

The meeting having continued a long time, every body became extremely anxious to know what they were about; the doors were kept shut, and no person whatever was let into the secret, till the whole was completed. A copy was then sent to each family for them to consider at their leisure.

Though curiosity was now gratified, yet anxiety was not relaxed. The new plan of partnership went by the name of *the fiddle*; those who were in favour of it called themselves *fiddlers*, and those who opposed it were styled *anti-fiddlers*. The former said it was the best plan that human wisdom had ever contrived. The latter imagined it pregnant with mischief of every kind. The former compared it to a strong fence about a rich field of wheat. The latter compared it to the whale that swallowed up Jonah.

In each family a consultation was held on the question, Whether it should be adopted or not? and liberty was given for every one to speak his mind with the utmost freedom. The objections, answers, replies, rejoinders, and rebutters, which were produced on this occasion, would make a curious collection, and form an important page in the history of man. The *fiddlers* were extremely fond of having it examined, because they said it was like a rich piece of plate, which the more it be rubbed shines the brighter. The *anti-fiddlers* said it was like a worm-eaten bottom of a ship, the defects of which would more evidently appear the more it was ripped to pieces; they were therefore for rejecting it at once, without any examination at all.

When they were urged to point out its defects, they would say, "it is dangerous to put so much power into the hands of any man, or set of men, lest they should abuse it. Our liberty and property will be safe whilst we keep them ourselves, but when we have once parted with them, we may never be able to get them back again".

If the plan was compared to a *house*, then the objection would be made against building it too high, lest the wind should blow it down. How shall we guard it against fire? how shall we secure it against robbers? and how shall we keep out rats and mice?

If it was likened to a *ship*, then it would be asked, how shall we guard it against leaking? how shall we prevent it from running on the rocks and quicksands?

Sometimes it would be compared to a *clock*, then the question was, how shall we secure the pendulum, the wheels and the balance from rust? who shall keep the key, and who shall we trust to wind it up?

Sometimes it was represented by a *purse*, and then it was said to be dangerous to let any one hold the strings. Money is a tempting object, and the best men are liable to be corrupted.

In short, the whole sum and substance of the arguments against it might be summed up in one word—JEALOUSY.

To shew the futility of these arguments it was observed by the opposite party, that it was impossible to put it into any man's power to do you good, without, at the same time, putting it into his power to do you hurt. If you trust a barber to shave you beard, you put it into his power to cut your throat. If you trust a baker to make your bread, or a cook to dress your meat, you put it into the power of each to poison you; nay, if you venture to lie in the same bed with your wife, you put it into her power to choak you when you are asleep. Shall we therefore let our beards grow till they are long enough to put into our pockets, because we are afraid of the barber? Shall