

*To the Citizens of Columbia County.*

A certain very officious gentleman called "Atticus," whose lucubrations have, for sometime past, adorned that scurrilous and defamatory paper, the *Centinel*, published at Athens, having exhausted all the store of nonsense and vituperation that he has been pouring forth against the general government, has lately thought proper, by way of variety, to publish a piece for your special use, doubtless with a hope of aiding you in making a judicious selection of one capable of representing you, at the next general election. This very obliging gentleman, knowing that the paper in which his publications have heretofore been made had but very limited circulation in this county, has been so extremely kind as to cause a number of handbills to be struck off, which his friends, for whose use and benefit they were intended, are circulating through the county, and endeavoring to turn to their own account. This man Atticus, (whose name is Augustin S. Clayton,) a late unsuccessful candidate for the office of Judge of the Western Circuit, would have been very kind to you, and placed you under lasting obligation to him, had he confined himself strictly to the truth, and made no statements but such as were susceptible of proof. But to absolve you somewhat from the weight of obligation under which he has placed you, we have thought proper to expose this tissue of misrepresentation, by showing that most of his statements are at variance with the fact, and positively false; and hope, if we succeed in this to your satisfaction, you will award him the merited meed of obloquy, and advise him, when he next volunteers his services to a county of which he is not an inhabitant, and with whose citizens he is literally unacquainted, to maintain something like a decent show of veracity among strangers, however lightly he may regard that virtue where he is known.

The first of his statements that we shall notice is, where he says, "It is an universal principle upon which representative republics are founded, and especially our own, at the formation of our Constitution, that representation should be regulated by taxation and population." If this principle can be found embodied in our Constitution, we confess it has escaped our observation. For the truth of this new doctrine of "Atticus," we would invite you to examine, attentively, the Constitution of our state. According to this new principle of representation by taxation, the county of Chatham, which pays a greater tax (\$19,990 28) than the aggregate amount (19,727 41) received from the counties of Columbia, Elbert, Jasper, Jones, and Putnam, and with a population far inferior to either of the three last, would be entitled to as many members of the Legislature as the whole five. This principle should be resisted by every friend of "equal rights," as oppressive and aristocratical. Indeed, to admit the validity of this principle would be to measure the rights of every man by his wealth—that the purse should be represented, instead of the individual, and lands, Bank stock, houses & lots, should be represented, instead of its owner. This doctrine, coming from the source it does, has not surprised us—knowing you as we do, we are convinced it will not avail them. We would respectfully ask, if there is not established a wise and just equalization of taxation in the respective counties throughout the state? Does not the poorest county in the state pay a tax in proportion to her property, and is not this tax as burdensome as that paid by the most wealthy county? Is not the poll tax paid by the poor man as oppressive on him as that paid by the most wealthy lordling? Certainly it is. This principle of representation is addressed to you by "Atticus," because you live in Columbia, one of the "rich counties," but you will perceive its adoption would operate much more strongly against you than for you. Beside the instance already given you, the county of Richmond, with a population less than your own, pays a tax nearly four times as great, and of course would be entitled to a proportionable increase of representation—whereas, her representation, as now regulated by population, is the same as your own. In addition to the two examples above enumerated there are nine other counties, ("of the 21 rich counties,") some with less and others with somewhat larger population, which pay more tax than Columbia, (as you will see by the showing of Atticus,) and would, consequently, be entitled to an increased representation, according to this principle. This plan of Atticus, so far from equalizing the representation would have the very contrary effect. It would be placing the weight of representation in a few counties, rich in point of wealth, but comparatively poor in population, to the exclusion of a large number of counties, small in wealth, but large in population.

We would ask "Atticus" and his friends in this county, who so cheerfully subscribed to, and so industriously promulgated, this doctrine, if the state was invaded, would the militia from the respective counties be furnished in the ratio of their taxation or population? This has already been answered us—by population. Hence it appears, fellow-citizens, that the poor of our country, who fight our battles and contribute their equal proportion of taxes for the support of government, are to be denied their most invaluable privilege—the right

of representation. This we conceive the most dangerous doctrine that ever has been propagated in our country—it is entirely subversive of equal rights, and destructive of our republican principles. It would be to annihilate those inherent and unalienable rights of man, secured to us by the blood of our revolutionary fathers, and render even that much boasted name of liberty a mere empty sound. Such a state of things ought not to exist—it should be deprecated by every friend of good government and our republican institutions.

That there is some inequality in the representation of the different counties, we have no doubt, and we would be extremely desirous to see it so regulated that the population of the respective counties would be more equally represented. One of your representatives has drawn up more than one plan to remedy this evil, but the difficulties that presented themselves have hitherto prevented their adoption. It must be the work of time; but we have no doubt the evil will be eventually corrected. But against the principle that taxation should be the rule of representation, we hope the people of Columbia will always most solemnly protest.

The next error in point of fact, is, where Atticus says, an attempt was made by the "last Legislature to compensate Grand and Petit Jurors." This statement we pronounce positively false, and by a reference to the Journals of the House of Representatives, the charge will be supported, and it will be seen that the attempt was made only to pay Petit Jurors. This fact being established, it is evident that the conclusion derived from these false premises is also false, and the labored calculation of the expenses incident to a session of the Courts, "three Bailiffs and twenty Grand Jurors," is also incorrect.

The next statement of Atticus we are prepared to disprove, is, that, beside the taxes paid by the different counties, "there is but one other resource of government, and that is the precatious and fluctuating income on Bank Stock." Now, if you will look at the journals of the House of Representatives, page 270, you will find according to the Comptroller General's report, that the whole resources of the State for the political year 1825, was \$365,827 78 1-2; of this sum \$167,442 was derived from the general county tax and dividends on Bank stock, leaving a balance received from other sources unknown to the sapient and insidious Atticus, of \$203,140; this last sum is \$11,980 more than the whole expenses ordinary and extraordinary of the state, although the extra session of the Legislature occurred that year. The total expense of the state for the political year 1825, was \$191,160 80,\* which sum subtracted from \$365,827 78 (the whole resources of the state for that year) leaves a balance in favour of the state of \$174,421 98, unexpended on the 31st of October, 1825.—Add to this \$97,935 55 1-2, the balance remaining in the Treasury on the 31st of October, 1824, and it will make the sum of \$772,407 48 1 2, remaining in the Treasury, unappropriated, on the 31st of October, 1825, Atticus' statement that "there is but \$10,000 of the taxes left, after paying the Legislature," to the contrary notwithstanding.

The next fact, assumed by "Atticus," is "that if the 24 counties were disposed to pay jurors, they actually have not the means to do it." This statement we pronounce equally unfounded as the former. You have already seen, that after defraying the expenses of the political year 1825, we had a cash balance on hand of \$772,407, 48 1 2. Now, this sum vested in some productive stock, say at 5 per cent, would produce to the state annually \$38,620 35 7. This sum, which would only be the interest on the surplus fund lying in the Treasury unemployed, would defray the expense of Jurors and Bailiffs, even according to the statement of Atticus, of \$200. So well convinced have the Legislature been of the prosperous situation of the finances of the state, that for the last two sessions they have left one half of the general tax, in the several counties, to be applied to county purposes. This large sum in the Treasury will be annually increased by collection from taxes due for the sale of fractions, town lots, &c. belonging to the state, and from other resources that will soon be available.

The sum appropriated by the Bill for the compensation of Petit Jurors was \$100,000, smaller indeed than the amount of that measure thought was requisite, but on consultation with a number of members, the mover of the Bill thought it safe to insert no higher sum, if he wished to pass it—he therefore determined to pass it if possible with that sum, and trust to time for its enlargement. But, if it had been even double that amount, you will see by the foregoing review of our fiscal affairs, that it could have been paid without the slightest inconvenience. It is however stated that the Jurors ought to be paid by counties—To this there are two objections:—First, if there are as many counties in the state unable to pay their members of the Legislature, as is represented by "Atticus," it would be utterly impossible to pass such a law—for the "41 poor counties," (if there be that many) would always be able to defeat it in the Senate—and that they would do so, there can be no doubt—for foolish in the extreme would those counties be, to undertake to perform that they are utterly unable to do—to pay that they had not. Secondly: the income of the state (or the greater part of it) arises, not from the general county tax, but from other sources of revenue in which all parts of the state are jointly interested, and each county should equally participate. Out of the sum of \$365,827 73, received in the Treasury during the last political year, only \$109,942 10, was derived from the general county tax, and of which sum according to "Atticus," the "11 poor counties" paid \$11,138 09—the balance of \$245,610 63 was received from other sources. Will it be contended, that the 41 counties have no

a joint interest in this last amount, derived entirely from extrinsic sources? To argue oppositely would be the height of absurdity—it would be to establish a principle, that we believe even the sophistical "Atticus" would blush to avow.

The public justice of the country is a matter in which we are all equally concerned; and if a juror serves as such, he renders as good services as the soldier who fights our battles, or any other public servant. Hence it would seem that jurors must not be paid at all, or paid from the public Treasury.

We would make only one other remark in conclusion, as Atticus has warned you to beware, how you "tie yourselves to a mere man, a perfect stranger—handcuff yourselves to a party, and like slaves wear the name of their master," &c. We would join him most heartily in this remark, and say to you, beware how you credit the bare, unsupported, and unsupportable statements of a mere man—a stranger—the busy agent of a party—that very few of you know, and who on his first introduction to you has given you such a striking proof of his powers of palpable misrepresentation and positive falsehood. Such a mere man—such a stranger—such a partizan is "Atticus."

A COLUMBIAN.