



New
Direction

Henry St. John Bolingbroke
**ON PATRIOTISM,
PARTIES, AND
IDEA OF A
PATRIOT KING**



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On Patriotism, Parties, and Idea of a Patriot King



Letter on the spirit of patriotism, reprinted from
*Letters, on the spirit of patriotism, on the idea of a patriot king, and on the state of parties,
at the accession of King George the First*, London 1749

The Idea of a Patriot King, reprinted from
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Of the state of parties at the accession of King George The First, reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 2, Philadelphia 1841

Dissertation upon Parties [Letters I, X, XIII, XVI], reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 2, Philadelphia 1841

On good and bad ministers, reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1841

On the power of the prince, and the freedom of the people, reprinted from
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New Direction

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INTRODUCTION

Tomasz Poręba MEP

Conservatism is primarily associated with opposition to sudden political changes. Such an image is undoubtedly influenced by the fact that its origins, as a separate ideological-political trend, are commonly sought in the actions against the slogans and practices of the French Revolution of 1789, especially in the criticism of the radicalization of revolutionary governments after they were taken over by the Jacobins. Indeed, it was then that with both great talent and extraordinary power of persuasion, the revolutionary theories and practices were attacked by high-class thinkers, like Edmund Burke, Joseph de Maistre, and Louis de Bonald, who laid the foundations for a conservative reflection on reality. Since then, conservatism has been recognized – although for this reason it is assessed in different ways – as the most expressive alternative to radicalism striving to destroy the existing orders, and to the abstract political and social theories ignoring both tradition and experience advocated by radicals. Nonetheless, this is far too narrow a view of what conservatism is and what role it can and should play. Not only in times of revolutions or other disturbances and violent upheavals political community finds useful the conservative moderation, protection of traditional, evolutionarily developed customs, local colour and diversity – and the common sense associated with these values. Even in times of stability, when there are no signs of major threats to the current order, it is worthwhile to prophylactically protect what is valuable. After all, it is better to avoid acute crises than to fight them later.

But it is also a mistake to equate conservatism only with reluctance to change or defending a given *status quo*. Such an understanding would lead to the conclusion that conservatives should protect also the orders that are fully non-conservative as well as threatening to all which conservatives consider valuable in politics, culture or social life. There are situations when a conservative must even be focused on a thorough change of the *status quo*, although carried out with appropriate caution and the awareness of his own limitations, which his opponents often lack. It is not worth defending a given state of affairs at all costs, if there are elements which need improving. Neither does it make sense to idealize the past by force. Though, it is always worth drawing conclusions from it. The legacy of the conservative thought of the past centuries gives a lot of room for expression here, and can still become an excellent inspiration in dealing with the current dilemmas.

Conservatives are facing many such challenges and dilemmas in the present times. In many countries of the Western world, they are pushed to the margins of both political and intellectual life, and those who wish to place them there transform reality in a way that not only disregards the lessons of the past, but is directly dangerous to the harmony of freedom and order, without which the continued successful development of political communities would be difficult. Political correctness certainly limits the freedom of public debate. Opinions, until recently treated as ordinary voices in a discussion, are now stigmatized as inappropriate. Those who preach them not only face ruthless criticism, but often are eradicated from many media, including those introducing themselves as objective and pluralistic. There are attempts to marginalize them also in the academia. The arbitrariness of solutions enforced by the political ‘mainstream’ is often clearly visible also within the European Union, the evolution of which towards left-liberalism is legitimately causing concern among conservative circles. At the same time, the crisis currently affecting the Western world increases the risk of growing popularity of various radical ideas, in facing which this political ‘mainstream’ and its media are either helpless or even naively favourable. In such a situation, conservatives must present a clear alternative to these trends and phenomena – which they need to try to consistently promote and implement wherever possible.

Old conservative books do not contain ready-made solutions on how to deal with these modern threats. To the modern reader, who wishes to find recipes for now, this lack of simple answers may seem disappointing. A conservative, however, if he has learnt well the lessons of the classics of conservatism, is perfectly aware that as the political, cultural, and social conditions change, various political forms gain or lose their value. Therefore, both the dogmatic attachment to certain solutions or the imposition of them on countries and nations that have followed a different path is often a dangerous mistake. On the other hand, a conservative should look for inspiration in the heritage of conservative thought as well as treat it as a great lesson in political thinking. He should also popularize this heritage in order to combat the long-lingering myth that there is no alternative to left-liberal ideas that have largely dominated the political and academic ‘mainstream’ of the Western world.

Based on this belief, New Direction – The Foundation for European Reform of Brussels and the Centre for Political Thought of Krakow undertook the initiative to publish selections of the classics of conservative thought. It includes diverse authors who took different positions on many issues. As this is how conservatism has always been – also before the French Revolution when it was still unnamed. It always drew on different national traditions, emphasized various principles, and referred to various practical experiences. In order to better understand the nature of politics and the cultural processes taking place before our eyes, it is precisely this ambiguity and the wealth of experiences captured by the classics of conservative thought that can be especially inspiring. And it is exactly this decent, reasonable inspiration which, among other things, the Western world needs so very much right now.

PREFACE

Maciej Zakrzewski

Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke was very much a product of his times, of their paradoxes and illogicalities, which the modern mind finds so difficult to comprehend. It remains an ongoing question – one that has no actual answer – whether Bolingbroke can be qualified as conservative. It is not only a matter of chronology – his political activity took place in the pre-revolutionary, and thus somehow also pre-conservative times. It is rather a matter of Bolingbroke’s Enlightenment intellectual formation that was so much deplored by Burke himself. However, it would be prudent not to make hasty judgment and to remember Russell Kirk’s observation that *conscious conservatism, in the modern sense, did not manifest itself until 1790, with the publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France. In that year the prophetic powers of Burke fixed in the public consciousness, for the first time, the opposing poles of conservation and innovation*⁽¹⁾. Bolingbroke represents the world that has not been shaken yet by the revolution (in that respect he is not unlike David Hume – an Enlightenment deist and a funder of philosophical concepts that were important for conservatism); he is the philosopher of Enlightenment of its skeptical, not its utopian, “let’s fix the world” branch. More importantly, Bolingbroke is first and foremost a English thinker, whose ideas are inextricably tied to contemporary debates and heated arguments about the right form of English constitution.

(1) Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Eliot* (Washington, 2001, 7th edition), p. 6.

Bolingbroke was born at Lydiard Tregoze in 1678 – a decade before the Glorious Revolution and at the time, when the whole country was animated by the Popish Plot, an alleged Catholic conspiracy against King Charles II. Those events were emblematic of the divides growing in the late Stuart England. On the one hand, there existed a religious conflict – not only in its traditional Catholics vs Protestants form, but also a disagreement between supporters of the established Anglican Church and dissenters, whom the former accused of republican sympathies. On the other hand, there was a matter of developing a suitable constitutional framework for Britain. Although in 1660 a hereditary monarchy, independent of the parliament, was re-established, interpreting the traditional royal prerogative in the new socio-political circumstances was still a work in progress. The country the Stuarts returned to in the 1660s was different from the country they had left in the 1640s; it was impossible to recover the pre-Cromwellian monarchy and it was still unknown how the post-Cromwellian monarchy would look like. Furthermore, the efforts undertaken in the years 1679-1681 to exclude King Charles's brother and an heir apparent, James, Duke of York, from the succession, on the grounds of his Catholicism, became an origin of new divisions. This political episode, known as the Exclusion Crisis, has given rise to the future Whig and Tory parties. While the former actively oppose the Duke of York, the latter defended the principle of hereditary succession. Importantly, the emergence of two antagonistic sides was not tantamount with the development of consistent political factions, as apart from the whig-tory line, politics were significantly influenced by a court and country party cross-division. The court party consisted of elite politicians – whigs and tories alike – who were closely connected to the court (usually through the offices they held), whereas a substantial number of the crown-independent MPs (usually distrustful of the pragmatic ministers) powered the ranks of the country party. It is important to remember that until the rule of the Hanoverian dynasty, there was no one-party cabinet; the administration leaned one way or another – depending on the current majority in the parliament – but the king or the queen was free to choose people to work with from among the whigs and the tories at his/her will.

This instability of the party system has generated a great debate among historians, who tried to establish which division line (tories – whigs or court – country party) was most important. While Lewis Namier gave precedence to the court – country party division, John H. Plumb argued for the primacy of the tory - whig distinction⁽²⁾. In turn, Robert Walcott suggested the cross-divisional classification: whig country, whig court, country tory and court tory. Moreover, he added to this structure a layer of factions, which operated (and often alternated) within particular segments, thus offering a fluid multi-polar model of political affiliation⁽³⁾. In truth, Walcott's model reconciles the approaches to the matter rather than settles it, yet it undoubtedly helps to illuminate the nature of the contemporaneous political structure.

Leaving the historians' debates aside, it is an unquestionable fact that St John entered a highly antagonized and volatile political scene, at times when the lack of prudence could be punished by death, exile or imprisonment. Henry St John took a parliamentary seat in 1701 and – going against the family political traditions – quickly associated himself with radical tories. The most fruitful years of the young, ambitious politician began with the accession to the throne of Anne Stuart, who sympathized with the tories. In time, St John shifted from the tory “right” towards the tory court party, built around Robert Harley, Sidney Godolphin, and John, Duke of Marlborough⁽⁴⁾. The duke's spectacular defeat of the French army at Blenheim (1704) during the War of the Spanish Succession gave a strong boost to the new administration. However, the triumvirate of Marlborough, Godolphin, and Harley was hardly unified and the latter soon came to dominate his political associates. Harley's steps against increasingly whig-leaning Marlborough and Godolphin proved to be counterproductive and resulted in his resignation in 1708. This event affected St John's career as well – a supporter of Harley, he decided

(2) J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675–1725* (London, 1967), p. 130.

(3) Robert Walcott, “The Idea of Party in the Writing of Later Stuart History”, *The Journal of British Studies*, 2 (1962), p. 57.

(4) According to Dickinson, this shift began in January 1704 - H. T. Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London, 1970), p. 35.

to follow Harley's lead and gave up his post of secretary at war.⁽⁵⁾ The cold shoulder offered to him by the party in consequence as well as his failed re-election excluded St John from the mainstream politics for two years. However, his fate changed in 1710, when Queen Anne in conjunction with Harley launched a political attack. As a result, Godolphin fell from power, Harley took over as chancellor of the exchequer, whereas St John became secretary of state⁽⁶⁾. The years of political prosperity followed. In 1712, St John was made Viscount Bolingbroke; soon he led the peace negotiations with France and was one of the architects of the treaty of Utrecht. Moreover, he has been gaining Queen Anne's trust and started to build his own political faction, supported by, among others, William Wyndham and John Stonehouse. The harmonious cooperation with Robert Harley (earl of Oxford and lord treasurer since 1711) was long gone by then, replaced with a bitter rivalry. In 1714, Bolingbroke won Queen Anne's favor and led to the dismissal of lord treasurer, however he was unsuccessful in replacing Oxford in this position due to the Queen's death. Her death meant also a demise of Bolingbroke's political plans, as following the Act of Settlement (1701) the crown was to be succeeded by the Hanoverian dynasty, which, incidentally, favored the whigs. Bolingbroke expressed his disappointment in the letter to Jonathan Swift: *Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday, the Queen died on Sunday...That's life and how it kicks us around*⁽⁷⁾. Soon he was dismissed and in March 1715, fearing an arrest, he fled to France. After several months of waiting and probing the situation in Britain, Bolingbroke decided to join the side of the Pretender; he accepted the earldom from him and agreed to be the Pretender's secretary of state. In the meantime, in England by an act of attainder he was condemned to death and lost both his estates and his title⁽⁸⁾.

(5) *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 72.

(7) Jerzy Zdziśław Kędzierski, *Dzieje Anglii* (Wrocław, 1986), Vol. I, p. 305.

(8) George Wingrove Cooke, *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke* (London, 1835), Vol. I, p. 354; Thomas Macknight, *The Life of Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, Secretary of State in the Reign of Queen Anne* (London, 1863), p. 448.

Bolingbroke's association with the Jacobite cause was short-lived, yet had long-term consequences. In truth, the Stuarts' prospects of recovering the British crown in the first half of 1715 were not entirely bleak – even during the reign of Queen Anne many prominent tory politicians remained in touch with the court at Saint Germain en Laye, moreover, the openly pro-whig politics of Georg Ludwig, then the Elector of Hanover and Queen Anne's heir presumptive, enhanced a chance of winning over parts of the nobility and aristocracy. Importantly, the Jacobite cause was supported by King Louis XIV. The situation had changed dramatically in the fall of 1715. Firstly, after the death of King Louis XIV, power in France fell into the hands of Philippe, Duke of Orléans; unlike the late king, the regent saw the current government of Great Britain as an ally rather than an opponent. The French support of the Jacobites has *de facto* ceased to exist and the rising – in the face of half-baked preparations of the English Jacobites – could rely exclusively on the Scots⁽⁹⁾. According to Bolingbroke, the Scottish forces were insufficient to carry out and he advised against the uprising. Nonetheless, on 6 September the uprising broke up – only to end in an utter defeat several months later and to confirm the accusations of Jacobitism against the tories. Following the failed uprising, there came the usual process of looking for the scapegoat and Bolingbroke – unjustly – was held responsible⁽¹⁰⁾. Consequently, in March 1716 Bolingbroke was dismissed from the office; in the atmosphere of mutual accusations, he broke off relations with the Pretender's camp.

While in France, Bolingbroke entered leading intellectual salons of Paris. Pierre Alary introduced him to history, Lévesque de Pouilly showed him mathematics and philosophy; he got to know Abbé Asselin, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Brook Taylor, an English mathematician.⁽¹¹⁾ Despite developing an interest in science and philosophy, Bolingbroke had no intention of giving up politics. Shortly after the break up with the Jacobites, Bolingbroke undertook industrious efforts to make his return to England possible. At the end of 1717 he completed *A Letter to*

(9) Walter Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times* (New York, 1968), Vol. 2, p. 40

(10) Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 142.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Sir William Wyndham, which was well received and has been praised as his best work even by his most severe critics⁽¹²⁾. In this work Bolingbroke attempted the assessment of his political activities; he defended the treaty of Utrecht, justified his actions after the Hanoverians' accession to the throne, attacked the Pretender, and argued for the tories' disengagement of the Stuarts' cause⁽¹³⁾. However, the matter of Bolingbroke's return met with difficulties. Although King George I soon agreed to his return, Bolingbroke's old opponents, the whigs (especially Robert Walpole⁽¹⁴⁾, whose position was becoming increasingly stronger), were far less sympathetic.

Ultimately, Bolingbroke was able to return to England without fearing for his life no sooner than in April 1723. In 1725, the parliament lifted almost all restrictions that had been imposed on him in 1715. However, Bolingbroke was banned from taking a seat in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords⁽¹⁵⁾ – this natural-born politician and schemer was apparently still too dangerous, so the whigs (the parliamentary majority at the time) decided to limit their opponent's activities.

However, though excluded from active politics, Bolingbroke was not politically passive. Shortly after his return, he launched a dynamic press campaign against the practices of Walpole's administration. Whereas it was impossible for Bolingbroke to become the leader of the opposition, he became committed to laying down its intellectual foundations. Together with William Pulteney he established *The Craftsman* – a newspaper that for a decade, since its first issue on 5 December 1726, acted as the chief tube of the opposition. As to Walpole, he was awarded the post of lord treasurer in 1721 and for the next twenty years he held full control over politics within Great Britain. Taking full advantage of the means at the government's disposal, he became the master of the parliament. Control over the parliament was of critical importance, as the political position

(12) J. M. Robertson, *Bolingbroke and Walpole* (London, 1919), p. 50.

(13) Please refer to the text included in this volume.

(14) Walpole's animosity may be better understood, if we remember that it was the tory government of Harley and St John that accused Walpole of corruption, impeached him and send him to Tower.

(15) J. H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole. The King's Minister* (London, 1960), pp. 125–126.

of lord treasurer at that time relied not only on the royal favor, but also on the House of Commons' support; from the monarch's perspective, it was vital for a politician to be able to obtain the parliament's approval for legislation as needed. And Walpole undoubtedly had a knack for that. Thanks to the clever office distribution, the sowing of discord, and also the employment of other forms of political corruption, he gained – and sustained – a dominant position in politics. Walpole and the system he had created was a force to reckon with and Bolingbroke directed all his efforts to create an opposition platform behind which the opposition, as of 1726, highly fragmented and divided into the multitude of tory and whig coterie, could unite⁽¹⁶⁾.

This was not an easy task. Bolingbroke – a former Jacobite – had to find a formula that would legitimize the opposition's resistance against the royal government led by Walpole without undermining the position of the king. Bolingbroke's solution was to differentiate between government and constitution; while the former's main responsibility was to administer public affairs, the latter was a collection of laws, customs and institutions etc⁽¹⁷⁾. Those who opposed the current government were not disloyal towards the constitution or its elements; on the contrary, it could happen that in order to discharge their duties to the constitution, they had to be disloyal to the current government⁽¹⁸⁾. Furthermore, Bolingbroke argued that the rule of the Hanoverian dynasty was safeguarded by a balanced constitution, thus to oppose a corrupt government was to act not against the king but for the king, seeing that it was precisely the corrupt government and its anti-constitutional actions that undermined the legitimacy of the king's title. Thus, Bolingbroke contributed to the future idea of legal opposition within the parliamentary system, but also to its British off-shoot – Her Majesty's opposition.

One of the stages of building this delicate construction was overcoming the barriers between the whigs and the tories. Bolingbroke

(16) Archibald Foord, *His Majesty's Opposition 1714–1830* (Westport, 1979), p. 117.

(17) Henry St. John Bolingbroke, *A Dissertation upon Parties* in Idem, *Political Writings*, edited by David Armitage (Cambridge, 1997), p. 88. Henceforth Bolingbroke, *Dissertation*.

(18) *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

focused on practical and historical aspects of the whig-tory division as well as on the relationship between the court and country parties. In order to understand clearly this analysis, it is necessary to define the fundamental terms: party and faction. Basically, Bolingbroke defined a party as a group of people *associated together for certain purposes, and certain interests*⁽¹⁹⁾. The more a party's objectives and interests align with objectives and interests of a nation, the more national character has this party; and reversely, whenever the interests of particular sets of people prevail, the essence of a country party is annihilated⁽²⁰⁾. This model was highly dynamic, yet it had two established reference points: a national party (country party) and a faction. On the one end of the spectrum Bolingbroke placed a country party, which actually should not be called a party any longer, as *it is the nation, speaking and acting in the discourse and conduct of particular men*⁽²¹⁾; whereas the opposite site was occupied by individual groups of interest, variably centered around the king, ministers or party leaders. The range between those poles included a complex structure of various groups swaying one way or another. Bolingbroke did not set a definitive division line between a party and a faction, but rather he pointed out various degrees of the party's degeneration. It is common for a country party to disintegrate and turn into a mix of factions. The first stage of the country party's degeneration is division into smaller parties (for instance, into whigs and tories). Each of these smaller parties claims to represent the whole nation, yet in truth, each one of them offers only a particular version of the constitution and gradually narrows down its objectives and interests and ultimately, instead of being a voice of the nation, it becomes a voice of a very small group of people. Alternatively, a faction emerges not as a result of the party's disintegration, but of consolidation – following individuals' alliance with the court. Indeed, according to Bolingbroke, the court party was a faction in the strict sense of the word⁽²²⁾. While

(19) Henry St. John Bolingbroke, *The Idea of a Patriot King* in Idem, *Political Writings*, p. 258. Henceforth, *The Idea of a Patriot King*. Please refer also to the text included in this volume.

(20) Bolingbroke, *Dissertation*, pp. 6, 8.

(21) *Ibid.*, p. 37.

(22) *Ibid.*, p. 39.

a country party was always guided by the wise and moderate “spirit of the constitution”⁽²³⁾, “the spirit of faction” is of a very different nature and takes the form of either irrationality (an innate characteristic of the masses)⁽²⁴⁾ or “a malicious genius”, epitomized by Robert Walpole and the Jacobites⁽²⁵⁾. In both cases, “the spirit of faction” provokes actions against the constitution, though in the first instance such anti-constitutional operations result from the emotions' domination over reason, while in the second case they are the consequence of intended manipulation.

Bolingbroke's efforts to consolidate the opposition proved to be effective. They reached the peak during the great debate on the excise legislation in 1733, when the combined efforts of the opposition and its media (with *The Craftsman* leading the way), undermined Walpole's control over the House of Commons and the House of Lords so much that the whigs temporarily lost the majority in the parliament; yet a quick change of tack and the recovery of influence saved Walpole. Still, the excise crisis was not without repercussions and the situation before the general election (1734) was difficult for Walpole. Once again, Bolingbroke took up his pen to fight against the prime minister. In October 1733, *The Craftsman* started to publish a series of articles entitled *A Dissertation upon Parties*. These articles aimed to remove all remaining obstacles in the path of the final reconciliation of whigs and tories and thus to make the cooperation within the opposition easier. In order to achieve it, Bolingbroke broke up with the established tory tradition and pledged allegiance to the principles of the Glorious Revolution, which he recognized as the national legacy. There remained only one relevant political division – a distinction between the court party (currently in service of the ambitious minister rather than Her Majesty) and the country party – defenders of the ancient constitution. Ultimately, despite favorable circumstances and a few significant victories, the opposition's hopes

(23) *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 188.

(24) *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 22, 37.

(25) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

for a major vote shift were not fulfilled and the whigs kept a secure majority in the House of Commons⁽²⁶⁾.

Subsequent failures of the opposition fostered its internal disintegration and prompted Bolingbroke's decision to return to France. This decision was very likely influenced also by Walpole, who found out that Bolingbroke had accepted the pension from the French court and was determined to use this information to demolish his political opponent's reputation⁽²⁷⁾.

Being consistent was not Bolingbroke's forte, so despite his declaration of parting with politics for good, he continued to influence the politics of his country, though less and less. In France he settled in Chanteloup, visiting Paris frequently, but later he moved to Agraville, near Fontainebleau. The sojourn in France was supposed to be a short one, but in the fall of 1735, while writing his *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, Bolingbroke decided to prolong his stay abroad.⁽²⁸⁾ He spent next 10 years in France and devoted himself to the studies of philosophy and history; in was the time when Bolingbroke wrote most of his vital works: *On the True Use of Retirement and Study*, *A Letter on Spirit of Patriotism*, and *The Idea of Patriot King*. He kept abreast of England's affairs via correspondence and receiving his friends, including Lord Chesterfield, Lord Marchmont, and Lord Essen; he also visited England himself several times (July 1738, April 1739, and brief trips in 1742 and 1743)⁽²⁹⁾.

Regardless the distance, Bolingbroke remained occupied with the affairs of England, to which *A Letter on Spirit of Patriotism* and *The Idea of Patriot King* (both included in this volume) were a clear testimony. They also shed light on his specific political projects.

Bolingbroke addressed *A Letter* to Lord Cornbury and other "boy patriots" (George Lyttelton, Lord Polwarth, Lord Cobham) – a group of young whig politicians who opposed the prime minister. He argued that the previous model of consolidating the opposition – based on the

(26) Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 245.

(27) *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 240–241.

(28) Rex A. Barrell, *Bolingbroke and France* (New York & London, 1988), pp. 33–34.

(29) Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 247.

country party – had proved to be unsuccessful. Therefore, he suggested an approach that emphasized the importance of professionalization; he also underlined the political virtue of aristocracy. *A Letter* included two important postulates. Firstly, Bolingbroke called for more than a mere removal of Walpole; it was necessary to get rid of the whole system of corruption that the prime minister had created in order to informally subordinate the parliament to the executive. Secondly, Bolingbroke advocated an organized and efficient opposition – analogous to the government it stood against. According to Bolingbroke:

They who affect to head an opposition, or to make any considerable figure in it, must be equal at least to those whom they oppose (...) Every administration is a system of conduct: opposition therefore, should be a system of conduct likewise: an opposite, but not a dependent system⁽³⁰⁾.

The prime minister's seat is not an element of the constitution; on the contrary – it is the constitution's political deformation against which the constitution is powerless, and the only way to eradicate this political deformation is to employ coordinated political measures allowed by the constitution. Walpole's government and the opposition are like two opposing armies⁽³¹⁾: one's victory will be decided by the level of their respective integrity and coordination, as well as by their diligence, intelligence, and the ability to anticipate possible challenges. Furthermore, when faced with the system of organized corruption, the opposition must act systematically⁽³²⁾.

In turn, *The Idea of a Patriot King* (1738) was a pamphlet addressed to Frederic, prince of Wales and the heir apparent around whom the opposition assembled after he had quarreled openly with his father in 1737. Bolingbroke counted on Prince Frederic to become a leader of a new renewal movement and envisaged him as the patriot king – the king who rules above political divides and who by his own example manages to restore the government of virtue – the very essence of the constitution. The treatise – like the *Remarks upon History of England* – was a mirror

(30) Henry St. John Bolingbroke, *On Spirit of Patriotism* in Idem, *Political Writings*, p. 215. Please refer also to the text included in this volume.

(31) *Ibid.*, p. 215.

(32) *Ibid.*

of princes, and while the *Remarks* showed the reign of Queen Elizabeth I as the example of the patriotic rule, *The Idea* foresaw the future rule of Prince Frederic as its model.

Notably, the patriot king was to be a restorer of the political virtue rather than a political reformer. Bolingbroke, similarly to Burke, praised the British political system for managing to keep after the Glorious Revolution a balance between authority and liberty. However, the proper functioning of this political system can be ensured only by the public virtue – the best guarantor of political stability as well as citizens’ liberty. In Bolingbroke’s assessment, had the citizens’ care about the state been sufficiently high, Walpole’s corruptive operations would have been futile. Unlike King James II, Walpole did not attack the constitution directly, but from the inside; he did not attack its form, but its spirit. However, in either case the consequence of such an attack is the same – slavery. To this the king patriot needs to put a stop. He is called to be a statesman ruling above the political factions, and as a supporter of “the spirit of liberty” he will be able to ground his authority in people instead of political cliques.

Bolingbroke imagined that the future king will not only act according to “the spirit of liberty”, but he will also revive it. His prime objective is to prevent a further destruction of the constitution, then he should strive to renew the public virtue – in the people and its leaders alike. Notably, Bolingbroke remained temperate in his planning – he did not believe that it was possible to preserve liberty by new laws and new schemes of government, while the corruption of the people continued to grow⁽³³⁾ – after all, perfect schemes are not adapted for the imperfect state⁽³⁴⁾. Instead, it was necessary to restore and preserve liberty under the laws that already existed, but had been abandoned by the members of society⁽³⁵⁾. The king could not succeed unless he took the right position within government – the position designed for him by the constitution. Bolingbroke proposed a model of governance that

(33) Bolingbroke, *The Idea of a Patriot King*, p. 250.

(34) *Ibid.*, p. 230.

(35) *Ibid.*, p. 250.

was substantially different from the way the first two Hanoverian kings exercised their power – it was because they played such a passive role in the current politics, the prime minister could be so active⁽³⁶⁾. In Bolingbroke’s model it was the king – the head of the executive – who led the politics carried out on his behalf. Immediately after ascending to the throne, the king should purge his court and remove those responsible for poor and abusive administration; by dismissing heads of “the system of corruption” he will already inaugurate the renewal of the spirit of constitution. Bolingbroke believed that *as soon as corruption cease to be an expedient of government, and it will cease to such as soon as a patriot king is raised to the throne, the panacea is applied*⁽³⁷⁾. Those two things: taking control over the government and replacing the corrupt ministers with the good ones, with people who will serve on the same principles on which the patriot-king intends to govern, were the key objectives of the patriot-king in Britain. Characteristically, Bolingbroke was short on practical details arguing that all the particular cases that could arise were included in the general characteristics of a wise and good reign⁽³⁸⁾.

Unification of the nation was to be the new king’s primary task. It required a distinctive approach towards parties and factions: *to espouse no party, but to govern like the common father of his people is so essential to the character of a patriot king*⁽³⁹⁾. Bolingbroke advanced this patriarchal argument elsewhere stating that *the true image of a free people, governed by a patriot king, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit*⁽⁴⁰⁾. In a word – the king should differentiate between being the head of the commonwealth and the party leader.

The death of Frederic Louis in 1751 dashed Bolingbroke’s hopes for seeing the patriot-king on the throne. However, his dream of Walpole’s political fall was realized – after almost two decades of domination, the prime minister lost control over the House of Commons and following

(36) *Ibid.*, p. 252

(37) *Ibid.*, p. 251.

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 273.

(39) *Ibid.*, p. 257.

(40) *Ibid.*, p. 258.

a series of the lost votes he resigned in February 1742. Yet Bolingbroke received the news without enthusiasm, as he observed that the system of political corruption persisted and Walpole's successors continued to use it for their own particular interests. Bolingbroke returned to England in 1743 and although he was instrumental in overthrowing the administration of Lord Carteret in 1744, his political career came to an end. He died in oblivion in Battersea on 12 December 1751.

Bolingbroke's legacy has been a subject-matter of continuous examination and dispute. He has been identified as the true author of the theory of separation of power (later formulated by Montesquieu) and as the inspirer of policies – of King George III as much as of the American colonists fighting for their rights within the British Empire.⁽⁴¹⁾ He was not appreciated by the next generations of Tories, prejudiced by Burke's vicious anti-Bolingbroke campaign, with the exception of Benjamin Disraeli – a great admirer of Bolingbroke.

Bolingbroke's writings can be assessed from two different perspectives – either as the works written by a proponent of the Enlightenment or by a theorist of government. Bolingbroke was a representative of the earlier phase of the Enlightenment; a friend of Voltaire and Montesquieu, he was skeptical about organized religion and the Bible as the revealed word of God, but he was far from being revolutionary. He remained a supporter of the moderate, aristocratic, deistic form of the Enlightenment, even after the Enlightenment had moved into its more radical stage (opposed so strongly by Burke). Subsequent events have led to the reevaluation of the works written in that period (on par with Bolingbroke's historical and political writings in terms of scope) and can be seen at present as an interesting, if rococo, ornament of the epoch; the symbol of the world looked at through the lens of Leibnizian optimism, when history has not yet regained momentum. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 shook this optimism and gave ground for the idea of cumulative progress. Bolingbroke was a representative of the old, naïve but pragmatic form of the Enlightenment.

(41) Cf. Robert Shackleton, 'Montesquieu, Bolingbroke, and the Separation of Powers', *French Studies*, 3/1 (1949), pp. 25-38; William Liddle, 'A Patriot King, or None': Lord Bolingbroke and the American Renunciation of George III', *The Journal of American History*, 65/4 (1979); pp. 951-970.

The achievements of Bolingbroke – the political theoretician seem to be far more interesting. He saw in action (and sometimes authored) many common institutions that were critical for British parliamentarism. He was one of the first who proposed a modern theory of political opposition (not any longer defined in terms of resistance) and the originator of the concepts of "the Shadow Cabinet" and "Her Majesty's Opposition". Crucially, he correctly diagnosed problems of constitutional balance, especially those deriving from the development of parties and of the office of "prime minister" (and he was an eyewitness to the career of Robert Walpole – the first prime minister in Europe in the modern sense). Unlike so many people today, Bolingbroke noticed the conflict between the principle of separation of powers and party rule. In his opinion, parties – driven by their interests – created networks that undermined the very essence of both the legislature and the executive. Unlike Montesquieu, Bolingbroke more fully appreciated the problem of the monarch's position – Montesquieu could well encourage the king to play an active role as the head of the executive, but about the monarch who prefers "reigning" over "governing"?

How are Bolingbroke's ideas relevant to us today? Can they be understood by contemporaries, whether citizens or politicians? Of all his observations probably the most important today is his critique of political parties, especially considering the fact that their tendency to dominate the state and put the party interest first seem to characterize parties in general – regardless the time. It is worth remembering that modern political parties have just started to emerge in Bolingbroke's times, somehow buffered by the monarchical system, and although they were not free of demagoguery, it was still the elite who were in charge of politics; political groups operated as a natural element of local communities, corporations, and networks. Nowadays, when the concept of local communities has been getting forgotten, the public sphere became dominated by political parties disconnected from their original social base; instead parties turned into media-demagogic corporations of wizards who specialize in taking over and keeping power. Present-day politics feature almost all aberrations that Bolingbroke laid at Walpole's door; more than that – they are common enough to be considered natural and accepted; while in the eyes of Bolingbroke obtaining the political

support via the office distribution was corruption, in today's politics it constitutes a regular element of gameplay – the gameplay that makes the state a party's hostage.

Unlike Bolingbroke, we cannot imagine the existence of politics without parties; yet like Bolingbroke, we could benefit from remembering the key distinction between “the party's interest” and “the state's interest” – after all, that is what separates “a faction” from “a country party”. Bolingbroke remains one of the chief proponents of the idea of modern state harmonizing internal strife for the sake of common good. In his opinion, the way to manifest one's patriotism was not by participating in angry public protests, but by restraining one's hunger for power – a difficult art indeed. Like so many great statesmen, Bolingbroke believed that the party's hold on power is transitory, whereas the state's power (that is the power of its institutions) should be perpetual.

Presently, when various ideological conflicts – this rich fodder for hyper-partysim – tear apart European countries, Bolingbroke reminds us that when it comes to the state, there exist some fundamental values, which should be fortified and protected; he reminds us that the state is not a public booty for demanding masses or ambitious leaders to grab, but it is the commonwealth; not an object to be exploited for private gain, but, first and foremost, our shared responsibility.

Translated by
Martyna Mirecka

Henry St. John Bolingbroke

On Patriotism, Parties, and Idea of a Patriot King



Letter on the spirit of patriotism, reprinted from
*Letters, on the spirit of patriotism, on the idea of a patriot king, and on the state of parties,
at the accession of King George the First*, London 1749

The Idea of a Patriot King, reprinted from
*Letters, on the spirit of patriotism, on the idea of a patriot king, and on the state of parties,
at the accession of King George the First*, London 1749

Of the state of parties at the accession of King George The First, reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 2, Philadelphia 1841

Dissertation upon Parties [Letters I, X, XIII, XVI], reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 2, Philadelphia 1841

On good and bad ministers, reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1841

On the power of the prince, and the freedom of the people, reprinted from
The works of Lord Bolingbroke: with a life, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1841

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MMXX

**LETTER ON THE
SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM**

My Lord,

You have engaged me on a subject which interrupts the series of those letters I was writing to you; but it is one, which, I confess, I have very much at heart. I shall therefore explain myself fully, nor blush to reason on principles that are out of fashion among men, who intend nothing by serving the public, but to feed their avarice, their vanity, and their luxury, without the sense of any duty they owe to God or man.

It seems to me, that in order to maintain the moral system of the world at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection (for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining), but however sufficient upon the whole to constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst tolerable: I say, it seems to me, that the author of nature has thought fit to mingle from time to time, among the societies of men, a few, and but a few of those, on whom he is graciously pleased to bestow a larger proportion of the ethereal spirit than is given in the ordinary course of his providence to the sons of men. These are they who engross almost the whole reason of the species, who are born to instruct, to guide, and to preserve; who are designed to be the tutors and the guardians of human kind. When they prove such, they exhibit to us examples of the highest virtue, and the truest piety: and they desire to have their festivals kept, instead of that pack of *Anchorites* and *Enthusiasts*, with whose names the calendar is crowded and disgraced. When these men apply their talents to other purposes, when they strive to be great and despise being good, they commit a most sacrilegious breach of trust; they pervert the means, they defeat as far as lies in them the designs of providence, and disturb in some sort the system of infinite wisdom. To misapply these talents is the most diffused, and therefore the greatest of crimes in its nature and consequence; but to keep them unexerted, and unemployed, is a crime too. Look about you, my Lord, from the palace to the cottage; you will find that the bulk of mankind is made to breathe the air of this atmosphere, to roam about this globe, and to consume, like the courtiers of *Alcinous*, the fruits of the earth. *Nos numerus sumus et fruges consumere nati*. When they have trod this insipid round a certain number of years, and begot others to do the same after them, they have lived; and if they have performed, in some tolerable degree, the ordinary moral duties of life, they have done all they were born to do. Look about you

again, my Lord, nay look into your own breast, and you will find that there are superior spirits, men who show even from their infancy, though it be not always perceived by others, perhaps not always felt by themselves, that they were born for something more, and better. These are the men to whom the part I mentioned is assigned. Their talents denote their general designation; and the opportunities of conforming themselves to it, that arise in the course of things, or that are presented to them by any circumstances of rank and situation in the society to which they belong, denote the particular vocation which it is not lawful for them to resist, nor even to neglect. The duration of the lives of such men as these is to be determined, I think, by the length and importance of the parts they act, not by the number of years that pass between their coming into the world, and their going out of it. Whether the piece be of three, or of five acts, the part may be long: and he who sustains it through the whole may be said to die in the fullness of years; whilst he, who declines it sooner, may be said not to live out half his days.

I have sometimes represented to myself the vulgar, who are accidentally distinguished by the titles of king and subject, of lord and vassal, of noblemen and peasant; and the few who are distinguished by nature so essentially from the herd of mankind, that (figure apart) they seem to be of another species, in this manner. The former come into the world and continue in it like Dutch travellers in a foreign country. Everything they meet has the grace of novelty: and they are fond alike of everything that is new. They wander about from one object to another, of vain curiosity, or inelegant pleasure. If they are industrious, they show their industry in copying signs, and collecting mottoes and epitaphs. They loiter, or they trifle away their whole time: and their presence or their absence would be equally unperceived, if caprice or accident did not raise them often to stations, wherein their stupidity, their vices, or their follies, make them a public misfortune. The latter come into the world, or at least continue in it after the effects of surprise and inexperience are over, like men who are sent on more important errands. They observe with distinction, they admire with knowledge. They may indulge themselves in pleasure; but as their industry is not employed about trifles, so their amusements are not made the business of their lives. Such men cannot pass unperceived through a country. If they retire from

the world, their splendour accompanies them, and enlightens even the obscurity of their retreat. If they take part in public life, the effect is never indifferent. They either appear like ministers of divine vengeance, and their course through the world is marked by desolation and oppression, by poverty and servitude: or they are the guardian angels of the country they inhabit, busy to avert even the most distant evil, and to maintain or to procure peace, plenty, and the greatest of human blessings, liberty.

From the observation, that superiority of parts is often employed to do superior mischief, no consequence can be drawn against the truth I endeavour to establish. Reason collects the will of God from the constitution of things, in this as in other cases; but in no case does the divine power impel us necessarily to conform ourselves to this will: and therefore from the misapplication of superior parts to the hurt, no argument can be drawn against this position, that they were given for the good of mankind. Reason deceives us not: we deceive ourselves and suffer our wills to be determined by other motives. Montaigne or Charron would say, *'l'homme se pipe'* 'man is at once his own sharper, and his own bubble'. Human nature is her own bawd, says Tully, *blanda conciliatrix et quasi lena sui*. He who considers the universal wants, imperfections, and vices of his kind, must agree that men were intended not only for society, but to unite in commonwealths, and to submit to laws. *Legum idcirco omnes servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus*. And yet this very man will be seduced by his own passions, or the passions and examples of others, to think, or to act as if he thought, the very contrary. So he who is conscious of superior endowments, such as render him more capable than the generality of men to secure and improve the advantages of social life, by preserving the commonwealth in strength and splendour, even he may be seduced to think, or to act as if he thought, that these endowments were given to him for the gratification of his ambition, and his other passions; and that there is no difference between vice and virtue, between a knave and an honest man, but one which a prince, who died not many years ago, asserted, 'that men of great sense were therefore knaves, and men of little sense were therefore honest'. But in neither of these cases will the truth and reason of things be altered, by such examples of human frailty. It will be still true, and reason will still demonstrate, that all men are directed, by the general constitution of human nature, to submit to

government; and that some men are in a particular manner designed to take care of that government on which common happiness depends. The use that reason will make of such examples will be only this, that since men are so apt, in every form of life and every degree of understanding, to act against their interest and their duty too, without benevolence to mankind, or regard to the divine will, it is more incumbent on those who have this benevolence and this regard at heart, to employ all the means that the nature of government allows, and that rank, circumstances of situation, or superiority of talents, give them, to oppose evil, and promote good government; and contribute thus to preserve the moral system of the world, at that point of imperfection at least, which seems to have been prescribed to it by the great creator of every system of beings.

Give me leave now, my Lord, to cast my eyes for a moment homeward, and to apply what I have been saying to the present state of *Britain*. That there is no profusion of the ethereal spirit to be observed among us, and that we do not abound with men of superior genius, I am ready to confess; but I think there is no ground for the complaints I have heard made, as if nature had not done her part in our age, as well as in former ages, by producing men capable of serving the commonwealth. The manners of our forefathers were, I believe, in many respects better: they had more probity perhaps, they had certainly more show of honour, and greater industry. But still nature sows alike, though we do not reap alike. There are, and as there always have been, there always will be such creatures in government as I have described above. Fortune maintains a kind of rivalry with wisdom and piques herself often in favour of fools as well as knaves. Socrates used to say, that although no man undertakes a trade he has not learned, even the meanest; yet everyone thinks himself sufficiently qualified for the hardest of all trades, that of government. He said this upon the experience he had in *Greece*. He would not change his opinion if he lived now in *Britain*. But however, such characters as these would do little hurt, generally speaking, or would not do it long, if they stood alone. To do great hurt, some genius, some knowledge, some talents in short, natural or acquired, are necessary: less indeed, far less than are required to do good, but always some. Yet I imagine, not the worst minister could do all the mischief he does by the misapplication

of his talents alone, if it were not for the misapplication of much better talents than his by some who join with him, and the non-application, or the faint and unsteady exercise of their talents by some who oppose him; as well as the general remissness of mankind in acquiring knowledge, and in improving the parts which God has given them for the service of the public. These are the great springs of national misfortunes. There have been monsters in other ages, and other countries, as well as ours; but they have never continued their devastations long, when there were heroes to oppose them. We will suppose a man imprudent, rash, presumptuous, ungracious, insolent, and profligate, in speculation as well as practice. He can bribe, but he cannot seduce; he can buy, but he cannot gain; he can lie, but he cannot deceive. From whence then has such a man his strength? From the general corruption of the people, nursed up to a full maturity under his administration; from the venality of all orders and all ranks of men, some of whom are so prostitute, that they set themselves to sale, and even prevent application? This would be the answer, and it would be a true one as far as it goes; but it does not account for the whole. Corruption could not spread with so much success, though reduced into system; and though some ministers, with equal impudence and folly, avowed it by themselves and their advocates, to be the principal expedient by which they governed, if a long and almost unobserved progression of causes and effects, did not prepare the conjuncture. Let me explain it and apply it, as I conceive it. One party had given their whole attention, during several years, to the project of enriching themselves, and impoverishing the rest of the nation; and, by these and other means, of establishing their dominion under the government and with the favour of a family, who were foreigners, and therefore might believe, that they were established on the throne by the goodwill and strength of this party alone. This party in general were so intent on these views, and many of them, I fear, are so still, that they did not advert in time to the necessary consequences of the measures they abetted; nor did they consider, that the power they raised, and by which they hoped to govern their country, would govern them with the very rod of iron they forged, and would be the power of a prince or minister, not that of a party. Another party continued sour, sullen, and inactive, with judgments so weak, and passions so strong, that even experience,

and a severe one surely, was lost upon them. They waited, like the *Jews*, for a *Messiah*, that may never come; and under whom, if he did come, they would be strangely disappointed in their expectations of glory and triumph, and universal dominion. Whilst they waited, they were marked out like the *Jews*, a distinct race, hewers of wood and drawers of water, scarce members of the community, though born in the country. All indifferent men stood as it were at a gaze: and the few, who were jealous of the court, were still more jealous of one another; so that a strength sufficient to oppose bad ministers was not easy to be formed. When this strength was formed, and the insufficiency or iniquity of the administration was daily exposed to public view, many adhered at first to the minister, and others were since gained to his cause, because they knew nothing of the constitution of their own, nor of the history of other countries; but imagined wildly, that things always went as they saw them go, and that liberty has been, and therefore may be preserved under the influence of the same corruption. Others perhaps were weak enough to be frightened at first, as some are hypocritical enough to pretend to be still, with the appellations of Tory and Jacobite, which are always ridiculously given to every man who does not bow to the brazen image that the King has set up. Others again might be persuaded, that no fatal use at least would be made of the power acquired by corruption; and men of superior parts might and may still flatter themselves, that if this power should be so employed, they shall have time and means to stop the effects of it. The first of these are seduced by their ignorance and futility; the second, if they are not hypocrites, by their prejudices; the third, by their partiality and blind confidence; the last, by their presumptions; and all of them by the mammon of unrighteousness, their private interest, which they endeavour to palliate and to reconcile as well as they can to that of the public: *et caeca cupiditate corrupti, non intelligunt se, dum vendant, et venire.*

According to this representation, which I take to be true, your Lordship will agree that our unfortunate country affords an example in proof of what is asserted above. The *Dutch* travellers I spoke of, men of the ordinary, or below the ordinary size of understanding, though they are called by caprice, or lifted any other way into power, cannot do great and long mischief, in a country of liberty; unless men of genius, knowledge, and

experience, misapply these talents, and become their leaders. A ministerial faction would have as little ability to do hurt, as they have inclination to do good, if they were not formed and conducted by one of better parts than they: nor would such a minister be able to support, at the head of this trusty phalanx, the ignominious tyranny imposed on his country, if other men, of better parts and much more consequence than himself, were not drawn in to misapply these parts to the vilest drudgery imaginable; the daily drudgery of explaining nonsense, covering ignorance, disguising folly, concealing and even justifying fraud and corruption; instead of employing their knowledge, their elocution, their skill, experience, and authority, to correct the administration and to guard the constitution. But this is not all: the example shows a great deal more. Your Lordship's experience as well as mine will justify what I am going to say. It shows further, that such a conjuncture could not be rendered effectual to preserve power in some of the weakest and some of the worst hands in the kingdom, if there was not a non-application, or a faint and unsteady exercise of parts on one side, as well as an iniquitous misapplication of them on the other: and I cannot help saying, let it fall where it will, what I have said perhaps already, that the former is a crime but one degree inferior to the latter. The more genius, industry, and spirit are employed to destroy, the harder the task of saving our country becomes; but the duty increases with the difficulty, if the principles on which I reason are true. In such exigencies it is not enough that genius be opposed to genius, *spirit* must be matched by *spirit*. They, who go about to destroy, are animated from the first by ambition and avarice, the love of power and money: fear makes them often desperate at last. They must be opposed therefore, or they will be opposed in vain, by a spirit able to cope with ambition, avarice, and despair itself: by a spirit able to cope with these passions, when they are favoured and fortified by the weakness of a nation, and the strength of a government. In such exigencies there is little difference, as to the merit or the effect, between opposing faintly and unsteadily, and not opposing at all: nay the former may be of worse consequence in certain circumstances than the latter. And this is a truth I wish with all my heart you may not see verified in our country, where many, I fear, undertake opposition not as a duty, but as an *adventure*: and looking on themselves like volunteers, not like men listed in the service, they deem themselves at liberty to take as much or

as little of this trouble, and to continue in it as long, or end it as soon as they please. It is but a few years ago, that not the merchants alone, but the whole nation, took fire at the project of new excises. The project was opposed, not on mercantile considerations and interests alone, but on the true principles of liberty. In Parliament, the opposition was strenuously enough supported for a time; but there was so little disposition to guide and improve the spirit, that the chief concern of those who took the lead seemed applied to keep it down; and yet your Lordship remembers how high it continued against the projector; till it was calmed just before the elections of the present Parliament, by the remarkable indolence and inactivity of the last session of the last Parliament. But these friends of ours, my Lord, are as much mistaken in their ethics, as the event will show they have been in their politics.

The service of our country is no chimerical, but a real duty. He who admits the proofs of any other moral duty, drawn from the constitution of human nature, or from the moral fitness and unfitness of things, must admit them in favour of this duty, or be reduced to the most absurd inconsistency. When he has once admitted the duty on these proofs, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate to him, that his obligation to the performance of it is in proportion to the means and the opportunities he has of performing it; and that nothing can discharge him from this obligation as long as he has these means and these opportunities in his power, and as long as his country continues in the same want of his services. These obligations then to public service may become obligations for life on certain persons. No doubt they may: and shall this consideration become a reason for denying or evading them? On the contrary, sure it should become a reason for acknowledging and fulfilling them, with the greatest gratitude to the Supreme Being, who has made us capable of acting so excellent a part, and of the utmost benevolence to mankind. Superior talents, and superior rank amongst our fellow creatures, whether acquired by birth, or by the course of accidents, and the success of our own industry, are noble prerogatives. Shall he who possesses them repine at the obligation they lay him under, of passing his whole life in the noblest occupation of which human nature is capable? To what higher station, to what greater glory can any mortal aspire, than to be, during the whole course of his life, the support of good, the control of bad

government, and the guardian of public liberty? To be driven from hence by successful tyranny, by loss of health or of parts, or by the force of accidents, is to be degraded in such a manner as to deserve pity, and not to incur blame: but to degrade ourselves, to descend voluntarily, and by choice, from the highest to a lower, perhaps to the lowest rank among the sons of Adam; to abandon the government of men for that of hounds and horses, the care of a kingdom for that of a parish, and a scene of great and generous efforts in public life, for one of trifling amusements and low cares, of sloth and idleness, what is it, my Lord? I had rather your Lordship should name it than I. Will it be said that it is hard to exact from some men, in favour of others, that they should renounce all the pleasures of life, and drudge all their days in business, that others may indulge themselves in ease? It will be said without grounds. A life dedicated to the service of our country admits the full use, and no life should admit the abuse, of pleasures: the least are consistent with a constant discharge of our public duty, the greatest arise from it. The common, the sensual pleasures to which nature prompts us, and which reason therefore does not forbid, though she should always direct, are so far from being excluded out of a life of business, that they are sometimes necessary in it, and are always heightened by it: those of the table, for instance, may be ordered so as to promote that which the elder Cato calls *vitae conjunctionem*. In the midst of public duties, private studies, and an extreme old age, he found time to frequent the *sodalitates*, or clubs of friends at Rome, and to sit up all night with his neighbours in the country of the *Sabines*. Cato's virtue often glowed with wine: and the love of women did not hinder Caesar from forming and executing the greatest projects that ambition ever suggested. But if Caesar, whilst he laboured to destroy the liberties of his country, enjoyed these inferior pleasures of life, which a man who labours to save those liberties may enjoy as well as he; there are superior pleasures in a busy life that Caesar never knew, those, I mean, that arise from a faithful discharge of our duty to the commonwealth. Neither Montaigne in writing his essays, nor Descartes in building new worlds, nor Burnet in framing an antediluvian earth, nor Newton in discovering and establishing the true laws of nature on experiment and a sublimer geometry, felt more intellectual joys, than he feels who is a *real patriot*, who bends all the force of his understanding,

and directs all his thoughts and actions, to the good of his country. When such a man forms a political scheme and adjusts various and seemingly independent parts in it to one great and good design, he is transported by imagination, or absorbed in meditation, as much and as agreeably as the satisfaction that arises from the different importance of these objects, in every step of the work, is vastly in his favour. It is here that the speculative philosopher's labour and pleasure end. But he who speculates in order to *act*, goes on, and carries his scheme into execution. His labour continues, it varies, it increases; but so does his pleasure. The execution indeed is often traversed, by unforeseen and untoward circumstances, by the perverseness or treachery of friends, and by the power or malice of enemies: but the first and the last of these animate, and the docility and fidelity of some men make amends for the perverseness and treachery of others. Whilst a great event is in suspense, the action warms, and the very suspense, made up of hope and fear, maintains no unpleasing agitation in the mind. If the event is decided successfully, such a man enjoys pleasure proportionable to the good he has done; a pleasure like to that which is attributed to the Supreme Being, on a survey of his works. If the event is decided otherwise, and usurping courts, or overbearing parties prevail; such a man has still the testimony of his conscience, and a sense of the honour he has acquired, to soothe his mind, and support his courage. For although the course of state-affairs be to those who meddle in them like a lottery, yet it is a lottery wherein no good man can be a loser. He may be reviled, it is true, instead of being applauded, and may suffer violence of many kinds. I will not say, like Seneca, that the noblest spectacle which God can behold, is a virtuous man suffering, and struggling with afflictions: but this I will say, that the second Cato driven out of the forum, and dragged to prison, enjoyed more inward pleasure, and maintained more outward dignity, than they who insulted him, and who triumphed in the ruin of their country. But the very example of Cato may be urged perhaps against what I have insisted upon: it may be asked, what good he did to *Rome*, by dedicating his whole life to her service, what honour to himself by dying at *Utica*? It may be said, that governments have their periods like all things human; that they may be brought back to their primitive principles during a certain time, but that when these principles are worn out, in the minds of men, it is a vain

enterprise to endeavour to renew them: that this is the case of all governments, when the corruption of the people comes to a great pitch, and is grown universal: that when a house which is old, and quite decayed, though often repaired, not only cracks, but totters even from the foundations, every man in his senses runs out of it, and takes shelter where he can, and that none but madmen continue obstinate to repair what is irreparable, till they are crushed in the ruin. Just so, that we must content ourselves to live under the government we like the least, when that form which we like the most is destroyed, or worn out; according to the counsel of Dolabella in one of his letters to Cicero. But, my Lord, if Cato could not save, he prolonged the life of liberty: the liberties of *Rome* would have been lost when Catiline attacked them, abetted probably by Caesar and Crassus, and the worst citizens of *Rome*; and when Cicero defended them, abetted by Cato and the best. That Cato erred in his conduct, by giving way too much to the natural roughness of his temper, and by allowing too little for that of the *Romans*, among whom luxury had long prevailed, and corruption was openly practised, is most true. He was incapable of employing those seeming compliances that are reconcilable to the greatest steadiness and treated unskillfully a crazy constitution. The safety of the commonwealth depended, in that critical conjuncture, on a *coalition of parties*, the *senatorian* and the *equestrian*: Tully had formed it, Cato broke it. But if this good, for I think he was not an able man and erred in the particular respects I have ventured to mention, he deserved most certainly the glory he acquired by the general tenor of his conduct, and by dedicating the whole labour of his life to the service of his country. He would have deserved more if he had persisted in maintaining the same cause to the end and would have died I think with a better grace at *Munda* than at *Utica*. If this be so, if Cato may be censured, severely indeed, but justly, for abandoning the cause of liberty, which he would not however survive; what shall we say of those, who embrace it faintly, pursue it irresolutely, grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear?

My Lord, I have insisted more on this duty which men owe to their country, because I came out of *England*, and continue still, strongly affected with what I saw when I was there. Our government has approached, nearer than ever before, to the true principles of it, since

the Revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty eight: and the accession of the present family to the throne, has given the fairest opportunities, as well as the most just reasons, for completing the scheme of liberty, and improving it to perfection. But it seems to me, that, in our separate world, as the means of asserting and supporting liberty are increased, all concern for it is diminished. I beheld, when I was among you, more abject servility, in the manners and behaviour of particular men, than I ever saw in *France*, or than has been seen there, I believe, since the days of that *Gascon*, who, being turned out of the minister's door, leaped in again at his window. As to bodies of men, I dare challenge your Lordship, and I am sorry for it, to produce any instances of resistance to the unjust demands, or wanton will of a court, that *British* Parliaments have given, comparable to such as I am able to cite to the honour of the *parliament of Paris*, and the whole body of the law in that country, within the same compass of time. This abject servility may appear justly the more wonderful in *Britain*, because the government of *Britain* has, in some sort, the appearance of an oligarchy and monarchy is rather hid behind it than shown, rather weakened than strengthened, rather imposed upon than obeyed. The wonder therefore is to observe, how imagination and custom (a giddy fool and a formal pedant) have rendered these cabals, or oligarchies, more respected than majesty itself. That this should happen in countries where princes, who have absolute power, may be tyrants themselves, or substitute subordinate tyrants, is not wonderful. It has happened often: but that it should happen in *Britain*, may be justly an object of wonder. In these countries, the people had lost the armour of their constitution: they were naked and defenceless. Ours is more complete than ever. But though we have preserved the *armour*, we have lost the *spirit* of our constitution: and therefore we bear, from little engrossers of delegated power, what our fathers would not have suffered from true proprietors of the royal authority. Parliaments are not only, what they always were, essential parts of our constitution, but essential parts of our administration too. They do not claim executive power. No. But executive power cannot be exercised without their annual concurrence. How few months, instead of years, have princes and ministers now, to pass without inspection and control? How *easy*, therefore, has it become to check every growing evil in the bud, to change

every bad administration, to keep such farmers of governments in awe, to maintain and avenge, if need be, the constitution? It has become so easy by the present form of our government, that corruption *alone* could not destroy us. We must want *spirit*, as well as *virtue*, to perish. Even able knaves would preserve liberty in such circumstances as ours, and highwaymen would scorn to receive the wages and do the drudgery of pickpockets. But all is little, and low, and mean among us! Far from having the *virtues*, we have not even the *vices* of great men. He who had pride instead of vanity, and ambition but equal to his desire of wealth, could never bear, I do not say to be the understrapper to any farmer of royal authority, but to see patiently one of them (at best his fellow, perhaps his inferior in every respect) lord it over him, and the rest of mankind, dissipating wealth, and trampling on the liberties of his country, with impunity. This could not happen, if there was the least spirit among us. But there is none. What passes among us for ambition, is an odd mixture of avarice and vanity. The moderation we have seen practised is pusillanimity, and the philosophy that some men affect is sloth. Hence, it comes that corruption has spread, and prevails.

I expect little from the principal actors that tread the stage at present. They are divided, not so much as it has seemed, and as they would have it believed, about *measures*: the true division is about their different *ends*. Whilst the minister was not hard pushed, nor the prospect of succeeding to him near, they appeared to have but one end, the reformation of the government. The destruction of the minister was pursued only as a preliminary, but of essential and indispensable necessity to that end. But when his destruction seemed to approach, the *object* of his *succession* interposed to the sight of many, and the *reformation* of the *government* was no longer their point of view. They divided the skin, at least in their thoughts, before they had taken the beast, and the common fear of hunting him down for others made them all faint in the chase. It was *this*, and this alone, that *has* saved him, or *has* put off his evil day. Corruption, so much, and so justly complained of, could not have done it *alone*.

When I say that I expect little from the principal actors that tread the stage at present, I am far from applying to all of them what I take to be true of the far greatest part. There are men among them who certainly intend the good of their country, and whom I love and honour for that reason.

But these men have been clogged, or misled, or overborne by others; and, seduced by natural temper to inactivity, have taken any excuse, or yielded to any pretence that savoured it. That they should rouse therefore in themselves, or in anyone else, the spirit they have suffered, nay helped to die away, I do not expect. I turn my eyes from the generation that is going off, to the generation that is coming on the stage. I expect good from them, and from none of them more than from you, my Lord. Remember that the opposition in which you have engaged, at your first entrance into business, is not an opposition only to a bad administration of public affairs, but to an administration that supports itself by means, establishes principles, introduces customs, repugnant to the constitution of our governments, and destructive of all liberty; that you do not only combat present evils, but your posterity; that if it attempts to entail these evils upon you and you cease the combat, you give up the cause: and that he, who does not renew on every occasion his claim, may forfeit his right.

Our disputes were formerly, to say the truth, much more about persons than things; or at most about particular points of political conduct, in which we should have soon agreed, if persons, and personal interests had been less concerned, and the blind prejudice of party less prevalent. Whether the *Big-endians* or the *Little-endians* got the better, I believe no man of sense and knowledge thought the constitution concerned; notwithstanding all the clamour raised at one time about the *danger* of the *Church*, and at another about the *danger* of the *Protestant succession*. But the case is at this time vastly altered. The means of invading liberty more effectually by the constitution of the *revenue*, than it ever had been invaded by *prerogative*, were not then grown up into strength. They are so now; and a bold and an insolent use is made of them. To reform the *state* therefore is, and ought to be, the object of your opposition, as well as to reform the *administration*. Why do I say as well? It is so, and it ought to be so, much more. Wrest the power of the government, if you can, out of hands that have employed it weakly and wickedly; ever since it was thrown into them, by a silly bargain made in one reign, and a corrupt bargain made in another. But do not imagine this to be your sole, or your principal business. You owe to your country, to your honour, to your security, to the present, and to future ages, that no endeavours of yours be wanting to repair the breach that is made,

and is increasing daily in the constitution, and to shut up with all the bars and bolts of law, the principal entries through which these torrents of corruption have been let in upon us. I say the *principal* entries; because, however it may appear in pure speculation, I think it would not be found in practice possible, nor eligible neither, to shut them up *all*. As entries of corruption none of them deserve to be excepted: but there is a just distinction to be made, because there is a real difference. *Some* of these entries are opened by the abuse of powers, necessary to maintain subordination, and to carry on even good government, and therefore necessary to be preserved in the crown, notwithstanding the abuse that is sometimes made of them; for no human institution can arrive at perfection, and the most that human wisdom can do, is to procure the same or greater good, at the expense of less evil. There will be always some evil either immediate, or remote, either in cause or consequence. But there are *other* entries of corruption, and these are by much the greatest, for suffering of which to continue often no reason can be assigned or has been pretended to be assigned, but that which is to every honest and wise man a reason for shutting them up; the increase of the means of corruption, which are most often employed for the service of the oligarchy, than for the service of the monarchy. Shut up *these*, and you will have nothing to fear from the *others*. By these, a more real and a more dangerous power has been gained to ministers, than was lost to the crown by the restraints on prerogative.

There have been periods when our government continued free, with strong appearances of becoming absolute. Let it be your glory, my Lord, and that of the new generation springing up with you, that the governments do not become absolute at any future period, with the appearances of being free. However, you may be employed, in all your councils, in all your actions, to keep this regard to the constitution always in sight. The scene that opens before you is great, and the part that you will have to act difficult. It is difficult indeed to bring men, from strong habits of corruption, to prefer honour to profit, and liberty to luxury, as it is hard to teach princes the great art of governing all by all, or to prevail on them to practise it. But if it be a difficult, it is a glorious attempt; an attempt worthy to exert the greatest talents, and to fill the most extended life. Pursue it with courage, my Lord, nor despair of success.

--- *deus haec fortasse benigna*

Reducet in sedem vice.

A Parliament, nay one house of Parliament, is able at any time, and at once, to destroy any corrupt plan of power. Time produces every day new conjunctures, be prepared to improve them. We read in the Old Testament of a city that might have escaped divine vengeance, if five righteous men had been found in it. Let not our city perish for want of so small a number: and if the generation that is going off could not furnish it, let the generation that is coming on furnish a greater.

We may reasonably hope that it will, from the first essays which your Lordship, and some others of our young senators, have made in public life. You have raised the hopes of your country by the proofs you have given of superior parts. Confirm these hopes by proofs of uncommon industry and application, and perseverance. Superior parts, nay even superior virtue, without these qualities, will be insufficient to support your character and your cause. How many men have appeared in my time who have made these essays with success, and have made no progress afterwards? Some have dropped, from their first flights, down into the vulgar crowd, have been distinguished, nay heard of, no more! Others with better parts, perhaps with more presumption, but certainly with greater ridicule, have persisted in making these essays towards business all their lives, and have never been able to advance farther, in their political course, than a premeditated harangue on some choice subject. I never saw one of these important persons sit down after his oration, with repeated hear-hims ringing in his ears, and inward rapture glowing in his eyes, that he did not recall to my memory the story of a conceited member of some parlement in *France*, who was overheard, after his tedious harangue, muttering most devoutly to himself, *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam!*

Eloquence, that leads mankind by the ears, gives a nobler superiority than power that every dunce may use, or fraud that every knave may employ, to lead them by the nose. But eloquence must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout forth a little frothy water on some gaudy day and remain dry the rest of the year. The famous orators of *Greece* and *Rome* were the statesmen and ministers of those commonwealths. The nature of their governments and the humour of

those ages made elaborate orations necessary. They harangued oftener than they debated: and the *ars dicendi*, required more study and more exercise of mind, and of body too, among them, than are necessary among us. But as much pains as they took in learning how to conduct the stream of eloquence, they took more to enlarge the fountain from which it flowed. Hear Demosthenes, hear Cicero thunder against Philip, Catiline, and Anthony. I choose the example of the first rather than that of Pericles whom he imitated, or of Phocion whom he opposed, or of any other considerable personage in *Greece*; and the example of Cicero rather than that of Crassus, or of Hortensius, or of any other of the great men of *Rome*; because the eloquence of these two has been so celebrated that we are accustomed to look upon them almost *as mere orators*. They were orators indeed, and no man who has a soul can read their orations, after the revolution of so many ages, after the extinction of the governments, and of the people for whom they were composed, without feeling at this hour the passions they were designed to move, and the spirit they were designed to raise. But if we look into the history of these two men, and consider the parts they acted, we shall see them in another light, and admire them in a higher sphere of action. Demosthenes had been neglected, in his education, by the same tutors who cheated him of his inheritance. Cicero was bred with greater advantage: and Plutarch, I think, says that when he first appeared the people used to call him, by way of derision, the *Greek*, and the scholar. But whatever advantage of this kind the latter might have over the former, and to which of them soever you ascribe the superior genius, the progress which both of them made in every part of *political knowledge*, by their industry and application, was marvellous. Cicero might be a better philosopher, but Demosthenes was no less a statesman: and both performed actions and acquired fame, above the reach of eloquence alone. Demosthenes used to compare eloquence to a weapon, aptly enough; for eloquence, like every other weapon, is of little use to the owner, unless he has the force and the skill to use it. This force and this skill Demosthenes had in an eminent degree. Observe them in one instance among many. It was of mighty importance to Philip to prevent the accession of *Thebes* to the grand alliance that Demosthenes, at the head of the *Athenian* commonwealth, formed against the growing power of the *Macedonians*.

Philip had emissaries and his ambassadors on the spot to oppose to those of *Athens*, and we may be assured that he neglected none of those arts upon this occasion that he employed so successfully on others. The struggle was great, but Demosthenes prevailed, and the *Thebans* engaged in the war against Philip. Was it by his eloquence alone that he prevailed in a divided state, over all the subtlety of intrigue, all the dexterity of negotiation, all the seduction, all the corruption, and all the terror that the ablest and most powerful prince could employ? Was Demosthenes wholly taken up with composing orations, and haranguing the people, in this remarkable crisis? He harangued them no doubt at *Thebes*, as well as at *Athens*, and in the rest of *Greece*, where all the great resolutions of making alliances, waging war, or concluding peace, were determined in democratic assemblies. But yet, haranguing was no doubt the least part of his business, and eloquence was neither the sole, nor the principal talent, as the style of writers would induce us to believe, on which his success depended. He must have been master of other arts, subserviently to which his eloquence was employed, and must have had a thorough knowledge of his own state, and of the other states of *Greece*, of their dispositions, and of their interests relatively to one another, and relatively to their neighbours, to the *Persians* particularly, with whom he held a correspondence, not much to his honour: I say, he must have possessed an immense fund of knowledge, to make his eloquence in every case successful, and even pertinent or seasonable in some, as well as to direct it and to furnish it with matter whenever he thought proper to employ this weapon.

Let us consider Tully on the greatest theatre of the known world, and in the most difficult circumstances. We are better acquainted with him than we are with Demosthenes; for we see him nearer, as it were, and in a more different light. How perfect a knowledge had he acquired of the *Roman* constitution of government, ecclesiastical and civil; of the original and progress, of the general reasons and particular occasions of the laws and customs of his country; of the great rules of equity, and the low practice of courts; of the duty of every magistracy and office in the state, from the dictator down to the lictor; and of all the steps by which *Rome* had risen from her infancy, to liberty, to power and grandeur and dominion, as well as of all those by which she began to decline, a little

before his age, to that servitude which he died for opposing, but lived to see established, and in which not her liberty alone, but her power and grandeur and dominion were lost? How well was he acquainted with the *Roman* colonies and provinces, with the allies and enemies of the empire, with the rights and privileges of the former, the dispositions and conditions of the latter, with the interests of them all relatively to *Rome*, and with the interests of *Rome* relatively to them? How present to his mind were the anecdotes of former times concerning the *Roman* and other states, and how curious was he to observe the minutest circumstances that passed in his own? His works will answer sufficiently the questions I ask, and establish in the mind of every man who reads them the idea I would give of his capacity and knowledge, as well as that which is so universally taken of his eloquence. To a man fraught with all this stock of knowledge, and industrious to improve it daily, nothing could happen that was entirely new, nothing for which he was quite unprepared, scarce any effect whereof he had not considered the cause, scarce any cause wherein his sagacity could not discern the latent effect. His eloquence in private causes gave him first credit at *Rome*, but it was this knowledge, this experience, and the continued habits of business, that supported his reputation, enabled him to do so much service to his country, and gave force and authority to his eloquence. To little purpose would he have attached Catiline with all the vehemence that indignation and even fear added to eloquence if he had trusted this weapon alone. This weapon alone would have secured neither him nor the senate from the poniard of that assassin. He would have had no occasion to boast, that he had driven this infamous citizen out of the walls of *Rome*, *abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*, if he had not made it before-hand impossible for him to continue any longer in them. As little occasion would he have had to assume the honour of defeating without any tumult, or any disorder, the designs of those who conspired to murder the *Roman* people, to destroy the *Roman* empire, and to extinguish the *Roman* name; if he had not united by skill and management, in the common cause of their country, orders of men the most averse to each other; if he had not watched all the machinations of the conspirators in silence, and prepared a strength sufficient to resist them at *Rome*, and in the provinces, before he opened this scene of villainy to the senate and the people: in a word, if he had

not made much more use of political prudence, that is, of the knowledge of mankind, and of the arts of government, which study and experience give, than of all the powers of his eloquence.

Such was Demosthenes, such was Cicero, such were all the great men whose memories are preserved in history, and such must every man be, or endeavour to be, if he has either sense or sentiment, who presumes to meddle in affairs of government, of a free government I mean, and hopes to maintain a distinguished character in popular assemblies, whatever part he takes, whether that of supporting, or that of opposing. I put the two cases purposely, my Lord, because I have observed, and your Lordship will have frequent occasions of observing, many persons who seem to think that opposition to an administration requires fewer preparative, and less constant application than the conduct of it. Now, my Lord, I take this to be a gross error, and I am sure it has been a fatal one. It is one of those errors, and there are many such, which men impute to judgment, and which proceed from the defect of judgment, as this does from lightness, irresolution, laziness, and a false notion of opposition; unless the persons, who seem to think, do not really think in this manner, but serving the public purely for interest, and not for fame, nor for duty, decline taking the same pains when they oppose without personal and immediate reward, as they are willing to take when they are paid for serving. Look about you, and you will see men eager to speak, and keen to act, when particular occasions press them, or particular motives excite them, but quite unprepared for either: and hence all that superficiality in speaking, for want of information, hence all that confusion or inactivity, for want of concert, and all that disappointment for want of preliminary measures. They who affect to head an opposition, or to make any considerable figure in it, must be equal at least to those whom they oppose; I do not say in parts only, but in application and industry, and the fruits of both, information, knowledge, and a certain constant preparedness for all the events that may arise. Every administration is a system of conduct: opposition, therefore, should be a system of conduct likewise; an opposite, but not a dependent system. I shall explain myself better by an example. When two armies take the field, the generals on both sides have their different plans for the campaign, either of defence or of offence: and as the former does not suspend his measures till he is attacked, but takes them beforehand

on every probable contingency, so the latter does not suspend his, till the opportunity of attacking presents itself, but is alert and constantly ready to seize it whenever it happens; and meanwhile is busy improving all the advantages of skill, of force, or of any other kind that he has, or that he can acquire, independently of the plan and of the motions of his enemy.

In a word, my Lord, this is my notion, and I submit it to you. According to the present form of our constitution, every member of either house of Parliament is a member of a national standing council, born, or appointed by the people, to promote good, and to oppose bad government; and, if not vested with the power of a minister of state, yet vested with the superior power of controlling those who are appointed such by the crown. It follows from hence, that they who engage in opposition are under as great obligations, to prepare themselves to control, as they who serve the crown are under, to prepare themselves to carry on the administration: and that a party formed for this purpose, do not act like good citizens nor honest men, unless they *propose true*, as well as *oppose false* measures of government. Surely they do not act like wise men unless they act systematically, and unless they contrast, on every occasion, that scheme of policy which the public interest requires to be followed, with that which is suited to no interest but the private interest of the prince or his ministers. Cunning men (several such there are among you) will dislike this consequence, and object, that such a conduct would support, under the appearance of opposing, a weak and even a wicked administration; and that to proceed in this manner would be to give good counsel to a bad minister, and to extricate him out of distresses that ought to be improved to his ruin. But cunning pays no regard to virtue and is but the low mimic of wisdom. It was easy to demonstrate what I have asserted concerning the duty of an opposing party. And I presume there is no need of labouring to prove, that a party who opposed, systematically, a wise to a silly, an honest to an iniquitous, scheme of government, would acquire greater reputation and strength, and arrive more surely at their end, than a party who opposed occasionally, as it were, without any common system, without any general concert, with little uniformity, little preparation, little perseverance, and as little knowledge or political capacity. But it is time to leave this invidious subject, and to hasten to the conclusion of my letter before it grows into a book.

I am, my Lord, & c.

THE IDEA OF A PATRIOT KING

INTRODUCTION

December 1, 1738

Revising some letters I wrote to my Lord, I found in one of them a great deal said concerning the *duties* which men owe to their *country*, those men particularly who live under a *free constitution* of government; with a strong application of these general doctrines to the *present state of Great Britain*, and to the characters of the present actors on this stage.

I saw no reason to alter, none even to soften, anything that is there advanced. On the contrary, it came into my mind to carry these considerations further, and to delineate, for I pretend not to make a perfect draught, the *duties of a king to his country*; of those kings particularly who are appointed by the people, for I know of none who are anointed by God to rule in *limited monarchies*. After which I proposed to apply the general doctrines in this case, as strongly and as directly as in the other, to the *present state of Great Britain*.

I am not one of those oriental slaves, who deem it unlawful presumption to look their kings in the face; neither am I swayed by my Lord Bacon's authority to think this custom good and reasonable in its *meaning*, though it savours of barbarism in its *institution: Ritu quidem barbarus, sed significatione bonus*. Much otherwise. It seems to me, that no secrets are so important to be known, no hearts deserve to be pried into with more curiosity and attention, than those of princes. But many things have concurred, besides age and temper, to set me at a great distance from the present court. Far from prying into the hearts, I scarce know the faces of our royal family. I shall therefore decline all application to their characters, and all mention of any influence which their characters

may have on their own fortune, or on that of this nation.

The principles I have reasoned upon in my letter to my Lord, and those I shall reason upon here, are the same. They are laid in the same system of human nature. They are drawn from that source from whence all the duties of public and private morality must be derived, or they will be often falsely, and always precariously, established. Up to this source there are few men who take the pains to go: and, open as it lies, there are not many who can find their way to it. By such as you, I shall be understood and approved: and, far from fearing the censure, or the ridicule, I should reproach myself with the applause, of men who measure their interest by their passions, and their duty by the examples of a corrupt age; that is, by the examples they afford to one another. Such, I think, are the greatest part of the present generation; not of the vulgar alone, but of those who stand foremost, and are raised highest in our nation. Such we may justly apprehend too that the next will be; since they who are to compose it will set out into the world under a direction that must incline them strongly to the same course of self-interest, profligacy, and corruption.

The iniquity of all the principal men in any community, of kings and ministers especially, does not consist alone in the crimes they commit, and in the immediate consequences of these crimes: and, therefore, their guilt is not to be measured by these alone. Such men sin against posterity, as well as against their own age; and when the consequences of their crimes are over, the consequences of their example remain. I think, and every wise and honest man in generations yet unborn will think, if the history of this administration descends to blacken our annals, that the greatest iniquity of the minister, on whom the whole iniquity ought to be charged, since he has been so long in possession of the whole power, is the constant endeavour he has employed to corrupt the *morals of men*. I say thus generally, the *morals*; because he, who abandons or betrays his country, will abandon or betray his friend; and because he, who is prevailed upon to act in Parliament without any regard to truth or justice, will easily prevail upon himself to act in the same manner everywhere else. A wiser and more honest administration may relieve our trade from that oppression, and the public from that load of debt, under which it must be supposed that he has industriously kept it; because we are able

to prove, by fair calculations, that he might have provided effectually for the payment of it, since he came to the head of the Treasury. A wiser and more honest administration may draw us back to our former credit and influence abroad, from that state of contempt into which we are sunk among all our neighbours. But will the *minds of men*, which this minister has narrowed to personal regards alone, will their views, which he has confined to the present moment, as if nations were mortal like the men who compose them, and *Britain* was to perish with her degenerate children; will these, I say, be so *easily* or so *soon* enlarged? Will their *sentiments*, which are debased from the love of liberty, from zeal for the honour and prosperity of their country, and from a desire of honest fame, to an absolute unconcernedness for all these, to an abject submission, and a rapacious eagerness after wealth, that may sate their avarice, and exceed the profusion of their luxury; will these, I say again, be so *easily* or so *soon elevated*? In a word, will the *British spirit*, that *spirit* which has preserved liberty hitherto in one corner of the world at least, be so *easily* or so *soon reinfused* into the *British* nation? I think not. We have been long coming to this point of depravation: and the progress from confirmed habits of evil is much slower than the progress to them. Virtue is not placed on a rugged mountain of difficult and dangerous access, as they who would excuse the indolence of their temper, or the perverseness of their will, desire to have it believed; but she is seated, however, on an *eminence*. We may go up to her with ease, but we must go up *gradually*, according to the natural progression of *reason*, who is to lead the way, and to guide our steps. On the other hand, if we fall from thence, we are sure to be hurried down the hill with a blind impetuosity, according to the natural violence of those *appetites* and *passions* that caused our fall at first, and urge it on the faster, the further they are removed from the control that before restrained them.

To perform, therefore, so great a work, as to reinfuse the *spirit of liberty*, to reform the *morals*, and to raise the *sentiments* of a people, much time is required; and a work which requires so much time, may, too probably, be never completed; considering how unsteadily and unsystematically even the best of men are apt often to proceed, and how this reformation is to be carried forward, in opposition to *public fashion*, and *private inclination*, to the *authority* of the men in power,

and to the *secret bent* of many of those who are out of power. Let us not flatter ourselves: I did so too long. It is more to be wished than to be hoped, that the contagion should spread no further than that leprous race, who carry on their skins, exposed to public sight, the scabs and blotches of their distemper. The *minister* preaches corruption aloud and constantly, like an impudent missionary of vice: and some there are who not only insinuate but teach the same occasionally. I say, some; because I am as far from thinking, that all those who join with him, as that any of those who oppose him, wait only to be more authorized, that they may propagate it with greater success, and apply it to their own use, in their turn.

It seems to me, upon the whole matter, that to save or redeem a nation, under such circumstances, from perdition, nothing less is necessary than some great, some extraordinary conjuncture of ill fortune, or of good, which may *purge, yet so as by fire*. Distress from abroad, bankruptcy at home, and other circumstances of like nature and tendency, may beget universal confusion. Out of confusion, order may arise but it may be the order of a wicked tyranny, instead of the order of a just monarchy. Either may happen and such an alternative, at the disposition of fortune, is sufficient to make a Stoic tremble! We may be saved, indeed, by means of a very different kind; but these means will not offer themselves, this way of salvation will not be opened to us, without the concurrence, and the influence, of a Patriot King, the most uncommon of all phenomena in the physical or moral world.

Nothing can so surely and so effectually restore the virtue and public spirit essential to the preservation of liberty and national prosperity, as the reign of such a prince.

We are willing to indulge this pleasing expectation, and there is nothing we desire more ardently than to be able to hold of a *British* prince, without flattery, the same language that was held of a *Roman* emperor, with a great deal, *Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes*.

But let us not neglect, on our part, such means as are in our power, to keep the cause of truth, of reason, of virtue, and of liberty, alive. If the blessing be withheld from us, let us deserve, at least, that it should be granted to us. If heaven, in mercy, bestows it on us, let us prepare to receive it, to improve it, and to co-operate with it.

I speak as if I could take my share in these glorious efforts. Neither shall I recall my words. Stripped of the rights of a *British* subject, of all except the meanest of them, that of inheriting, I remember that I am a Briton still. I apply to myself what I have read in Seneca: *officia, si civis amiserit, hominis exerceat*. I have renounced the world, not in show but in reality and more by my way of thinking, than by my way of living, as retired as that may seem. But I have not renounced my country, nor my friends: and by my friends I mean all those, and those alone, who are such to their country, by whatever name they have been, or may be still distinguished; and though in that number there should be men, of whose past ingratitude, injustice, or malice, I might complain, on my own account, with the greatest reason. These I will never renounce. In their prosperity, they shall never hear of me: in their distress, always. In that retreat, wherein the remainder of my days shall be spent, I may be of some use to them; since, even from thence, I may advise, exhort, and warn them. *Nec enim is solus reipublicae prodest, qui candidatos extrahit, et tuetur reos, et de pace, belloque censet; sed qui juventutem exhortatur, qui, in tanta bonorum praeceptorum inopia, virtute instruit animos; qui ad pecuniam luxuriamque cursu ruentes, prensat ac retrahit, et, si nihil aliud, certe moratur; in privato publicum negotium agit.*

My intention is not to introduce what I have to say concerning the *duties of kings*, by any nice inquiry into the *original* of their institution. What is to be known of it will appear plainly enough to such as are able and can spare time to trace it, in the broken traditions which are come down to us of a few nations. But those who are not able to trace it there, may trace something better, and more worthy to be known, in their own thoughts: I mean what this institution *ought* to have been, whenever it began, according to the rule of *reason*, founded in the common *rights*, and *interests*, of *mankind*. On this head it is quite necessary to make some reflections, that will, like angular stones laid on a rock, support the little fabric, the model however of a great building, that I propose to raise.

So plain a matter could never have been rendered intricate and voluminous, had it not been for lawless ambition, extravagant vanity, and the detestable spirit of tyranny, abetted by the private interests of artful men, by adulation and superstition, two vices to which that staring timid creature man is excessively prone; if authority had not imposed on such as did not pretend to reason; and if such as did attempt to reason had not been caught in the common snare of sophism, and bewildered in the labyrinths of disputation. In this case, therefore, as in all those of great concernment, the shortest and the surest method of arriving at real knowledge is to *unlearn* the lessons we have been taught, to *remount to first principles*, and take nobody's word about them; for it is about *them* that almost all the juggling and legerdemain, employed by men whose trade it is to deceive, are set to work.

Now he, who does so in this case, will discover soon, that the notions concerning the *divine institution* and *right* of kings, as well as the *absolute power* belonging to their office, have no foundation in fact or reason, but have risen from an old alliance between *ecclesiastical* and *civil policy*. The characters of king and priest have been sometimes blended together: and when they have been divided, as kings have found the great effects wrought in government by the empire which priests obtain over the consciences of mankind, so priests have been taught by experience, that the best method to preserve their own rank, dignity, wealth, and power, all raised upon a supposed *divine right*, is to communicate the same pretension to kings, and, by a fallacy common to both, impose their usur-

pations on a silly world. This they have done and, in the state, as in the *Church*, these pretensions to a *divine right* have been generally carried highest by those, who have had the least pretension to the *divine favour*.

It is worthwhile to observe, on what principle some men were advanced to a great pre-eminence over others, in the early ages of those nations that are little known to us: I speak not of such as raised themselves by *conquest*, but of such as were raised by *common consent*. Now you will find, in all these proceedings, an entire uniformity of principle. The authors of such inventions, as were of general use to the wellbeing of mankind, were not only revered and obeyed during their lives, but worshipped after their deaths: they became principal gods, *Dii majorum gentium*. The founders of commonwealths, the lawgivers, and the heroes of particular states, became gods of a second class, *Dii minorum gentium*. All pre-eminence was given in heaven, as well as on earth, in proportion to the benefits that men received. *Majesty* was the first, and *divinity* the second, reward. Both were earned by services done to mankind, whom it was easy to lead, in those days of simplicity and superstition, from admiration and gratitude, to adoration and expectation.

When advantage had been taken, by some particular men, of these dispositions in the generality, and religion and government were become two trades or mysteries, new means of attaining to this pre-eminence were soon devised, and new and even contrary motives worked the same effect. Merit had given rank; but rank was soon kept and, which is more preposterous, obtained, too, without merit. Men were then made kings for reasons as little relative to *good government*, as the neighing of the horse of the son of Hystaspes.

But the most prevalent, and the general motive was *proximity of blood* to the *last*, not to the *best*, king. *Nobility in China mounts upwards*: and he, who has it conferred upon him, ennobles his *ancestors*, not his *posterity*. A wise institution! Especially among a people in whose minds a great veneration for their forefathers has been always carefully maintained. But in China, as well as in most other countries, *royalty* has *descended*, and kingdoms have been reckoned the patrimonies of particular families.

I have read in one of the historians of the latter *Roman* empire, historians, by the way, that I will not advise others to misspend their time in reading, that Saporess, the famous king of *Persia* against whom

Julian made the expedition wherein he lost his life, was crowned in his mother's womb. His father left her with child: the magi declared that the child would be a male; whereupon the royal ensigns were brought forth, they were placed on her majesty's belly, and the princes and the satraps prostrate recognized the embryo-monarch. But to take a more known example, out of multitudes that present themselves, Domitian, the worst, and Trajan, the best of princes, were promoted to the empire by the *same title*. Domitian was the son of Flavius, and the brother, though possibly the poisoner too, of Titus Vespasian: Trajan was the adopted son of Nerva. Hereditary right served the purpose of one, as well as of the other: and if Trajan was translated to a place among the gods, this was no greater a distinction than some of the worst of his predecessors and his successors obtained, for reasons generally as good as that which Seneca puts into the mouth of Diespiter in the *Apocolocyntosis* of Claudius: *cum sit republica esse aliquem, qui cum Romulo possit erventia rapa vorare*. To say the truth, it would have been a wiser measure to have made these royal persons gods at once; *as gods* they would have done neither good nor hurt; but as emperors, in their way to divinity, they acted like *devils*.

If my readers are ready by this time to think me antimonarchical, and in particular an enemy to the succession of kings by hereditary right, I hope to be soon restored to their good opinion. I esteem monarchy above any other form of government, and hereditary monarchy above elective. I reverence kings, their office, their rights, their persons: and it will never be owing to the *principles* I am going to establish, because the character and government of a Patriot King can be established on no other, if their *office* and their *right* are not always held *divine*, and their *persons* always *sacred*.

Now, we are subject, by the constitution of human nature, and therefore by the will of the author of this and every other nature, to two laws. One given immediately to all men by God, the same to all, and obligatory alike on all. The other given to man by man, and therefore not the same to all, nor obligatory alike on all: founded indeed on the same principles, but varied by different applications of them to times, to characters, and to a number, which may be reckoned infinite, of other circumstances. By the first, I mean the universal law of reason; and by the second, the particular law or constitution of laws, by which every distinct community has chosen to be governed.

The obligation of submission to both, is discoverable by so clear and so simple an use of our intellectual faculties, that it may be said properly enough to be *revealed to us by God*: and though *both* these laws cannot be said properly to be given by him, yet our obligation to submit to the civil law is a principal paragraph in the *natural* law, which he has most manifestly given us. In truth we can no more doubt the obligations of both these laws, than of the existence of the lawgiver. As supreme lord over all his works, his general providence regards immediately the great *commonwealth* of mankind; but then, as supreme lord likewise, his authority gives a sanction to the *particular bodies* of law which are made under it. The law of *nature* is the law of *all* his subjects: the constitutions of *particular* governments are like the *by-laws* of cities, or the appropriated customs of provinces. It follows, therefore, that he who breaks the *laws of his country* resists the *ordinance of God*, that is, the law of his nature. God has instituted neither monarchy, nor aristocracy, nor democracy, nor mixed government: but though God has instituted no particular form of government among men, yet by the general laws of his kingdom he exacts our obedience to the laws of those communities, to which each of us is attached by birth, or to which we may be attached by a subsequent and lawful engagement.

From such plain, unrefined, and therefore, I suppose, true reasoning, the *just authority* of *kings* and the *due obedience* of *subjects*, may be deduced with utmost certainty. And surely it is far better for kings themselves to have their authority thus founded on principles incontestable, and on fair deductions from them, than on the chimeras of madmen, or, what has been more common, the sophisms of knaves. A *human right*, that cannot be controverted, is preferable, surely, to a *pretended divine right*, which every man must believe implicitly, as few will do, or not believe at all.

But the principles we have laid down do not stop here. A divine right in kings is to be deduced evidently from them: a divine right to govern *well*, and conformably to the constitution at the head of which they are placed. A divine right to govern *ill*, is an absurdity to assert it, is blasphemy. A people may choose, or hereditary succession may raise, a *bad* prince to the throne; but a *good* king alone can derive his right to govern from *God*. The reason is plain: good government alone can be

in the divine intention. God has made us to desire happiness; he has made our happiness dependent on society; and the happiness of society dependent on good or bad government. His intention, therefore, was, that government should be *good*.

This is essential to his wisdom; for wisdom consists, surely, in proportioning means to ends: therefore, it cannot be said without absurd impiety, that he confers a right to oppose his intention.

The office of kings is, then, of *right divine*, and their persons are to be reputed *sacred*. As *men*, they have no such right, no such sacredness belonging to them: as *kings*, they have both, unless they forfeit them. Reverence for government obliges to reverence governors, who, for the sake of it, are raised above the level of other men: but reverence for governors, independently of government, any further than reverence would be due to their virtues if they were private men, is preposterous, and repugnant to common sense. The spring from which this legal reverence, for so I may call it, arises, is *national*, not *personal*. As well might we say that a ship is built, and loaded, and manned, for the sake of any particular pilot, instead of acknowledging that the pilot is made for the sake of the ship, her lading, and her crew, who are always the *owners* in the political vessel; as to say that kingdoms were instituted for kings, not kings for kingdoms. In short, and to carry our allusion higher, majesty is not an inherent, but a reflected light.

All this is as true of *elective*, as it is of *hereditary* monarchs, though the scribblers for tyranny, under the name of monarchy, would have us believe that there is something more august, and more sacred in one than the other. They are sacred *alike*, and this attribute is to be ascribed or not ascribed, to them, as they answer, or do not answer, the *Ends* of their institution. But there is another comparison to be made, in which a great and most important dissimilitude will be found between hereditary and elective monarchy. Nothing can be more absurd, in pure *speculation*, than a hereditary right in any mortal to govern other men: and yet, in *practice*, nothing can be more absurd than to have a king to choose at every vacancy of a throne. We draw at a *lottery* indeed in one case, where there are many chances to lose, and few to gain. But have we much more advantage of this kind in the other? I think not. Upon these, and upon most occasions, the multitude would do at least as well to trust to chance

as choice, and to their fortune as to their judgment. But in another respect, the advantage is entirely on the side of hereditary succession; for, in elective monarchies, these elections, whether well or ill made, are often attended with such *national calamities*, that even the best reigns cannot make amends for them: whereas, in hereditary monarchy, whether a good or a bad prince succeeds, these calamities are avoided. There is one source of evil the less open: and one source of evil the less in human affairs, where there are so many, is sufficient to decide. We may lament the imperfections of our human state, which is such, that in cases of the utmost importance to the order and good government of society, and by consequence to the happiness of our kind, we are reduced, by the very constitution of our nature, to have no part to take that our reason can *approve absolutely*. But though we lament it, we must submit to it. We must tell ourselves once for all, that *perfect* schemes are not adapted to our imperfect state; that *Stoical morals* and *Platonic politics* are nothing better than amusements for those who have had little experience in the affairs of the world, and who have much leisure, *verba otiosorum senum ad imperitos juvenes*, which was the censure, and a just one too, that Dionysius passed on some of the doctrines of the father of the Academy. In truth, all that human prudence can do, is to furnish expedients, and to compound, as it were, with general vice and folly; employing reason to act even against her own principles, and teaching us, if I may say so *insanire cum ratione*, which appears on many occasions not to be the paradox it has been thought.

To conclude this head therefore: as I think a *limited monarchy* the best of governments, so I think a *hereditary monarchy* the best of monarchies. I said a *limited monarchy*; for an *unlimited monarchy*, wherein arbitrary will, which is in truth no rule, is however the sole rule, or stands instead of all rule of government, is so great an absurdity, both in reason informed or uninformed by experience, that it seems a government fitter for savages than for civilized people.

But I think it proper to explain a little more what I mean, when I say a *limited monarchy*, that I may leave nothing untouched which ought to be taken into consideration by us, when we attempt to fix our ideas of a Patriot King.

Among many reasons which determine me to prefer *monarchy* to every form of government, this is a principal one. When monarchy is the

essential form, it may be more easily and more usefully *tempered* with *aristocracy*, or *democracy*, or both, than either of them, when they are the essential forms, can be *tempered* with *monarchy*. It seems to me, that the introduction of a real permanent monarchical power, or anything more than the pageantry of it, into either of these, must destroy them and extinguish them, as a greater light extinguishes a less. Whereas it may easily be shown, and the true form of our government will demonstrate, without seeking any other example, that very considerable *aristocratic* and *democratic powers* may be granted on a *monarchical stock*, without diminishing the lustre, or restraining the power and authority of the prince, enough to alter in any degree the essential form.

A great difference is made in nature, and therefore the distinction should be always preserved in our notions, between two things that we are apt to confound in speculation, as they have been confounded in practice, *legislative* and *monarchical power*. There must be an absolute, unlimited, and uncontrollable power lodged *somewhere* in every government; but to constitute monarchy, or the government of a single person, it is not necessary that this power should be lodged in the monarch *alone*. It is no more necessary that he should exclusively and independently establish the rule of his government, than it is that he should govern without any rule at all: and this surely will be thought reasonable by no man.

I would not say God governs by a rule that we know, or may know, as well as he, and upon our knowledge of which he appeals to men for the justice of his proceedings towards them; which a famous divine has impiously advanced, in a pretended demonstration of his being and attributes. God forbid but this I may say, that God does always that which is fittest to be done, and that this fitness, whereof neither that presumptuous dogmatist was, nor any created being is, a competent judge, results from the various *natures*, and more various *relations* of things: so that, as creator of all systems by which these natures and relations are constituted, he prescribed to himself the *rule*, which he follows as governor of every system of being. In short, with reverence be it spoken, God is a monarch, yet not an arbitrary but a limited monarch, limited by the *rule* which *infinite wisdom* prescribed to *infinite power*. I know well enough the impropriety of these expressions; but, when our ideas are inadequate, our expressions must be improper. Such conceptions,

however, as we are able to form of these attributes, and of the exercise of them in the government of the universe, may serve to show what I have produced them to show. If governing without *any rule*, and by *arbitrary will*, be not essential to our idea of the monarchy of the *Supreme Being*, it is plainly ridiculous to suppose them necessarily included in the idea of a *human monarchy*: and though God, in his eternal ideas, for we are able to conceive no other manner of knowing, has prescribed to himself that rule by which he governs the universe he *created*, it will be just as ridiculous to affirm, that the idea of human monarchy cannot be preserved, if kings are obliged to govern according to a rule established by the wisdom of a state, that was a state before they were kings, and by the consent of a people that they did not most certainly *create*; especially when the whole executive power is exclusively in their hands, and the legislative power cannot be exercised without their concurrence.

There are *limitations* indeed that would destroy the *essential form* of monarchy; or, in other words, a monarchical constitution may be changed, under pretence of limiting the monarch. This happened among us in the last century, when the vilest usurpation, and the most infamous tyranny, were established over our nation, by some of the worst and some of the meanest men in it. I will not say that the *essential form* of monarchy should be preserved though the preservation of it were to cause the loss of *liberty*. *Salus reipublicae suprema lex esto* is a fundamental law; and, sure I am, the *safety* of a commonwealth is ill provided for, if *liberty* be given up. But this I presume to say, and can demonstrate, that *all* the limitations necessary to preserve liberty, as long as the *spirit* of it subsists, and longer than that no limitations of monarchy, nor any other form of government, can preserve it, are *compatible* with monarchy. I think on these subjects, neither as the *Tories*, nor as the *Whigs* have thought; at least, I endeavour to avoid the excesses of both. I neither *dress up* kings like so many *burlesque Jupiters*, weighing the fortunes of mankind in the scales of fate, and darting thunderbolts at the heads of rebellious giants; nor do I strip them naked, as it were, and leave them at most a few *tattered rags* to clothe their *majesty*, but such as can serve really as little for use as for ornament. My aim is to fix this principle: that *limitations* on a crown ought to be carried *as far* as it is necessary to secure the liberties of a people; and that all *such limitations* may subsist, without weakening or endangering monarchy.

I shall be told, perhaps, for I have heard it said by many, that this point is imaginary; and that limitations, sufficient to procure good government and to secure liberty under a *bad* prince, cannot be made, unless they are such as will deprive the subjects of many benefits in the reign of a *good* prince, clog his administration, maintain an unjust jealousy between him and his people, and occasion a defect of power, necessary to preserve public tranquility, and to promote national prosperity. If this was true, here would be a much greater melancholy instance of the imperfection of our nature, and of the inefficacy of our reason to supply this imperfection, than the former. In the former, reason prompted by experience avoids a certain evil effectually, and is able to provide, in some measure, against the contingent evils that may arise from the expedient itself.

But in the latter, if what is there advanced was true, these provisions against contingent evils would, in some cases, be the occasions of much certain evil, and of positive good in none; under a good prince they would render the administration defective, and under a bad one there would be no government at all. But the truth is widely different from this representation. The limitations necessary to preserve liberty under monarchy will *restrain* effectually a bad prince, without being ever *felt* as *shackles* by a *good* one. Our constitution is brought, or almost brought, to such a point, a point of perfection I think, that no *king*, who is not, in the true meaning of the word, a *patriot*, can govern Britain with *ease*, *security*, *honour*, *dignity*, or indeed with *sufficient power* and *strength*. But yet a king, who is a patriot may govern with *all* the former; and, besides them, with power as extended as the most absolute monarch can boast, and a power, too, far more agreeable in the enjoyment as well as more effectual in the operation.

To attain these great and noble ends, the patriotism must be *real*, and not in *show* alone. It is something to desire to appear a patriot: and the desire of having fame is a step towards deserving it, because it is a motive the more to deserve it. If it be true, as Tacitus says, *contemptu famae contemni virtutem*, that a contempt of a good name, or an indifference about it, begets or accompanies always a contempt of virtue; the contrary will be true: and they are certainly both true. But this motive alone is not sufficient. To constitute a *patriot*, whether *king* or *subject*, there must be something more substantial than a desire of *fame*, in the

composition; and if there be not, this desire of fame will never rise above that sentiment which may be compared to the coquetry of women: a fondness of transient applause, which is courted by vanity, given by *flattery*, and spends itself in *show*, like the qualities which acquire it. *Patriotism* must be founded on *great principles* and supported by *great virtues*. The chief of these principles I have endeavoured to trace; and I will not scruple to assert, that a man can be a *good king* upon *no other*. He may, without them and by complexion, be unambitious, generous, good-natured; but, without them, the exercise even of these virtues will be often ill *directed*: and, with principles of another sort, he will be drawn easily, notwithstanding these virtues, from all the purposes of his institution.

I mention these opposite principles the rather, because, instead of wondering that so many kings, unfit and unworthy to be trusted with the government of mankind, appear in the world, I have been tempted to wonder that there are any tolerable; when I have considered the flattery that environs them most commonly from the cradle, and the tendency of all those false notions that are instilled into them by precept, and by example, by the habits of courts, and by the interested selfish views of courtiers. They are bred to esteem themselves of a *distinct* and *superior species* among *men*, as men are among *animals*.

Louis the Fourteenth was a strong instance of the effect of this *education*, which trains up kings to be tyrants, without knowing that they are so. That oppression under which he kept his people, during the whole course of a long reign, might proceed, in some degree, from the natural haughtiness of his temper; but it proceeded, in a greater degree, from the principles and habits of his education. By this he had been brought to look on his kingdom as a patrimony that descended to him from his ancestors, and that was to be considered in no other light: so that when a very considerable man had discoursed to him at large of the miserable condition, to which his people were reduced, and had frequently used this word, 'l'état', though the King approved the substance of all he had said, yet he was shocked at the frequent repetition of this word, and complained of it as of a kind of indecency to himself. This will not appear so strange to our second as it may very justly to our first reflections; for what wonder is it, that princes are easily betrayed into an error that

takes its rise in the general imperfection of our nature, in our pride, our vanity, and our presumption? The bastard children but the children still, of selflove; a spurious brood, but often a favourite brood, that governs the whole family. As men are apt to make themselves the measure of all being, so they make themselves the final cause of all creation. Thus, the reputed orthodox philosophers in all ages have taught, that the world was made for man, the earth for him to inhabit, and all the luminous bodies, in the immense expanse around us, for him to gaze at. Kings do no more, no, not so much, when they imagine themselves the final cause for which societies were formed, and governments instituted.

This capital error, in which almost every prince is confirmed by his *education*, has so great extent and so general influence, that a right to do every iniquitous thing in government may be derived from it. But, as if this was not enough, the characters of princes are spoiled many more ways by their *education*. I shall not descend into a detail of such particulars, nor presume so much as to hint what regulations might be made about the *education of princes*, nor what part our *Parliaments* might take occasionally in this momentous affair, lest I should appear too refining, or too presumptuous, in my speculations. But I may assert in general, that the indifference of mankind upon this head, especially in a government constituted like ours, is monstrous.

I may also take notice of another cause of the mistakes of princes; I mean the general conduct of those who are brought near to their persons. Such men, let me say, have a particular duty arising from this very situation; a duty common to them all, because it arises not from their stations, which are different, but from their situation, which is the same. To enumerate the various applications of this duty would be too minute and tedious; but this may suffice, that all such men should bear constantly in mind, that the master they serve is to be the *king of their country*: that their attachment to him, therefore, is not to be like that of other servants to other *masters*, for *his* sake alone, or for *his* sake and *their own*, but for the sake of *their country* likewise.

Craterus *loves the King*, but Hephaestion *loves Alexander*, was a saying of the last that has been often quoted, but not censured as it ought to be. Alexander gave the preference to the attachment of Hephaestion; but this preference was due undoubtedly to that of Craterus. Attachment

to a private person must comprehend a great concern for his character and his interests: but attachment to one who is, or may be a king, much more; because the character of the latter is more important to himself and others; and because his interests are vastly more complicated with those of his country, and in some sort with those of mankind. Alexander himself seemed, upon one occasion, to make the distinction that should be always made between our attachment to a prince, and to any private person. It was when Parmenio advised him to accept the terms of peace which Darius offered: they were great, he thought them so; but he thought, no matter for my purpose whether justly or not, that it would be unbecoming of him to accept them; therefore he rejected them, but acknowledged, that 'he would have done as he was advised to do, if he had been Parmenio'.

As to persons who are not about a prince in the situation here spoken of, they can do little more than proportion their applause, and the demonstrations of their confidence and affection, to the benefits they actually receive from the prince on the throne, or to the just expectations that a successor gives them. It is of the latter I propose to speak here particularly. If he gives them those of a *good reign*, we may assure ourselves that they will carry, and in this case they ought to carry that applause, and those demonstrations of their confidence and affection, as high as such a prince himself can desire. Thus, the prince and the people, take, in effect, a sort of engagement with one another: the prince to govern well, and the people to honour and obey him. If he gives them expectations of a *bad reign*, they have this obligation to him at least, that he puts them early on their guard; and an obligation, and an advantage it will be, if they prepare for his accession as a great and inevitable evil; and if they guard on every occasion against the ill-use they foresee that he will make of money and power. Above all, they should not suffer themselves to be caught in the common snare, which is laid under specious pretences of '*gaining* such a prince, and of *keeping* him by public compliances out of *bad hands*'. That argument has been pressed more than once, has prevailed, and has been fruitful of most pernicious consequences. None indeed can be more absurd. It is not unlike the reasoning of those savages who worship the devil, not because they love him or honour him, or expect any good from him, but that he

may do them no hurt. Nay it is more absurd; for the savages suppose that the devil has, *independently of them*, the power to hurt them: whereas the others put more power into the hands of a prince, because he has already some power to hurt them; and trust to the justice and gratitude of one, who wants sense, virtue, or both, rather than increase and fortify the barriers against his folly and his vices.

But the truth is, that men, who reason and act in this manner, either mean, or else are led by such as mean, nothing more than to make a *private court* at the *public expense*; who choose to be the instruments of a bad king rather than to be out of power; and who are often so wicked, that they would *prefer* such a service to that of the best of kings. In fine, these reasons, and every other reason for providing against a *bad reign* in prospect, acquire a new force, when one weak or wicked prince is, in the order of succession, to follow another of the same character. Such provisions indeed are *hardest* to be obtained when they are the *most necessary*, that is, when the spirit of liberty begins to flag in a free people, and when they become disposed, by habits that have grown insensibly upon them, to a base submission. But they are *necessary too*, even when they are easiest to be obtained; that is, when the spirit of liberty is in full strength, and a disposition, to oppose all instances of maladministration, and to resist all attempts on liberty, is universal. In both cases, the endeavours of every man who loves his country will be employed with incessant care and constancy to obtain them, that good government and liberty may be better preserved and secured; but in the latter case for this further reason also, that the preservation and security of these may be provided for, not only better but *more consistently* with *public tranquility*, by *constitutional* methods, and a *legal* course of Opposition to the excesses of regal or ministerial power. What I touch upon here might be made extremely plain; and I think the observation would appear to be of no small importance: but I should be carried too far from my subject, and my subject will afford me matter of more agreeable speculation.

It is true that a prince, who gives just reasons to expect that his reign will be that of a Patriot King, may not always meet, and from all persons, such returns as such expectations deserve: but they must not hinder either the prince from continuing to give them, or the people from continuing to acknowledge them. United, none can hurt them: and if no

artifice interrupts, no power can defeat the effects of their perseverance. It will blast many a wicked project, keep virtue in countenance, and vice, to some degree at least, in awe. Nay, if it should fail to have these effects, if we should even suppose a good prince to suffer with the people, and in some measure for them, yet many advantages would accrue to him: for instance, the cause of the people he is to govern, and his own cause would be made the same by their common enemies. He would feel grievances himself as a subject before he had the power of imposing them as a king. He would be formed in that school out of which the greatest and the best of monarchs have come, the school of affliction: and all the vices, which had prevailed before his reign, would serve as so many foils to the glories of it. But I hasten to speak of the greatest of all these advantages, and of that which a Patriot King will esteem to be such; whose ways of thinking and acting to so glorious a purpose as the re-establishment of a free constitution, when it has been shook by the iniquity of former administrations, I shall endeavour to explain.

What I have here said will pass among some for the reveries of a distempered brain, at best for the vain speculations of an idle man who has lost sight of the world, or who had never sagacity enough to discern in government the practicable from the impracticable. Will it not be said, that this is advising a king to rouse a spirit which may turn against himself; to reject the sole expedient of governing a limited monarchy with success; to labour to confine, instead of labouring to extend, his power: to patch up an old constitution, which his people are disposed to lay aside, instead of forming a new one more agreeable to them, and more advantageous to him; to refuse, in short, to be an *absolute monarch*, when every circumstance invites him to it? All these particulars, in every one of which the question is begged, will be thus represented, and will be then ridiculed as paradoxes fit to be ranked among the *mirabilia et inopinata* of the Stoics, and such as no man in his senses can maintain in earnest. These judgments and these reasonings may be expected in an age as futile and as corrupt as ours: in an age wherein so many betray the cause of liberty, and act not only without regard, but in direct opposition, to the most important interests of their country; not only occasionally, by surprise, by weakness, by strong temptation, or sly seduction, but constantly, steadily, by deliberate choice, and in pursuance of principles

they avow and propagate: in an age when so many others shrink from the service of their country; or promote it coolly and uncertainly, in subordination to their own interest and humour, or to those of a party: in an age, when to assert the truth is called spreading of delusion, and to assert the cause of liberty and good government, is termed sowing of sedition. But I have declared already my unconcernedness at the censure or ridicule of such men as these; for whose *supposed abilities* I have much well-grounded contempt, and against whose *real immorality* I have as just indignation.

Let us come, therefore, to the bar of reason and experience, where we shall find these paradoxes admitted as plain and almost self-evident propositions, and these reveries and vain speculations as important truths, confirmed by experience in all ages and all countries.

Machiavelli is an author who should have great authority with the persons likely to oppose me. He proposes to princes the amplification of their power, the extent of their dominion, and the subjection of their people, as the sole objects of their policy. He devises and recommends all means that tend to these purposes, without the consideration of any duty owing to God or man, or any regard to the morality or immorality of actions. Yet even he declares the affectation of virtue to be useful to princes: he is so far on my side in the present question. The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue for real: he requires no more than the appearance of it.

In the tenth chapter of the first book of *Discourses*, he appears convinced, such is the force of truth, but how consistently with himself let others determine, that the supreme glory of a prince accrues to him who establishes good government and a *free constitution*; and that a prince, ambitious of fame, must wish to come into possession of a disordered and corrupted state, not to finish the wicked work that others have begun, and to complete the ruin, but to stop the progress of the first, and to prevent the last. He thinks this not only the true way to *fame*, but to *security* and *quiet*; as the contrary leads, for here is no third way, and a prince must make his option between these two, not only to infamy, but to danger and to perpetual disquietude. He represents those who might establish a commonwealth or a legal monarchy, and who choose to improve the opportunity of establishing tyranny, that is, monarchy

without any rule of law, as men who are deceived by false notions of good, and false appearances of glory, and who are in effect blind to their true interest in every respect: *‘nè si avvegono per questo partito quanta fama, quanta gloria, quanto onore, sicurtà, quiete, con sodisfazione d’animo ei fuggono, e in quanta infamia, vituperio, biasimo, pericolo et inquietudine incorrono’*. He touches another advantage which patriot princes reap, and in that he contradicts flatly the main point on which his half-taught scholars insist. He denies that such princes *diminish* their power by *circumscribing* it: and affirms, with truth on his side, that Timoleon, and others of the same character whom he had cited, possessed as great authority in their country, with every other advantage besides, as Dionysius or Phalaris had acquired, with the loss of all those advantages.

Thus far Machiavelli reasons justly; but he takes in only a *part* of his subject and confines himself to those motives that should determine a wise prince to maintain liberty, because it is his *interest* to do so. He rises no higher than the consideration of mere interest, of fame, of security, of quiet, and of power, all personal to the prince: and by such motives alone, even his favourite Borgia might have been determined to affect the virtues of a patriot prince; more than which this great doctor in political knowledge would not have required of him. But he is far from going up to that motive which should above all determine a good prince to hold this conduct, because it is his *duty to do so*; a duty that he owes to God by one law, and to his people by another. Now it is with this that I shall begin what I intend to offer concerning the system of principles and conduct by which a Patriot King will govern himself and his people. I shall not only begin higher, but descend into more detail, and keep still in my eye the application of the whole to the constitution of *Great Britain*, even to the present state of our nation, and temper of our people.

I think enough has been already said, to establish the *first and true principles* of *monarchical* and indeed of *every other* kind of *government*: and I will say with confidence, that no principles but these, and such as these, can be advanced, which deserve to be treated seriously; though Mr Locke condescended to examine those of Filmer, more out of regard to the prejudices of the time, than to the importance of the work. Upon such foundations we must conclude, that since men were directed by nature to form *societies*, because they cannot by their nature subsist

without them, nor in a state of *individuality*; and since they were directed in like manner to establish *governments*, because societies cannot be maintained without them, nor subsist in a state of anarchy, the ultimate end of all governments is the *good* of the *people*, for whose *sake* they were made, and *without whose consent* they could not have been made. In forming societies, and submitting to government, men give up part of that *liberty* to which they are all born and are alike. But why? Is government incompatible with a full enjoyment of *liberty*? By no means. But because popular liberty without government will degenerate into *licence*, as government without sufficient liberty will degenerate into *tyranny*, they are mutually necessary to each other, good government to support legal liberty, and legal liberty to preserve good government.

I speak not here of people, if any such there are, who have been savage or stupid enough to submit to tyranny by original contract; nor of those nations on whom tyranny has stolen as it were imperceptibly, or been imposed by violence, and settled by prescription. I shall exercise no political casuistry about the rights of *such kings*, and the obligations of *such people*. Men are to take their lots, perhaps, in governments as in climates, to fence against the inconveniences of both, and to bear what they cannot alter. But I speak of people who have been wise and happy enough to establish, and to preserve, *free constitutions* of government, as the people of this *island* have done. To these, therefore, I say, that their kings are under the most sacred obligations that human law can create, and *divine law* authorize, to defend and maintain, in the first place, and preferably to every other consideration, the *freedom* of such constitutions.

The *good of the people* is the ultimate and true end of government. Governors are, therefore, appointed *for this end*, and the civil constitution which appoints them, and invests them with their power, is determined to do so by that *law of nature* and *reason*, which has determined the *end of government*, and which admits this *form* of government as the proper means of arriving at it. Now, the greatest good of a people is their liberty and, in the case here referred to, the people have judged it so and provided for it accordingly. *Liberty* is to the collective body, that which health is to every individual body. Without *health* no pleasure can be tasted by man: without *liberty* no happiness can be enjoyed by *society*. The obligation,

therefore, to defend and maintain the freedom of such constitutions will appear most sacred to a Patriot King.

Kings who have weak understandings, bad hearts, and strong prejudices, and all these, as it often happens, inflamed by their passions, and rendered incurable by their self-conceit and presumption; such kings are apt to imagine, and they conduct themselves so as to make many of their subjects imagine, that the king and the people in free governments are *rival powers*, who stand in *competition* with one another, who have *different interests*, and must of course have different *views*: that the *rights* and *privileges* of the people are so many *spoils* taken from the right and *prerogative* of the crown; and that the rules and laws, made for the exercise and security of the former, are so many *diminutions* of their dignity, and *restraints* on their power.

A Patriot King will see all this in a far different and much truer light. The constitution will be considered by him as *one law*, consisting of *two tables*, containing the rule of his government, and the measure of his subjects' obedience; or as *one system*, composed of *different parts* and *powers*, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conspiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and *but one*, distinction between his rights, and those of his people: he will look on his to be a *trust*, and theirs a *property*. He will discern, that he can have a right to no more than is trusted to him by the constitution: and that his people, who had an original right to the *whole* by the law of nature, can have the sole indefeasible right to *any part*; and really have such a right to *that part* which they have reserved to themselves. In time, the *constitution* will be revered by him as the *law of God* and *of man*; the *force* of which binds the king *as much* as the meanest subject, and the *reason* of which binds him *much more*.

Thus he will think, and on these principles he will act, whether he comes to the throne by immediate or remote election. I say *remote*; for in hereditary monarchies, where *men* are not elected, *families* are: and, therefore, some authors would have it believed, that when a family has been once admitted, and a hereditary right to the crown recognized in it, that right cannot be forfeited, nor that throne become vacant, as long as any heir of the family remains. How much more agreeably to truth and to common sense would these authors have written, if they had

maintained, that every prince who comes to a crown in the course of succession, were he the *last* of five hundred, comes to it under the *same* conditions under which the *first* took it, whether expressed or implied; as well as under those, if any such there be, which have been since made by legal authority: and that royal blood can give no right, nor length of succession any prescription, against the constitution of a government? The *first* and the *last* hold by the *same tenure*.

I mention this rather, because I have an imperfect remembrance, that some scribbler was employed, or employed himself, to assert the *hereditary right* of the present royal family. A task so unnecessary to any good purpose, that, I believe, a suspicion arose of its having been designed for a bad one. A Patriot King will never countenance such impertinent fallacies, nor deign to lean on broken reeds. He knows that his right is founded on the *laws of God and man*, that none can shake it but himself, and that his own virtue is sufficient to maintain it against all opposition.

I have dwelt the longer on the *first* and *general principles* of *monarchical government*, and have recurred often to them, because it seems to me that they are the *seeds of patriotism*, which must be sown as soon as possible in the mind of a prince, lest their growth be checked by luxuriant weeds, which are apt to abound in such soils, and under which no crop of kingly virtues can ever flourish. A prince, who does not know the *true principles*, cannot propose to himself the *true ends of government*; and he who does not propose them will never direct his conduct steadily to them. There is not a deeper, nor a finer observation in all my Lord Bacon's works, than one which I shall apply and paraphrase on this occasion. The most compendious, the most noble, and the most effectual remedy, which can be opposed to the uncertain and irregular motions of the human mind, agitated by various passions, allured by various temptations, inclining sometimes towards a state of moral perfection, and often, even in the best, towards a state of moral depravation, is this. We must choose betimes such *virtuous objects* as are proportioned to the means we have of pursuing them, and as belong particularly to the *stations* we are in, and to the duties of those stations. We must *determine* and *fix* our minds in such manner upon them, that the pursuit of them may become the *business*, and the attainment of them the *end*, of our whole lives. Thus, we shall imitate the great operations of nature, and not the feeble, slow,

and imperfect operations of art. We must not proceed, in forming the moral character, as a statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who works sometimes on the face, sometimes on one part, and sometimes on another: but we must proceed, and it is in our power to proceed, as nature does in forming a flower, an animal, or any other of her productions: *rudimenta partium omnium simul parit et producit*. 'She throws out altogether, and at once, the whole system of every being, and the rudiments of all the parts'. The vegetable or the animal grows in bulk and increases in strength; but is the *same from the first*. Just so our Patriot King must be a patriot from the first. He must be such in resolution, before he grows such in practice. He must fix at once the *general principles and ends* of all his actions and determine that his whole conduct shall be regulated by them and directed to them. When he has done this, he will have turned, by one great effort, the bent of his mind so strongly towards the perfection of a kingly character, that he will exercise with ease, and as it were by a natural determination, all the virtues of it; which will be suggested to him on every occasion by the *principles* wherewith his mind is imbued, and by those *ends* that are the constant objects of his attention.

Let us then see in what manner and with what effect he will do this, upon the greatest occasion he can have of exercising these virtues, the *maintenance of liberty*, and the *re-establishment of a free constitution*.

The freedom of a constitution rests on two points. The orders of it are one: so Machiavelli calls them, and I know not how to call them more significantly. He means not only the forms and customs, but the different classes and assemblies of men, with different powers and privileges attributed to them, which are established in the state. The *spirit* and *character* of the *people* are the other. On the mutual conformity and harmony of these the preservation of liberty depends. To take away, or essentially to alter the former, cannot be brought to pass, whilst the latter remains in original purity and vigour: nor can liberty be destroyed by this method, unless the attempt be made with a military force sufficient to conquer the nation, which would not submit in this case till it was conquered, nor with much security to the conqueror even then. But these *orders* of the state may be essentially altered, and serve more effectually to the destruction of liberty, than the taking away of them would serve, if the *spirit* and *character* of the people are lost.

Now this method of destroying liberty is the most dangerous on many accounts, particularly on this; that even the reign of the weakest prince, and the policy of the weakest ministry, may effect the destruction, when circumstances are favourable to this method. If people are growing corrupt, there is no need of capacity to contrive, nor of insinuation to gain, nor of plausibility to seduce, nor of eloquence to persuade, nor of authority to impose, nor of courage to attempt. The most incapable, awkward, ungracious, shocking, profligate, and timorous wretches, invested with power, and masters of the purse, will be sufficient for the work, when the people are accomplices in it. Luxury is rapacious; let them feed it: the more it is fed, the more profuse it will grow. Want is the consequence of profusion, venality of want, and dependence of venality. By this progression, the first men of a nation will become the pensioners of the last; and he who has talents, the most implicit tool to him who has none. The distemper will soon descend, not indeed to make a deposit *below*, and to remain there, but to pervade the *whole body*.

It may seem a singular, but it is perhaps a true proposition, that such a king and such a ministry are more likely to *begin*, and to *pursue* with success, this method of destroying a free constitution of government, than a king and a ministry that were held in great esteem would be. This very *esteem* might put many on their guard against the latter; but the former may draw from *contempt* the advantage of *not being feared*: and an advantage this is in the beginning of corruption. Men are willing to excuse, not only to others but to themselves, the first steps they take in vice, and especially in vice that affects the public, and whereof the public has a right to complain. Those, therefore, who might withstand corruption in one case, from a persuasion that the consequence was too certain to leave them any excuse, may yield to it when they can flatter themselves, and endeavour to flatter others, that liberty cannot be destroyed, nor the constitution be demolished, by *such hands* as hold the sceptre, and guide the reins of the administration. But alas! the flattery is gross, and the excuse without colour. These men may ruin their country, but they cannot impose on any, unless it be on themselves. Nor will even this imposition on themselves be long necessary. Their consciences will be soon seared, by *habit* and by *example*: and they, who wanted an *excuse* to *begin*, will want *none* to *continue* and to *complete*, the tragedy of their

country. Old men will outlive the shame of losing liberty, and young men will arise who know not that it ever existed. A spirit of slavery will oppose and oppress the spirit of liberty and seem at least to be the genius of the nation. Such too it will become in time, when corruption has once grown to this height, unless the progress of it can be interrupted.

How inestimable a blessing therefore must the succession of a Patriot King be esteemed in such circumstances as these, which would be a blessing, and a great one too, in any other? He, and he alone, can save a country whose ruin is so far advanced. The utmost that private men can do, who remain untainted by the general contagion, is to keep the spirit of liberty alive in a few breasts; to protest against what they cannot hinder, and to claim on every occasion what they cannot by their own strength recover.

Machiavelli has treated, in the discourses before cited, this question, ‘whether, when *the people are grown corrupt, a free government* can be maintained, if they enjoy it; or established, if they enjoy it not?’ And upon the whole matter he concludes for the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of succeeding in either case. It will be worthwhile to observe his way of reasoning. He asserts very truly, and proves by the example of the *Roman* commonwealth, that those *orders* which are proper to maintain liberty, whilst a people remain uncorrupt, become improper and hurtful to liberty, when a people have grown corrupt. To remedy this abuse, new laws alone will not be sufficient. These *orders*, therefore, must be *changed*, according to him, and the constitution must be adapted to the depraved manners of the people. He shows, that such a change in the orders, and constituent parts of the government, is impracticable, whether the attempt be made by gentle and slow, or by violent and precipitate measures: and from thence he concludes, that a *free commonwealth* can neither be *maintained* by a *corrupt people*, nor be *established* among them. But he adds, that ‘if this can possibly be done, it must be done by drawing the constitution to the *monarchical form* of government’, ‘*acciochè quegli uomini i quali dalle leggi non possono essere corretti, fussero da una podestà, in qualche modo frenati*’. ‘That a *corrupt people*, whom law cannot correct, may be restrained and corrected by a *kingly power*’. Here is the hinge on which the whole turns.

Another advantage that a *free monarchy* has over all other forms of free government, besides the advantage of being more easily and more usefully tempered with aristocratic and democratic powers, which is mentioned above, is this. Those governments are made up of *different parts*, and are apt to be disjointed by the shocks to which they are exposed: but a free monarchical government is more compact, because there is a *part the more* that *keeps*, like the *keystone* of a vault, the whole building together. They cannot be *mended* in a state of corruption, they must be in effect *constituted anew*, and in such attempt they may be dissolved forever: but this is not the case of a free monarchy. To preserve liberty by new laws and *new* schemes of government, whilst the corruption of a people *continues* and *grows*, is absolutely impossible: but to restore and to preserve it under *old laws*, and an *old* constitution, by reinfusing into the minds of men the *spirit of this constitution*, is not only possible, but is, in a particular manner, easy to a *king*. A corrupt commonwealth remains without remedy, though all the orders and forms of it subsist: a free monarchical government cannot remain absolutely so, as long as the orders and forms of the constitution subsist. These, *alone*, are indeed nothing more than the dead letter of freedom, or masks of liberty in the first character they serve to no good purpose whatsoever: in the second they serve to a bad one; because tyranny, or government by will, becomes more severe, and more secure, under their disguise, than it would if it was barefaced and avowed. But a king can, easily to himself and without violence to his people, renew the spirit of liberty in their minds, quicken this dead letter, and pull off this mask.

As soon as corruption ceases to be an expedient of government, and it will cease to be such as soon as a Patriot King is raised to the throne, the *panacea* is applied; the spirit of the constitution revives of course: and, as fast as it revives, the orders and forms of the constitution are restored to their primitive integrity, and become what they were intended to be, *real barriers* against arbitrary power, not *blinds* nor *masks* under which tyranny may lie concealed. Depravation of manners exposed the constitution to ruin: reformation will secure it. Men decline easily from virtue; for there is a devil too in the political system, a constant tempter at hand. A Patriot King will want neither power nor inclination to cast out this devil, to make the temptation cease, and to deliver his subjects,

if not from the guilt, yet from the consequence, of their fall. Under him they will not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; for, by rendering public virtue and real capacity the sole means of acquiring any degree of power or profit in the state, he will set the passions of their hearts on the side of liberty and good government. A Patriot King is the most powerful of all reformers; for he is himself a sort of standing miracle, so rarely seen and so little understood, that the sure effects of his appearance will be admiration and love in every honest breast, confusion and terror to every guilty conscience, but submission and resignation in all. A new people will seem to arise with a new king. Innumerable metamorphoses, like those which poets feign, will happen in very deed: and, while men are conscious that they are the same individuals, the difference of their sentiments will almost persuade them that they are changed into different beings.

But that we may not expect more from such a king than even he can perform, it is necessary to premise another general observation, after which I shall descend into some that will be more particular.

Absolute stability is not to be expected in anything human; for that which exists immutably exists alone necessarily, and this attribute of the Supreme Being, can neither belong to man, nor to the works of man. The best instituted governments, like the best constituted animal bodies, carry in them the seeds of their destruction: and, though they grow and improve for a time, they will soon tend visibly to their dissolution. Every hour they live is an hour less that they have to live. All that can be done, therefore, to prolong the duration of a good government, is to draw it back, on every favourable occasion, to the *first good principles* on which it was founded. When these occasions happen often, and are well improved, such governments are prosperous and durable. When they happen seldom, or are ill improved, these political bodies live in pain, or in languor, and die soon.

A Patriot King affords one of the occasions I mention in a free monarchical state, and the very best that can happen. It should be improved, like snatches of fair weather at sea, to repair the damages sustained in the last storm, and to prepare to resist the next. For such a king cannot secure to his people a succession of princes like himself. He will do all he can towards it, by his example and by his instruction.

But after all, the royal mantle will not convey the spirit of patriotism into another king, as the mantle of *Elijah* did the gift of prophecy into another prophet. The utmost he can do, and that which deserves the utmost gratitude from his subjects, is to restore good government, to revive the spirit of it, and to maintain and confirm both, during the whole course of his reign. The rest his people must do for themselves. If they do not, they will have none but themselves to blame: if they do, they will have the principal obligation to him. In all events, they will have been free men one reign the longer by his means, and perhaps more; since he will leave them much better prepared and disposed to defend their liberties, than he found them.

This general observation being made, let us now descend, in some detail, to the particular *steps* and *measures* that such a king must pursue, to merit a much nobler title than all those which many princes of the west, as well as the east, are so proud to accumulate.

First, then, he must begin to govern as soon as he begins to reign. For the very first steps he makes in government will give the first impression, and as it were the presage of his reign; and may be of great importance in many other respects besides that of opinion and reputation. His first care will be, no doubt, to purge his court, and to call into the administration such men as he can assure himself will *serve* on the *same principles* on which he intends to *govern*.

As to the first point, if the precedent reign has been bad, we know how he will find the court composed. The men in power will be some of those adventurers, busy and bold, who thrust and crowd themselves early into the intrigue of party and the management of affairs of state, often without true ability, always without true ambition, or even the appearances of virtue: who mean nothing more than what is called making a fortune, the acquisition of wealth to satisfy avarice, and of titles and ribands to satisfy vanity. Such as these are sure to be employed by a weak, or a wicked king: they impose on the first and are chosen by the last. Nor is it marvelous that they are so, since every other want is supplied in them by the want of good principles and a good conscience; and since these defects become ministerial perfections, in a reign when measures are pursued and designs carried on that every honest man will disapprove. All the prostitutes who set themselves to sale, all the locusts who devour

the land, with crowds of spies, parasites, and sycophants, will surround the throne under the patronage of such ministers; and whole swarms of little, noisome, nameless insects will hum and buzz in every corner of the court. Such ministers will be cast off, and such abettors of a ministry will be chased away together, and at once, by a Patriot King.

Some of them perhaps, will be abandoned by him; not to party fury, but to national justice; not to sate private resentments, and to serve particular interests, but to make satisfaction for wrongs done to their country, and to stand as examples of terror to future administrations. Clemency makes, no doubt, an amiable part of the character I attempt to draw; but clemency, to be a virtue, must have its bounds, like other virtues: and surely these bounds are extended enough by a maxim I have read somewhere, that frailties and even vices may be passed over, but not enormous crimes: *multa donanda ingeniis puto, sed donanda vitia, non portenta*.

Among the bad company, with which such a court will abound, may be reckoned a sort of men too low to be much regarded, and too high to be quite neglected; the lumber of every administration, the furniture of every court. These gilt carved things are seldom answerable for more than the men on a chessboard, who are moved about at will, and on whom the conduct of the game is not to be charged. Some of these, every prince must have about him. The pageantry of a court requires that he should: and this pageantry, like many other despicable things, ought not to be laid aside. But as much sameness as there may appear in the characters of this sort of men, there is one distinction that will be made, whenever a good prince succeeds to the throne after an iniquitous administration: the distinction I mean is, between those who have affected to dip themselves deeply in precedent iniquities, and those who have had the virtue to keep aloof from them, or the good luck not to be called to any share in them. And thus, much for the first point, that of purging his court.

As to the second, that of calling to his administration such men as he can assure himself will *serve* on the *same principles* on which he intends to *govern*, there is no need to enlarge much upon it. A good prince will no more choose ill men, than a wise prince will choose fools. Deception in one case is indeed easier than in the other; because a knave may be an artful hypocrite, whereas a silly fellow can never impose himself

for a man of sense. And least of all, in a country like ours, can either of these deceptions happen, if any degree of the discernment of spirits be employed to choose. The reason is, because every man here, who stands forward enough in rank and reputation to be called to the councils of his king, must have given proofs beforehand of his patriotism, as well as of his capacity, if he has either, sufficient to determine his general character.

There is, however, one distinction to be made as to the capacity of ministers, on which I will insist a little: because I think it very important at all times, particularly so at this time; and because it escapes observation most commonly. The distinction I mean is that between a cunning man and a wise man: and this distinction is built on a manifest difference in nature, howsoever imperceptible it may be to weak eyes, or to eyes that look at their object through the false medium of custom and habit. My Lord Bacon says that cunning is *left-handed* or *crooked wisdom*. I would rather say, that it is a part, but the lowest part, of wisdom; employed alone by some, because they have not the other parts to employ; and by some, because it is as much as they want, within those bounds of action which they prescribe to themselves, and sufficient to the ends that they propose. The difference seems to consist in degree, and application, rather than in kind. Wisdom is neither left-handed, nor crooked: but the heads of some men contain little, and the hearts of others employ it wrong. To use my Lord Bacon's own comparison, the cunning man knows how to pack the cards, the wise man how to play the game better: but it would be of no use to the first to pack the cards, if his knowledge stopped here, and he had no skill in the game; nor to the second to play the game better, if he did not know how to pack the cards, that he might unpack them by new shuffling, inferior wisdom or cunning may get the better of folly: but superior wisdom will get the better of cunning. Wisdom and cunning have often the same objects; but a wise man will have more and greater in his view. The least will not fill his soul, nor ever become the principal there; but will be pursued in subserviency, in subordination at least, to the other. Wisdom and cunning may employ sometimes the same means too: but the wise man stoops to these means, and the other cannot rise above them. Simulation and dissimulation, for instance, are the chief arts of cunning: the first will be esteemed always by a wise man unworthy of him, and will be therefore avoided by him, in every possible

case; for, to resume my Lord Bacon's comparison, simulation is put on that we may look into the cards of another, whereas dissimulation intends nothing more than to hide our own. Simulation is a stiletto, not only an offensive, but an unlawful weapon: and the use of it may be rarely, very rarely, excused, but never justified. Dissimulation is a shield, as secrecy is armour: and it is no more possible to preserve secrecy in the administration of public affairs without some degree of dissimulation, than it is to succeed in it without secrecy. Those two arts of cunning are like the alloy mingled with pure ore. A little is necessary and will not debase the coin below its proper standard; but if more than that little be employed, the coin loses its currency, and the coiner his credit.

We may observe much the same difference between wisdom and cunning, both as to the objects they propose and to the means they employ, as we observe between the visual powers of different men. One sees distinctly the objects that are near to him, their immediate relations, and their direct tendencies; and a sight like this serves well enough the purpose of those who concern themselves no further. The cunning minister is one of those: he neither sees, nor is concerned to see, any further than his personal interests, and the support of his administration, require. If such a man overcomes any actual difficulty, avoids any immediate distress, or, without doing either of these effectually, gains a little time, by all the low artifice which cunning is ready to suggest and baseness of mind to employ, he triumphs, and is flattered by his mercenary train, on the great event; which amounts often to no more than this, that he got into distress by one series of faults, and out of it by another. The wise minister sees, and is concerned to see further, because government has a further concern: he sees the objects that are distant as well as those that are near, and all their remote relations, and even their indirect tendencies. He thinks of fame as well as of applause, and prefers that, which to be enjoyed must be given, to that which may be bought. He considers his administration as a single day in the great year of government; but as a day that is affected by those which went before, and that must affect those which are to follow. He combines, therefore, and compares all these objects, relations, and tendencies; and the judgment he makes, on an entire not a partial survey of them, is the rule of his conduct. That scheme of the reason of state, which lies open before

a wise minister, contains all the great principles of government, and all the great interests of his country: so that, as he prepares some events, he prepares against others, whether they be likely to happen during his administration, or in some future time.

Many reflections might be added to these, and many examples be brought to illustrate them. Some I could draw from the men I have seen at the head of business and make supremely strong contrasts of men of great wisdom with those of mere cunning. But I conclude this head, that I may proceed to another of no less importance.

To espouse no party, but to govern like the common father of his people, is so essential to the character of a Patriot King, that he who does otherwise forfeits the title. It is the peculiar privilege and glory of this character, that princes who maintain it, and they alone, are so far from the necessity, that they are not exposed to the temptation, of *governing by a party*; which must always end in the government of a *faction*: the faction of the *prince*, if he has ability; the faction of his *ministers*, if he has not; and, either one way or other, in the oppression of the people. For *faction* is to *party* what the *superlative* is to the *positive*: *party* is a political evil, and *faction* is the *worst* of all *parties*. The true image of a free people, governed by a Patriot King, is that of a patriarchal family, where the head and all the members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit: and where, if any are perverse enough to have another, they will be soon borne down by the superiority of those who have the same; and, far from making a *division*, they will but confirm the *union* of the little state. That to approach as near as possible to these ideas of perfect government, and social happiness under it, is desirable in every state, no man will be absurd enough to deny. The sole question is, therefore, how near to them it is possible to attain? For, if this attempt be not absolutely impracticable, all the views of a Patriot King will be directed to make it succeed. Instead of abetting the divisions of his people, he will endeavour to unite them, and to be himself the centre of their union: instead of putting himself at the head of *one party* in order to govern *his people*, he will put himself at the head of *his people* in order to govern, or more properly to subdue, *all parties*. Now, to arrive at this desirable union, and to maintain it, will be found more difficult in some cases than in others, but absolutely impossible in none, to a wise and good prince.

If his people are *united* in their submission to him, and in their attachment to the established government, he must not only *espouse* but *create* a party, in order to govern by *one*: and what should tempt him to pursue so wild a measure? A prince, who aims at more power than the constitution gives him, may be so tempted; because he may hope to obtain in the disorders of the state what cannot be obtained in quiet times; and because contending parties will give what a nation will not. Parties, even before they degenerate into absolute factions, are still numbers of men associated together for certain purposes, and certain interests, which are not, or which are not allowed to be, those of the community by others. A more private or personal interest comes but too soon, and too often, to be superadded, and to grow predominant in them: and when it does so, whatever occasions or principles began to form them, the same logic prevails in them that prevails in every church. The interest of the state is supposed to be that of the party, as the interest of religion is supposed to be that of the Church: and, with this pretence or prepossession, the interest of the state becomes, like that of religion, a remote consideration, is never pursued for its own sake, and is often sacrificed to the other. A king, therefore, who has ill designs to carry on, must endeavour to divide an united people; and by blending or seeming to blend his interests with that of a party, he may succeed perhaps, and his party and he may share the spoils of a ruined nation: but such a party is then just a faction, such a king is a tyrant, and such a government is a conspiracy. A Patriot King must renounce his character, to have such designs; or act against his own designs, to pursue such methods. Both are too absurd to be supposed. It remains, therefore, that as all the good ends of government are most attainable in a state that is united and as the divisions of a people can serve to bad purposes alone, the king we suppose here will deem the union of his subjects his greatest advantage, and will think himself happy to find that established, which he would have employed the whole labour of his life to bring about. This seems so plain, that I am ready to make excuses for having insisted at all upon it.

Let us turn ourselves to another supposition, to that of a *divided state*. This will fall in oftener with the ordinary course of things in free governments, and especially after iniquitous and weak administrations. Such a state may be better or worse, and the great and good purposes

of a Patriot King more or less attainable in it, according to the different nature of those *divisions*; and, therefore, we will consider this state in different light.

A people may be *united* in submission to the prince, and to the establishment, and yet be *divided* about *general principles*, or *particular measures* of government. In the first case, they will do by their constitution what has frequently been done by the Scripture, strain it to their own notions and prejudices; and, if they cannot strain it, alter it as much as is necessary to render it conformable to them. In the second, they will support or oppose particular acts of administrations, and defend or attack the persons employed in them; and both these ways a conflict of parties may arise, but no great difficulty to a prince who determines to pursue the union of his subjects, and the prosperity of his kingdoms independently of all parties.

When parties are divided by different notions and principles concerning some particular ecclesiastical or civil institutions, the constitution, which should be their rule, must be that of the prince. He may and he ought to show his dislike or his favour, as he judges the constitution may be hurt or improved, by one side or the other. The hurt he is never to suffer, not for his own sake; and, therefore, surely not for the sake of any whimsical, factious, or ambitious set of men. The improvement he must always desire; but as every new modification in a scheme of government and of national policy is of great importance, and requires more and deeper consideration than the warmth, and hurry, and rashness of party conduct admit, the duty of a prince seems to require that he should render by his influence the proceedings more *orderly* and more *deliberate*, even when he approves the end to which they are directed. All this may be done by him without fomenting division: and, far from forming or espousing a party, he will defeat party in defence of the constitution, on some occasions; and lead men, from acting with a party spirit, to act with a national spirit, on others.

When the division is about *particular measures* of government, and the conduct of the administration is alone concerned, a Patriot King will stand in want of party as little as in any other case. Under his reign, the opportunities of forming an opposition of this sort will be rare, and the pretences generally weak. Nay, the motives to it will lose much of their

force, when a government is strong in reputation, and men are kept in good humour by feeling the rod of a party on no occasion, though they feel the weight of the sceptre on some. Such opportunities, however, may happen; and there may be reason, as well as pretences, sometimes for opposition even in such a reign: at least we will suppose so, that we may include in this argument every contingent case. Grievances then are complained about, mistakes and abuses in government are pointed out, and ministers are prosecuted by their enemies. Shall the prince on the throne form a party by intrigue, and by secret and corrupt influence, to oppose the prosecution? When the prince and the ministers are *participes criminis*, when everything is to be defended, lest something should come out, that may unravel the silly wicked scheme, and disclose to public sight the whole turpitude of the administration, there is no help; this must be done, and such a party must be formed, because such a party alone will submit to a drudgery of this kind. But a prince, who is not in these circumstances, will not have recourse to these means. He has others more open, more noble, and more effectual in his power: he knows that the views of his government are right, and that the tenor of his administration is good; but he knows that neither he nor his ministers are infallible, nor impeccable. There may be abuses in his government, mistakes in his administration, and guilt in his ministers, which he has not observed: and he will be far from imputing the complaints, that give him occasion to observe them, to a spirit of party; much less will he treat those who carry on such prosecutions in a legal manner, as incendiaries, and as enemies to his government. On the contrary, he will distinguish the voice of his people from the clamour of a faction and will hearken to it. He will redress grievances, correct errors, and reform or punish ministers. This he will do as a good prince: and as a wise one, he will do it in such a manner that his dignity shall be maintained, and that his authority shall increase, with his reputation, by it.

Should the efforts of a mere faction be bent to calumniate his government, and to distress the administration on groundless pretences, and for insufficient reasons; he will not neglect, but he will not apprehend neither, the short-lived and contemptible scheme. He will indeed have no reason to do so; for let the fautors of maladministration, whenever an opposition is made to it, affect to insinuate as much as they please, that

their masters are in no other circumstances than those to which the very best ministers stand exposed, objects of general envy and of particular malice, it will remain eternally true, that groundless opposition, in a well-regulated monarchy, can never be strong and durable. To be convinced of the truth of this proposition, one needs only to reflect how many well-grounded attacks have been defeated, and how few have succeeded, against the most wicked and the weakest administrations. Every king of *Britain* has means enough in his power, to defeat and to calm opposition. But a Patriot King, above all others, may safely rest his cause on the innocence of his administration, on the constitutional strength of the crown, and on the concurrence of his people, to whom he dares appeal, and by whom he will be supported.

To conclude all I will say on the divisions of this kind, let me add, that the case of a groundless opposition can hardly happen in a bad reign, because in such a reign just occasions of opposition must of course be frequently given, as we have allowed that they may be given sometimes, though very rarely, in a good reign; but that, whether it be well or ill grounded, whether it be that of the nation, or that of a faction, the conduct of the prince with respect to it will be the same; and one way or other this conduct must have a very fatal event. Such a prince will not mend the administration, as long as he can resist the most just and most popular opposition: and, therefore, this opposition will last and grow, as long as a free constitution is in force, and the spirit of liberty is preserved; for so long even a change of his ministers, without a change of his measures, will not be sufficient. The former without the latter is mere banter, and would be deemed and taken for such, by every man who did not oppose on a factious principle; that I mean of getting into power at any rate, and using it as ill, perhaps worse than the men he helped to turn out of it. Now if such men as these abound, and they will abound in the decline of a free government, a bad prince, whether he changes or does not change his ministers, may hope to govern by the spirit and art of a faction, against the spirit and strength of the nation. His character may be too low, and that of his minister too odious, to form originally even a faction that shall be able to defend them. But they may apply to their purposes, a party that was formed on far different occasions, and bring numbers to fight for a cause in which many of them would not have

listed. The names, and with the names the animosity of parties, may be kept up, when the causes that formed them subsist no longer.

When a party is thus revived or continued in the spirit of a faction, the corrupt and infatuated members of it will act without any regard to right or wrong: and they who have asserted liberty in one reign, or opposed invasions of one kind, will give it up in another reign, and abet invasions of another kind; though they still distinguish themselves by the same appellation, still spread the same banner, and still deafen their adversaries and one another with the same cry. If the national cause prevails against all the wicked arts of corruption and division, that an obstinate prince and flagitious ministry can employ; yet will the struggle be long, and the difficulties, the distresses, and the danger great, both to the king and to the people. The best he can hope for, in such a case, will be to escape with a diminution of his reputation, authority, and power. He may be exposed to something worse; and his obstinacy may force things to such extremities, as they who oppose him will lament, and as the preservation of liberty and good government can alone justify. If the wicked arts I speak of prevail, faction will be propagated through the whole nation, an ill- or well-grounded opposition will be the question no longer, and the contest among parties will be, who shall govern, not how they shall be governed. In short, universal confusion will follow, and a complete victory, on any side, will enslave all sides.

I have not overcharged the draught. Such consequences must follow such a conduct; and therefore let me ask, how much more safe, more easy, more pleasant, more honourable is it, for a prince to correct, if he has not prevented, maladministration? That he may be able to rest his cause, as I said before, on the strength of the crown and the concurrence of his people, whenever any faction presumes to rise in opposition to him.

This a Patriot King will do. He may favour one party and discourage another, upon occasions wherein the state of his kingdom makes such a temporary measure necessary: but he will espouse none, much less will he proscribe any. He will list no party, much less will he do the meanest and most imprudent thing a king can do, list himself in any. It will be his aim to pursue true principles of government independently of all and, by a steady adherence to this measure, his reign will become an undeniable and glorious proof, that a wise and good prince may unite his subjects,

and be himself the centre of their union, notwithstanding any of these divisions that have been hitherto mentioned.

Let us now view the divided state of a nation in another light. In this, the divisions will appear more odious, more dangerous, less dependent on the influence, and less subject to the authority of the crown. Such will be the state, whenever a people are *divided* about *submission to their prince*, and a party is formed, of spirit and strength sufficient to oppose, even in arms, the established government. But in this case, desperate as it may seem, a Patriot King will not despair of reconciling, and reuniting his subjects to himself, and to one another. He may be obliged, perhaps, as *Henry* the Fourth of *France* was, to conquer his own; but then, like that great prince, if he is the conqueror, he will be the father too, of his people. He must pursue in arms those who presume to take arms against him; but he will pursue them like rebellious children whom he seeks to reclaim, and not like irreconcilable enemies whom he endeavours to exterminate. Another prince may blow up the flame of civil war by unprovoked severity, render those zealous against him who were at worst indifferent, and determine the disaffection of others to open rebellion. When he has prevailed against the faction he helped to form, as he could not have prevailed if the bent of the nation had been against him, he may be willing to ascribe his success to a *party*, that he may have that pretence to govern by a party: and, far from reconciling the minds that have been alienated from him, and reuniting his subjects in a willing unforced submission to him, he may be content to maintain himself on that throne, where the laws of God and man have placed him, by the melancholy expedient that usurpers and tyrants, who have no other in their power, employ; the expedient of force. But a Patriot King will act with another spirit, and entertain nobler and wiser views, from first to last, and through the whole course of such a conjuncture. Nothing less than the hearts of his people will content such a prince; nor will he think his throne established, till it is established there. That he may have time and opportunity to gain them, therefore, he will prevent the flame from breaking out, if by art and management he can do it. If he cannot, he will endeavour to keep it from spreading: and, if the frenzy of rebellion disappoints them in both these attempts, he will remember peace, like the heroic king I just now quoted, in the midst of war. Like him he will

forego advantages of pushing the latter, rather than lose an opportunity of promoting the former; like him, in the heat of battle he will spare, and in the triumph of victory condescend; like him, he will beat down the violence of this flame, by his valour, and extinguish even the embers of it, by his lenity.

It may happen, that a prince, capable of holding such a conduct as this, may not have the opportunity. He may succeed to the throne after a contrary conduct has been held: and when, among other divisions which maladministration and the tyranny of faction have increased and confirmed, there is one against the established government still in being, though not still in arms. The use is obvious, which a faction in power might make of such a circumstance under a weak prince, by ranking in that division all those who opposed the administration; or at least by holding out equal danger to him from two quarters, from their enemies who meant him no harm, and from his enemies who could do him none. But so gross an artifice will not impose on a prince of another character: he will soon discern the distinctions it enables him to make. He will see, in this instance, how faction breeds, nourishes, and perpetuates faction: he will observe how far that of the court contributed to form the other, and contributes still to keep it in countenance and credit among those who consider more what such men are against, than what they are for. He will observe, how much that of the disaffected gives pretence to the other who keeps a monopoly of power and wealth; one of which oppresses, and the other beggars, the rest of the nation. His penetration will soon discover, that these factions break in but little on the body of his people, and that it depends on him alone to take from them even the strength they have; because that of the former is acquired entirely by his authority and purse, and that of the latter principally by the abuse which the former makes of both. Upon the whole, the measures he has to pursue towards the great object of a Patriot King, the union of his people, will appear to him extremely easy. How should they be otherwise? One of the factions must be dissolved the moment that the favour of the prince is withdrawn: and the other is disarmed as soon as it is marked out. It will have no shelter, and it must therefore be so marked out, under a good and wise administration; for, whether the members of it avow their principles by refusing those tests of fidelity which the law requires,

or perjure themselves by taking them, they will be known alike. One difference, and but one, will be made between them in the general sense of mankind, a difference arising from the greater degree of infamy that will belong justly to the latter. The first may pass for fools; the latter must pass, without excuse, for knaves.

The terms I use sound harsh, but the censure is just: and it will appear to be so in the highest degree, and upon the highest reason, if we stop to make a rejection or two, that deserve very well to be made, on the conduct of our Jacobites; for I desire no stronger instance on which to establish the censure, and to justify the terms I have used. Now all these, whether they swear or whether they do not, are liable to one particular objection, that did not lie against those who were, in former days, enemies to the king on the throne. In the days of *York* and *Lancaster*, for instance, a man might be against the prince on the throne, without being against the constitution of his country. The *constitution* conveyed the crown by *hereditary right* in the same family: and he who was a *Yorkist*, and he who was a *Lancastrian*, might, and I doubt not did, pretend in every contest to have this right on his side. The same *constitution* was acknowledged by both: and, therefore, so much indulgence was shown by law to both, at least in the time of *Henry* the Seventh, that submission to a *king de facto* could not be imputed as a crime to either. Thus again, to descend lower in history, when the exclusion of the Duke of *York* was pressed in the reign of *Charles* the Second, the right of that prince to the crown was not disputed. His *divine right* indeed, such a divine right as his grandfather and father had asserted before him, was not much regarded; but his right by the constitution, his *legal right*, was sufficiently owned by those who insisted on a law as necessary to bar it. But every Jacobite, at this time, goes beyond all these examples, and is a rebel to the *constitution* under which he is born, as well as to the *prince* on the throne. The law of his country has settled the right of succession in a *new family*. He resists this law, and asserts, on his own private authority, not only a right in contradiction to it, but a right extinguished by it. This absurdity is so great, that it cannot be defended, except by advancing a greater: and therefore it is urged, that no power on earth could alter the constitution in this respect, nor extinguish a right to the crown inherent in the *Stuart* family, and derived from a superior, that is, from a divine, authority.

This kind of plea for refusing submission to the laws of the land, if it was admitted, would serve any purpose as well as that for which it is brought. Our fanatics urged it formerly, and I do not see why a conscientious fifth monarchy-man had not as much right to urge it formerly, as a Jacobite has now. But if conscience, that is private opinion, may excuse the fifth monarchy-man and the Jacobite, who act conformably to it, from all imputations except those of madness and folly; how shall the latter be excused when he forswears the principles he retains, acknowledges the right he renounces, takes oaths with an intent to violate them, and calls God to witness a premeditated lie? Some casuistry has been employed to excuse these men to themselves and to others. But such casuistry, and in truth every other, destroys, by distinctions and exceptions, all morality, and effaces the essential difference between right and wrong, good and evil. This the schoolmen in general have done on many occasions, the sons of *Loyola* in particular: and I wish with all my heart that nothing of the same kind could be objected to any other divines. Some political reasoning has been employed, as well as the casuistry here spoken of, and to the same purpose. It has been said that the conduct of those who are enemies to the establishment, to which they submit and swear, is justified by the principles of the Revolution. Nothing can be more false and frivolous. By the principles of the Revolution, a subject may resist, no doubt, the prince who endeavours to ruin and enslave his people, and may push this resistance to the dethronement and exclusion of him and his race: but will it follow, that, because we may justly take arms against a prince whose right to govern we once acknowledged, and who by subsequent acts has forfeited that right, we may swear to a right we do not acknowledge, and resist a prince whose conduct has not forfeited the right we swore to, nor given any just dispensation from our oaths?

But I shall lengthen this digression no further: it is on a subject I have treated in public writings, the refutation of which never came to my hands, and, I think, never will. I return to the subject of my present discourse. And I say that such factions as these can never create any obstruction to a prince who pursues the union of his subjects, nor disturb the peace of his government. The men who compose them must be desperate, and impotent; the most despicable of all characters, when they go together every honest and sensible man will distinguish himself

out of their number: and they will remain, as they deserve to be, hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the rest of their fellow subjects.

They will remain such, if they are abandoned to themselves, and to that habitual infatuation which they have not sense and spirit enough to break. But if a prince, out of goodness or policy, should think it worth his while to take them from under this influence, and to break these habits; even this division, the most absurd of all others, will not be found incurable. A man who has not seen the inside of parties, nor had opportunities to examine nearly their secret motives, can hardly conceive how little a share principle of any sort, though principle of some sort or other be always pretended, has in the determination of their conduct. Reason has small effect on numbers. A turn of imagination, often as violent and as sudden as a gust of wind, determines their conduct: and passion is taken, by others, and by themselves too, when it grows into habit especially, for principle. What gave strength and spirit to a Jacobite party after the late King's accession? The true answer is, a sudden turn of the imaginations of a whole party to resentment and rage, that were turned a little before to quiet submission, and patient expectation. Principle had as little share in making the turn, as reason had in conducting it. Men who had sense, and temper too, before that moment, thought of nothing, after it, but setting up a Tory king against a Whig king: and when some of them were asked, if they were sure a popish king would make a good Tory king, or whether they were determined to sacrifice their religion and liberty to him the answer was, no; that they would take arms against him if he made attempts on either; that this might be the case, perhaps, in six months after his restoration, but that, in the meantime, they would endeavour his restoration. This is no exaggerated fact: and I leave all men to judge, to what such sentiments and conduct must be ascribed, to principle or passion, to reason or madness? What gives obstinacy without strength, and sullenness without spirit, to the Jacobite Tories at this time? Another turn of imagination, or rather the same showing itself in another form; a factious habit, and a factious notion, converted into a notion of policy and honour. They are taught to believe, that by clinging together they are a considerable weight, which may be thrown in to turn the scale in any great event; and that in the meantime, to be a steady suffering party is an honour they may flatter themselves with very

justly. Thus, they continue steady to engagements which most of them wish in their hearts they had never taken; and suffer for principles, in support of which not one of them would venture further, than talking the treason that claret inspires.

It results, therefore, from all that has been said, and from the reflections which these hints may suggest, that in whatever light we view the *divided state* of a people, there is none in which these divisions will appear incurable, nor an union of the members of a great community with one another, and with their head, unattainable. It may happen in this case as it does in many others, that things uncommon may pass for improbable or impossible: and, as nothing can be more uncommon than a Patriot King, there will be no room to wonder if the natural and certain effects of his conduct should appear improbable or impossible to many. But there is still something more in this case. Though the union we speak of be so much for the interest of every king and every people, that their glory and their prosperity must increase, or diminish, in proportion as they approach nearer to it, or are further removed from it; yet is there another interest, by which princes and people both are often imposed upon so far, as to mistake it for their own. The interest I mean, is that of *private ambition*. It would be easy to show in many instances, and particularly in this, of uniting instead of dividing, and of governing by a national concurrence instead of governing by the management of parties and factions in the state, how widely different, nay how repugnant, the interests of *private ambition* and those of *real patriotism* are. Men, therefore, who are warmed by the first, and have no sense of the last, will declare for *division* as they do for *corruption*, in opposition to *union* and to *integrity* of government. They will not indeed declare directly, that the two former are in the abstract preferable; but they will affirm, with great airs of sufficiency, that both are incurable; and conclude from hence, that in practice it is necessary to comply with both. This subterfuge once open, there is no false and immoral measure in political management which may not be avowed and recommended. But the very men, who hope to escape by opening it, shut it up again, and secure their own condemnation, when they labour to *confirm* divisions, and to *propagate* corruption, and thereby to create the very *necessity* that they plead in their excuse. Necessity of this kind there is in reality none; for

it seems full as absurd to say, that popular divisions must be cultivated, because popular union cannot be procured, as it would be to say that poison must be poured into a wound, because it cannot be healed. The practice of morality, in private life, will never arrive at ideal perfection: must we give up ourselves, therefore, to all manner of immorality? And must those who are charged with our instruction endeavour to make us the most profligate of men, because they cannot make us saints?

Experience of the depravity of human nature made men desirous to unite in society and under government, that they might defend themselves the better against injuries; but the same depravity soon inspired to some the design of employing societies to invade and spoil societies; and to disturb the peace of the great commonwealth of mankind, with more force and effect in such collective bodies, than they could do individually. Just so it happens in the domestic economy of particular states: and their peace is disturbed by the same passions. Some of their members content themselves with the common benefits of society, and employ all their industry to promote the public good: but some propose to themselves a separate interest, and, that they may pursue it the more effectually, they associate with others. Thus *factions* are in them, what *nations* are in the world; they invade and rob one another: and, while each pursues a separate interest, the common interest is sacrificed by them all: that of mankind in one case, that of some particular community in the other. This has been, and must always be, in some measure, the course of human affairs, especially in free countries, where the passions of men are less restrained by authority: and I am not wild enough to suppose that a Patriot King can change human nature. But I am reasonable enough to suppose, that, without altering human nature, he may give a check to this course of human affairs, in his own kingdom at least; that he may defeat the designs, and break the spirit of factions, instead of partaking in one, and assuming the other; and that, if he cannot render the union of his subjects universal, he may render it so general as to answer all the ends of good government, private security, public tranquility, wealth, power, and fame.

If these ends were ever answered, they were so, surely, in this country, in the days of our Elizabeth. She found her kingdom full of factions, and factions of another consequence and danger than these of our days,

whom she would have dispersed with a puff of her breath. She could not re-unite them, it is true: the papist continued a papist, the puritan a puritan; one furious, the other sullen. But she united the great body of the people in her and their *common interest*, she inflamed them with *one national spirit*, and, thus armed, she maintained tranquility at home, and carried succour to her friends and terror to her enemies abroad. There were cabals at her court, and intrigues among her ministers. It is said too, that she did not dislike that there should be such. But these were kept within her court. They could not creep abroad, to sow division among her people, and her greatest favourite the Earl of Essex paid the price of attempting it with his head. Let our great doctors in politics, who preach so learnedly on the trite text *Divide et impera*, compare the conduct of Elizabeth in this respect with that of her successor, who endeavoured to govern his kingdom by the notions of a *faction* that he raised, and to manage his *parliament* by *undertakers*: and they must be very obstinate indeed, if they refuse to acknowledge, that a wise and good prince can unite a divided people, though a weak and wicked prince cannot; and that the consequences of national union are glory and happiness to the prince and to the people, whilst those of disunion bring shame and misery on both, and entail them too on posterity.

I have dwelt long on the last head, not only because it is of great importance in itself, and at all times, but because it is rendered more so than ever at this time, by the unexampled avowal of contrary principles. Hitherto it has been thought the highest pitch of profligacy to own, instead of concealing, crimes, and to take pride in them, instead of being ashamed of them. But in our age men have soared to a pitch still higher. The first is common, it is the practice of numbers, and by their numbers they keep one another in countenance. But the choice spirits of these days, the men of mode in politics, are far from stopping where criminals of all kinds have stopped, when they have gone even to this point; for generally the most hardened of the inhabitants of *Newgate* do not go so far. The men I speak of contend, that it is not enough to be vicious by *practice* and *habit*, but that it is necessary to be so by *principle*. They make themselves missionaries of faction as well as of corruption: they recommend both, they deride all such as imagine it possible, or fit to retain truth, integrity, and a disinterested regard to the public in

public life, and pronounce every man a fool who is not ready to act like a knave. I hope that enough has been said, though much more might have been said, to expose the wickedness of these men, and the absurdity of their schemes; and to show that a Patriot King may walk more easily and successfully in other paths of government, *per tutum planumque iter religionis, justitiae, honestatis, virtutumque moralium*. Let me proceed, therefore, to mention two other heads of the conduct that such a king will hold, and it shall be my endeavour not to fall into the same prolixity.

A king who esteems it his duty to support, or to restore, if that be needful, the free constitution of a limited monarchy; who forms and maintains a wise and good administration; who subdues faction, and promotes the union of his people: and who makes their greatest good the constant object of his government, may be said, no doubt, to be in the true interest of his kingdom. All the particular cases, that can arise, are included in these general characteristics of a wise and good reign. And yet it seems proper to mention, under a distinct head, some particular instances that have not been touched, wherein this wisdom and goodness will exert themselves.

Now, though the true interest of several states may be the same in many respects, yet is there always some difference to be perceived, by a discerning eye, both in these interests, and in the manner of pursuing them; a difference that arises from the situation of countries, from the character of people, from the nature of government, and even from that of climate and soil; from circumstances that are, like these, permanent, and from others that may be deemed more accidental. To illustrate all this by examples, would be easy, but long. I shall content myself therefore to mention, in some instances only, the difference that arises from the causes referred to, between the true interest of our country, and that of some or all our neighbours on the continent: and leave to extend and apply in own thoughts the comparison I shall hint at, rather than enlarge upon.

The situation of *Great Britain*; the character of her people, and the nature of her government, fit her for trade and commerce. Her climate and her soil make them necessary to her wellbeing. By trade and commerce, we grow a rich and powerful nation, and by their decay we are growing poor and impotent. As trade and commerce enrich, so they for-

tify, our country. The sea is our barrier, ships are our fortresses, and the mariners, that trade and commerce alone can furnish, are the garrisons to defend them. *France* lies under great disadvantages in trade and commerce, by the nature of her government. Her advantages, in situation, are as great at least as ours. Those that arise, from the temper and character of her people, are a little different perhaps, and yet upon the whole equivalent. Those of her climate and her soil are superior to ours, and indeed to those of any *European* nation. The United Provinces have the same advantages that we have in the nature of their government, more perhaps in the temper and character of their people, less to be sure in their situation, climate, and soil. But, without descending into a longer detail of the advantages and disadvantages attending each of these nations in trade and commerce, it is sufficient for my present purpose to observe, that *Great Britain* stands in a certain middle between the other two, with regard to *wealth* and *power* arising from these springs. A less, and a less constant, application to the improvement of these may serve the ends of *France*; a greater is necessary in this country, and a greater still in *Holland*. The *French* may improve their natural wealth and power by the improvement of trade and commerce. We can have no wealth, nor power by consequence, as *Europe* is now constituted, without the improvement of them, nor in any degree but proportionably to this improvement. The *Dutch* cannot subsist without them. They bring wealth to other nations and are necessary to the wellbeing of them; but they supply the *Dutch* with food and raiment and are necessary even to their being.

The result of what has been said is *in general*, that the wealth and power of all nations depending so much on their trade and commerce, and every nation being, like the three I have mentioned, in such different circumstances of advantage or disadvantage in the pursuit of this common interest; a good government, and therefore the government of a Patriot King, will be directed constantly to make the most of every advantage that nature has given, or art can procure, towards the improvement of trade and commerce. And this is one of the principal criterions by which we are to judge, whether governors are in the true interest of the people or not.

It results, *in particular*, that *Great Britain* might improve her wealth and power in a proportion superior to that of any nation who can be

deemed her rival, if the advantages she has were as wisely cultivated, as they will be in the reign of a Patriot King. To be convinced more thoroughly of this truth, a very short process of reasoning will suffice. Let any man who has knowledge enough for it, first compare the natural state of *Great Britain*, and of the United Provinces, and then their artificial state together. That is, let him consider minutely the advantages we have because the situation, extent, and nature of our island, over the inhabitants of a few salt marshes gained on the sea, and hardly defended from it: and after that, let him consider how nearly these provinces have raised themselves to an equality of wealth and power with the kingdom of *Great Britain*. From whence arises this difference in improvement? It arises plainly from hence: the *Dutch* have been, from the foundation of their commonwealth, a nation of *patriots* and *merchants*. The spirit of that people has not been diverted from these two objects, the defence of their liberty, and the improvement of their trade and commerce: which have been carried on by them with uninterrupted and unslackened application, industry, order, and economy. In *Great Britain* the case has not been the same, in either respect; but here we confine ourselves to speak of the last alone.

Trade and commerce, such as they were in those days, had been sometimes, and in some instances, before the reign of Queen Elizabeth, encouraged and improved: but the great encouragements were given, the great extensions and improvements were made, by that glorious princess. To her we owe that spirit of domestic and foreign trade which is not quite extinguished. It was she who gave that rapid motion to our whole mercantile system which is not entirely ceased. They both flagged under her successor, were not revived under his son; were checked, diverted, clogged, and interrupted, during our civil wars; and began to exert new vigour after the Restoration, in a long course of peace; but met with new difficulties, too, from the confirmed rivalry of the *Dutch*, and the growing rivalry of the *French*. To one of these the pusillanimous character of James the First gave many scandalous occasions: and the other was favoured by the conduct of Charles the Second, who never was in the true interest of the people he governed. From the Revolution to the death of Queen Anne, however trade and commerce might be aided and encouraged in other respects, they were necessarily subjected to depredations

abroad, and overloaded by taxes at home, during the course of two great wars. From the accession of the late king to this hour, in the midst of a full peace, the debts of the nation continue much the same, the taxes have been increased, and for eighteen years of this time we have tamely suffered continual depredations from the most contemptible maritime power in *Europe*, that of *Spain*.

A Patriot King will neither neglect nor sacrifice his country's interest. No other interest, neither foreign nor domestic, neither public nor private, will influence his conduct in government. He will not multiply taxes wantonly nor keep up those unnecessarily which necessity has laid, that he may keep up legions of tax-gatherers. He will not continue national debts, by all sorts of political and other profusion; nor, more wickedly still, by a settled purpose of oppressing and impoverishing the people; that he may with greater ease corrupt some, and govern the whole, according to the dictates of his passions and arbitrary will. To give ease and encouragement to manufactory at home, to assist and protect trade abroad, to improve and keep in heart the national colonies, like so many farms of the mother country, will be principal and constant parts of the attention of such a prince. The wealth of the nation he will most justly esteem to be his wealth, the power his power, the security and the honour, his security and honour; and, by the very means by which he promotes the two first, he will wisely preserve the two last; for by these means, and by these alone, can the great advantage of the *situation* of this kingdom be taken and improved.

Great Britain is an island: and, whilst nations on the continent are at immense charge in maintaining their barriers, and perpetually on their guard, and frequently embroiled, to extend or strengthen them, *Great Britain* may, if her governors please, accumulate wealth in maintaining hers; make herself secure from invasions, and be ready to invade others when her own immediate interest, or the general interest of *Europe* require it. Of all which Queen Elizabeth's reign is a memorable example, and undeniable proof. I said the *general interest* of *Europe*; because it seems to me that this, alone, should call our councils off from an almost entire application to their domestic and proper business. Other nations must watch over every motion of their neighbours; penetrate, if they can, every design; foresee every minute event; and take part by some

engagement or other in almost every conjuncture that arises. But as we cannot be easily nor suddenly attacked, and as we ought not to aim at any acquisition of territory on the continent, it may be our interest to watch the secret workings of the several councils abroad; to advise, and warn; to abet, and oppose; but it never can be our true interest easily and officiously to enter into action, much less into engagements that imply action and expense. Other nations, like the *velites* or light-armed troops, stand foremost in the field, and skirmish perpetually. When a great war begins, we ought to look on the powers of the continent, to whom we incline, like the two first lines, the *principes* and *hastati* of a *Roman* army: and on ourselves, like the *triarii*, that are not to charge with these legions on every occasion, but to be ready for the conflict whenever the fortune of the day, be it sooner or later, calls us to it, and the sum of things, or the *general interest*, makes it necessary.

This is that *post of advantage* and *honour*, which our singular situation among the powers of *Europe* determines us, or should determine us, to take, in all disputes that happen on the continent. If we neglect it, and dissipate our strength on occasions that touch us remotely or indirectly, we are governed by men who do not know the true interest of this island, or who have some other interest more at heart. If we adhere to it, so at least as to deviate little and seldom from it, as we shall do whenever we are wisely and honestly governed, then will this nation make her proper figure: and a great one it will be. By a continual attention to improve her natural, that is her maritime strength, by collecting all her forces within herself, and reserving them to be laid out on great occasions, such as regard her immediate interests and her honour, or such as are truly important to the general system of power in *Europe*; she may be the *arbitrator of differences*, the *guardian of liberty*, and the *preserver* of that *balance*, which has been so much talked of, and is so little understood.

'Are we never to be soldiers?' you will say. Yes, constantly, in such proportion as is necessary for the defence of good government. To establish such a military force as none but bad governors can want, is to establish tyrannical power in the King or in the ministers; and may be wanted by the latter, when the former would be secure without his army, if he broke his minister. Occasionally too we must be soldiers, and for offence as well as defence; but in proportion to the nature of the conjuncture, consid-

ered always relatively to the difference here insisted upon between our situation, our interest, and the nature of our strength, compared with those of the other powers of *Europe*; and not in proportion to the desires, or even to the wants, of the nations with whom we are confederated. Like other amphibious animals, we must come occasionally on shore, but the water is more properly our element, and in it, like them, as we find our greatest security, so we exert our greatest force.

What I touch upon here, very shortly, deserves to be considered, and reconsidered, by every man who has, or may have, any share in the government of *Great Britain*. For we have not only departed too much from our true national interest in this respect; but we have done so with the general applause even of well-meaning men, who did not discern that we wasted ourselves by an improper application of our strength in conjunctures when we might have served the common cause far more usefully, nay with entire effect, by a proper application of our natural strength. There was something more than this. Armies grew so much into fashion, in time of war, among men who meant well to their country, that they who mean ill to it have kept, and keep them still up in the profoundest peace: and the number of our soldiers, in this island alone, is almost double to that of our seamen. That they are kept up against foreign enemies, cannot be said with any colour. If they are kept for show, they are ridiculous. If they are kept for any other purpose whatever, they are too dangerous to be suffered. A Patriot King, seconded by ministers attached to the true interest of their country, would soon reform this abuse, and save a great part of this expense; or apply it, in a manner preferable even to the saving of it, to the maintenance of a body of marine foot, and to the charge of a register of thirty or forty thousand seamen. But no thoughts like these, no great designs for the honour and interest of the kingdom, will be entertained, till men who have this honour and interest at heart arise to power.

I come now to the last head under which I shall consider the character and conduct of a Patriot King; and let it not be thought to be of the least importance, though it may seem, at the first mention, to concern appearances rather than realities, and to be nothing more than a circumstance contained in or implied by the great parts of the character and conduct of such a king. It is of his personal behaviour, of his manner of

living with other men, and, in a word, of his private as well as public life that I mean to speak. It is of that decency and grace, that *bienséance* of the *French*, that *decorum* of the *Latins*, that *ωρεπον*, of the *Greeks*, which can never be reflected on any character that is not laid in virtue: but for want of which, a character that is so laid will lose, at all times, part of the lustre belonging to it, and may be sometimes not a little misunderstood and undervalued. *Beauty* is not separable from *health*, nor this *lustre*, said the Stoics, from *virtue*; but as a man may be *healthful* without being *handsome*, so he may be *virtuous* without being *amiable*.

There are certain finishing strokes, a last hand as we commonly say, to be given to all the works of art. When that is not given, we may see the excellence of a general design, and the beauty of some particular parts. A judge of the art may see further; he may allow for what is wanting and discern the full merit of a complete work in one that is imperfect. But vulgar eyes will not be so struck. The work will appear to them defective, because unfinished: so that without knowing precisely what they dislike, they may admire, but they will not be pleased. Thus in moral characters, though every part be virtuous and great, or though the few and small defects in it be concealed under the blaze of those shining qualities that compensate for them; yet is not this enough even in private life: it is less so in public life, and still less so in that of a prince.

There is a certain *species liberalis*, more easily understood than explained, and felt than defined, that must be acquired and rendered habitual to him. A certain propriety of words and actions, that results from their conformity to nature and character, must always accompany him, and create an air and manner that run uniformly through the whole tenor of his conduct and behaviour: which air and manner are so far from any kind or degree or affectation, that they cannot be attained except by him who is void of all affectation. We may illustrate this to ourselves, and make it more sensible, by reflecting on the conduct of good dramatic or epic writers. They draw the characters, which they bring on the scene, from nature, they sustain them through the whole piece, and make their actors neither say nor do anything that is not exactly proper to the character each of them represents. *Oderint dum metuant* came properly out of the mouth of a *tyrant*; but Euripides would never have put that execrable sentence into the mouth of Minos or Aeacus.

A man of sense and virtue both will not fall into any great impropriety of character, or indecency of conduct: but he may slide or be surprised into small ones, from a thousand reasons, and in a thousand manners, which I shall not stay to enumerate. Against these, therefore, even men, who are incapable of falling into the others, must be still on their guard, and no men so much as princes. When their minds are filled and their hearts warmed with *true notions* of government, when they *know their duty*, and *love their people*, they will not fail in the *great* parts they are to act, in the council, in the field, and in all the arduous affairs that belong to their kingly office: at least they will not *begin* to fail, by failing in *them*. But as they are men susceptible of the same impressions, liable to the same errors, and exposed to the same passions, so they are likewise exposed to more and stronger temptations than others. Besides, the elevation in which they are placed, as it gives them great advantages, gives them great disadvantages too, that often countervail the former. Thus, for instance, a little *merit* in a prince is seen and felt by numbers: it is multiplied, as it were, and in proportion to this effect his reputation is raised by it. But then, a little *failing* is seen and felt by numbers too: it is multiplied in the same manner, and his reputation sinks in the same proportion.

I spoke above of defects that may be concealed under the blaze of great and shining qualities. This may be the case; it has been that of some princes. There goes a tradition that Henry the Fourth of *France* asked a *Spanish* ambassador, what mistresses the king of *Spain* had? The ambassador replied, like a formal pedant, that his master was a prince who feared God, and had no mistress but the queen. Henry the Fourth felt the reflection, and asked him in return, with some contempt, 'Whether his master had not virtues enough to cover one vice?' The faults or defects, that may be thus covered or compensated, are, I think, those of the man, rather than those of the king; such as arise from constitution, and the *natural* rather than the *moral* character; such as may be deemed accidental starts of passion, or accidental remissness in some unguarded hours; surprises, if I may say so, of the man on the king. When these happen seldom, and pass soon, they may be hidden like spots in the sun: but they are spots still. He who has the means of seeing them, will see them: and he who has not, may feel the effects of them without knowing precisely the cause. When they continue (for here is the danger, because, if they

continue, they will *increase*) they are spots no longer: they spread a general shade, and obscure the light in which they were drowned before. The virtues of the king are lost in the vices of the man.

Alexander had violent passions, and those for wine and women were predominant, after his ambition. They were *spots* in his character before they prevailed by the force of habit: as soon as they began to do so, the king and the hero appeared less, the rake and bully more. *Persepolis* was burnt at the instigation of *Thais*, and *Clytus* was killed in a drunken brawl. He repented indeed of these two horrible actions, and was again the king and hero upon many occasions; but he had not been enough on his guard, when the strongest incitements to vanity and to sensual pleasures offered themselves at every moment to him: and, when he stood in all his easy hours surrounded by women and eunuchs, by the panders, parasites, and buffoons of a voluptuous court, they, who could not approach the king, approached the man, and by seducing the man, they betrayed the king. His faults became habits. The *Macedonians*, who did not or would not see the one, saw the other; and he fell a sacrifice to their resentments, to their fears, and to those factions that will arise under an odious government, as well as under one that grows into contempt.

Other characters might be brought to contrast with this; the first *Scipio Africanus*, for example, or the eldest Cato: and there will be no objection to a comparison of such citizens of Rome, as these were, with kings of the first magnitude. Now the reputation of the first Scipio was not so clear and uncontroverted in *private* as in *public* life; nor was he allowed by all, to be a man of such severe virtue, as he affected, and as that age required. Naevius was thought to mean him in some verses Gellius has preserved: and Valerius Antias made no scruple to assert, that, far from restoring the fair *Spaniard* to her family, he debauched and kept her. Notwithstanding this, what authority did he not maintain? In what esteem and veneration did he not live and die? With what panegyrics has not the whole torrent of writers rolled down his reputation even to these days? This could not have happened, if the vice imputed to him had shown itself in any scandalous appearances, to eclipse the lustre of the general, the consul, or the citizen. The same rejection might be extended to Cato, who loved wine as well as Scipio loved women. Men did not judge in the days of the elder Cato perhaps, as Seneca was ready to do in those

of the younger, that drunkenness could be no crime if Cato drank: but Cato's passion, as well as that of Scipio, was subdued and kept under by his public character. His virtue warmed instead of cooling, by this indulgence to his genius or natural temper: and one may gather, from what Tully puts into his mouth, in the treatise concerning old age, that even his love of wine was rendered subservient, instead of doing hurt, to the measures he pursued in his public character.

Give me leave to insist a little on the two first Caesars, and on Mark Antony. I quote none of them as good men, but I may quote them all as great men, and therefore properly in this place; since a Patriot King must avoid the defects that diminish a great character, as well as those that corrupt a good one. Old Curio called Julius Caesar the husband of every wife, and the wife of every husband, referring to his known adulteries, and to the compliances that he was suspected of in his youth for *Nicomedes*. Even his own soldiers, in the licence of a triumph, sung lampoons on him for his profusion as well as lewdness. The youth of *Augustus* was defamed as much as that of *Julius Caesar*, and both as much as that of *Antony*. When Rome was ransacked by the panders of *Augustus*, and matrons and virgins were stripped and searched, like slaves in a market, to choose the fittest to satisfy his lust, did *Antony* do more? When *Julius* set no bounds to his debauches in *Egypt*, except those that satiety imposed, *postquam epulis bacchoque modum lassata voluptas imposuit*, when he trifled away his time with *Cleopatra* in the very crisis of the civil war, and till his troops refused to follow him any further in his effeminate progress up the *Nile*: did *Antony* do more? No; all three had vices which would have been so little borne in any former age of *Rome*, that no man could have raised himself, under the weight of them, to popularity and to power. But we must not wonder that the people, who bore the *tyrants*, bore the *libertines*; nor that indulgence was shown to the vices of the great, in a city where universal corruption and profligacy of manners were established: and yet even in this city, and among these degenerate *Romans*, certain it is, that different appearances, with the same vices, helped to maintain the *Caesars*, and ruined *Antony*. I might produce many anecdotes to show how the two former saved appearances whilst their vices were the most flagrant, and made so much amends for the appearances they had not saved, by those of a contrary kind, that a great part at least

of all which was said to defame them might pass, and did pass, for the calumny of party.

But *Antony* threw off all decorum from the first and continued to do so to the last. Not only *vice*, but *indecenty* became habitual to him. He ceased to be a general, a consul, a triumvir, a citizen of *Rome*. He became an *Egyptian* king, sunk into luxurious effeminacy, and proved he was unfit to govern men, by suffering himself to be governed by a woman. His *vices* hurt him, but his *habits* ruined him. If political modesty at least had made him disguise the first, they would have hurt him less, and he might have escaped the last: but he was so little sensible of this, that in a fragment of one of his letters to Augustus, which Suetonius has preserved, he endeavours to justify himself by pleading this very *habit*. 'What matter is it whom we lie with?' says he: 'this letter may find you perhaps with Tertulla, or Terentilla', or others that he names. 'I lie with Cleopatra, and have I not done so *these nine years*?'

These great examples, which I have produced, not to encourage vice, but to show more strongly the advantages of decency in private behaviour, may appear in some sort figures bigger than the life. Few virtues and few vices grow up, in these parts of the world and these latter ages, to the *size* of those I have mentioned; and none have such *scenes* wherein to exert themselves. But the truths I am desirous to inculcate will be as justly delivered in this manner, and perhaps more strongly felt. Failings or vices that flow from the same source of human nature, that run the same course through the conduct of princes, and have the same effects on their characters, and consequently on their government and their fortune, have all the proportion necessary to my application of them. It matters little whether a prince, who abandons that common decorum which results from nature and which reason prescribes, abandons the particular decora of this country or that, of this age or that, which result from mode, and which custom exacts. It matters little, for instance, whether a prince gives himself up to the more gross luxury of the west, or to the more refined luxury of the east; whether he becomes the slave of a domestic harlot, or of a foreign queen; in short, whether he forgets himself in the arms of one whore or of twenty; and whether he imitates Antony, or a king of *Achin*, who is reported to have passed his whole time in a seraglio, eating, drinking, chewing betel, playing with women, and talking of cockfighting.

To sum up the whole and draw to a conclusion: this *decency*, this *grace*, this *propriety of manners to character*, is so essential to princes in particular, that whenever it is neglected their virtues lose a great degree of lustre, and their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay more; by neglecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a sufficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices into habits unworthy of princes and unworthy of men.

The *constitutions of governments*, and the different *tempers* and characters of *people*, may be thought justly to deserve some consideration, in determining the behaviour of princes in private life as well as in public; and to put a difference, for instance, between the decorum of a king of *France*, and that of a king of *Great Britain*.

Louis the Fourteenth was king in an absolute monarchy and reigned over a people whose genius makes it as fit perhaps to impose on them by admiration and awe, as to gain and hold them by affection. Accordingly, he kept great state; was haughty, was reserved; and all he said or did appeared to be forethought and planned. His regard to appearances was such, that when his mistress was the wife of another man, and he had children by her every year, he endeavoured to cover her constant residence at court by a place she filled about the queen: and he dined and supped and cohabited with the latter in every apparent respect as if he had had no mistress at all. Thus he raised a great reputation; he was revered by his subjects, and admired by his neighbours: and this was due principally to the art with which he managed appearances, so as to set off his virtues, to disguise his failings and his vices, and by his example and authority to keep a veil drawn over the futility and debauch of his court.

His successor, not to the throne, but to the sovereign power, was a mere rake, with some wit, and no morals; nay, with so little regard to them, that he made them a subject of ridicule in discourse, and appeared in his whole conduct more profligate, if that could be, than he was in principle. The difference between these characters soon appeared in abominable effects; such as, cruelty apart, might recall the memory of *Nero*, or, in the other sex, that of *Messalina*, and such as I leave the chroniclers of scandal to relate.

Our *Elizabeth* was queen in a limited monarchy, and reigned over a people at all times more easily led than driven; and at that time capable

of being attached to their prince and their country, by a more generous principle than any of those which prevail in our days, by *affection*. There was a strong *prerogative* then in being, and the crown was in possession of greater legal power. Popularity was, however, then, as it is now, and as it must be always in mixed government, the sole true foundation of that sufficient authority and influence, which other constitutions give the prince *gratis*, and independently of the people, but which a king of this nation must *acquire*. The wise queen saw it, and she saw too, how much popularity depends on those appearances, that depend on the decorum, the decency, the grace, and the propriety of behaviour of which we are speaking. A warm concern for the interest and honour of the nation, a tenderness for her people, and a confidence in their affections, were appearances that ran through her whole public conduct, and gave life and colour to it. She did great things, and she knew how to set them off according to their full value, by her manner of doing them. In her *private behaviour* she showed great affability, she descended even to familiarity, but her familiarity was such as could not be imputed to her *weakness*, and was, therefore, most justly ascribed to her *goodness*. Though a woman, she hid all that was womanish about her: and if a few equivocal marks of coquetry appeared on some occasions, they passed like flashes of lightning, vanished as soon as they were discerned, and imprinted no blot on her character. She had private *friendships*, she had *favourites*: but she never suffered her *friends* to forget she was their queen; and when her *favourites* did, she made them feel that she was so.

Her successor had no virtues to set off, but he had failings and vices to conceal. He could not conceal the latter; and void of the former, he could not compensate for them. His failings and his vices therefore standing in full view, he passed for a weak prince and an ill man; and fell into all the contempt wherein his memory remains to this day. The methods he took, to preserve himself from it, served but to confirm him in it. No man can keep the decorum of manners in life, who is not free from every kind of *affectation*, as it has been said already: but he who affects what he has no pretensions to, or what is improper to his character and rank in the world, is guilty of most consummate folly; he becomes doubly ungracious, doubly indecent, and quite ridiculous. *James the First*, not having one quality to conciliate the esteem or affection of his people to

him, endeavoured to impose in their understandings; and to create respect for himself, by preaching the most extravagant notions about *kings* in general, as if they were *middle beings* between God and other men; and by comparing the extent and unsearchable mysteries of their *power* and *prerogative* to those of the divine providence. His *language* and his *behaviour* were commonly suited to such foolish pretensions; and thus, by assuming a claim to such respect and submission as were not due to him, he lost a great part of what was due to him. In short, he began at the wrong end; for though the shining qualities of the king may cover some failings and some vices that do not grow up to strong habits in the man, yet must the character of a *great* and *good king* be founded in that of a *great* and *good man*. A king who lives out of the sight of his subjects or is never seen by them except on his throne, can scarce be despised as a man, though he may be hated as a king. But the king who lives more in their sight, and more under their observation, may be despised before he is hated, and even without being hated. This happened to King James: a thousand circumstances brought it to pass, and none more than the *indecent weaknesses* he had for his *minions*. He did not endeavour to cure this contempt and raise his character, only by affecting what he had no pretensions to, as in the former case; but he endeavoured likewise most vainly to do it by affecting what was improper to his character and rank. He did not endeavour indeed to disguise his natural *pusillanimity* and *timidity* under the mask of a bully, whilst he was imposed upon and insulted by all his neighbours, and above all by the *Spaniards*; but he retailed the scraps of Buchanan, affected to talk much, figured in church controversies, and put on all the pedantic appearances of a scholar, whilst he neglected all those of a great and good man, as well as a king.

Let not princes flatter themselves. They will be examined closely, in *private* as well as in *public life*: and those, who cannot pierce further, will judge of them by the appearances they give in both. To obtain true popularity, that which is founded in esteem and affection, they must, therefore, maintain their characters in *both*; and to that end neglect appearances in neither, but observe the *decorum* necessary to preserve the esteem, whilst they win the affections of mankind. *Kings*, they must never forget that they are *men*; *men*, they must never forget that they are *kings*. The sentiments, which one of these reflections of course inspires,

will give a humane and affable air to their whole behaviour, and make them taste in that high elevation all the joys of social life. The sentiments, that the other rejection suggests, will be found very compatible with the former: and they may never forget that they are kings, though they do not always carry the crown on their heads, nor the sceptre in their hands. *Vanity* and *folly* must entrench themselves in a constant affectation of state, to preserve regal dignity: a *wise* prince will know how to preserve it when he lays his majesty aside. He will *dare* to appear a private man, and in that character he will draw to himself a respect less ostentatious, but more real and more pleasing to him, than any which is paid to the monarch. By never *saying* what is unfit for him to say, he will never *hear* what is unfit for him to hear. By never *doing* what is unfit for him to do, he will never *see* what is unfit for him to see. Decency and propriety of manners are so far from lessening the pleasures of life, that they refine them, and give them a higher taste: they are so far from restraining the free and easy commerce of social life, that they banish the bane of it, licentiousness of behaviour. *Ceremony* is the barrier against this abuse of liberty in public; *politeness* and *decency* are so in private: and the prince, who practises and exacts them, will amuse himself much better, and oblige those, who have the honour to be in his intimacy and to share his pleasures with him, much more, than he could possibly do by the most *absolute* and *unguarded familiarity*.

That which is here recommended to princes, that constant guard on their own behaviour even in private life, and that constant decorum which their example ought to exact from others, will not be found so difficult in practice as may be imagined; if they use a proper discernment in the *choice* of the *persons* whom they admit to the nearest degrees of intimacy with them. A prince should choose his *companions* with as great care as his *ministers*. If he trusts the *business* of his state to these, he trusts his *character* to those; and his character will depend on theirs much more than is commonly thought. General experience will lead men to judge that a similitude of character determined the choice; even when chance, indulgence to assiduity, good nature, or want of reflection, had their share in the introduction of men unworthy of such favour. But, in such cases, certain it is that they, who judged wrong at first concerning him, will judge right at last. He is not a trifler, for instance. Be it so:

but if he takes trifling, futile creatures, men of mean characters, or of no character, into his intimacy, he shows a disposition to become such; and will become such, unless he breaks these habits early, and before puerile amusements grow up to be the business of his life. I mean, that the minds of princes, like the minds of other men, will be *brought down* insensibly to the *tone* of the company they keep.

A worse consequence, even than this, may follow a want of discernment in princes how to choose their companions, and how to conduct themselves in private life. Silly kings have resigned themselves to their *ministers*, have suffered these to stand between them and their people, and have formed no judgments, nor taken any measures on their own knowledge, but all implicitly on the representations made to them by their ministers. Kings of superior capacity have resigned themselves in the same manner to their *favourites*, male and female, have suffered these to stand between them and their most able and faithful counselors: their judgments have been influenced, and their measures directed by insinuations of women, or of men as little fitted as women, by nature and education, to be hearkened to, in the great affairs of government. History is full of such examples; all melancholy, many tragical! Sufficient, one would imagine, to deter princes, if attended to, from permitting the companions of their idle hours, or the instruments of their pleasures, to exceed the bounds of those provinces. Should a minister of state pretend to vie with any of these, about the forms of a *drawing-room*, the regulation of a *ruelle*, the decoration of a *ball*, or the dress of a *fine lady*, he would be thought ridiculous, and he would be truly so. But then are not any of these impertinent, when they presume to meddle in things at least as much *above* them, as those that have been mentioned are *below* the others? And are not princes, who suffer them to do so, unaccountably weak?

What shall I say further on this head? Nothing more is necessary. Let me wind it up, therefore, by asserting this great truth, that results from what has been already said. As he can never fill the character of a Patriot King, though his personal great and good qualities be in every other respect equal to it, who lies open to the flattery of *courtiers*, to the seduction of *women*, and to the partialities and affections which are easily contracted by too great indulgence in private life; so the prince,

who is desirous to establish this character, must observe such a decorum, and keep such a guard on himself, as may prevent even the *suspicion* of being liable to such influences. For as the reality would ruin, the very suspicion will lessen him in the opinion of mankind: and the opinion of mankind, which is *fame* after death, is superior *strength* and *power* in life.

And now, if the principles and measures of conduct, laid down in this discourse, as necessary to constitute that greatest and most glorious of human beings, a Patriot King, be sufficient to this purpose; let us consider, too, how *easy* it is, or ought to be, to establish them in the minds of princes. They are founded on true propositions, all of which are obvious, nay, many of them self-evident. They are confirmed by universal experience. In a word, no understanding can resist them, and none but the weakest can fail, or be misled, in the application of them. To a prince, whose heart is corrupt, it is in vain to speak: and, for such a prince, I would not be thought to write. But if the heart of a prince be not corrupt, these truths will find an easy ingress, through the understanding, to it. Let us consider again, what the sure, the necessary effects of such principles and measures of conduct must be, to the prince, and to the people. On this subject let the imagination range through the whole glorious scene of a patriot reign: the beauty of the idea will inspire those transports, which Plato imagined the vision of virtue would inspire, if virtue could be seen. What in truth can be so lovely, what so venerable, as to contemplate a king on whom the eyes of a whole people are fixed, filled with admiration, and glowing with affection? A king, in the temper of whose government, like that of Nerva, things so seldom allied as empire and liberty are intimately mixed, co-exist together inseparably, and constitute one real essence? What spectacle can be presented to the view of the mind so rare, so nearly divine, as a king possessed of absolute power, neither usurped by fraud, nor maintained by force, but the genuine effect of esteem, of confidence, and affection; the free gift of *liberty*, who finds her greatest security in this power, and would desire no other if the prince on the throne could be, what his people wish him to be, immortal? Of such a prince, and of such a prince alone, it may be said with strict propriety and truth,

Volentes

Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo.

Civil fury will have no place in this draft: or, if the monster is seen, he must be seen as *Virgil* describes him,

Centum vinctus ahenis

Post tergum nodis, fremit horridus ore cruento.

He must be seen subdued, bound, chained, and deprived entirely of power to do hurt. In his place, concord will appear, brooding peace and prosperity on the happy land; joy sitting in every face, content in every heart; a people unoppressed, undisturbed, unalarmed; busy to improve their private property and the public stock; fleets covering the ocean, bringing home wealth by the returns of industry, carrying assistance or terror abroad by the direction of wisdom, and asserting triumphantly the right and the honour of *Great Britain*, as far as waters roll and as winds can waft them.

Those who live to see such happy days, and to act in so glorious a scene, will perhaps call to mind, with some tenderness of sentiment, when he is no more, a *man*, who contributed his mite to carry on so good a work, and who desired life for nothing so much, as to see a king of *Great Britain* the most popular man in his country, and a *Patriot King* at the head of an united people.

**OF THE STATE OF PARTIES AT THE
ACCESSION OF KING GEORGE THE FIRST**

IPERCEIVE by yours that my discourse of the character and conduct of a Patriot King, in that article which relates to party, has not entirely satisfied your expectations. You expected, from some things that I remember to have said to you in conversation, and others that have fallen on that occasion from my pen, a more particular application of those general reasonings to the present time, and to the state of parties, from the late king's accession to the throne. The subject is delicate enough, and yet I shall speak upon it what truth exacts from me, with the utmost frankness: for I know all our parties too well, to esteem any; and I am too old, and too resigned to my fate, to want, or to fear any.

Whatever anecdotes you have been told, for you are too young to have seen the passages of the times I am going to mention, and whatever prepossessions you have had, take these facts for undoubted truths: that there was no design on foot, during the four last years of queen Anne's reign, to set aside the succession of the house of Hanover, and to place the crown on the head of the Pretender to it; nor any party formed for this purpose at the time of the death of that princess, whose memory I honor, and therefore feel a just indignation at the irreverence with which we have seen it treated. If such a design had been on foot, during that time, there were moments when the execution of it would not have been difficult, or dangerous enough, to have stopped men of the most moderate resolution. Neither could a design of that nature have been carried on so long, though it was not carried into execution, without leaving some traces, which would have appeared when such strict inquisitions were made; when the papers of so many of the queen's servants were seized, and even her own papers, even those she had sealed up to be burnt after her death, were exposed to so much indecent inspection. But, laying aside all arguments of the probable kind, I deny the fact absolutely: and I have the better title to expect credit, because it could not be true without my knowledge, or at least suspicion of it; and because even they who believed it, for all who asserted it did not believe it, had no proof to produce, nor have to this hour, but vain surmises; nor any authority to rest upon, but the clamor of party.

That there were particular men, who corresponded indirectly, and directly too, with the Pretender, and with others for his service; that these

men professed themselves to be zealous in it, and made large promises, and raised some faint hopes, I cannot doubt: though this was unknown to me at that time, or at least I knew it not with the same certainty, and in the same detail, that I have known it since. But if this was done by some who were in the queen's service, it was done too by some who were out of it, and, I think, with little sincerity by either.

It may well seem strange to one who carries in his breast a heart like yours, that men of any rank, and especially of the highest, should hold a conduct so false, so dangerous, always of uncertain event, and often, as it was in the case here mentioned, upon remote contingencies, and such as they themselves think the least probable. Even I think it strange, who have been much longer mingled in a corrupt world, and who have seen many more examples of the folly, of the cunning, and the perfidy of mankind. A great regard to wealth, and a total contempt of virtue, are sentiments very nearly allied: and they must possess the whole souls of men whom they can determine to such infamous duplicity, to such double treachery. In fact they do so. One is so afraid of losing his fortune, that he lays in claims to secure it, perhaps to augment it, on all sides, and to prevent even imaginary dangers. Another values so little the inward testimony of a good conscience, or the future reproaches of those he has deceived, that he scruples not to take engagements, for a time to come, that he has no design to keep; if they may serve as expedients to facilitate, in any small degree, the success of an immediate project. All this was done at the time, on the occasion, and by the persons I intend. But the scheme of defeating the protestant succession was so far from being laid by the queen and her ministers, and such a resolution was so far from being taken, that the very men I speak of, when they were pressed by the other side, that is from Versailles and St. Germain, to be more particular, and to come into a closer concert, declined both, and gave the most evasive answers.

A little before, or about, the time of the queen's death, some other persons who figured afterwards in the rebellion, entered in good earnest into those engagements, as I believe; for I do not know exactly the date of them. But whenever they took them, they took them as single men. They could answer for no party to back them. They might flatter themselves with hopes and dreams like Pompey, if little men and little things may

be compared with great, of legions ready to rise at the stamp of their feet. But they had no assurance, no, nor grounds to expect any troops, except those of the highlands; whose disposition in general was known to every man, but whose insurrection, without the concurrence of other insurrections and other troops, was deemed, even by those that made them take arms afterwards, not a strength but a weakness; ruin to the poor people, and ruin to the cause. In a word, these men were so truly single in their engagements, and their measures were so unripe for action when the resolution of acting immediately was taken by them, that, I am persuaded, they durst not communicate their design to any one man of consequence that served at that time with them. What persuades me of it is this. One man, whom they thought likely to incline to them on several accounts, they attempted indirectly and at a great distance: they came no nearer to the point with him neither then, that is just before the queen's death, nor afterwards. They had indeed no encouragement to do it; for, upon this hint, and another circumstance which fell in, both he and others took several occasions to declare, that though they would serve the queen faithfully, and exclusively of all other regards or engagements, to her last breath, yet after her decease they would acknowledge the prince on whom the succession devolved by law, and to which they had sworn, and no other. This declaration would have been that of the far greatest number of the same party, and would have been stuck to by them, if the passions and private interests of another party had not prevailed over the true interest of a new family that was going to mount the throne. You may ask me now, and the question will not be at all improper, how it came to pass, if the queen and her ministers had no design to defeat the succession, that so much suspicion of it prevailed, that so great an alarm was taken and so great a clamor raised? I might answer you very shortly and very truly. By the strange conduct of a first minister, by the contests about the negotiations of the peace, and by the arts of a party.

The minds of some ministers are like the "sanctum sanctorum" of a temple I have read of somewhere: before it a great curtain was solemnly drawn; within it nothing was to be seen but a confused group of misshapen, and imperfect forms, heads without bodies, bodies without heads, and the like. To develop the most complicated cases, and to decide in the most doubtful, has been the talent of great ministers: it

is that of others to perplex the most simple, and to be puzzled by the plainest. No man was more desirous of power than the minister here intended, and he had a competent share of cunning to wriggle himself into it; but then his part was over, and no man was more at a loss how to employ it. The ends, he proposed to himself, he saw for the most part darkly and indistinctly; and if he saw them a little better, he still made use of means disproportionate to them. That private correspondence with the queen, which produced the change of the ministry in 1710, was begun with him whilst he was secretary of state, and was continued, through him, during the two years that intervened between his leaving the court, and his return to it. This gave him the sole confidence of the queen, put him more absolutely at the head of the party that came into power, and invested him with all the authority that a first minister could have in those days, and before any man could presume to rival, in that rank, and in this kingdom, the rank of the ancient mayors of the palace in France. The tories, with whom and by whom he had risen, expected much from him. Their expectations were ill answered: and I think that such management as he employed would not have hindered them long from breaking from him, if new things had not fallen in, to engage their whole attention, and to divert their passions.

The foolish prosecution of Sacheverel had carried party rage to the height, and the late change of the ministry had confirmed it there. These circumstances, and many others relative to them, which I omit, would have made it impossible, if there had been honesty and wisdom enough to desire it, to bring about a coalition of the bulk of the tories and whigs at the latter end of this reign: as it had been brought about a few years before under the administration of my Lord Marlborough and my Lord Godolphin, who broke it soon, and before it had time to cement, by making such an use of it as I am unable to account for, even at this hour. The two parties were in truth become factions in the strict sense of the word. I was of one, and I own the guilt; which no man of the other would have a good grace to deny. In this respect they were alike; but here was the difference: one was well united, well conducted, and determined to their future, as well as their present objects. Not one of these advantages attended the other. The minister had evidently no bottom to rest his administration upon, but that of the party at the head of which he came into power: if he

had rested it there, if he had gained their confidence, instead of creating, even wantonly, if I may say so, a distrust of himself in them, it is certain he might have determined them to every national interest during the queen's time, and after her death. But this was above his conception as well as his talents. He meant to keep power as long as he could, by the little arts by which he had got into it: he thought that he should be able to compound for himself in all events, and cared little what became of his party, his mistress, or the nation. That this was the whole of his scheme appeared sufficiently in the course of his administration; was then seen by some; and has been since acknowledged by all people. For this purpose he coaxed and persecuted whigs; he flattered and disappointed tories; and supported, by a thousand little tricks, his tottering administration. To the tory party he held out the peace, as an era when all they expected should be done for them, and when they should be placed in such fulness of power and such strength of party, "that it would be more the interest of the successor to be well with them, than theirs to be well with him." Such expressions were often used, and others of like import: and, I believe, these oracular speeches were interpreted as oracles used to be, according as every man's inclinations led him.

The contest that soon followed, by the violent opposition to the negotiations of peace, did the good hinted at above to the minister, and enabled him to amuse and banter his party a little longer. But they did great, and, in some respects, irreparable mischief to Great Britain, and to all Europe. One part of the mischief they did at home is proper to be mentioned here. They dipped the house of Hanover in our party quarrels, unseasonably, I presume to think, and unpopularly; for though the contest was maintained by two parties that pretended equally to have the national interest at heart, yet the national interest was so plainly on one side of the question, and the other side was so plainly partial, at the expense of this interest, to the emperor, the princes of the empire, and our other allies, that a successor to the crown, who was himself a prince of Germany, should have preserved, in good policy, for this very reason, the appearance at least of some neutrality. The means employed openly to break the queen's measures were indecent and unjustifiable; those employed secretly, and meditated to be employed, were worse. The ministers of Hanover, whose conduct I may censure the more freely

because the late king did not approve it all, took so remarkable a share in the first, that they might be, and they were, suspected of having some in the others. This had a very bad effect, which was improved by men in the two extremes. The whigs desired nothing more than to have it thought that the successor was theirs, if I may repeat an insolent expression which was used at that time; the notion did them honor, and, though it could give no color, it gave some strength, to their opposition. The Jacobites insinuated industriously the same thing; and represented that the establishment of the house of Hanover would be the establishment of the whig party, and that the interests of Great Britain would be constantly sacrificed to foreign interests, and her wealth drained to support them under that family. I leave you to judge what ingression such exaggerations must find, on such occasion, and in such a ferment. I do not think they determined men to Jacobitism. I know they did not; but I know that they disinclined men from the succession, and made many, who resolved to submit to it, submit to it rather as a necessary evil, than as an eligible good.

This was, to the best of my observation and knowledge, the state of one party. An absurd one it was, and the consequences of it were foreseen, foretold, and pressed upon the minister at the time, but always without effect, and sometimes without any answers. He had some private intrigue for himself at Hanover: so he had at Bar. He was the bubble of one in the end: the Pretender was so of the other. But his whole management in the meantime was contrived to keep up a kind of general indetermination in the party about the succession; which made a man of great temper once say to him with passion, that "he believed no other minister, at the head of a powerful party, would not be better at Hanover, if he did not mean to be worse there."

The state of the other party was this. The whigs had appeared zealous for the protestant succession from the time when king William proposed it, after the death of the Duke of Gloucester. The tories voted for it then; and the acts that were judged necessary to secure it, some of them at least, were promoted by them. Yet were they not thought, nor did they affect, as the others did, to be thought, extremely fond of it. King William did not come into this measure, till he found, upon trial, that there was no other safe and practicable: and the tories had an air of coming into

it for no other reason. Besides which, it is certain that there was at that time a much greater leaven of Jacobitism in the tory lump, than at the time spoken of here.

Now, thus far the whigs acted like a national party, who thought that their religion and liberty could be secured by no other expedient, and therefore adhered to this settlement of the crown with distinguished zeal. But this national party degenerated soon into faction; that is, the national interest became soon a secondary and subservient motive, and the cause of the succession was supported more for the sake of the party or faction, than for the sake of the nation; and with views that went more directly to the establishment of their own administration, than to a solid settlement of the present royal family. This appeared, evidently enough, to those whom noise and show could not impose upon, in the latter end of the queen's reign, and plain beyond dispute to all mankind, after her decease. The art of the whigs was to blend, as undistinguishably as they could, all their party interests with those of the succession: and they made just the same factious use of the supposed danger of it, as the tories had endeavored to make, some time before, of the supposed danger of the church. As no man is reputed a friend to Christianity beyond the Alps and the Pyrenees, who does not acknowledge the papal supremacy, so here no man was to be reputed a friend to the protestant succession, who was not ready to acknowledge their supremacy. The interest of the present royal family was, to succeed without opposition and risk, and to come to the throne in a calm. It was the interest of a faction that they should come to it in a storm. Accordingly the whigs were very near putting in execution some of the wildest projects of insurrections and rebellion, under pretence of securing what there was not sufficient disposition, nor any preparation at all made to obstruct. Happily for the public these designs proved abortive. They were too well known to have succeeded; but they might have had, and they would have had, most fatal consequences. The storm, that was not raised to disturb and endanger the late king's accession, was only deferred. To a party, who meant nothing less than engrossing the whole power of the government and the whole wealth of the nation under the successor, a storm, in which every other man should be driven from him, was too necessary, not to be conjured up at any rate, and it was so immediately after the late king's

accession. He came to the throne easily and quietly, and took possession of the kingdom with as little trouble, as he could have expected if he had been not only the queen's successor, but her son. The whole nation submitted cheerfully to his government, and the queen's servants discharged the duty of their offices, whilst he continued them in their offices, in such a manner as to merit his approbation. This was signified to some of them, to the secretaries in particular, in the strongest terms, and according to his majesty's express order, before the whole council of state. He might I think, I thought then that he ought, and every man, except the Earl of O—d, who believed, or had a mind to make others believe, that his influence would be great in the new reign, expected, that he would have given his principal confidence and the principal power of the administration to the whigs: but it was scarce possible to expect, that he would immediately let loose the whole fury of party, suffer the queen's servants, who had surely been guilty of no crime against him, nor the state, to be so bitterly persecuted; and proscribe in effect every man in the country who did not bear forbid the name of whig. Princes have often forgot, on their accession to a throne, even personal injuries received in party quarrels: and the saying of Louis the Twelfth of France, in answer to those who would have persuaded him to show severity to La Tremouille, is very deservedly famous. "God forbid," said he, "that Louis the Twelfth should revenge the quarrels of the Duke of Orleans." Other princes, who have fought their way to the throne, have not only exercised clemency, but shown favor to those who had stood in arms against them; and here again I might quote the example of another king of France, that of Henry the Fourth. But to take an example in our own country, look back to the restoration, consider all that passed from the year 1641 to the year 1660, and then compare the measures that king Charles the Second was advised to pursue, for the establishment of his government, in the circumstances of that time, with those which the late king was advised, and prevailed on, against his opinion, inclination, and first resolution, to pursue, in the circumstances I have just mentioned. I leave the conclusion to the candor and good sense of every impartial reader.

To these measures of unexpected violence, alone, it must be ascribed, that the Pretender had any party for him of strength sufficient to appear

and act. These measures, alone, produced the troubles that followed, and dyed the royal ermines of a prince, no way sanguinary, in blood. I am far from excusing one party, for suffering another to drive them into rebellion. I wish I could forget it myself. But there are two observations on that event, which I cannot refuse myself to make. One is, that the very manner in which this rebellion was begun, shows abundantly that it was a start of passion, a sudden phrensy of men transported by their resentment, and nothing less than the execution of a design long premeditated and prepared. The other is, that few examples are to be found in history, perhaps none, of what happened on this occasion, when the same men, in the same country, and in the compass of the same year, were ready to rise in arms against one prince without any national cause; and then provoked, by the violence of their councils, the opposite faction to rise in actual rebellion against the successor.

These are some of the effects of maintaining divisions in a nation, and of governing by faction. I might descend into a detail of many fatal consequences that have followed, from the first false step which was taken, when the present settlement was so avowedly made, on the narrow bottom of party. But I consider that this discourse is growing into length; that I have had, and shall have occasion to mention some of these consequences elsewhere; and that your own reflections on what has been said will more than supply what I omit to say in this place. Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that division has caused all the mischief we lament, that union can alone retrieve it, and that a great advance towards this union was the coalition of parties, so happily begun, so successfully carried on, and of late so unaccountably neglected, to say no worse. But let me add, that this union can never be complete, till it become a union of the head with the members, as well as of the members with one another: and that such a union can never be expected till patriotism fills the throne, and faction be banished from the administration.

DISSERTATION UPON PARTIES

Letter I.

Sir: To corrupt and to divide are the trite and wicked expedients, by which some ministers in all ages have affected to govern; but especially such as have been least capable of exerting the true arts of government. There is, however, a difference to be made between these two expedients, to the advantage of the latter, and by consequence between the characters of those who put them in practice.

Every busy, ambitious child of fortune, who hath himself a corrupt heart, and becomes master of a large purse, hath all that is necessary to employ the expedient of corruption with success. A bribe, in the hand of the most blundering coxcomb that ever disgraced honor and wealth and power, will prevail as much as in the hand of a man of sense, and go farther too, if it weigh more. An intriguing chamber-maid may slip a bank note into a griping paw, as well as the most subtle demon of hell. He may govern as triumphantly by this expedient as the great knight his brother, and the great knight as Burleigh himself.

But every character cannot attempt the other expedient of dividing, or keeping up divisions, with equal success. There is, indeed, no occasion for any extraordinary genius to divide; and true wisdom despises the infamous task. But there is need of that left-handed wisdom, called cunning, and of those habits in business, called experience. He that is corrupted, co-operates with him that corrupts. He runs into his arms at the first beckon; or, in order sometimes to raise the price, he meets him but half way. On the other hand, to divide, or to maintain and renew the divisions of parties in a state, a system of seduction and fraud is necessary to be carried on. The divided are so far from being accessory to the guilt, that they would not be divided, if they were not first deceived.

From these differences, which I have observed between the two expedients, and the characters and means proper to put them in practice with success, it may be discovered perhaps why, upon former occasions, as I shall hereafter show, the expedient of dividing prospered so much better than that of corrupting; and why, upon some later occasions, the expedient of corrupting succeeds so well in those hands, which are not, and I trust will not be so lucky in maintaining or renewing our party divisions.

Much hath been written by you, Mr. D'Anvers, by your correspondents and others, who have drawn their pens in the cause of truth, virtue, and liberty, against the right reverend, as well as undignified, the noble, as well as ignoble assertors of corruption; enough surely to shame those who have not lost all sense of shame, out of so ignominious a crime; and to make those who have not lost every other sense, tremble at the consequences of it. We may flatter ourselves that those honest endeavors have had some effect; and have reason to hope that far greater will follow from those illustrious examples of repulses, which have been lately given to the grand corrupter, notwithstanding his frequent and insolent declarations that he could seduce whomsoever he had a mind to gain. These hopes are farther confirmed to us by repeated declarations of the sense of parliament, and will be turned, we doubt not, into certainty, whenever the wisdom of the two houses shall again think it proper to raise new barriers of law against this encroaching vice.

In the meantime, I think nothing can better answer the design of your papers, nor promote the public good more effectually in the present conjuncture, than to put our countrymen frequently on their guard against the artifice, which is clumsily, but industriously employed to maintain, and, if it be possible, to create new divisions amongst them. That day, which our fathers wished to see, and did not see, is now breaking upon us. Shall we suffer this light to be turned again into party-darkness by the incantations of those who would not have passed for conjurers, even in the days of superstition and ignorance? The nation is not only brought into an uniformity of opinion concerning the present administration, by the length and the righteous conduct of it; but we are grown into an unanimity about principles of government, which the most sanguine could scarce have expected, without extravagance. Certain associations of ideas were made so familiar to us, about half a century ago, and became in the course of time so habitual, that we should not have been able, even a few years ago, to break them, nor have been easily induced to believe, on the faith of any prediction, that experience and the evidence of facts would, in a few years more, break them for us, destroy all our notions of party, and substitute new ones in their room.

The power and majesty of the people, an original contract, the authority and independency of parliament, liberty, resistance, exclusion,

abdication, deposition; these were ideas associated, at that time, to the idea of a whig, and supposed by every whig to be incommunicable, and inconsistent with the idea of a tory.

Divine, hereditary, indefeasible right, lineal succession, passive obedience, prerogative, non-resistance, slavery, nay, and sometimes property too, were associated in many minds to the idea of a tory, and deemed incommunicable and inconsistent in the same manner, with the idea of a whig.

But now that which neither side would have believed on the faith of any prediction, is come to pass;

...quod divum promitter enemo

Auderet, volvenda dies en! attulit ultro.

These associations are broken; these distinct sets of ideas are shuffled out of their order; new combinations force themselves upon us; and it would actually be as absurd to impute to the tories the principles, which were laid to their charge formerly, as it would be to ascribe to the projector and his faction the name of whigs, whilst they daily forfeit that character by their actions. The bulk of both parties are really united; united on principles of liberty, in opposition to an obscure remnant of one party, who disown those principles, and a mercenary detachment from the other, who betray them.

How this change for the better comes to have been wrought in an age, when most things have changed for the worse; and since it hath been wrought, why the old distinctions are kept up in some measure, will I think be accounted for in treating this subject farther. At present, what shall we say to those who publicly speak of this national union as impracticable and chimerical, yet privately act against it, with all their might, as a practicable thing, and a real evil to them? If it be as complete and as well cemented, as I imagine it is, and as every honest Briton wishes it may be; nay, if there be nothing more than a strong tendency on all sides towards it, which no man of the least observation and candor will deny; it is surely the duty of every one, who desires the prosperity of his country, to seize the opportunity, to cultivate and improve it. If men are to be known by their works, the works of those, who oppose this union, denote them sufficiently. Wicked and unhappy men! who seek their private safety, in opposing public good. Weak and silly men! who vainly

imagine that they shall pass for the nation, and the nation for a faction; that they shall be judged in the right, and the whole body of the people in the wrong on whom would they impose? How long do they imagine that so unequal a contest can last?

There is no complaint which hath been more constantly in the mouths, no grief hath lain more heavily at the hearts of all good men, than those about our national divisions; about the spirit of party, which inspires animosity and breeds rancor; which hath so often destroyed our inward peace; weakened our national strength, and sullied our glory abroad. It is time, therefore, that all, who desire to be esteemed good men, and to procure the peace, the strength and the glory of their country by the only means, by which they can be procured effectually, should join their efforts to heal our national divisions, and to change the narrow spirit of party into a diffusive spirit of public benevolence.

That we may be more encouraged to do so, it will be of use perhaps to consider, in some particulars, what advances are already made towards that national union, without which no national good can be expected in such circumstances as ours.

Let us begin with the present temper of the members of the church of England towards the dissenters. Those laws, by which the latter were debarred from serving God after their own way, have not been these many years a terror to them. Those which were designed to hinder the propagation of their principles, and those which shut the door of all public preferment, even to such amongst them as conformed occasionally, are repealed. Far from desiring to impose any new hardships upon them, even those who have been reputed their enemies, and who have acted as such on several occasions, acknowledge their error. Experience hath removed prejudice. They see that indulgence hath done what severity never could; and from the frankness of these, if I was a dissenter, I should sooner entertain hopes of future favor, than from the double dealing of those who lean on the dissenters when they are out of power, and who esteem them a load upon them when they are in it. We are now in the true and only road, which can possibly lead to a perfect reconciliation among protestants; to the abolition of all their differences; or to terms of difference so little essential, as to deserve none of distinction. These happy ends must be obtained by mutual goodwill. They never can be

obtained by force. It is true, indeed, that force, which is the effect of a majority and superior power, may support a rivalry and erect even counter-establishments. But then, by the same means, our ancient disputes will be revived; the church will be thought really in danger; and religious feuds, which have been so long and so beneficially kept down, will once more disturb the peace of the state. It is a certain truth, that our religious and civil contests have mutually, and almost alternately, raised and fomented each other. Churchmen and dissenters have sometimes differed, and sometimes thought, or been made to think, that they differed, at least, as much about civil as religious matters. There can be, therefore, no way so effectual to compose their differences on the latter, as to improve the growing union between them on the former. “*Idem sentire de republica*,” to think alike about political affairs, hath been esteemed necessary to constitute and maintain private friendships. It is obviously more essential in public friendships. Bodies of men in the same society can never unite, unless they unite on this principle; and if they once unite on this principle, they will unite on all others, or they will readily and cheerfully make one another easy about them. Let me speak plainly. It becomes a man to do so, who means honestly. In our political divisions of whig and tory, the dissenters have adhered to the former; and they want no apology for doing so. They joined themselves to those with whom they agreed, and stood in opposition to those with whom they differed in principles of government. There could be no objection brought against them on this account. They certainly did not follow power. They did not act like a sect, or a faction, who had, and pursued an interest distinct from the interest of the whole. Their non-conformity hath nothing to do here. They concurred with conformists; and if they had been conformists themselves, as they were dissenters, they would have acted in the same manner. But if this division of parties, on the same principles, subsists no longer; if there be in truth neither a tory, nor a whig, as I have said above, but a court and a country party in being; if the political principles, which the dissenters have formerly avowed, are manifestly pursued on one side; and those which they have opposed, or others equivalent to them in their effects, are pursued on the other; can the dissenters hesitate about the option they are to make? I am persuaded they cannot. I know that several amongst them do not. What

might be, and certainly would be said, if they made their option to stand by the m, I will not so much as suggest. What must be the consequence of their standing by the nation, in opposition to him, for between these two powers the present contest lies, it is easy to tell, and impossible to deny. They will prove, in this case, to the whole world, that the spirit of liberty animates, and conscience alone determines their conduct. They, who could never brook a regal, will have the merit of saving their country from a ministerial tyranny; and their country will owe them all the acknowledgements, which are due from good and grateful citizens of the same commonwealth.

As to the other great and national division of whig and tory; he who recollects what hath passed in parliament, and observes what passes out of it, can differ very little in his opinion from what hath been said concerning it. The principal articles of your civil faith, published some time ago, or, to speak more properly, the civil faith of the old whigs, are assented and consented to by the country party; and I say, upon good authority, that if this creed was made a test of political orthodoxy, there would appear at this time but very few heretics amongst us. How different the case is on the other side, will appear not only from the actions, but from the principles of the court-party, as we find them avowed in their writings; principles more dangerous to liberty, though not so directly, nor so openly levelled against it, than even any of those, bad as they were, which some of these men value themselves for having formerly opposed.

In short, the revolution is looked upon by all sides as a new era; but the settlement then made is looked upon by the whole country party as a new Magna Carta, from whence new interests, new principles of government, new measures of submission, and new obligations arise. From thence we must date both king and people. His majesty derives his title from acts, made in consequence of it. We likewise derive, not our privileges, for they were always ours, but a more full and explicit declaration, and a more solemn establishment of them from the same period. On this foundation all the reasonable, independent whigs and tories unite. They could unite on this alone; for the whigs have always professed the principles which paved the way for the revolution; and whatever the tories may have professed, they acted upon the same principles, or they acted upon none, which would be too absurd to assert, when they brought about that great

event, in concert with the rest of the nation, as I shall some time or other prove.

To this Magna Carta, and these principles, let us adhere inviolably, in opposition to the two extremes mentioned by me at the beginning of this letter, viz: to those who disown them, and to those who betray them. Let neither the polemical skill of Lesly, nor the antique erudition of Bedford, persuade us to put on again those old shackles of false law, false reason, and false gospel, which were forged before the revolution, and broken to pieces by it. As little let us suffer the arch slyness of G, the dogmatical dryness of H, or the sousing prostitution of S to slip new shackles on us, which are inconsistent with the constituent principles of our establishment. Let us maintain and improve the national union, so happily begun, and bless God for disposing the temper of the nation almost universally to it. Such a coalition hath been long wanted in this kingdom, and never more than at this important crisis; for on this it will depend, whether they, who not only oppose the progress of that growing corruption, which had well nigh overspread the land, but endeavor to extirpate it by the roots, shall prevail; or they who nourish and propagate it, who eat themselves, and tempt others to eat the baneful fruit it bears. On this it will depend whether they shall prevail, who constantly insist against the continuance of a standing army in time of peace, agreeably to the principles of our constitution; or they who plead for it, and endeavor to make it a necessary part of that constitution, though incompatible with public liberty. On this it will depend whether they shall prevail, who endeavor to conceal the frauds which are practised, and to screen the fraudulent, at the risk of ruining credit, and destroying trade, as well as to monopolise in the hands of a few the whole wealth of the nation; or they who do their utmost to bring the former to light, and the latter to punishment, at a time when glaring fraud, or very strong symptoms of fraud, appear in so many parts of public management, from some of the greatest companies down to the turnpike at Hyde Park Corner. On this it will depend whether they shall prevail, who desire that Great Britain should maintain such a dignity and prudent reserve in the broils of Europe, as become her situation, suit her interest, and alone can enable her to cast the balance; or they who are eager, on every occasion, to prostitute her dignity, to pawn her purse, and to sacrifice her commerce,

by entangling her not only too much with the other great powers of Europe, from whom she may sometimes want reciprocal engagements, but even with those diminutive powers, from whom it would be ridiculous to expect any.

I am, sir, yours, etc.

Letter X.

Sir: It may be asked, perhaps, how men who are friends to a government, can be enemies at the same time to the constitution upon which that government is founded. But the answer will be easy, if we consider these two things: first, the true distinction, so often confounded in writing, and almost always in conversation, between constitution and government. By constitution we mean, whenever we speak with propriety and exactness, that assemblage of laws, institutions, and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason, directed to certain fixed objects of public good, that compose the general system, according to which the community hath agreed to be governed. By government we mean, whenever we speak in the same manner, that particular tenor of conduct which a chief magistrate, and inferior magistrates under his direction and influence, hold in the administration of public affairs. We call this a good government, when the execution of the laws, the observation of the institutions and customs, in short, the whole administration of public affairs, is wisely pursued, and with a strict conformity to the principles and objects of the constitution. We call it a bad government, when it is administered on other principles, and directed to other objects, either wickedly or weakly, either by obtaining new laws, which want this conformity, or by perverting old ones which had it; and when this is done without law, or in open violation of the laws, we term it a tyrannical government. In a word, and to bring this home to our own case, constitution is the rule by which our princes ought to govern at all times; government is that by which they actually do govern at any particular time. One may remain immutable; the other may, and, as human nature is constituted, must vary. One is the criterion by which we are to try the other; for surely we have a right to do so, since if we are to live in subjection to the government of our kings, our kings are to govern in subjection to the constitution; and the conformity or non-conformity of their government to it, prescribes the measure of our submission to them, according to the principles of the revolution, and of our present settlement; in both of which, though some remote regard was had to blood, yet the preservation of the constitution manifestly determined the community to the choice then made of the persons who should govern.

Another thing to be considered is this: when persons are spoken of as friends to the government, and enemies to the constitution, the term friendship is a little prostituted, in compliance with common usage. Such men are really incapable of friendship; for real friendship can never exist among those who have banished virtue and truth. They have no affection to any but themselves; no regard to any interest except their own. Their sole attachments are such as I mentioned in the last letter, attachments to power and profit, and when they have contracted a load of infamy and guilt in the pursuit of these, an attachment to that protection, which is sufficient to procure them appearances of consideration, and real impunity. They may bear the semblance of affection to their prince, and of zeal for his government; but they who are false to the cause of their country, will not be true to any other; and the very same minister who exalts his master's throne on the ruins of the constitution, that he may govern without control, or retire without danger, would do the reverse of this, if any turn of affairs enabled him to compound, in that manner, the better for himself.

Under a prince, therefore, tolerably honest, or tolerably wise, such men as these will have no great sway; at least, they will not hold it long. Such a prince will know, that to unite himself to them, is to disunite himself from his people; and that he makes a stupid bargain, if he prefers trick to policy, expedient to system, and a cabal to the nation. Reason and experience will teach him that a prince who does so, must govern weakly, ignominiously, and precariously; whilst he, who engages all the hearts, and employs all the heads and hands of his people, governs with strength, with splendor, and with safety, and is sure of rising to a degree of absolute power, by maintaining liberty, which the most successful tyrant could never reach by imposing slavery. But how few men (and princes, by their leaves, are men) have been found in times past, or can be hoped for in times to come, capable of governing by such arts as these? Some cannot propose the ends, nor some employ the means; for some are wicked, and some are weak. This general division runs through the whole race of mankind, of the multitudes designed to obey, and of the few designed to govern. It was this depravity of multitudes, as well as their mutual wants, which obliged men first to enter into societies, to depart from their natural liberty, and to subject themselves to government.

It was this depravity of the few (which is often the greater, because born no better than other men, they are educated worse) which obliged men first to subject government to constitution, that they might preserve social, when they gave up natural liberty, and not be oppressed by arbitrary will. Kings may have preceded lawgivers, for aught I know, or have possibly been the first lawgivers, and government by will have been established before government by constitution. Theseus might reign at Athens, and Eurytion at Sparta, long before Solon gave laws to one, and Lycurgus to the other of these cities. Kings had governed Rome, we know, and consuls had succeeded kings, long before the decemviri compiled a body of law; and the Saxons had their monarchs before Edgar, though the Saxon laws went under his name. These, and a thousand other instances of the same kind, will never serve to prove what my Lord Bacon would prove by them, "that monarchies do not subsist, like other governments, by a precedent law, or compact; that the original submission to them was natural, like the obedience of a child to his parents; and that allegiance to hereditary monarchs is the work of the law of nature." But that which these examples prove very plainly is, that however men might submit voluntarily in the primitive simplicity of early ages, or be subjected by conquest to a government without a constitution, yet they were never long in discovering that "to live by one man's will became the cause of all men's misery" and therefore they soon rejected the yoke, or made it sit easy on their necks. They instituted commonwealths, or they limited monarchies: and here began that struggle between the spirit of liberty and the spirit of dominion, which always hath subsisted, and that we may not flatter ourselves nor others, must always subsist, except in those instances, of which the most ancient histories furnish so few, the reigns of a Titus, or a Trajan; for it might look like flattery to quote the present most auspicious reign.

To govern a society of freemen by a constitution founded on the eternal rules of right reason, and directed to promote the happiness of the whole, and of every individual, is the noblest prerogative which can belong to humanity; and if man may be said, without profaneness, to imitate God in any case, this is the case: but sure I am he imitates the devil, who is so far from promoting the happiness of others, that he makes his own happiness to consist in the misery of others; who

governs by no rule but that of his passions, whatever appearances he is forced sometimes to put on, who endeavors to corrupt the innocent and to enslave the free, whose business is to seduce or betray, whose pleasure is to damn, and whose triumph is to torment. Odious and execrable as this character is, it is the character of every prince who makes use of his power to subvert, or even to weaken that constitution, which ought to be the rule of his government. When such a prince fills a throne with superior parts, liberty is in the utmost peril; nor does the danger diminish in proportion, if he happens to want them. Such men as we are now to speak of (friends to the government and enemies to the constitution) will be always at hand to supply his defects; for as they are the willing instruments of a wicked prince, they are the ready prompters of a weak one. They may sink into the mass of the people, and disappear in a good and a wise reign, or work themselves into power under false colors. “*Sed genus immortale manet.*” Their race will continue as long as ambition and avarice prevail in the world, and there will be bad citizens as long as there are bad men. The good ought, therefore, to be always on their guard against them, and whatever disguise they assume, whatever veils they cast over their conduct, they will never be able to deceive those long, who observe constantly the difference between constitution and government, and who have virtue enough to preserve the cause of the former, how unprofitable soever it may be at all times, and how unpopular soever at some. But I ramble too long in generals. It is high time I should come to those particular measures, by which the men I have described are most likely to carry on their designs against our constitution; after which I shall say something of the methods, by which alone their designs may be prevented, or will be defeated, if a national union oppose itself by such methods as these, in time, to them.

Now that I may do this the better, and make what I have to say the more sensibly felt, give me leave to suppose, though I speak of a remote time, and such an one as we ought to hope will never come, that our national circumstances will be just the same as they are now, and our constitution as far distant as it now is from that point of perfection, to which the revolution ought to have brought it, might have brought it, and hath given the nation a right to expect that it should be brought. The completion of that glorious deliverance is still imperfect, after five

and forty years, notwithstanding the hopes then given, the engagements then taken, and the opportunities that have since arisen. How this hath happened, by what arts this justice to the constitution hath been hitherto evaded, sometimes in favor of one government, and sometimes in favor of another, might easily be shown, and proved too, beyond contradiction. But I had rather exhort than reproach, and especially at a time when a strong tendency appears among men of all denominations to such a national union, as will effectually obtain the complete settlement of our constitution, which hath been so long delayed, if it be honestly, prudently, and vigorously improved.

It is certain then, that if ever such men as call themselves friends to the government, but are real enemies of the constitution, prevail, they will make it a capital point of their wicked policy to keep up a standing army. False appearances of reason for it will never be wanting, as long as there are pretenders to the crown; though nothing can be more absurd than to employ, in defence of liberty, an instrument so often employed to destroy it; though nothing can be more absurd than to maintain that any government ought to make use of the same expedient to support itself, as another government, on the ruins of which this government stands, was subverted for using; though nothing can be proved more manifestly by experience than these two propositions: that Britain is enabled, by her situation, to support her government, when the bulk of her people are for it, without employing any means inconsistent with her constitution; and that the bulk of the people are not only always for the government, when the government supports the constitution, but are even hard and slow to be detached from it, when the government attacks or undermines the constitution, and when they are by consequence both justified in resisting, and even obliged in conscience to resist the government.

I have heard it argued lately, that Pretenders abroad are a security at home, and that a government exposed to their attacks, will never venture to attack the constitution. I have been told too, that these notions were entertained by some who drew many political consequences from them at the revolution. But if any of those persons are still alive, I persuade myself that they have altered this opinion, since such a situation will furnish at all times pretences of danger; since pretences of danger to a government, whether real or imaginary, will be always urged with

plausibility, and generally with success, for obtaining new powers, or for straining old ones; and since whilst those who mean well to the government, are imposed upon by those who mean ill to the constitution, all true concern for the latter is lost in a mistaken zeal for the former, and the most important is ventured to save the least important, when neither one nor the other would have been exposed, if false alarms had not been rashly and too implicitly taken, or if true alarms had not given unnecessary strength to the government, at the expense of weakening the constitution.

Notwithstanding what hath been said, I do not imagine that an army would be employed by these men, directly and at first, against the nation and national liberty. I am far from thinking that any men can arise in future times, capable of attempting, in this manner, what some men in our age, who call themselves friends to the government, have been so weak and so imprudent as to avow in print, and publish to the nation. To destroy British liberty with an army of Britons, is not a measure so sure of success as some people may believe. To corrupt the parliament is a slower, but might prove a more effectual method; and two or three hundred mercenaries in the two houses, if they could be listed there, would be more fatal to the constitution, than ten times as many thousands in red and in blue out of them. Parliaments are the true guardians of liberty. For this principally they were instituted; and this is the principal article of that great and noble trust which the collective body of the people of Britain reposes in the representative. But then no slavery can be so effectually brought and fixed upon us as parliamentary slavery. By the corruption of parliament, and the absolute influence of a king, or his minister, on the two houses, we return into that state, to deliver or secure us from which parliaments were instituted, and are really governed by the arbitrary will of one man. Our whole constitution is at once dissolved. Many securities to liberty are provided, but the integrity which depends on the freedom and the independence of parliament, is the keystone that keeps the whole together. If this be shaken, our constitution totters. If it be quite removed, our constitution falls into ruin. That noble fabric, the pride of Britain, the envy of her neighbours, raised by the labor of so many centuries, repaired at the expense of so many millions, and cemented by such a profusion of blood;

that noble fabric, I say, which was able to resist the united efforts of so many races of giants, may be demolished by a race of pigmies. The integrity of parliament is a kind of palladium, a tutelary goddess, who protects our state. When she is once removed, we may become the prey of any enemies. No Agamemnon, no Achilles will be wanted to take our city. Thersites himself will be sufficient for such a conquest. But I need not dwell any longer on this subject. There is no man, who thinks at all, can fail to see the several fatal consequences which will necessarily flow from this one source, whenever it shall be opened. If the reason of the thing does not strike him enough, experience must. The single reign of Henry the Eighth will serve to show that no tyranny can be more severe than that which is exercised by a concert with parliament: that arbitrary will may be made the sole rule of government, even whilst the names and forms of a free constitution are preserved; that for a prince, or his minister, to become our tyrant, there is no need to abolish parliaments; there is no need that he who is master of one part of the legislature, should endeavor to abolish the other two, when he can use, upon every occasion, the united strength of the whole; there is no need he should be a tyrant in the gross, when he can be so in detail, nor in name, when he can be so in effect; that for parliaments to establish tyranny, there is no need therefore, to repeal Magna Carta, or any other of the great supports of our liberty. It is enough, if they put themselves corruptly and servilely under the influence of such a prince, or such a minister. On the whole, I conclude, that in the possible case here supposed, the first and principal object will be to destroy the constitution, under pretence of preserving the government, by corrupting our parliaments. I am the better founded in concluding that this may happen in some future age, by what we may observe in our own. There is surely but too much reason to suspect that the enemies of our constitution may attempt hereafter to govern by corruption, when we hear and see the friends and advocates of our present most incorrupt minister harangue and scribble in favor of corruption; when it is pleaded for and recommended, as a necessary expedient of government, by some men, of all ranks and orders; not only by professed hirelings, who write that they may eat, but by men who have talked and written themselves already out of their native obscurity and penury, by affecting zeal in the cause of liberty: not only by such as

these, but by men whose birth, education, and fortune, aggravate their crime and their folly; by men, whom honor at least should restrain from favoring so dishonorable a cause; and by men whose peculiar obligations to preach up morality should restrain them, at least, from being the preachers of an immorality, above all others, abominable in its nature, and pernicious in its effects.

These men are ready, I know, to tell us, that the influence they plead for is necessary to strengthen the hands of those who govern; that corruption serves to oil the wheels of government, and to render the administration more smooth and easy; and that it can never be of dangerous consequence under the present father of our country. Absurd and wicked triflers! “According to them, our excellent constitution” (as one of your correspondents hath observed extremely well) “is no better than a jumble of incompatible powers, which would separate and fall to pieces of themselves, unless restrained and upheld by such honorable methods as those of bribery and corruption.” They would prove, “that the form of our government is defective to a degree of ridiculousness.” But the ridicule, as well as the iniquity, is their own. A good government can want no power, under the present constitution. A bad one may, and it is fit it should. Popularity is the expedient of one, and will effectually support it. Nothing but corruption can support the other. If there was a real deficiency of power in the crown, it ought to be supplied, no doubt. The old whimsies of prerogative should not be revived; but limitations ought to be taken off, or new powers to be given. The friends of liberty acknowledge that a balance of the powers, divided among the three parts of the legislature, is essential to our constitution, and necessary to support it. The friends of liberty therefore would concur, at least to a certain point, with the friends of the ministry; for the former are friends to order, and enemies to licence. For decency’s sake, therefore, let the debate be put on this issue. Let it be such a debate as freemen may avow without blushing. To argue from this supposed deficiency of power in the crown, in favor of a scheme of government repugnant to all laws divine and human, is such an instance of abandoned villainous prostitution, as the most corrupt ages never saw, and as will place the present age, with infamous pre-eminence, at the head of them, unless the nation do itself justice, and fix the brand on those who ought to bear it.

Thus much for the iniquity of the practice pleaded for. As to the danger of it, let us agree that a prince of such magnanimity and justice as our present monarch, can never be tempted by any sordid motives to forget the recent obligation which he and his family have to the British nation, by whom they were made kings; nor to aim at greater power and wealth than are consistent with the safety of the constitution they are entrusted to preserve, and obliged to secure. Allowing this to be our present case, (and concerning our present case, there are not two opinions, I dare say, in the whole nation) yet still the symptoms I have mentioned, show that the poison, with which these pretended friends of the government, and real enemies of the constitution, corrupt the morals of mankind, hath made some progress; and if this progress be not immediately checked by proper antidotes, and the power of poisoning taken from these empirics, the disease will grow incurable. The last dismal effect of it may not, or if you please, cannot happen in this reign; but it may, nay it must happen in some other, unless we prevent it effectually and soon: and what season more proper to prevent it in, and to complete the security of our liberties, than the reign of a prince, for whom the nation hath done so much, and from whom, by consequence, the nation hath a right to expect so much? King William delivered us from popery and slavery. There was wisdom in his councils, and fortitude in his conduct. He steered through many real difficulties at home, and he fought our battles abroad; and yet those points of security, which had been neglected, or not sufficiently provided for in the honeymoon of his accession, were continually pressed upon him, during the whole course of his reign. The men who pressed them were called Jacobites, tories, republicans, and incendiaries too; not from the throne indeed, but by the clamor of those, who showed great indifference at least for the constitution, whilst they affected great zeal for the government. They succeeded however in part, and we enjoy the benefit of their success. If they did not succeed in the whole; if the settlement necessary to secure our liberty, and therefore intended at the revolution, be not yet complete, let us be persuaded, and let us act on that persuasion, that the honor of completing it was reserved to crown the glories of the present reign. To finish the great work, which king William began, of establishing the liberties of Britain on firm and durable foundations, must be reputed an honor surely; and to whom

can this honor belong more justly than to a prince, who emulates, in so remarkable a manner, all the other heroic virtues of his renowned predecessor?

I am, sir, etc.

Letter XIII.

Sir: Much hath been said occasionally, in the course of these letters, concerning the beauty and excellency of the British constitution. I shall make, however, no excuse for returning to the same subject, upon an occasion which introduces it so naturally, and indeed so necessarily. Nothing can be more apposite to the professed design of these writings; nothing of more real, and more present use. Let me speak plainly. We have been all of us, those of every side, and of every denomination, accustomed too long to value ourselves, foolishly or knavishly, on our zeal for this or that party, or for this or that government; and to make a merit of straining the constitution different ways, in order to serve the different purposes of each. It is high time we should all learn, if that be still possible, to value ourselves in the first place on our zeal for the constitution; to make all governments, and much more all parties bow to that, and to suffer that to bow to none. But how shall this constitution be known, unless we make it the subject of careful enquiry, and of frequent and sober reflection? Or unknown, how shall it become, what it ought to be, the object of our admiration, our love and our zeal? Many of those who reap the greatest advantages from it, pass it by unregarded, with equal folly and ingratitude. Many take a transient, inattentive view of it. Many again consider it in part only, or behold it in a narrow, pedantic light. Instead of this, we should view it often. We should pierce through the form to the soul of it. We should contemplate the noble object in all its parts, and in the whole, and render it as familiar to our intellectual sight, as the most common sensible objects are to our corporeal sight. “*Quam illa ardentis amoris excitaret sui, si videretur?*” Well may it be allowed me to apply to so glorious an effort of human wisdom, what Tully says after Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, if I mistake not, of wisdom herself. “All public regiment,” says Mr. Hooker, “hath arisen from deliberate advice, consultation, and composition between men.” The proposition is undoubtedly and universally true. It is as true in the kingdom of Morocco, as it is in the kingdom of Britain; and the undeniable consequences which flow from it are obvious. We are not to wonder, however, if men do not look up to this original of government, nor trace these consequences from it in most countries. In the institution of governments, too great powers have been usually

given, and too great confidence reposed, either at first, or in process of time. These powers have subsisted, have been confirmed by more time, and increased by the very nature of power, which is the properest instrument of its own propagation. But the original composition, for want of being expressed, or sufficiently implied, or frequently recurred to by the forms of the government, hath been forgot, or hath grown so obsolete, that they whose interest required that no such thing should be believed, have thought themselves at liberty boldly to deny it; and not only so, but to suppose some other original of government. Strange systems of policy, and stranger of religion, have been devised to support and sanctify these usurpations. Education hath been set on the same side; and saucy authority hath prevailed against the clearest light of nature, and the plainest dictates of common sense. No man who hath read and looked abroad into the world, and made a reasonable use of either, will think this too strange to be true; since there is no demonstrated truth (such truths I mean as are here spoken of) which may not be rendered, at least, very problematically, by long, uniform, positive contradiction; nor any demonstrated lie, which may not be rendered probable to many, and certain to some, by a long, uniform, positive affirmation; according to a just observation made by Father Paul somewhere or other, on occasion of Constantine's supposed grant, and other cheats of the court of Rome. But we of this country have been more happy. Our original contract hath been recurred to often, and as many cavils as have been made, as many jests as have been broken about this expression, we might safely defy the assertors of absolute monarchy and arbitrary will, if there were any worth our regard, to produce any one point of time, since which we know any thing of our constitution, wherein the whole scheme of it would not have been one monstrous absurdity, unless an original contract had been supposed. They must have been blinded therefore by ignorance, or passion, or prejudice, who did not always see that there is such a thing necessarily, and in the very nature of our constitution; and that they might as well doubt whether the foundations of an ancient, solid building were suited and proportioned to the elevation and form of it, as whether our constitution was established by composition and contract. Sure I am that they must be worse than blind, if any such there are, who do not confess at this time, and under the present settlement, that our constitution is in

the strictest sense a bargain, a conditional contract between the prince and the people, as it always hath been, and still is, between the representative and collective bodies of the nation.

That this bargain may not be broken, on the part of the prince with the people (though the executive power be trusted to the prince, to be exercised according to such rules, and by the ministry of such officers as are prescribed by the laws and customs of this kingdom) the legislative, or supreme power, is vested by our constitution in three estates, whereof the king is one. Whilst the members of the other two preserve their private independence, and those estates are consequently under no dependency, except that which is in the scheme of our constitution, this control on the first will always be sufficient; and a bad king, let him be as bold as he may please to be thought, must stand in awe of an honest parliament.

That this bargain may not be broken, on the part of the representative body, with the collective body of the nation, it is not only a principal, declared right of the people of Britain, that the election of members to sit in parliament shall be free, but it hath been a principal part of the care and attention of parliaments, for more than three hundred years, to watch over this freedom, and to secure it, by removing all influence of the crown, and all other corrupt influence, from these elections. This care and this attention have gone still farther. They have provided, as far as they have been suffered to provide hitherto, by the constitutional dependency of one house on the other, and of both on the crown, that all such influence should be removed from the members after they are chosen. Even here the providence of our constitution hath not stopped. Lest all other provisions should be ineffectual to keep the members of the house of commons out of this unconstitutional dependency, which some men presume, with a silly dogmatic air of triumph, to suppose necessary to support the constitutional independence of the crown, the wisdom of our constitution hath thought fit that the representatives of the people should not have time to forget that they are such; that they are empowered to act for the people, not against them. In a word, our constitution means, that the members of this body should be kept, as it were, to their good behavior, by the frequent returns of new elections. It does all that a constitution can do, all that can be done by legal provisions, to secure

the interests of the people, by maintaining the integrity of their trustees: and lest all this should fail, it gives frequent opportunities to the people to secure their interests themselves, by mending their choice of their trustees; so that as a bad king must stand in awe of an honest parliament, a corrupt house of commons must stand in awe of an honest people.

Between these two estates, or branches of the legislative power, there stands a third, the house of peers; which may seem in theory, perhaps, too much under the influence of the crown, to be a proper control upon it, because the sole right of creating peers resides in the crown; whereas the crown hath no right to intermeddle in electing commoners. This would be the case, and an intolerable one indeed, if the crown should exercise this right often, as it had been exercised sometimes with universal and most just disapprobation. It is possible too, that this may come to be the case, in some future age, by the method of electing peers to sit in parliament, for one part of the same kingdom, by the frequent translations of bishops, and by other means, if the wisdom and virtue of the present age, and the favorable opportunity of the present auspicious and indulgent reign do not prevent it. But in all other respects, the persons who are once created peers, and their posterity, according to the scheme of the constitution, having a right to sit and debate, and vote in the house of peers, which cannot be taken from them, except by forfeiture; all influence of the kind I have mentioned seems to be again removed, and their share in the government depending neither on the king nor the people, they constitute a middle order, and are properly mediators between the other two, in the eye of our constitution.

It is by this mixture of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic power, blended together in one system, and by these three estates balancing one another, that our free constitution of government hath been preserved so long inviolate, or hath been brought back, after having suffered violations, to its original principles, and been renewed, and improved too, by frequent and salutary revolutions. It is by this that weak and wicked princes have been opposed, restrained, reformed, punished by parliaments; that the real, and perhaps the doubtful, exorbitances of parliaments have been reduced by the crown, and that the heat of one house hath been moderated, or the spirit raised, by the proceedings of the other. Parliaments have had a good effect on the people, by keep-

ing them quiet; and the people on parliaments, by keeping them within bounds, which they were tempted to transgress. A just confidence in the safe, regular, parliamentary methods of redressing grievances hath often made the freest, and not the most patient people on earth, bear the greatest grievances much longer than people held under stronger restraints, and more used to oppression, who had not the same confidence, nor the same expectation, have borne even less. The cries of the people, and the terror of approaching elections, have defeated the most dangerous projects for beggaring and enslaving the nation; and the majority without doors hath obliged the majority within doors, to truckle to the minority. In a word, two things may be said with truth of our constitution, which I think neither can, nor ever could be said of any other. It secures society against the miseries which are inseparable from simple forms of government, and is liable as little as possible to the inconveniencies that arise in mixed forms. It cannot become uneasy to the prince, or people, unless the former be egregiously weak or wicked; nor be destroyed, unless the latter be excessively and universally corrupt. But these general assertions require to be a little better explained.

By simple forms of government, I mean such as lodge the whole supreme power, absolutely and without control, either in a single person, or in the principal persons of the community, or in the whole body of the people. Such governments are governments of arbitrary will, and therefore, of all imaginable absurdities the most absurd. They stand in direct opposition to the sole motive of submission to any government whatsoever; for if men quit the state, and renounce the rights of nature (one of which is, to be sure, that of being governed by their own will) they do this, that they may not remain exposed to the arbitrary will of other men, the weakest to that of the strongest, the few to that of the many. Now, in submitting to any simple form of government whatever, they establish what they mean to avoid, and for fear of being exposed to arbitrary will sometimes, they choose to be governed by it always. These governments do not only degenerate into tyranny, they are tyranny in their very institution; and they who submit to them are slaves, not subjects, however the supreme power may be exercised: for tyranny and slavery do not so properly consist in the stripes that are given and received, as in the power of giving them at pleasure, and the necessity of receiving

them, whenever and for whatever they are inflicted. Absolute democracy may appear to some, in abstracted speculations, a less deviation from nature than monarchy, and more agreeable to reason, because here it is the will of the whole community that governs the whole community, and because reason does certainly instruct every man, even from a consciousness of his own frailty, the *impotentia animi* of the Latin writers, to trust as little power as possible to any other man. But still it must be confessed, that if it be unsafe for a people to trust too much power to a prince, it is unsafe for them likewise to keep too much power to themselves. Absolute monarchy is tyranny; but absolute democracy is tyranny and anarchy both. If aristocracy be placed between these two extremes, it is placed on a slippery ridge, and must fall into one or the other, according to the natural course of human affairs; if the few who govern are united, into tyranny, perhaps, more severe than any other; if they are disunited, into factions and disorders as great as those of the most tumultuous democracy.

From such observations, and many of the same kind and tendency, it hath been concluded very reasonably, that the best form of government must be one compounded of these three, and in which they are all so tempered, that each may produce the good effects, and be restrained by the counter workings of the other two, from producing the bad effects that are natural to it. Thus much is evident. But then how to fix that just proportion of each, how to hit that happy temperament of them all in one system, is a difficulty that hath perplexed the wisest politicians, and the most famous legislators. Let me quote one of the greatest writers of antiquity. Tacitus acknowledges, in the fourth book of his annals, what is here advanced; but he thinks such a constitution of government rather a subject of fine speculation than of practice. He thinks it much more likely that such a system should continue to be admired and praised in idea, than established in fact; and if it happens ever to be established, he does not imagine it can be supported long. Not only the real difficulties which his sagacity presented to his mind, but his reflections on the constitution and fate of the Roman commonwealth might lead Tacitus into this dependency. But what the refinements of Roman policy could not do, hath been done in this island, upon foundations laid by the rough simplicity of our northern ancestors.

It would be a curious and entertaining amusement, to reduce the constitutions of the Roman government, and of those which were formed on the ruins of that empire, particularly of our own, to their first principles; to observe in which they agree, and in which they differ, and the uniform or various tendencies of each; to mark the latent, as well as apparent causes of their rise and fall; how well or how ill they were contrived for triumphs abroad, or peace at home; for vain grandeur, or real prosperity; for resisting corruption, or being ruined by it. Such an analysis and enquiry would be, I imagine, not only amusing, but useful. At least, it would be more so than any rhapsody of general reflections, huddled together with little order or design; for these leave no systematic impressions on the mind; nothing but a confusion of ideas, often bright and glittering, seldom instructive. But a work of this kind would be too voluminous and too aspiring for these little essays, and the humble author of them. He will therefore keep to his point, and content himself to make some of those observations alone, which seem proper to illustrate and prove what he hath advanced, that the British constitution is a plain and sufficient rule of judgment and conduct to us in every thing that regards our liberty; for preserving of which, as well as for securing its own duration, it is better fitted than any other.

There was so great a mixture of monarchical power in the Roman commonwealth, that Livy dates the original of liberty from the expulsion of the Tarquins, rather because the consular dignity was made annual, than because the regal power had suffered any diminution in that change. The dictatorial power the most absolute that can be imagined, was introduced in eight, or at farthest in eleven years afterwards, and may therefore be reckoned coeval with the commonwealth; and whatever diminution either this or the consular power might suffer, the axes and the rods were terrible to the last, especially when they were carried before a dictator, for whom the tribunes of the people were not a match, as they were for the consuls. But though there were three sorts of power exercised, there were but two orders, or estates established in this commonwealth, the patricians and the plebeians; and the supreme power was divided accordingly between the senate and the collective, nor a representative body of the people. These two orders or estates had frequent contests, and well they might, since they had very opposite inter-

ests. Agrarian laws, for instance, began to be promulgated within three-and-twenty years, and continued to the end of the commonwealth to produce the same disorders. How inconsistent, indeed, was that plan of government, which required so much hard service of the people; and which, leaving them so much power in the distribution of power, left them so little property in the distribution of property? Such an inequality of property, and of the means of acquiring it, cannot subsist in an equal commonwealth; and I much apprehend that any near approaches to a monopoly of property, would not be long endured even in a monarchy. But I return to my first observation.

Though the Romans made frequent experience of the cruel mischiefs, and even extreme danger to liberty, which attended almost every variance of the two estates, yet did they never fall upon any safe or effectual method of preventing these disputes, or of reconciling them without violence. The old expedients alone subsisted; and surely they were not only violent, but extraconstitutional. When the senate was inflexible, the people had immediate recourse to sedition. When the people was refractory, the senate had recourse to a dictator. The latter had an approbation which could not be given to the former, and was a legal institution; notwithstanding which I make no scruple of saying that it was at least as inconsistent with a free constitution of government as the former. Sedition was temporary anarchy. A dictator was a tyrant for six months, unless he thought fit to abdicate sooner. The constitution was suspended, and endangered by both. It might have been destroyed by the excesses of one. It was destroyed by the bare duration of the other. If the Romans had annually elected out of their tribes a certain number of men to represent the people instead of depending on their tribunes; a sort of bullying magistracy, and often a very corrupt one, and if this representative body had been one estate, and had acted as such, the consuls might very well have supplied the place of a third estate, and have been safely trusted, even more independently of the senate than they were, with the executive power. But the want of a third estate in the Roman system of government, and of a representative body, to act for the collective body, maintained one perpetual ferment, which often increased into a storm, but never subsided into a calm. The state of Rome, and of the greatest men in that commonwealth, would have deserved pity rather than envy,

even in the best times, if their defective constitution had not made such a state of trouble and tumult the price they paid for the maintenance of their liberty. But this was not the whole price. Whilst Rome advanced triumphantly in conquering the world, as her orators, poets, and historians have expressed themselves; that is, a few nations round the Mediterranean sea, and little more; her citizens turned against one another those weapons, which were put into their hands against the enemies of Rome. Mutual proscriptions and bloody massacres followed; each party triumphed in its turn; they were more animated and better disciplined by their contests; both grew stronger; the commonwealth alone grew weaker; and Pompey and Caesar finished the last tragic scene, which Marius and Sylla began. In fine, the Roman commonwealth would have been dissolved much sooner than it was, by the defects I have mentioned, which many circumstances concurred to aggravate, if such a spirit of wisdom, as well as courage, and such an enthusiasm for the grandeur, the majesty, and the duration of their empire had not possessed this people, as never possessed any other. When this spirit decayed, when this enthusiasm cooled, the constitution could not help, nay, worked against itself. That dictatorial power, on which the senate had always depended for preserving it, completed the ruin of it, in the hands of Caesar; and that tribunitial power to which the people had always trusted the defence of their liberty, confirmed their slavery in the hands of Augustus.

I am, sir, etc

Letter XVI.

Sir: I have dwelt long, perhaps too long, on the last head. I was induced to it, not only because the account I have given, according to the truth of history, is contrary to the national prejudices of many people on this subject, as I hinted before; but principally because the great point of strength and security, on which the freedom of our constitution rests, will appear in a fuller light, by being thus contrasted with the constitution of the French government. Both their ancestors and ours came out of Germany, and had probably much the same manners, the same customs, and the same forms of government. But as they proceeded differently in the conquests they made, so did they in the establishments that followed. The conquest of Britain was a work of time, and the Saxon monarchy was long in forming. The conquest of Gaul was carried on with greater rapidity, and the French monarchy was sooner found. From hence some reasons might be drawn to account, amongst others, for that great difference between the constitutions of the two monarchies, which these two German nations founded, at no great distance of time, in Britain and in Gaul. But I shall not indulge myself in guessing at the reasons, or accidents, that determined the Franks to the division they made of their people, and to the form of government they established. Whatever reasons or accidents determined them, this is certain, that the distinction of lord and vassal became the general distinction of the whole nation; that the commons amongst them were little better than slaves, whatever they had been in Germany; and that they were so inured to servitude under their kings, prelates, and lords, that they looked on themselves at last, not justly, but unjustly, as men who had no right, no, not even a right by nature, to any share in the government of that community whereof they made so vastly the principal part.

In Britain another constitution was formed, and another spirit prevailed. The Saxons had a nobility too, arising from personal valor, or wisdom, continued by blood, and sometimes conferred by the prince, however legally at first it matters not to inquire, on such as held great offices about his person. All these were the adelings, or nobles, an handful in comparison of the frilingi, or free-born, who made the body of the Saxon people. The freedom of this people was erected on two columns, that

have proved more durable than brass. They were parties to the making, and to the executing all the general laws of the kingdom. They shared the legislative power; were joined to the lords in the administration of justice; and no magistrate, or officer, could exercise jurisdiction, nor authority over them, no not ecclesiastical, without their consent and election. The *comites ex plebe*, who were chosen for this last function, the administration of justice, made one rank amongst the Saxon commonalty. The *custodes pagani*, such as had an helmet, a coat of mail, and a gilt sword, for their ordinary arms, whether they fought on foot, or on horseback, made another rank; and the plain *pagani*, or *ceorles*, made the lowest. But even these were totally distinct from, and far superior to the *lazzi*, or slaves, nay to the free *lazzi*, such as had been slaves, and were become free. The *ceorles* were freemen to all intents and purposes, and in all the essentials of liberty, as much as the Saxons of any superior rank, and were capable of rising to any superior rank by merit, or by favor.

These are the sources, from which all the distinction of rank and degree, that exist at this day, amongst us, have flowed. These are the general principles of all our liberties. That this Saxon constitution hath varied in many particulars, and at several periods of time, I am far from denying. That it did so, for instance, on the entry of the Normans, though certainly not near so much as many have been willing to believe, and to make others believe, is allowed. Nay, let it be allowed, for argument's sake, and not otherwise, that during the first confusion, and the subsequent disorders which necessarily accompany and follow so great and so violent a revolution, the scheme of the Saxon constitution was broken, and the liberties of the people invaded, as well as the crown usurped. Let us even agree that laws were made, without the consent of the people; that officers and magistrates, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, were imposed without their election; in one word, that these Norman kings, and the lords, had mounted each other too high to be lords over freemen, and that the government was entirely monarchical and aristocratic, without any exercise of democratic power. Let all this be granted, and the utmost that can be made of it, will amount to this, that confusion and violence at the entry, and for some time after, under the government of a foreign race, introduced many illegal practices, and some foreign principles of policy, contrary to the spirit, and letter too, of the ancient constitution;

and that these kings and the lords “abused their power over the freemen by extortion and oppression, as lords over tenants.” But it will remain true, that neither kings nor lords, nor both together, “could prevail over them, or gain their consent to give their right, or the law, up to the king’s beck. But still the law remained arbiter both of king and people, and the parliament supreme expounder and judge both of it and them.” Though the branches were lopped, and the tree lost its beauty for a time, yet the root remained untouched, was set in a good soil, and had taken strong hold in it; so that care and culture, and time were indeed required, and our ancestors were forced to water it, if I may use such an expression, with their blood; but with this care, and culture, and time, and blood, it shot up again with greater strength than ever, that we might sit quiet and happy under the shade of it; for if the same form was not exactly restored in every part, a tree of the same kind, and as beautiful, and as luxuriant as the former, grew up from the same root.

To bring our discourse to that point which is here immediately concerned, parliaments were never interrupted, nor the right of any estate taken away, however the exercise of it might be disturbed. Nay, they soon took the forms they still preserve, were constituted almost as they now are, and were entirely built on the same general principles, as well as directed to the same purposes.

When I say that they were constituted almost as they now are, I do not mean to enter into any of those minute questions, about which a man may employ much time and study, and have as little true and useful knowledge of our constitution as the most ignorant man alive. But I propose to make a short reflection or two on the property and power of the three estates that compose our parliament as they stood formerly, and as they now stand; because although our parliaments were composed of king, lords, and commons in those days, as well as these, yet the difference of the weight which each of these estates hath cast into the scale of government, at different periods, does in effect make some difference in the constitution of parliaments: and by considering this difference, our thoughts will be led the better to judge of the true poise of our constitution, on maintaining which our all depends; since the nearer we keep to it, the safer our liberty is, and since every variation from it is dangerous to our liberty, in a degree proportionable to such varia-

tions. Property then, and power by consequence, have changed hands, or rather have shifted much in the same hands since the Norman era. Kings, lords, and the church were in those days, and long afterwards, the great proprietors; and by the nature of tenures, as well as by the bulk of their estates, they held the commons in no small subjection, and seem to have governed without much regard to them, or to their concurrence, in many cases. But the regard that was not paid them at first, the kings, the lords, and the church found it necessary to pay them in a short time; and that authority, that weight in the balance of power, which property did not give them, they soon acquired, or rather resumed by their numbers, and by the circumstances that followed. By the circumstances that followed, I mean the great disorders in the state, and the civil wars, which the ambition of princes, of the nobility, and of the church too, created. In all these conflicts, some of the commons “holding for the king, who promised liberty from the lords, and others siding with the lords, who promised them liberty from the king,” they came off better in the end than their principals, and an example rarely to be paralleled was set; for general liberty was nursed by these means under the wings of particular ambition. In later days, when the nation, harassed and spent by the long wars of York and Lancaster, seemed glad to settle under any stable government; and in this temper gave many advantages to the cunning of Henry the Seventh, which the violence of his son improved; it is certain that the commons suffered extremely from the avarice of one, the profusion of the other, and the high-strained prerogative of both. But then their sufferings were temporary, and may be said to have ended with these reigns; whereas the sufferings of the nobility and the church were permanent and irretrievable. “The king and his council,” says the author I quoted last, “under color of liveries and retainers, brought the whole kingdom to be of their livery.” It was so. But still the commons lost nothing, and gained much. They were more under subjection to the crown; but they were less under subjection to the lords and the church. Not only the dependences on these were broken, but the lords and the church were made more dependent on the crown than the commons had been on them. The lords were obliged to attend the court at their own expense, and might alienate their estates to defray this expense. A great part of the lands of the church were confiscated and parcelled out to

those who could buy, at very cheap rates; and the increase of trade, which begun about this time to be very considerable, put the commons into a condition of being the buyers. Thus were the old foundations of property and power sapped on one side, and new foundations laid on the other. Some of the weight of the church continued in the scale of the lords, and some of it hath gone since into that of the commons. The parliamentary control of the crown did not become less, but it became more equally and more usefully placed. Democracy was so well poised with aristocracy, after this great change, that if they divided, they could not invade one another; and if they united they could not be invaded by the monarchy. Far different was the case in other countries, where the crown got the better of the lords, and baffled, at least in some degree, the monstrous attempts of ecclesiastical usurpation. In France, for instance, when the encroachments of the papal power were checked, the church compounded with the crown, and an alliance succeeded, of the monarchy with the hierarchy. But if the Church was able to compound, the nobility was forced to submit in that kingdom: so that the authority and wealth of the church being fixed on the side of the crown, the whole strength and influence of the nobility being taken from them, and incorporated with the power of the crown, and the commons having nothing to do in that government but to pay taxes and carry arms, the kings of France are become absolute monarchs; and whatever liberty, or appearance of liberty there was in that constitution, it is totally destroyed.

When I say that parliaments were entirely built on the same general principles, as well as directed to the same purposes, as they still are, I shall be justified by the whole tenor of our history, and of our law. Let us consider this in a case the plainest imaginable, though it suffers so much debate through the effrontery of some men. Let us consider it relatively to that great principle, that parliaments ought to be independent of the crown, in all respects, except such as are settled by the law and custom of parliament, and concerning which there is no dispute. Now, this general principle hath not only been always the same, but it hath been always so declared, in the most authentic and solemn manner; and parliaments have not been more intent on any national concern whatever, than on maintaining this principle, and securing the effects of it. I say, parliaments have been constantly thus intent, and especially in the best times,

during more than three centuries at least; for I would not go back too far, nor grope unnecessarily in the dark. What else did those laws mean, that were made in the time of the Lancaster kings, to regulate the elections, and to prevent the influence which Richard the Second had illegally and arbitrarily employed, and which there was room to fear that other princes might employ? What else do all those resolutions, all those declarations, all those remonstrances, all those acts of parliament mean, that have been made so often, and enforced so strongly, from time to time, and from those days to these, against the influence of the crown, either on the elections, or on the members of parliament? I should be ashamed to ask any more questions of this kind, or to descend into any detail, in order to prove what every clerk of a justice of peace, nay, almost every day-laborer, knows. But there is another question, which I must ask. If this be so, what do those men mean, who are employed, or rather, what does he mean who employs them, to plead in all places, and on all occasions, even the most solemn, in favor of this very influence, nay, of the very worst sort of it, of that influence which is created immediately by corruption; for to that their arguments reach by undeniable consequences? Reason is against him and them; since it is a plain absurdity to suppose a control on the crown, and they have not yet ventured to suppose the contrary, that I know of, and to establish, at the same time, a power, and even a right, in the crown, to render this control useless. Experience is against them; since the examples of other countries, and at some times (former times I mean) of our own, have proved, that a prince may govern according to his arbitrary will, or that of his more arbitrary minister, as absolutely, and much more securely with, than without the concurrence of a parliament. Authority, even the uniform authority of our whole legislature, is against them. The voice of our law gives them the lie. How then shall we account for this proceeding; this open and desperate attack upon our constitution, and therefore upon our liberty? Have these great men made any nice discovery, that escaped the blunt sagacity of our ancestors formerly, and is above the narrow conceptions of all other men, except themselves, at this time? Is it less fit than the wisdom of this nation hath judged it to be, for so many ages, that kings should govern under the constitutional control of two other estates? Or is it less fit that they should govern so for the time to come than it was for the time past?

We shall hear, for aught I know, even in this age, that kings are God's vicegerents; that they are, next to him and his son Christ Jesus, supreme moderators and governors. We shall hear again, perhaps, of their hereditary, their divine, their indefeasible right, and the rest of that silly cant, which was invented to make the usurpations of prerogative go down the better. But will even this alter the case? Will this make it unworthy of them to submit to the full control of such a constitution as God himself approved, in the institution of the Jewish senate? Moses was undoubtedly God's vicegerent. He was, if ever man was so, next and immediately under God, a supreme moderator and governor. He was inspired, and assisted in a supernatural manner; and yet he took the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. He associated to himself in the government of the commonwealth, or he bade the people take, as he says in another place, or choose, "wise men and understanding, and known among the tribes," that they might be associated to him. He found himself unequal to the task of governing alone, and he expostulated with God upon it. "I am not able to bear all this people alone. Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them? If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand." Whether they, who deduce from hence the institution of sanhedrins, are in the right, or they who assign them a more modern date, against the opinion of the Jewish doctors themselves, whose authority our doctors receive implicitly enough in some cases, and reject as arbitrarily in others, it matters not to inquire. Let us leave the dispute to the partisans of Joseph Scaliger and Petavius, of father Simon and Le Clerc. Thus much is certain. A great sanhedrin subsisted at Jerusalem, even at the coming of the Messiah, as well as inferior sanhedrins in several parts of Palestine; which form of government bore some resemblance to our old Saxon constitution; and he who takes the trouble of looking into Mr Selden, will find that the great sanhedrin had as much authority, and exercised as much power, as ever parliaments did, or witenagemots could claim. That God approved a kind of parliamentary establishment, and a division of the supreme power between his vicegerent Moses and the seventy elders, to whom he gave some of the spirit that was on Moses, the quotations I refer to from Holy Writ do sufficiently prove. After this, it cannot be said, I think, to derogate from the majesty of any prince, let us entertain as high notions of this majesty as we

please, that he is relieved from the burden of governing alone; that he is obliged to share the supreme power with the nobility and commonalty of the realm; and that he is hindered from destroying, either directly or indirectly, that independence of those other estates, which can alone preserve this division of the supreme power, really as well as apparently. But perhaps these great and honest men have discovered a necessity of putting the members, or a majority of the members of parliament, under the influence of the crown, in order to preserve this very constitution. Let us see, therefore, what dangers this expedient is fitted to prevent. Are we afraid that an house of commons, unless restrained by places and pensions, should give up the constitution to the lords, and establish an aristocracy? This fear would be ridiculous, surely; and he who should argue against such a supposition, would make himself so. Are we afraid that a house of commons, unless restrained in this manner, should usurp more power than belongs to them, and establish a kind of democratic tyranny? But they would have, in opposition to them, a power sufficient to defeat their designs: the united power of the crown, and of the house of lords. Formerly, indeed, they succeeded in an attempt of this kind; and the king and the lords may, at any time, throw too much power into their scale, and set the sense and spirit of the people on their side, as was done at that time. But this neither hath been, nor can be done, unless both king and lords conduct themselves so ill, that the mischiefs to be apprehended from their prevalency appear as great, or greater, than those which are to be apprehended from the prevalence of the commons. Let it be remembered too, that as the king and lords may give too much power and popularity to the commons, so the lords and commons may give too much power to the crown. The difference will lie only here; that the king and lords will never do the first designedly; whereas there is a possibility that the lords and commons may be induced, in some age less virtuous than the present, by places, pensions, and other gratifications, bestowed on a majority of those assemblies, to do the last designedly. What now remains to be urged, in favor of this expedient? From what danger are we to be protected by it? Shall we be told that parliament will not pursue the national interest, unless their members are bought into it by the crown? Something like this hath been advanced, I have heard; and nothing more impudent, nor more silly, could be advanced. A court that is truly in the

interest of the nation will have, nay, must have a concurrence of parliament, as it would be easy, if it was needful, to show. Time and trouble, indeed, may be sometimes required to lead independent men, who judge for themselves, and comply because they are convinced; whereas neither one nor the other are wanting to determine such as hold to a court by a corrupt dependency on it: for they are soon disciplined, and ready to perform the whole exercise of parliamentary mercenaries at the beat of a drum. Some inconveniences may likewise arise, for that which I have just mentioned does not deserve the name, from the independence of parliaments. Ministers, for instance, may be called to account by the passion, by the prejudice, if you will, of such assemblies, oftener, perhaps, than they deserve to be; or their errors may be censured, or their faults be punished, in a greater degree, and with more rigor, not only than true political justice requires, which should always be tempered with mercy, but even than strict justice exacts. But as one of these is a fault, if it be a fault, on the best side, and as the other will certainly happen very seldom, it does not seem reasonable that a door should be opened to corruption and dependency in order to prevent them. Nay, farther, this vigilance and this severity of parliaments, which we here suppose, will not fail to have some very good effects, that are more than sufficient to balance the supposed ill effects. Among the rest, they may render the rash, who are in power, more cautious, and the bold more modest. They may render fools less fond of power, and awe even knaves into honesty. It were better, surely, that able and good men should now and then suffer, nay, the good man who suffered would be himself of this opinion, than that the adulation and servility of parliaments, which are the necessary consequences of corruption and dependency, should ever contribute to make the court become, in any future age, a sanctuary for pickpockets, and a hospital for changelings.

I am, sir, etc.

ON GOOD AND BAD MINISTERS

Whilst a wicked and corrupt minister is weighing out panegyrics and dedications against just satires and invectives; or, perhaps, is numbering his creatures, and teaching them their implicit monosyllables; whilst he is drawing out his screen, and providing for a safe and decent elopement; or, it may be, comforts himself with the hopes that the public joy, at his removal, will drown all future inquiries; or that he shall keep sweet a good while longer, till the worm seizes his carcass, and posterity preys upon his memory; it may not be improper to tum your thoughts upon the reverse of his character, and to inquire by what marks a good minister may be found out and distinguished; or, since he is only a creature, by what arts, and in what method, he may be formed and brought into being. A people who are running the hazard of a death-bed repentance, want nothing so much as a good minister; and a bad one dreads nothing more than an honest successor, who comes after him without treading in his steps; takes his place without giving into his secrets; and will not be won by a share of his rapine to partake, at the same time, of his crimes and corruptions.

We know the mighty hand that is to form this creature, and that the breath of our nostrils is to give him being; but it is no presumption, no infringement of the right of election, to trace out a general character of many just and worthy candidates. It is no nomination, no designation to a particular office, to describe a good officer at large with all his qualifications and endowments. Neither the honest laborer, who discovers the mine, or digs out the ore; nor the skilful artificer, who purifies, refines, and weighs it, can in any sense be said to encroach upon the authority of those above him, who are appointed to make the last essay; to shape and mould it; and all these are friends to Caesar, who finishes the work, and gives it his own image and superscription.

Let us then imagine a number of men, scattered up and down a great, wise, and discerning nation; in their descent noble and generous; full of the virtues of their ancestors; in their temper affable and sweet-natured; educated in the knowledge and study of our constitution, its laws, settlements, dependences, and interests; always faithful to the crown, when consistent with their duty to their country; fonder of the substance, than the outside of religion; easy in their fortunes; lovers of mankind; more careful to preserve, than to aggrandise a family; making

virtue the foundation of their friendship, and merit the title to their favor; preservers of the freedom of others, as well as of their own; delighting rather to be thought good than great; pleased with any opportunity of making their fellow creatures happy; just in all their dealings; moderate in their pleasures; true to the several trusts, which have been reposed in them; watchful over the accounts of others, and ready to submit their own to a full and impartial inspection; not servile when out of power, nor imperious when in it; studying more the propriety of oratory, than its ornaments and garniture; and speaking rather to the good sense of others, than to their passions or interests; not solicitous for a place, because they want it, but because the place wants them; so keen in their resentments for the public, that they have no room for those which are personal; well acquainted with the most noted characters and transactions of late years; indifferent in their choice of public or private life, but careful to adorn both; and looking on the revenue of an office to be so far public money, as it is intended for the support and dignity of that office, to which it is appropriated. Men of this character, stars of this lustre, are still stuck in good plenty up and down our hemisphere. The changes of the weather may sometimes hide, but cannot extinguish them. Their short-lived obscurity is indeed their advantage; for by this we know what it is to want them, and their influence. Their brightness is tried, and distinguished from meteors and false fires. The regularity of their courses is more observed; and their glory, when it breaks out again, becomes doubly recommended.

Imagine now a man, of this order and character, advanced to the ministry. Suppose him not well acquainted with the course and dependence of many of the offices and branches of trust under his direction; and for that very reason not over-forward to prescribe for abuses, or admit of corruptions upon the plea of custom; yet whilst it is natural for him to find out, or to place in these offices such men as most nearly resemble himself; he could never want good intelligence both at home and abroad; clear and faithful accounts. The eyes, hands, and feet, which he borrowed from others, would be so much like his own, that he could not fail to see clearly, act fairly, and walk uprightly. Such a minister would with pleasure meet a senate, chosen as himself was, by the same marks and qualifications. He would encourage such a choice as his best

security; and when the *boni et legales viri de vicineto* are returned to parliament, as well as upon juries, the electors do alike consult their own honor and interest. A triennial, or septennial bribe, as ill-spent as it is ill-gotten, makes no amends for the loss of credit and reputation, which are the support of commerce; and it is as easy to prove, that the corruption of some boroughs is the cause of their poverty; as to prove that their poverty is the cause of their corruption. But to resume my former subject. The marks I have pointed out, and the rules I have laid down, are of such use to the public in the choice of a good minister, that where only one of them (the character of common honesty) hath been attended to, and the rest have been barely guessed at, or left to wild chance; such a choice has very often been more beneficial to a country than a choice made upon the very brink, or even from the bottom of that horrible and dreadful gulf, commonly called profound policy. I shall illustrate this truth by one remarkable instance, which I hope is too remote and far-fetched, to be hauled and wrenched into modern application. The Grand Seignior is said to walk abroad very often incognito, and to have his outlets and conveniences, both in the camp and seraglio, where he can oversee the assemblies of his domestics and officers, and be his own spy upon their actions and conversation. Listening one day to the grand minister of his kitchen, in a full assembly of his own culinary subalterns, closely debating the present juncture and posture of affairs, when discontents ran high, and the general voice laid the whole blame upon the prime vizier, he heard the grand master, then in the chair, sometimes threatening justice, and denouncing vengeance; brandishing his long knife at the close of every period, sometimes shaking his stew-pan with – Oh! he could toss up such a dish of politics! And every menace, every period concluded with a wish – that he was prime vizier but for one month only. The Grand Seignior took him at his word; and, in a few days advanced him to that high post next himself. Where all are slaves, this advancement was by no means surprising. It was a mere despotic humor and frolic; and perhaps done with a design to punish his vassal's presumption, by setting his own knife to his throat, upon the first false step, or mismanagement in his conduct. But the man was honest, and the master agreeably disappointed. No minister ever filled that station, for many years, with greater honor and reputation; or was better beloved both by prince and people. He fed the

empire as he had done the emperor, with good, wholesome diet, well cooked and garnished. He strewed plenty every where, and seemed by his conduct to understand perfectly well that fine maxim of Caesar, which deserves a whole physical, moral, and political essay, fully to explain it "Let me have men about me that are fat." If chance and incident, or caprice and humor, can go thus far in the choice of a good minister, who at first setting out only stumbled upon good sense, and common honesty; what will not good sense and common honesty do, when joined with those other noble qualifications of which I have given a detail, and when marked out and distinguished by a regular and judicious choice? They have made the reigns of minors, and of monarchs, never out of their minority, glorious and flourishing. They have transformed queens into amazons, and confined the faults of a soft and vicious prince to a few apartments; made them darlings of their people, and their people happy under their government. But where a prince, truly wise and great, and good in himself, is surrounded by a multitude of such counsellors, to how amazing a height, and to how many generations may he extend his grandeur and the public felicity? Such ministers, under a monarch, the father of his country, will consequently consider all his subjects as princes of the blood, so a merry writer of the last age called them, or, in the inspired, royal style, as flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; not in a natural sense; for adoption is better than nature. Such ministers will put out the revenues of their master to interest in the pockets of his subjects; then, with a *non rapui sed recepi*, recall them upon a real necessity. Such ministers will raise a standing force, so very numerous, that it shall take in all the landed gentry and trading commons of a nation; and perhaps 5d. a day is not so good encouragement, as when men fight for their all; for they fight for their all when they fight for a prince with whom they have but one common safety and interest. Such ministers will not suffer the law to be made the back-sword of justice, which cuts only on one side. They will not score up a war to the reckoning, when the good company have not had it in; nor palm a truce upon us, with all its accidents, for the real body of a solid and lasting peace, by a new political trans-or-consubstantiation. In short, they will not, like some old Roman minions and favorites, make a statue of their master, and then fly to it for refuge.

ON THE POWER OF THE PRINCE, AND THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE

“Furono veramente tutti i r  principio capi, e non r , di repubbliche, e non di regni. Ma poi il lungo uso h  fatto che i populi si siano disposti et anuezzati all’ habito dell’ intiera ubbidienza, come apunto suole assuefarsi una pianta, & un corpo humano a viuere, in terreno, e sotto clime diuerso dal suo naturale.”

- Card. Bentivoglio, *Relatione delle Prov. unitę de Fiandra*. Lib. 3.

Cardinal Bentiyoglio, from whose writings I have taken the motto to this paper, was a man on all accounts little to be suspected of favoring the cause of liberty; much less of writing strongly and boldly for it. But the love of it is innate in the mind of every man; and however we may be depraved by bad education, however inflamed by party, interest, or the spirit of opposition, yet whenever we grow cool, and are not immediately agitated by our passions, that spirit breaks out, and shows itself even in those, who are the greatest abettors of arbitrary power.

Thus the cardinal, borne down by the force of reason, and the influence of this principle of nature, expresses in this sentence not only his own opinion, but that of all mankind, though private reasons may induce many to profess themselves of contrary sentiments; nor is it impossible for some men, weak in their natures and warm in their tempers, to be either so far seduced by the arguments of designing men, or so heated by political contentions, as even to become in some manner convinced, that they have no natural right to liberty; and that their princes are born with a just title to that arbitrary power, which is always the child of fraud, or usurpation.

It is our great happiness that his present majesty's dominion is founded upon a better title than either the *jus divinum*, or hereditary right. He owes it purely to the voice of the people in parliament. He got it by their favor, and will keep it by their affection; nor is it less for the advantage of his family, or for that of the nation, that he came to the throne upon these terms. The limitations and conditions, by the due observance of which he is entitled to it, will serve as a certain rule to his posterity, by which if they guide themselves, they may depend upon the hearts and purses of their subjects to all eternity. His predecessors had not the same advantages. They were bred up in a notion that their prerogative entitled them to do what they pleased; nor were the privileges of the people so firmly ascertained. This occasioned perpetual jealousies, gave opportunities for evil ministers to impose upon the prince, and for seditious persons to inflame the people. It often gave rise to unwarrantable acts of power; and thus frequently exposed both the royal family and the nation to the utmost confusion.

Machiavelli, in his political discourses, lays down this position; that no government can long enjoy liberty, unless it be frequently

brought back to its first principles. It is the nature of all government to degenerate. As it grows older, it gradually deviates and flies farther from its first intention, which is singly the advantage of society; till at last it attains such a degree of corruption, that its order becomes entirely inverted; and that institution, by which the prince was first only the servant of the public, obliges the public to be slaves to the prince. For this reason he recommends a frequent renewal of the constitution. The various revolutions in this kingdom have, in a great measure, answered this end. They have purged off the luxuriences of power; and though few of them have gone so deep as to bring us back to the primitive purity of our constitution, yet they have still preserved us a free people, when liberty is lost in almost every other part of Europe.

The last revolution has done more for us than any of the rest. I would not be understood to speak of that, which was brought about in favor of our great deliverer the prince of Orange. I mean that, by which the present royal family were seated upon the throne. This happy change in our government, though it is not marked out by any such appellation, is the most important we have had. It has amounted within a few degrees of that reduction to the first principles of government, which Machiavelli recommends. Our constitution has received a new spring from it; and had we taken care to guard against a few inconveniences, as we might have done, or used the same caution to prevent new dangers, as to redress old grievances, our liberties had been delivered down to our posterity, after a thousand years, more secure and with a greater prospect of long duration, than at the very beginning of the commonwealth.

The sentence prefixed to this paper contains an account of the first powers, with which princes were invested. It alleges, that the present power of unlimited monarchs owes its rise only to an abuse of the first trust reposed in them; to which (though repugnant to human nature) by gradual steps and long use, men were insensibly habituated. The original state of monarchy is justly described very different from what it is now in all arbitrary governments. Kings were then no more than chiefs, or principal magistrates, in states republican and free.

It ought to give every Englishman the greatest satisfaction to find the constitution we now live under, since its last renewal, bearing so near a resemblance to primitive liberty. Our princes are now, in a great

measure, upon the same foot with these chiefs, or principal magistrates of old. They have authority given them to defend the laws of the land, but not to break them. They have too lately received their crown from the hands of the nation to forget that it is to them only they owe it, and that consequently they can be entitled to no powers but what are granted by them. The people must still remember that their own hands adorned the temples of their kings, and can have recourse to known and positive laws, if privilege and prerogative should ever clash. They are no longer to be abused by the sound of words; nor will they suffer themselves any longer to be duped into an opinion, because most of those, who have enjoyed the title of king, have also enjoyed an arbitrary sway, that therefore regal authority must inevitably import an absolute dominion. They justly look upon this word as one of the many, which have different meanings; and signifies with us no other than a third estate, superior to every individual, yet inferior to the collective body of the people, whose advantage and prosperity were the only causes of its existence.

The act of settlement has obtained all these great advantages for us. That compact between prince and people, which has been formerly treated by some persons as a mere chimera, is now no longer to be disputed. In that act are contained certain stipulations and conditions, under which the prince has consented to accept, and by which tenure only he holds his crown. By these means every subject in the nation may know the precise extent of his prince's power, and the measures of his own allegiance; how far and how long he is bound to obey.

It would be tedious to enumerate the many wise and prudent restrictions of this our second Magna Carta. I shall only mention two of the fundamental points of this public act, which sufficiently evince the care and zeal, with which the parliament, on this occasion, pursued the interest of the nation. They even seem, if we may judge from what has since happened, to have carried their caution beyond the bounds of absolute necessity, or prudence. Being apprised that the dominions of the present royal family were very considerable abroad, and not knowing how far their tenderness for their native country might carry them to the prejudice of this kingdom, they made these two points the principal conditions of their government; first, that the king should never leave his British dominions without consent of parliament; and secondly,

that he should never engage England in any broils relating to his foreign territories. I think I may venture to say, without any reflection upon the prudence of the parliament, who insisted upon these conditions, that they were upon this occasion, a little deficient in good manners; but this error may be forgiven, as it proceeded from their zeal, and we have since corrected it, by abandoning those two points, of which I have been speaking; the first soon after his late majesty's accession to the throne; the other not long ago, in that just, honorable, and ever memorable resolution of the house of commons, by which we engaged to support and maintain his majesty's German dominions, with the utmost efforts of Great Britain.

The remaining articles of the act of settlement are of such a nature, that we have no reason to fear they will be dispensed with. I have already shown how much it is the interest of the prince, as well as the people, to maintain them. I have mentioned many advantages arising from a settlement established on the foot of liberty. They are such, that I think any man, who endeavors to raise the prerogative one step higher than it stands at present, or even argues in favor of such conduct, either with a view to seduce the people, or to ingratiate himself with his prince, is the worst of traitors, and deserves the curse and hatred of the whole community.

Sir William Temple, in his observations upon the Dutch republic, made this judicious remark: "That this stomachful people, who could not endure the least exercise of arbitrary power, or impositions, under the Spanish government, have been since inured to digest them in the highest degree, under their own popular magistrates; bridled with hard laws; terrified with severe executions; environed with foreign forces; and oppressed with the most cruel hardships, and variety of taxes, that was ever known under any government." The reason of this great and general content, under the most severe oppression, was only this; that they found everyone subject to the same law. The persons in the administration could make no advantage from the public calamities. On the contrary, they felt the weight of the public misfortunes more heavily than those, who had less interest in the general welfare. It was never observed in that country, that the principal men in the commonwealth increased in riches, in proportion as the country grew poorer, or the public labored

under heavier taxes. These evils were well guarded against by their constitution; and therefore they considered all their misfortunes as a wise and just regulation of Providence for some important ends, which consequently they never repined at.

The Hanover succession under the limitations, which I have mentioned, and on which it is founded, has obtained, in a great measure, these advantages for us. The prince himself is now subject to the law, and the act of settlement binds him equally with the meanest peasant.

The benefits of this excellent establishment are not so easily discovered, until some abuses happen. But if ever a weak and corrupt administration should arise; if an evil minister should embezzle the public treasure; if he should load the nation, in times of peace, with taxes greater than would be necessary to defray the charge of an expensive war; if the money thus raised should be expended, under the pretence of secret services, to line his own pockets; to stop the mouths of his hungry dependents; to bribe some future parliament to approve his measures; and to patch up an ill-digested, base, dishonorable peace with foreign powers, whom he shall have offended by a continued series of provocations and blunders; if he should advise his sovereign to make it a maxim, that his security consisted in the continuance, or increase of the public debts, and that his grandeur was founded on the poverty of his subjects; if he should hazard the affections of the people, by procuring greater revenues for the crown, than they should be able to spend, or the people be well able to raise; and after this engage his prince to demand still farther sums as his right, which all men should be sensible were not his due; I say, if the nation should ever fall under these unhappy circumstances, they will then find the excellence of a free constitution. The public discontent, which upon such occasions has formerly burst forth in a torrent of blood, of universal confusion and desolation, will make itself known only in faint murmurs, and dutiful general complaints. The nation will wait long, before they engage in any desperate measures, that may endanger a constitution, which they justly adore, and from which they confidently expect a sure, though perhaps a dilatory justice, upon such an enormous offender.

These are the inestimable advantages of our present, happy settlement. Let us prize it as we ought. Let us not have the worse opinion

of the thing itself, because it may, in some instances, be abused. But let us retain the highest veneration for it. Let us remember how much it is our right, and let us resolve to preserve it untainted and inviolable. Thus shall we truly serve our king; we shall do our duty to our country; and preserve ourselves in the condition, for which all men were originally designed; that is, of a free people.



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