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Talking about money, puts me in mind of a great big book that I received during the last session of congress—it is almost as large as an octavo bible, and has the following for its title page:

Letter from the Comptroller of the treasury, transmitting a list of balances on the books of the second and third auditors of the treasury, which have remained due more than three years, prior to the 30th September, 1820; a list of the names of the persons who have failed to render their accounts to the said auditors within the year, and a list of advances made prior to the 30th of March, 1819, by the war department, which remained to be accounted for on the books of the third auditor of the treasury, on the 30th of September, 1820.

Then comes an explanatory letter from Mr. Hagner, third auditor of the treasury department, through whose office the greater part of these claims must pass. From this letter, he appears to be both vigilant and competent, and to give a comfortable view of what has been accomplished since his appointment in 1817—previous to which, say 8th May, 1816, "the outstanding and settled accounts (of the descriptions now under his charge, and relating to the military service,) amounted to more than 43 millions of dollars, distributed in the hands of several thousand persons." He says that "twenty three letter books" have been filled with the business of the office; that settlements have proceeded rapidly, and "resulted in reducing the outstanding accounts to balances to the amount stated;" which amount is added up at the end of a series of tables, and given only \$15,317,880,* as being due more than three years." But Mr. Hagner's explanation labours under a common misfortune that attends any of the documents regarding money concerns. Two items are given, by which the people are ended to be advised of the progress that has been made in settling accounts, and collecting their money: 43,000,000 are stated as the amount unsettled or outstanding on 8th of May, 1816, and 15,317,880 shown as the aggregate of such sums which appeared to be due more than three years" in 1820.—Now, out of these items, it appears difficult to draw a conclusion, as to solve the famous problem, "if it will take to cart a load, how many will it take to make a large pile?"

It is in this manner that the delay attending the settlement of public accounts, has long been a subject of general and severe complaint—and from this cause we have lost uncounted millions: Now we have 86 heavy tables, folded up maps of the quarters of the world in a geography, giving the names of persons, describing their rank or condition, with the sums being charged against each, and a column of remarks on the several cases; being in all between 20 and 3,000 men (a little army) apparently indebted about 16 millions, and for "more than three years." It is in the nature of things that many accounts must be opened, and that, from the lamentable want of organization during the late war, herein almost any body was, singly, intrusted with a disbursement of the public money; any bad debts should have been paid; but why so many accounts should yet remain unclosed, and for "there is also a table of balances on the books of the second auditor, amounting to 40 or \$30,000, not added up, and another series of tables showing balances, &c. to the sum of \$318,617.

long a time—for three years and upwards; we cannot tell their value decreases at the rate perhaps of 20 per cent. per annum by deaths, removals and bankruptcies. There has been some late happy approaches towards a system by which prompt settlements may be effected, and these should be coerced at least once a year, unless with persons out of the United States; they also being required to render their vouchers. The power of the government for the recovery of debts, is more ample than that of individuals, and the agents for such purposes are stationed throughout the union. Of the 2,500 or 3,000 accounts exhibited in these maps of debts, about two fifths are for balances on settlement, two other fifths on account of advances to different persons for which no accounts have been rendered—and the remaining cases are reported for suit, or in suit, as requiring additional vouchers, or in a course of settlement.

It may well be asked, why the thousand of "balances on settlement" are not collected, in suit, or stricken from the rolls? why the thousand more to whom "advances" were made, have not been compelled to give some account of their disbursements? The most recent of all these, we must recollect, are at least of three years standing—time enough, one would suppose, to bring them to an issue. If the sums reported to be due "on settlement" are due, I could myself name several persons of whom the amounts might be collected. But the real amount that is due to the United States, in this formidable list, is uncertain; it may not exceed ten millions—but I would take a tythe of it for my share of the wealth of this world, and really think that I might as well have it in these "hard times" as those who hold it! Many persons who stand charged as debtors, are probably, in right and equity, creditors of the United States—but they ought, nevertheless, to be compelled to settle their accounts. As this exhibit was made for the public information, it would have been well if the probable condition of the large amount apparently due, was stated; but we are left to grop about in the dark, and cannot make any other than a rude calculation upon it. There is one thing, however, that ought to be taken into consideration, though it may be impossible, or if possible, inexpedient, to provide a remedy for it: the heads of departments are often much diverted from a necessary attention to their ordinary business, by ill advised calls for information by congress. Many of these calls are made without a purpose in the mover of them, except to show to the electors of his district how vigilant he is—neither the senate or house of representatives, can well reject a motion that has only an "enquiry" for its object, but many of these motions have wasted one or two months of the time of the head of a department, and cost from ten to twenty thousand dollars in their execution, without any resulting good whatever. A laborious report is presented, ordered to lie on the table and to be printed, and then dies a natural death—not, perhaps, being looked at by one out of five members, without being considered by one out of fifty. At the suggestion of Mr. Rich, of Vermont, some objection was thrown in the way of such calls, by an alteration of the rules of the house, by which it was required that they should lie on the table one day. Experience will show us whether this is a sufficient impediment in the way of electing calls for information.

We have dwelt the longer on this document because its leading features are applicable to many others, and in a belief that the people have just as good a right to know all about the state of their receipts and expenditures as the secretary of the treasury himself, who is only chief clerk in the national counting house.—"Things, of this sort have been as plain as A. B. C. and I do not know any reason why they should not have continued to be so. Whence the necessity that we should retrograde in a knowledge of our own affairs? We certainly have retrograded, and at an alarming rate, and if the "era of good feelings" as our

state of apathy is called, continues—the who can best manage the people will be preferred—not those who are honest, who are capable, who are faithful to the constitution. As I do not mean, so I do not wish this remark to be applied to any person at present in office—but "facilis descensus Avernus" the "road to ruin" is easily travelled.

We have frequently spoken of a re-action that was about to take place. It has, for two or three years, been manifest to those who did not shut their eyes & ears to the truth, that the revenue of government would have to be increased, or its expenditures diminished. The former, I boldly say, cannot be accomplished in the present depression of business and want of employment; a change of policy must precede the assessment of new taxes; the latter will be brought about so reluctantly, and so many impediments be thrown in the way of its operation, that it seems as if nothing can be done without violence.

This is the nature of too many things, moral and physical—a bad practice, or formidable disease, is suffered to go on year after year, until a mighty effort is required to remove that which common prudence might have prevented, or prompt attention have easily cured. Like the cautious seaman, we should always "keep a look out a head," and if those stationed for this purpose, should neglect to warn us of approaching danger, they should not be trusted with the honourable post any longer; if their admonitions have not been attended to, the fault is our own, and we must meet the difficulty as well as we can; and if, under the excitement of self preservation, we commit some extravagancies, they must be excused from the necessity of the case. But have those whose business it was to "look out," warned us of the humiliating condition that we were approaching, as they ought to have done? Did they tell us plainly that, unless we "took in sail" we should run "a-foul" of the rocks of the money lenders, and be compelled to borrow large sums to pay current expenses? They did not. So late as November last, the president, in his message to congress, presented a flattering statement of our finances, and saw proper to exhibit it by saying that on the 30th Sept. preceding, we had \$1,930,000 in the treasury. But the secretary in his annual report, dated only fourteen days after the said message was delivered, proclaimed that we were behind hand in the enormous sum of \$7,451,586! In many of the banks there are certain bills discounted, which are called "accommodation notes"—these are retired by other notes discounted to meet them, and so on, the interest being paid every sixty days: Now suppose that I have an "accommodation" to the amount of \$1,000 due this day before three o'clock; well, the directors meet at 9 o'clock and discount my note, and I can boast that I have 1,000 dollars, less the discount, in bank! This may pass for a joke among friends and in "harvest times;" but if seriously urged, would justly render me ridiculous—when, perhaps, an hour or two afterwards, I might be running about to beg and borrow money to pay the discount upon the new loan! I do not believe—I cannot believe—that the point of this supposition applies to the proceeding of the president—my respect for his character will not permit me to believe it; but that proceeding, together with the subsequent and various statements from the treasury department, as well as those of the several reports of the committee of ways and means, clearly show, that the money matters of the nation are not attended to as they ought to be: a confounded confusion seems to reign through them from A to Z.

In this state of the case, a majority in congress was determined to bring about a retrenchment on some terms—on almost any terms; they would do something to lessen the public expenditures—and, among the rest, they struck at the estimates for fortifications. About five weeks since, I was informed on unquestionable authority, that the secretary of war was exceedingly embarrassed on account of this matter, as well as others. Now, the principle on which the amount asked was refused, may be exactly the right, and I

an unalterably the friend of specific appropriations, on the broad ground that, "lead us not into temptation" is a petition of the utmost moment, spiritual and temporal. But congress has so long been accustomed to grant any thing that was asked, indeed to obey the different departments, that contracts were unhesitatingly entered into by the heads of them, with a moral certainty either that the money to fulfill them would be immediately granted, or that they could supply the want of it from some other unconsumed appropriation. Thus, many years ago, the appropriation of a tribute to Algiers was diverted to another purpose, and if a determination had been manifested at the same time to refuse that tribute, the motive might have excused the act; but this was not the case, and it was afterwards paid up, with 50 per cent. interest, in the expenses which a want of punctuality caused. But on the strength of this supposed power over congress, large sums were frequently advanced to various descriptions of individuals, engaging to perform certain services or furnish certain supplies. If it was always safe and prudent to allow this discretion to the executive, no doubt the public business might oftentimes be promoted with more rapidly, and, possibly, on better terms—but it is best that the old doctrine about specific appropriations should be maintained, unless in cases of public emergency, arising from a condition of things not anticipated, and wherein the public good will not admit of delay.—In ordinary matters, public or private, it is indispensable that we should count the cost of an undertaking, and ascertain where the money is to come from to complete it, before we commence the work, lest our means should be embarrassed—intended palaces be turned into poor houses, and the collected materials for state works serve for mounds to mark the site of a "folly." But a right thing may be done in a wrong way—and in respect to this special matter, it seems that true economy would have dictated an appropriation sufficient to meet existing contracts, with a perfect understanding that, for the future (except in cases of emergency) all contracts should follow, not precede appropriations. We have particular reference to the works intended to be erected on Dauphin island, for the defence of New Orleans, at which, we learn, there are about 300 workmen, drawn from distant places, and a large quantity of materials collected, to whom and for which large advances have been made. The disposition of this affair, we were told, caused much trouble in the "cabinet," as a meeting of the president and his secretaries is called. We have not heard the decision—but the people who have been collected at so great expense, must be dispersed, and the materials, if of a perishable nature, be wasted, unless the president shall take upon himself the responsibility of going on with this work, to some certain extent, in opposition to the law—to the declared will of congress, that no money shall at present be expended for fortifications on Dauphin island.

The grand error which has caused this difficulty among others of far greater magnitude, may fairly be said to have been created by the insensibility of the executive to the approaching state of things, or to its unwillingness to tell the people unpalatable truth. And even yet, no public act has appeared proposing a plan to relieve the public necessities, which are every day becoming more and more imperious. Are we to "call up spirits from the vasty deep" to furnish us with money, and will "they come when we do call them?" Has our horoscope been cast, and are the stars propitious? If any thing is depended upon, it must be something out of the common order of things—but, perhaps, we are offering sacrifices to fear, or have given up all to despair. Immense sums of money are soon to be paid—19½ millions of dollars in 1825; 23½ millions in 1826; 13 millions in 1827; and 9½ millions in 1828. How shall we "compass the cash?" A little while ago, we were told that the sinking fund was to do a great deal more than meet our engagements—and it was pompously told the people that, af-

ter 1828, we were to be out of debt, except on account of the 5 per cent. stocks; and that "wiser brains" were judg'd to discover what we should do with our surplus revenues—Tasha!—the sinking fund has gone to the dogs like an old and faithful cat; horse-dead—and we are borrowing money "to keep soul and body together!" As I live, if I had a vote in congress, and on that vote depended whether "the wheels of the government," as Mr. Gallatin said, should stop or not, as resting on the passage of a bill to authorize a new loan, I would suffer them to stop until we carefully overhauled what we had done, and adopted a system as to what we should do, and would do, for the future. We are managing just now like a trader who is getting his paper shaved at 3 per cent. a month—playing a game at hazard, and resting upon accident or necromancy to release us from our dilemma. Charles II, of England, was asked why in his speeches to parliament, he did not hold up his head and look the members in the face?—but that pattern of modesty replied, he had asked the commons so often for money that he was ashamed to look them in the face! And even to this day, a British minister never asks for a loan, without offering some plan by which the principal is to be redeemed or the interest paid, though the project may be wholly delusive—but we borrow without regarding either! It was not so a few years past—it will not be so for many years to come. There must be a speedy end to it—volens volens.

I know that it is a sort of high treason, if committed in the ten miles square, as well as in the estimation of many thousand persons scattered over the United States, possessors or expectants of office, and others bloated with notions of their "influence" at Washington, to breathe a suspicion that a president of the United States can do wrong; and then they put in operation a sedition law to keep down the "factious," lustily maintaining that he who dispenses "the loaves and fishes" of government must needs be in the right! I have discovered this in hundreds of instances—and verily believe, that there is now a tolerant spirit, less earnestness as to the truth, than there was in 1798—a year well remembered by me. But be this as it may; altho' I respect Mr. Monroe, in my own self, more than an army of these things can do, although I have more esteem for him than a "drawing room" full of such as buzz about and bow before him, as Persians worship the sun—and altho' if his re-election had depended upon my individual vote, he should have been re-elected,* yet there are certain parts of his late inaugural address that I shall make some free remarks upon, notwithstanding the said address was generally received like a firman of the Grand Signor, and has been spoken of in the newspapers as if there was no possibility of doing justice to its excellence. In my humble opinion, it is the best thing that he ever gave us—in several respects it is highly interesting and important—but not faultless.

I shall first quote the following paragraph from that address, delivered on the 5th of March last, and then make some remarks upon its matter. The president says: "The situation of the United States, in regard to their resources, the extent of their revenue, and the facility with which it is raised, affords a most gratifying spectacle. The payment of nearly sixty-seven millions of dollars of the public debt, with the great progress made in measures of defence, and in other improvements of various kinds, since the late war, are conclusive proofs, of this extraordinary prosperity, especially when it is recollected that these expenditures have been defrayed without a burthen on the people, the direct tax and excise having been repealed soon after the conclusion of the late war, and the revenue applied to these great objects having been raised in a manner not to be felt. Our great resources, therefore, remain un-

* Not because I consider him as the only man in the United States fitted to serve as president—but for other considerations not necessary just now to mention.

REMOVAL. The subscriber of Anne Arundel county, hath obtained from the Orphan Court of Anne Arundel county, in Maryland, letters of administration on the personal estate of James H. Wilson, late of Anne Arundel county, deceased. All persons having claims against the said deceased, are hereby warned to exhibit their claims against the same with the vouchers thereof, to the subscriber, on or before the 26th day of October next, they may otherwise by law be excluded from all benefit of the said estate. Given under my hand, this 21st day of April, 1821.

Notice is hereby Given, That the subscriber of Anne Arundel county, hath obtained from the Orphan Court of Anne Arundel county, in Maryland, letters of administration on the personal estate of James H. Wilson, late of Anne Arundel county, deceased. All persons having claims against the said deceased, are hereby warned to exhibit their claims against the same with the vouchers thereof, to the subscriber, on or before the 26th day of October next, they may otherwise by law be excluded from all benefit of the said estate. Given under my hand, this 21st day of April, 1821.

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