

## THE POWER AND STABILITY OF FEDERATIVE GOVERNMENTS.

A PRIZE ESSAY, READ IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD,  
JULY 1, 1829.

[Continued.]

The argument then may be shortly recapitulated as follows.

I. That the commerce of the United Provinces formed the very nerves and sinews of their power.

II. That the strong monarchical Principle of the constitution, had it once been enabled to acquire the ascendancy, must, from the nature of the case, have assumed an absolute character, which could not have failed to prove in the highest degree prejudicial to commerce.

III. That the one effectual preventative against the acquisition of any such ascendancy lay in the operation of the federal government, which is therefore to be regarded as an necessary element of their power.

Now it is plain, that the above example, however it may exhibit an instance of great political power and that power mainly dependent upon the nature of the constitution, is yet in no way sufficient to constitute a valid objection to the general conclusion which asserts the prevailing character of federative governments to be weakness and inefficiency. It resulted from local and peculiar circumstances alone, that the operation of the federal constitution was favourable to power; and it was from these, in connection with their commerce, and the importance derived from their relative situation to the nations of Europe, that this people attained a height of consideration and influence, so disproportionate to their population and territorial extent. Their history is remarkable for many reasons; for no one more than the manner in which the very defects of their constitution were turned to their advantage; as well as for the spirit and decision with which on great emergencies they dispensed with restrictive regulations, when a close adherence to the letter of the constitution would have endangered the best interests of the commonwealth.

The question of the stability of federative governments is made up of opposite considerations to those insisted upon in the discussion of their power; and here we cannot fail to observe the existence of a very marked difference between the results of a federal union and those of a national government. In the latter, political power and internal stability have a mutual and beneficial operation; while under a federal operation, although it is quite true that stability is essential to the successful pursuit of power, yet it is also true, that accessions of power have a direct tendency to impair the stability of the union. Where then we pursue an abstract inquiry into the principles of federalism, or look to history for the evidence of example, we shall arrive by distinct paths at a common conclusion; and the coincidence between facts and theory would seem to be plain, striking, and complete.

The most favourable instance of a federal constitution will be found in the union of pure republics. Unanimity can never be expected from an association of monarchies, nor indeed from any combination of monarchy with the forms either of oligarchical or popular government; neither are the two latter more easily reconcilable; and although the case of the United Provinces present us with an illustrious exception in favour of an union of oligarchies, yet in the great majority of instances the government of the few is of too selfish a character to assimilate and harmonize with federal principles. Good government, therefore, if it be attainable at all under a confederacy, must have for its basis an association of republics. Nor is the process of negative reasoning the only one available to the establishment of this conclusion; but the positive argument in its favour are sufficiently obvious, to allow us to assume it as one which requires no further proof.

Associations of states, as of individuals, are formed in pursuit of a definite object by an identity of means: their stability, therefore, is liable to be endangered by any change in either of these two essentials. In the case of a confederacy, the one grand object is the attainment of security; and, as subordinate to this, we might enumerate all those political advantages which are inseparable from an extended sphere of influence, of consideration, and power. In an association of republics, when organized upon just principles, the means in order to the acquisition of these advantages would be a close and intimate union, a general community of rights and privileges, and, lastly the delegation of ample and efficient powers to the federal head. It will hardly be matter of controversy, that a union, established upon such principles as these, would embrace very many requisites for good government. But its excellencies and advantages would not be confined to a mere guarantee of internal prosperity and peace; but would comprise exhaustless sources of energy and greatness, to swell the stream in its onward course to political power.

Montesquieu† treats of a confederate republic as an expedient for extending the sphere of popular government, and combining the advantages of monarchy with those of republicanism; the energy of supreme power with the liberties of the people. This is obviously true of a confederacy in its most perfect form; which would allow little room among its salutary jealousies for the abuses of corruption, still less for any fatal burst of violence or faction, and none for the apprehension of tyranny and despotic power. And were there no adverse princi-

ples in the essence of such a constitution, it would not be presumptuous to prophesy in its favour a lengthened political existence. But the very prosperity of a federal government, however excellent in its organization, carries within its bosom the germ of disunion and decay, in the extreme difficulty of retaining for any very lengthened period the unanimity of thought, and singleness of purpose, which gave the first impulse to the measures of the union; in the impossibility (if the expression be allowed) of preserving in their pristine vigour these essentials of a federal constitution, and defending them against the secret, but powerful and unceasing, workings of separate and conflicting interests. In other words, although the great object of national security remain substantially the same, yet the circumstances, under which it is viewed by the members of the confederacy, are exposed to continual fluctuation; and with them the means to its attainment, originally assented to and pursued by all, become a fruitful source of dissension and dispute.

Now there is nothing which has a stronger and a more direct tendency to effect a change in the relative views and feelings of confederate states than an increase and growth of power. If indeed it were possible to assign to the several members of a confederacy a due proportion of the political advantages acquired by them in their collective capacity, and thus to preserve them in a situation similar or analogous to their original condition, the stability of their league would be so far from incurring any danger of a dissolution, as to acquire at every step additional firmness and consistency. But we may leave to the enthusiast the confident expectation of so cheering a result; and turning our eyes from the fair, but fallacious, picture of imaginary excellence, compels ourselves to regard steadily those darker shades, which are the truer representatives of human action, and which harmonize so justly with the varied colours of historical truth.

We will then assume a case of confederate republics, whose several interests have been carefully poised and adjusted in the outset of their national career, and their relative share of influence assigned with impartial justice. This arrangement would render imperative a great degree of mutual concession, and a subservience of particular interests to the general welfare. Now it is reasonable to suppose, that certain of these States will possess advantages in their situation and general circumstances, which will enable them to outstrip with ease their less fortunate associates. An augmentation of prosperity will beget, not merely a pretension, but a right to an augmentation of power. Power once acquired has a natural tendency to a rapid increase; and is unhappily so adverse to the due exercise of equity and moderation, that it is scarcely possible but that the change in the relative situation of the confederates, which began in justice, must end in encroachment and oppression. The natural result of this state of things will be combinations among the weaker states for the purposes of resistance; and the aid of foreign powers will be invoked to repel the threatened subjection, although it is scarcely possible that this summons can fail to involve a dissolution of the federal compact.

We have a striking exemplification of these political consequences in the history of the Achaean league. The feeble tie, of the Amphictyonic confederacy, over which Athens, Sparta, and Thebes had exercised a successive sovereignty, was at length effectually severed by the introduction of the Macedonian power. A state of anarchy ensued, and all appearance of concert and unanimity among the states of Greece was confined to a few inconsiderable towns of Achaia. Even this had at one moment disappeared beneath the potent influence of the arts and arms of Macedonia; but it had disappeared only to revive in a shape more commanding and extensive. † The disinterested union of a few Achaean towns gave promise of such inestimable advantages, that within a short time from its formation the league embraced nearly the entire Peloponnesus. Even Athens united herself to the common cause, and for a second time in the history of Greece the selfishness of ambition gave way before a generous enthusiasm for the common liberty. Sparta, however, a solitary exception to these sentiments, Sparta, who had reigned the imperial mistress of a former league, in which the Achaean had made so inconsiderable a figure, beheld their rapid progress with jealousy and discontent. The Achaean, unable to cope single-handed with the Spartan power, invoked the aid of Macedonia, and were triumphant in the contest. But they had escaped one danger only to incur another, more fatal, because more concealed, and clothed in the garb of friendship and alliance. Macedonia had now attained a situation whence she could securely foment the jealousies and discontent which had already begun to manifest themselves among the members of the league: nor was this a task of difficulty. Achaia, as the centre of the union, had acquired by her conduct and good fortune a very considerable share of influence and power. The same fears, therefore, which first gave birth to the confederacy, were again revived; but their direction was changed. Many of the confederates became distracted between their fears of Macedonia, and their jealousy of Achaia; and the harmony, so necessary to the very being of the confederacy, was lost for ever.

During this crisis the Romans had appeared upon the stage of Greece. Rome, however, was content to forego an immediate for a future, but more easy and certain, conquest. And, foreseeing the ultimate fate which awaited a divided people, she employed the intermediate time in secretly undermining the few remaining props and bulwarks of Grecian liberty. This insidious forbearance did not

\* La Grece etait perdue, lorsque un roi de Macedon obtint une place parmi les Amphictyons. *Esprit des Loix*, iii.

† In the second period of the league, about 280 B. C.

‡ Nec aliud adversus validissimas gentes nobis utilis quam quod in commune non consulat. Rarus duabus tribus civitatibus ad propulsandum commune periculum conventus. Ita, dum singuli pugnant, universi vincuntur. *Tacitus vit. Agricola*, c. 9.

long pass unrewarded. Opportunities speedily arose for a more direct and effectual interference; and Achaia, in common with the rest of Greece, submitted to a yoke of hopeless slavery the more galling, because attended with a conviction, when too late, that their own errors had mainly contributed to strengthen the hands and smooth the path of the haughty conqueror.

The objection furnished by the example of the United Provinces, which may seem to have combined stability with power, is easily met by an enquiry into the real merits of the case. Their confederacy subsisted, it is true, for upwards of two hundred years; but the duration of its pre-eminence in power did not embrace a sixteenth part of that period. The spirit of faction, together with other consequences of their brief though extraordinary career of prosperity, exposed them in a naked and defenceless state to the ambition of France at the commencement of the war in 1672. Since the era of that struggle they no longer occupied the same high station among the nations of Europe; and the stability of their union, up to the period of the French revolution, was owing to the interest of foreign powers in its preservation, and still more perhaps to their own comparative weakness and insignificance.

We have seen in all the instances examined the obstacles to the permanency of a federal union, which result from the acquisition of power of a purely defensive character; we are justified then in ascribing no less certain consequences to the power of a confederacy, which may have been fortunate enough to escape the influence of internal jealousies, and have proceeded through a long course of prosperity and riches, first to security, and then to conquest. The military talents of a single chief, the devotion of his victorious soldiers, the introduction of standing armies, a necessary accompaniment of conquest, must involve consequences so directly hostile to the stability of the confederacy where they exist, that it is needless to enlarge upon their inevitable operation.

If then the acquisition of power has a certain tendency to weaken the ties of federal union, we should expect that a confederacy, deprived, by nature, as well as adventitious circumstances, of all pretension to political power, would, for that reason, possess in a superior degree the merit of stability. This position is throughout illustrated by the history of Switzerland, which, prevented by concurrent causes from occupying a high place in the scale of nations, preserved with few variations, during the lapse of five centuries, the original constitution and character of her league.

The revolt of the Waldstetten at the close of the 13th century originated in an unmixt feeling of resistance to oppression; nor can we reasonably imagine that any idea of national power was at that moment entertained by those petty communities. This observation will apply in no less degree to their subsequent history; for it is a remarkable fact, and one which places in a clear light the general character and complexion of the Helvetic league, that the same free and jealous people, who flew to arms in vindication of their title to freedom in 1293, did not claim an entire exemption from the feudal sovereignty of the empire, † until upwards of three centuries had elapsed from the date of their independence. The Cantons acceded slowly to the league, accordingly as they severally felt themselves aggrieved by the Austrian dominion; and, content with having emancipated themselves from the yoke of servitude, seemed to pay but little regard to the dictates of ambition. During the course of the 14th century, their history is one strain of well merited panegyric; and the mind, wearied with the follies and disgraces with the crimes of the rest of Europe, reposes with pleasure on a scene, where she can find so little to condemn; nothing at least sufficient to obscure the bright example of public and private virtue.

Happy had it been for Switzerland, had she continued to cherish these pure and healthful feelings; happy had it been, had she gained nothing beyond simple liberty in her contest with her ancient masters. But the cravings of avarice and the thirst of plunder are inseparable from the pride of victory; and while the hardy mountaineer exulted in the defeat and humiliation of the Austrian chivalry, he purchased his triumph at the expense of his integrity and the simplicity of his nature. The sudden influx of wealth into the valleys and fastnesses of the Alps wrought a melancholy change in the character of the inhabitants. The peaceful occupations of the peasant and the citizen were gladly exchanged for the dangers and privations of the soldier; and the love of freedom, which had first awakened their warlike energies, degenerated into an undistinguishing thirst for gain and desire of advantage.

Under circumstances too favourable for the development of the military character, the Swiss were not slow to attain a prominent rank among the nations of Europe. Their situation, however, precluded them from exerting this means of power in their own behalf, and for the purposes of conquest; and they thus became the ready agents of the highest paymaster; content to substitute for the disinterested enthusiasm of the patriot and the hero, the rapacity of the hireling and the devotion of the slave. On the other hand, the comparative tranquillity, which was in some measure ensured to the internal relations of the confederacy by the constant occupation of these turbulent and licentious spirits, was a great, but a solitary, advantage.

Such was the condition of Switzerland, when the dawn of the Reformation gave promise of better hopes. It produced indeed a very material change in the character and circumstances of the Swiss; and its effects are chiefly visible in the improved tone of moral feeling, and the introduction of better habits, and a growing aversion to mercenary service, as the leading features of this improvement. But in another point of view, the Reformation

\* The history of the Olynthian confederacy, as detailed by Mitford, c. xxxvi. sect. 2. will furnish us with another proof of the certain operation of prosperity and power in loosening, and finally in severing the ties of federal union.

† i. e. Until the peace of Westphalia, A. D. 1648.

was unavoidably attended with disastrous consequences; and the history of Switzerland, during the latter part of the 16th and the whole of the 17th century, is crowded with end- less details of controversies and bloodshed; of that violence and those animosities, which are found so terribly to prevail, where religious zeal has been abused to the purposes of intolerance, or assumed as a passport for the unrestrained indulgence of evil passions. It was not until the commencement of the 18th century, that the mutual exhaustion of the conflicting Cantons put an end to a contest which had seemed interminable, but the tranquillity then established was founded upon a secure basis; and up to the period of the French revolution, Switzerland enjoyed an uninterrupted course of prosperity and peace.

From this brief and very imperfect sketch of the history of the Helvetic league, it is clear, that the stability of the confederacy during five centuries can in no wise be imputed to the absence of motives to disunion among the Cantons, or to their freedom from intestine divisions and social war. The annals of few nations are more deeply tinged with blood; few, like Switzerland, can present to us in the same page the evidences of the most determined hostility, and the semblance of union. But these apparent anomalies are easily reconciled by a slight consideration of the nature of her league, of its original purpose, and subsequent operation.

First then from the earliest ages\* down to our own times, the union between the various tribes or communities occupying the extent of modern Switzerland has been restricted to the simple principle of mutual defence. At no period does the federal constitution appear to have comprised any thing of importance beyond a general guarantee of independence, and a right of arbitration in disputes between the members of the league, vested by the constitution in the neutral Cantons. But we find no marks or traces of common sovereignty, no common treasury, no common troops, even in time of war, no common coin, or courts of judicature.

The second peculiarity, which resulted immediately from the foregoing, was the extreme feebleness, and singularly ill-defined character, of the ties of federal association. Indeed, since the era of the Reformation, this confederacy existed rather as a consequence of geographical position than of political combination. Before that period, their common interest, their military glory, together with the pressure of a neighbouring and hostile empire, preserved them in a state of union, of which they had too recently experienced the unmixt benefit, to be disposed to question its utility and advantage.

Now it is precisely to this feebleness and inefficiency of the federal ties, that we are to look for the main cause of the permanence of the league. An association, which imposed upon its members† no perceptible restraint, which called upon them for no sacrifices, and made no demands upon their individual interests, which might, we may almost say, ‡ be entered into at pleasure, and at pleasure relinquished, was surely well calculated to survive under circumstances, which must have proved fatal to any system of federation constructed upon better-ascertained principles, and possessing a vested right to interpret and assert the provisions of its constitution.

It would be unjust to Switzerland to omit in this place all notice of the remarkable excellence of her internal government. The absence of power, and the division of the country into petty communities, appear to have exercised a very beneficial influence upon the various forms of administration which are found to have prevailed among the members of the league. The Swiss unquestionably enjoyed during far the greater part of the 18th century a very high degree of happiness and prosperity. Their simplicity and singleness of character; their disposition, bold and uncompromising, yet peaceable and industrious; their steady neutrality amid all the wars of conflicting Europe; are worthy objects of contemplation to the moralist, and of panegyric to the historian. The praises indeed, they so fully merit, have never been denied them, but ratified by the concurrent testimony of all nations; and, to select an evidence of high authority, we find it declared by Burke, "that he had beheld throughout Switzerland, and above all in the Canton of Berne, a people at once the happiest and the best governed upon earth."

\* We learn from Cæsar, that ancient Helvetia was divided into four communities called 'Pagæ,' between whom there subsisted a defensive alliance, but no other sign of a federal union.

† For instance, the articles of confederation forbade the concluding of any foreign alliance without the consent of the Diet. But, after the Reformation, we find Berne at the head of the Protestant interest in treaty with the United Provinces; and Lucerne as the head of the Catholic interest, in treaty with France.

‡ We find Berne refusing to take any part in the war against Leopold of Austria, in which was fought the battle of Sempach; but this contempt of federal principles seems to have caused little surprise, and to have given birth to no hints at a separation.

§ We should perhaps confine this praise chiefly to the aristocratic Cantons; for it cannot be denied that in those possessing a democratical form of government, the administration of justice was extremely corrupt. This is perhaps attributable in some measure to their uniform practice of compounding for offences by a fine, which speedily confounds together the ideas of private gain and public justice.

[To be Continued.]

## ASSIZE OF BREAD.

At a Special Session of the Peace, holden at Fredericton, in and for the County of York, on Saturday the 20th day of June, 1829.

ORDERED, that from and after the 25th instant, the price of the One Pound Loaf of WHEAT BREAD, be Three-pence, and other Loaves in proportion.

H. G. CLOPPER.

## NOTICE.

THOSE Persons who are indebted to the late Proprietor of the Royal Gazette, are requested to call forthwith, and settle their accounts, as no time will be lost in bringing about this object, and all persons having demands against him will please send in their account.

26th September, 1829.

## NEW FALL GOODS.

The Subscriber's Fall Supply of Merchandise, comprises a general assortment of

ENGLISH, American and West India Produce; viz. Woollen, Cotton and Faucy Goods, Hardware, Cutlery, Stationary, Furs, and a general supply of Groceries, Provisions, and Liquors of a good quality.

The above articles having been selected by himself, he has taken great pains to procure them of the best description and quality; which, together with his former stock on hand, he now offers for sale at the lowest rates for Cash, or for Cord Wood delivered into the Government Fuel Yard, or in exchange for Country Produce, at his House and Store in Regent-street.

THOMAS B. SMITH.

Fredericton, Jan. 12, 1830.

## LOST.

ON the 3d instant, on the land road between Fredericton and Russell's Farm in Kings-clear, a large BUFFALO SKIN. Whoever has found the same and will put the Subscriber again in possession of it, shall be amply compensated for the trouble.

11th January, 1830. GEO. K. LUGRIN.

ALL Persons having any just demands against the Estate of CALVIN CAMP, late of Burton, in the County of Sunbury, deceased, are requested to render their accounts duly attested within twelve months from the date hereof, and all persons indebted to the said Estate are requested to make immediate payment to

HESTER CAMP, Administratrix.  
JOHN DOW, Administrator.

Burton, January 7th, 1830. tfp3w.

## NEW GOODS.

BY the Isabella from Greenock, and Pyrenees from London, the subscribers have received, in addition to their recent importation; White and Grey Shirting Cottons; Plaids; Camblet; Carpeting; Checks; and Homespuns; Screw Augers; black, blue, whitened, brown, and all coloured Threads; Pot, Fools-cap, Post and fine Gilt Writing Paper; Goose Quills; Silk Braces; Worsted, and Cotton do.; India, Book-Muslin; Gros De Naples; black Silk; and Kid Stocks; Gentlemen's Beaver, Black, Kid, and Buck Gloves; Fashionable Silk Pocket Handkerchiefs; 16 and 44 Black Crapes; Sewing Silk; Ribbons, &c. &c., all of which will be sold very cheap for prompt payment.

FISHER, WALKER & Co.

Fredericton, 20th October, 1829. tf

## FALL GOODS.

The Subscribers have received per Ships Forth and Augusta, from Liverpool, a part of their Fall Supply of British Merchandise, consisting of

BLACK, blue, and Olive Superfine Cloths; and Cassimeres; Gentlemen's Superfine, and Plated Hats; Ladies Black, and Drab, Beaver Bonnets, red and white Flannels; green Baize; drab Flushing, and Kersey; rose and point Blankets; Patent Cordage 1-1/4 to 4-1/2 inch; Bed Cords, and white Rope, Table Knives, and Forks; Desert do. do.; a few dozen Superior Silver Steel Pen Knives; Common do., and double-bladed Pocket-Knives; Razors in Cases assorted; Flat, Round, and Square Iron; best (L) Blistered Steel; 4d, 6d, 12d, and 20d fine rose Nails; Spades and Shovels; Mould and Dipt Candles; Soap, &c. &c.; which, together with their Stock on hand, will be sold at the lowest possible advance, for cash, or other approved Payments.

FISHER, WALKER, & Co.

Fredericton, October 6, 1829.

## NOTICE TO PEWHOLDERS.

THAT at a Meeting of the Vestry of Christ Church at Fredericton, on the 27th inst. it was resolved that whereas the Pew Leases had expired on the 24th instant, that they might be renewed for the ensuing seven years on the same terms as the last, all arrears of rent being first paid, and that their should efficient measures be taken forthwith to collect all monies due to the said Church.

Fredericton, 31st Dec. 1829. 6w

ALL persons are hereby cautioned against purchasing eight Notes of Hand for £12 : 10s each, dated the 10th of September last, granted by the Subscribers to John Doyle of Northampton, in payment of two lots of Land in the Parish of Woodstock; for which he cannot give a sufficient conveyance.

JOHN SPEER.

WILLIAM SPROWL.

Fredericton, 31st Dec. 1829. plw.

## FOR SALE.

THE House in which the undersigned now resides; it is an excellent stand for mercantile business; or from the number of apartments it contains, is well adapted for a boarding House. For further particulars apply to

GEORGE K. LUGRIN.

August 11, 1829. tf.

Eligible Situation to Let, for one or more Years.

TWO Offices and a commodious Cellar in the Brick Building formerly occupied by the Hon. Thomas Baillie. The apartments may be adapted for a convenient Store. For further particulars, application to be made to

E. W. MILLER.

Fredericton, December 5, 1829. ft.

THE subscriber begs leave to return thanks to the community at large for past favours; and he takes this method to inform them that he has removed to that new and elegant House, lately occupied by Mr. Thomas C. Everitt, corner of Phoenix Square; and from its central situation, and in the stile it is fitted up, inferior to none in the Province; he trusts from several years experience in that business that he will be able to give general satisfaction to the public.

Fredericton, Jan. 12, 1830. 3m.

## THE ROYAL GAZETTE.

TERMS—1s. per Annum, exclusive of Postage. Advertisements not exceeding Twelve Lines will be inserted for Four Shillings and Sixpence the first, and one Shilling and Sixpence for each succeeding Insertion. Advertisements must be accompanied with Cash, and the insertions will be regulated according to the amount received. Blanks, Handbills, &c. &c. can be struck off at the shortest notice.