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CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE

Preſent Political State

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

(Robert Wallace)

Priſca juvent alios: ego me nunc denique natum
Gratulor. OVID.

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ERRATA.

Page 32. line 7. for *Confuſion, by allowing leſs credit*; read *Confuſion; by allowing leſs credit,*
—— 52. line 2. for * read † Ibid. line 7. for † read *
—— 141. for *wealth* read *health*
—— 163. line laſt, read *caſes, it*
—— 169 and 170 in the notes at bottom, for *Eſſay, page* 2. read *Eſſay, page* 3.
—— 237. line 12 of the notes, for *aſpicias* read *afficias.*

CHARACTERISTICS

OF THE PRESENT

Political State

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

Advertiſement.

THE following Characteriſtics were written with an intention to give a more juſt and a more agreeable proſpect of the preſent ſtate of Britain, than is to be ſeen in many late writings. The author hopes, they will contribute ſomething to remove the diſquiet of good citizens, and to defeat the deſigns of the diſaffected.

HAVING conceived a very favourable opinion of the revolution in the year 1688, and of the Britiſh government ever ſince that period; having been confirmed in this opinion by obſerving the happineſs of the people, and by comparing the condition of Britain with that of other nations; he has often been not only ſurpriſed, but concerned, to meet with ſuch heavy and loud complaints of our poverty, of our want of ſilver and gold, of the abuſe of paper-credit, the greatneſs of our taxes, the

loſs of our trade, and the great increaſe of the national debts: all ſaid to be occaſioned by a ſeries of miſmanagements ever ſince the Revolution. Complaints of this kind tend naturally to diſquiet the friends of the conſtitution, and furniſh its ſecret enemies with many topics of declamation in order to create and to ſupport diſaffection.

BUT, what is ſtill more aſtoniſhing and alarming, it has been of late publickly aſſerted, that our national genius and capacity are almoſt quite gone; and that we are grown ſo feeble both in our counſels, and in the execution of them, that we run the greateſt riſk of becoming an eaſy prey to any bold invader.

THIS debility is *ſaid* to flow immediately from our luxury, and from the effeminacy of our manners; but is ſuppoſed to be originally derived from the reſtraints laid on the royal prerogative, from the new dignity and power acquired by our parliaments, and from the acceſſion of liberty gained by the people at the Revolution.

tion. In conſequence of this alteration in our political ſyſtem, our princes having too little power, and the people too much liberty; liberty has degenerated into licentiouſneſs, and there is nothing now to be found in our conſtitution, able to give a ſufficient check to the natural bad conſequences of luxury and of effeminacy. Hence, as is aſſerted, we are going very faſt to deſtruction, and are upon the brink of a precipice.

THOUGH thoſe gentlemen, who, on the one ſide, complain ſo loudly of our poverty, and thoſe, who, on the other, make as loud complaints of the bad effects of our riches, are very oppoſite in their principles; they agree, however, in the ſame concluſion. The one party affirm, that we are ruined by poverty; the other impute our ruin to our riches; but both maintain, that we *are* ruined, and, in ſome ſort, connect this ruin with the Revolution.

EXCITED by a natural curioſity to find out the truth in a matter of ſuch importance; anxious for the welfare of his

country; the author of theſe Characteriſtics ſet himſelf to enquire, whether there was juſt ground for ſuch complaints; or whether the nation is not at preſent much richer, happier, and more powerful, than it was before the Revolution. Having examined impartially what might be ſaid on both ſides, he hath compoſed the little treatiſe that follows, and preſumes to offer it to the Public at a criſis ſo important and ſo intereſting.

BEING neither merchant, manufacturer, nor farmer; having no management of the revenue, nor any ſhare in public counſels; he thinks himſelf obliged to own, that he has no other means of being inſtructed in the ſtate of the nation, than ſuch as are open to every other gentleman. He therefore brings his arguments chiefly from what is *obvious* and *viſible*. It might indeed be an advantage, if either gentlemen who are converſant in commerce and manufactures, or ſuch as are concerned in the revenue, would publiſh ſome of their anecdotes that are not among the *Arcana Imperii*. By a compariſon of the pre-

preſent ſtate of their country, with its ſtate before the Revolution, they could refute thoſe falſe allegations concerning its poverty. However, it may be poſſible to do without them. The poverty and the riches of a nation muſt be, in ſome ſort, *ſenſible*. At leaſt, they may be diſcerned by a *careful* obſerver. Nay, one may argue concerning them, perhaps, with greater certainty, from obvious appearances, than from the moſt minute accounts of taxes and of the public revenue. Of the condition of a nation in other reſpects, we muſt be able to form the ſureſt judgment from what is obvious and viſible.

WHEN we reaſon, in this manner, concerning the riches or the happineſs of a country, *from what is ſenſible*; we act much like an audience, who judge of the merit of a play, or of an oration, by their inward feelings: When they find themſelves greatly intereſted, they conclude that the poet or the orator is a maſter. But it will be difficult to convince them,

from the rules of criticiſm, that a piece is excellent, if, even when they are in the temper moſt ſuited to feel the force of it, they find themſelves cold and languid, notwithſtanding all the efforts of the author. In like manner, it may be concluded, that when a nation is encreaſing in riches, and is living at eaſe, the effects of its proſperity muſt be viſible and ſenſible.

BUT there is ſcarce any audience, in which one will not meet either with ſome ſour ill-natured people, who are *fond* of finding fault; or with ſome, who are ſo full of *vanity* and *affectation*, that they like to contradict the *common* opinion; or with ſome, who through melancholy, or other diſorders of body or mind, are not in a proper diſpoſition to be duly affected. Something of the ſame kind often happens in the State. Though the great body of the people are ſenſible of their own happineſs, many will be found of ſuch ſour and ſuch peeviſh diſpoſitions, or ſo blinded with prejudices, or ſo fretted by diſappointments, or of ſuch timorous and anxious tempers, that they will be continually *imagin-*

agining within themſelves, and, if they live under a free government, and in a learned age, will endeavour by their converſation and by their writings to perſuade others, that all things are in the greateſt diſorder, and that the happieſt nation in the world is haſtening to perdition.

THE good-natured part of mankind, no doubt, will agree in pitying ſuch unfortunate and anxious citizens, for fancying to themſelves ſo many *imaginary* evils, and for undertaking the difficult taſk of perſuading others out of their ſenſes, or of making a nation believe that it is extremely poor and oppreſſed, when, in truth, it is rich and free. But there is not the ſame agreement among politicians about the manner, in which ſuch peeviſh writings ought to be treated. Some declare for deſpiſing them altogether, both becauſe they aim at an impoſſibility, to wit, to convince a powerful and a happy people, that they are weak and miſerable; and becauſe there is ſeldom any reaſon to hope that either the authors themſelves, or ſuch as have

adopt-

adopted their opinions, will ever be convinced of their errors. This is ſaid to be the caſe with all controverſial writers and their writings; the former are never to be convinced; the latter have no effect on either ſide. The opinions and the principles of men are formed by other means.

BUT ſtrong objections lie againſt the policy of this *principle*. Books, pamphlets, ſongs, are known, from experience, to have conſiderable influence both in forming and in confirming the opinions of mankind. They have produced ſignal effects in the world. It muſt therefore be dangerous in any government, it muſt be ſo eſpecially in a free one, to neglect altogether the compoſitions which are publiſhed, without regard to the ſtrain in which they are written: Like company, if they are of a peeviſh gloomy complexion, they are infectious, and tend to ſour the minds of the people. Beſides, the falſe opinions of men may be corrected, if objects are ſhewn them in a proper light. The world is far from being ſo bad as many imagine. Many have a ſincere deſire to find out

out the truth. Tho' they have been blinded by prejudices, they are capable of conviction. For their ſake the truth ought to be fairly expoſed to public view.

It is for theſe reaſons, that the author of the Characteriſtics has propoſed to give a more comfortable, and, as he thinks, a more juſt view of the ſtate of the Public, than is to be ſeen in ſeveral late writings.

THE writings, on which this author is to offer ſome animadverſions, relate to our paper-credit, to our taxes, to the publick debts, to our luxury, to our effeminacy, and to a variety of other political ſubjects. They have been compoſed with very different intentions. Some of them by friends of the Government, without any bad deſign; others, as it is viſible, by its ſecret enemies, with an intention, not only to foment faction, but to promote diſaffection. If we will believe ſome of theſe writers, the nation, ever ſince the Revolution, has been in a poor and a wretched ſtate. It is ſo at preſent, and all things are going to ruin.

Inſtead

Inſtead of ſilver and gold, we have nothing but paper-credit. Our banks are pernicious, and are ſigns of our poverty. Our taxes are heavier than we can bear. They render it impoſſible for us to carry on trade to advantage; they have made us loſe much of it already, and as they raiſe the prices of proviſions and labour, they muſt make us gradually loſe the remainder of it, and be under-ſold by other nations in all the markets of the world. Our public debts too are certain proofs of our low condition; ſince we are obliged to borrow, and cannot raiſe the ſums neceſſary for the public ſervice, within the year. They could never have riſen ſo high, unleſs we had been moſt miſerably oppreſſed by the Government, and are ſo great, that we will never be able to pay them: indeed, they ought not to be paid, but to be aboliſhed at once by act of parliament; with a few merciful exceptions, in favour of widows, of orphans, and of ſuch others as deſerve compaſſion. Nay, according to ſome of theſe gentlemen, our agriculture is making very ſlow advances. Notwithſtanding all which diſadvantages, they

they aſſert, at the ſame time, that we are ſwimming in all kinds of foreign luxury. Thus one ſort of writers.

There are others, who go upon a different ſyſtem. They confeſs that we are both rich and free. They even allow that we are poſſeſſed of an extenſive trade, have acquired immenſe wealth, and enjoy the moſt ample liberty. But they maintain, at the ſame time, that our liberty has degenerated into licentiouſneſs; that it has produced an effeminacy of manners, extinguiſhed the good principles, and deſtroyed the genius and capacity, of the nation, to ſuch a degree, that we are now become defenceleſs, and run the greateſt hazard of falling before the ſuperior genius of the French.

In oppoſition to both theſe kinds of writers, who exhibit ſuch a diſagreeable picture of the preſent age, the writer of the Characteriſtics endeavours to ſhew, that Britain is in an opulent condition at preſent, and has been very happy ever ſince the Revolution: That banking is a very pro-

profitable inſtitution, and has greatly enriched the nation: That, tho' our taxes are high, we are much richer, than when they were much lower; and carry on an extenſive and profitable trade: That, tho' the greatneſs of the publick debt muſt be a conſiderable loſs, we both are at preſent, and may continue to be hereafter, rich and happy, and enjoy the moſt perfect liberty and ſecurity of any nation in the world: That the propoſal to aboliſh the publick debts, without paying them, is neither juſt nor profitable: That every farthing of them ought to be paid, and may be paid, without any diſtreſs to the nation; and that, notwithſtanding the juſt complaints of our luxury, effeminacy, and corruption, we have ſufficient means of ſelf-defence, and are fully able to ſupport ourſelves againſt the French, or any nation whatever. Theſe are the chief topics inſiſted on in the Characteriſtics. The author has digeſted his reflections into the order, which he thinks moſt proper for ſetting the preſent ſtate of the nation in a juſt light. He doth not intend his little work as an anſwer to any piece whatſoever;

yet he takes the liberty to animadvert on the writings of other Gentlemen, as they chance to ſtand in his way, or have aſſerted contrary principles. Nor hath he ſcrupled, from fear of the imputation of pedantry, to refer to the paſſages of their books at the bottom of the page.

IT is mean to flatter any court, any faction, or any perſon whatever. Therefore, how greatly ſoever he eſteems the government or the times ſince the Revolution, he will be far from maintaining, either that the governors have been guilty of *no* errors ſince that remarkable æra; or that there is not an odd concurrence of perplexing circumſtances in our preſent condition. Nevertheleſs, from a ſincere love to his country, he thinks himſelf obliged to maintain, that, notwithſtanding all errors, which either are committed by the Government at preſent, or have been committed by it during the laſt ſeventy years, Britain is much richer, is much more ſecure, and enjoys many more advantages, than in any former period: And that, notwithſtanding ſome unlucky events and diſappoint-

pointments in the courſe of the preſent war, the nation is fully able to defend itſelf againſt all its enemies.

NEITHER will any wiſe man, out of his zeal for the Revolution, which was founded on liberty, adopt the ſlaviſh doctrine, that a true patriot will not *take notice* of ſuch errors as have been committed ſince that happy æra. On the contrary, the wiſeſt and beſt friends of the Revolution will ever be the moſt ſincere lovers of liberty. They will, in particular, be the moſt ſtrenuous ſupporters of the liberty of the preſs, and will boldly maintain, againſt all flatterers and time-pleaſers, that the people of Great Britain have a right to take notice of errors in the adminiſtration, to point them out to public view, and to lay them before their repreſentatives in parliament.

BUT liberty may degenerate into licentiouſneſs. Some diſcontented writers have gone too far. One ought not wantonly to ſuggeſt, that the public credit is in danger, or,

or, like the writer of three late Eſſays *, to make a propoſal for erecting ſocieties, which ſhall circulate no bank-notes, but at an advanced price. Such a propoſal ſeems to be too aſſuming. It tends to create imaginary fears, gives falſe alarms, and can be excuſed only on the ſuppoſition, that it will be without effect. With how much greater prudence, as well as pious affection to his country, does the public-ſpirited author of the Queriſt † put the following query, "Whether the credit of the public "funds be not a mine of gold to Eng-"land; and whether any ſtep, that ſhould "leſſen this credit, ought not to be dread-"ed?" How different is this gentleman from the writer of the Three Eſſays, who, with an unuſual vehemence, calls upon the landed gentlemen, upon the farmers, and upon the manufacturers, to put an end to our paper-credit altogether.

* The firſt on the public debt; the ſecond on paper-money, banking, &c; and the third on frugality; ſaid in the title page to have been printed at London, 1755.

† The no leſs ingenious than pious Biſhop of Cloyne. See the 233d Quere of the Queriſt, 5th edition, printed 1750.

IT is ſtill more dangerous and inexcuſable, like the author of a late Eſtimate, to aggravate our vices and our weakneſſes ſo much beyond the truth, as naturally tends to diſpirit our countrymen, and to raiſe the ſpirits of the French. During many years, the writer of the Characteriſtics has been ſorry to *read* ſuch melancholy and unfavourable accounts of the ſtate of the Public. But, after the daſtardiſing repreſentations given by the author of the Eſtimate, he could no longer forbear to *publiſh* his thoughts, and to draw his pen in the ſervice of his country.

PART

PART I.

Of BANKS, and of PAPER-CREDIT.

IN order to form a true judgment of the political ſtate of Great Britain, it is neceſſary to conſider the nature of Paper-credit, and whether Banks are uſeful or dangerous to a nation.

ONE would think, the advantages of Banks muſt have been ſo manifeſt from *experience*, that, long before this time, no doubt could have been entertained of their uſefulneſs. But, inſtead of any univerſal agreement in their favour, ſuch violent prejudices have been contracted againſt them, that not only the vulgar, who have never conſidered the ſubject, but ſome very inquiſitive and ingenious gentlemen, have fallen into conſiderable miſtakes in this matter, and look on Banks as detrimental to trade and induſtry.

HOWEVER, as *experience* hath convinced the *trading part* of the world of the advan-

tages of Banking; it will not be difficult to ſhew, *from the nature of the thing*, in what manner Banks become uſeful in commerce.

IN a nation that is chiefly addicted to agriculture and to paſturage, where the people, ſatisfying themſelves with a ſimple life, and wanting only a few conveniencies, deal but little in trade and in manufactures; money will not be very neceſſary. Much of their commerce may be carried on by barter. But, where there is a great variety of manufactures and commodities, where all ſorts of arts are encouraged, and where elegance is ſtudied; much money will not only be *profitable*, but be *abſolutely neceſſary* for the exigencies of the ſtate.

HOWEVER, there *may be* too much money in a nation. And there is certainly too much, if it renders the great body of the people idle, and enables them to purchaſe what they want, from foreigners, without any labour or induſtry of their own. This was the caſe with Spain, two or

or three hundred years ago, and did great harm to that country. But it will ſcarce be poſſible to procure ſo much money by trade alone.

INDUSTRY and labour are far better than money, and will ſoon be able to procure it in exchange for commodities. Yet induſtry ſtands ſometimes in need to be *quickened*; and money is very ſerviceable for this purpoſe.

LET us ſuppoſe, that there is a certain quantity of money and of commodities in any country. The quantity of money may be ſaid to repreſent the commodities, and to determine the prices of them. The prices of *particular* commodities may vary in different circumſtances; but, if the *ſums* of the money and of the commodities continue much *the ſame*, the prices, *on the whole*, cannot much alter. In ſuch a caſe, if no more money comes into the country, unleſs the diſpoſitions of the people are remarkably changed by ſome extraordinary accident or revolution, it will be very difficult to carry on a great deal of more work

on a ſudden, or ſpeedily to increaſe the ſum of the commodities.

BUT, if a great ſum of money ſhould be brought into the nation at once, and be diſtributed any way whatever, provided the labouring and induſtrious part of the nation do not get ſuch ſums as will keep them idle; though ſome part of it would undoubtedly be hoarded up, and would thereby be rendered uſeleſs, yet the greateſt part of it would be employed, and become uſeful. The great people would immediately lay out part of it in adding to their houſes, to their furniture, to their equipages, and to their tables. The merchants and manufacturers would employ more hands, and carry on a greater trade. The farmers would improve their lands. The graziers would breed a greater and a better ſtock of cattle. Every one would be enabled to ſpend a little more, and to carry on his buſineſs better. By theſe means there would be every where more labour. Of courſe, the commodities, or *real* riches, which are quite *different* from *money*, would be greatly increaſed.

AGAIN;

AGAIN: If the ſtock of money ſhould be increaſed by this induſtry; or, if *another ſum* of money ſhould be introduced by other means, and be diſtributed as before; this would again increaſe the ſtock of commodities. And ſo on continually, or to a certain limit.

Now, Banks, ſettled by public authority under right regulations, continually increaſe the current ſpecies, by iſſuing notes, which circulate as money. By giving credit, they furniſh men of ſubſtance with the means of giving greater employment to the induſtrious, and enable merchants to carry on a more extenſive trade. The more notes the Banks can circulate in this way, the more will induſtry and trade be promoted. Nor can there be any limit, while the borrowers from theſe banks can give good ſecurity, and the managers take care to iſſue no more notes, than, by experience, they have learned, they can anſwer, according to the ordinary courſe of demand. Whatever ſums landed men, merchants, or others, borrow, provided they

can give good ſecurity, and borrow on reaſonable proſpects; this is ſo far from being a loſs, that it increaſes induſtry and conſumption. A great quantity of Bank-notes only ſhews, that great ſums have been borrowed by one part of the nation from another, upon good ſecurity, for carrying on trade, and for other reaſonable purpoſes: Which is ſo far from being either a ſign, or the cauſe, of poverty, that it is both the ſign, and a mean, of greater riches.

IT is of no conſequence, in this argument, that there may be more paper-money than ſilver and gold, and that the proportion betwixt them may not be aſcertained; provided the former regulations are duly obſerved.

IT is of no conſequence that foreign nations will not take our *Bank-notes*. They will take our *goods*, which are produced by the circulation of theſe notes among ourſelves.

IT is of no conſequence, though the value of the Bank-notes ſhould happen to extend to a vaſt ſum, provided the Banks, which are to anſwer theſe notes, have an equal value in coin, bullion, lands, goods, and good debts, to which there is convenient acceſs.

IT is of no conſequence, though landed men mortgage part of their eſtates for Bank-notes, and may be ſaid to coin their lands, and to bring them into the market. On the contrary, the more the lands of any country are *locked up*, the country muſt be leſs improved. And the more eaſily lands can be transferred and exchanged in commerce; induſtry, trade, and manufactures will be more ſpeedily and ſucceſsfully promoted.

BANKS are not only *profitable*, but may be ſaid, in many caſes, to be *neceſſary*. When a ſpirit of induſtry is any way excited in a nation, if, by this induſtry, both the commodities, and the number of the people, ſhall be increaſed, before they

they have much commerce with foreign nations to fetch them money; in *ſuch* a *condition*, either there *muſt be* a currency of Paper-credit, or the induſtrious part of the people will be continually obliged to uſe barter, which will expoſe them to many inconveniencies.

IN fact, we ſee that nations have proſpered by ſetting up Banks. This is true of Holland, of Genoa, and of other places; and it will be found to be true both of England and of Scotland.

BY making the intereſt of money fall, Banks muſt promote induſtry and trade.

PUBLIC Banks are preferable to private Bankers.

IT may be obſerved, that Banks have greateſt credit under free governments, or ſuch as have a mixture of the ariſtocratical or democratical form; a ſtrong preſumption in their favour. Abſolute monarchies ſeem hardly capable of ſuch a wiſe inſtitution. Under arbitrary governments the credit of Banks

Banks cannot be firm. Abſolute princes would be diſpoſed to lay them under contribution, and would have too ready acceſs to their treaſures. It is eaſy to ſee, how the ingenious author of the Queriſt would anſwer the 303d query, which he hath propoſed *, "Whether it be poſſible "for a national Bank to ſubſiſt and main-"tain its credit under a French government?" Perhaps, it might flouriſh for a *little time*, under a *very wiſe* and *juſt* prince: but it muſt ſink under one of another character, who would be tempted to lay hold on its treaſures, as our King Charles II. ſhut up his exchequer, and ſeized the money which belonged to his creditors.

IN this manner we may better account for the want of Banks and of Paper-credit in France, than by the ſuppoſition of a ſu-

* Fifth edition, printed 1750.
No man hath explained the general nature of Banking, hath ſhown the advantages of Banks, and hath anſwered the objections againſt them, more conciſely, and with greater force of argument, than this ingenious author; whoſe Queriſt deſerves well to be peruſed by every lover of his country, and of mankind.

perior

perior policy in that country, in order to acquire and retain greater quantities of ſilver and gold. Thus, the French policy in not inſtituting Banks, in not admitting ſuch a circulation of merchants bills as in England, and in not *directly* permitting lending on intereſt, which Mr. Hume imagines to be a mighty advantage to the French *, appears to be quite the reverſe, and is truly a diſadvantage, ariſing from the pernicious nature of an abſolute monarchy.

HOWEVER, Banks, like all other political inſtitutions, are attended with inconveniencies. The four following are much inſiſted on.

FIRST; That too great a run may be made upon Banks, and they may not be able to anſwer their notes; by which many innocent perſons may ſuffer, and a great deal of confuſion may be raiſed in the country. But in anſwer: Though this indeed *is poſſible*, there is *little danger of its happening*;

* In his Political Diſcourſe of the Balance of Trade.

happening; if the Bank is not originally on a bad footing, and the miſmanagements are not very great. Banks have continued long in Europe, without ſuch diſorders; and may be ſo well conſtituted and managed, as to prevent them in times to come.

SECONDLY; It is ſaid, That Banks cannot be depended on during civil wars, or when a foreign enemy is in the heart of the country. But *what* can be preſerved in *ſuch* a caſe? Shall we make no wiſe eſtabliſhments in time of peace, becauſe we cannot ſecure them in time of war? 'Tis true, if we cannot defend ourſelves againſt the French King, or the Pretender, our Banks will be of little uſe to us. But, in ſuch circumſtances, we muſt lay our account with greater loſſes than the loſs of our Paper-credit. We ſhould loſe our more ſubſtantial riches. We ſhould loſe our religion and liberty. In ſhort, we ſhould be able to ſecure nothing but the ſoil of our iſland; and that too we ſhould be obliged to cultivate, not for ourſelves, but for others.

BESIDES

BESIDES theſe objections, which may be reckoned inconſiderable, there are two of greater importance. The one, That Paper-money prevents the acquiſition of greater quantities of ſilver and gold. The other, That it heightens the price of labour, and therefore hurts our foreign trade. But neither of theſe objections reſts on a ſolid foundation.

"SUPPOSE (ſays an ingenious writer *) "there are twelve millions of paper, that "circulate in a kingdom as money; and "ſuppoſe, that the real caſh is eighteen "millions. Here is a ſtate, which is "found by experience able to hold a ſtock "of thirty millions: I ſay, if it be able to "hold it, it muſt of neceſſity have acquir-"ed it in gold and ſilver, had it not ob-"ſtructed the entrance of theſe metals by "this new invention of Paper. *Whence "would it have acquired that ſum?* From all "the kingdoms of this world. *But why?* "Becauſe, if you remove theſe twelve mil-

* Mr. Hume in his Political Diſcourſe of the Balance of Trade.

"lions

"lions of paper, money in this ſtate is "below its level compared with its neigh-"bours, and it muſt immediately draw "from all of them, till it be full and ſatu-"rate, ſo to ſpeak, and can hold no more." This is the argument brought to prove that paper-money prevents the entrance of ſilver and gold. But it is too ſubtile to be convincing.

IF at any period, the coin in any kingdom is eighteen millions, this nation may carry on a conſiderable trade, and in time may acquire twelve millions more in ſilver and gold, without Paper-credit. But if, at the time at which they have only eighteen millions in coin, the nation ſhould fall into the uſe of Paper-credit, and ſhould circulate a ſum of twelve millions in paper-money, in order to quicken induſtry, and to enable the people to carry on a more extenſive trade; it is evident, they may carry on a greater trade with the *thirty* millions of *paper and coin*, than with the *eighteen* millions of *coin alone*. And, as they don't take paper in payment from foreign nations, if they are gainers by trade,

they

they muſt receive the balance in ſilver and gold. Conſequently, the national ſtock muſt be ſooner increaſed in the one caſe than the other. If we ſhall ſuppoſe further, that we could remove the twelve millions of paper-money, without any ſhock or confuſion, by allowing leſs credit; we would only put a ſtop to ſo much induſtry, and would diſable the people from carrying on ſo extenſive a trade. This is not the way of bringing in either ſilver or gold. How is it poſſible, therefore, that the want of ſo much credit can add to the treaſure of the nation in any way whatever?

THE other objection is more plauſible, and is ſtated in this manner by Mr. Hume *: "That, by increaſing the current "ſpecies of a country, we increaſe the "price of labour and proviſions; conſe-"quently, enable poorer nations, where "labour and proviſions are cheaper, to "work cheaper, and underſell us at fo-"reign markets: That this is even a ne-"ceſſary conſequence of a great trade, in

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Money.

"whatever

"whatever way it is upheld, and is inſe-"parably connected with great plenty of "ſilver and gold. On which account, "trade muſt neceſſarily circulate; and the "poorer nations muſt gradually carry it "off from the richer. However, there is "ſome comfort (it is ſaid) in loſing our "trade by plenty and fulneſs; but it is ex-"tremely fooliſh to loſe it by an imagi-"nary wealth, and artificially to increaſe "the natural diſadvantages of plenty."

THIS is the moſt plauſible objection, that ever has been made againſt Paper-credit. But, when fully examined, it will appear to be ill founded.

CREDIT of *ſome kind or other* is *neceſſary* wherever there is much trade. In nations, where there is great ſimplicity of manners and little trade, there is little neceſſity either of borrowing, or of buying, upon credit. But as commerce is enlarged, credit muſt be enlarged in proportion. There can be little trade, where every one buys for ready money.

IF therefore we would encreaſe our trade, we muſt ſubmit to the diſadvantages or rather natural conſequences, ariſing from credit; ſince credit is *abſolutely neceſſary* to an extenſive commerce.

IN whatever manner this credit is given, it may be ſaid to come in the place of money, to anſwer for it, or to ſupply the want of it. It may be reckoned money, and is truly a kind of money.

CREDIT can never be given without end. None will give credit but to men either of ſubſtance, or of integrity, prudence, and activity. Here then are *natural* checks and limits, beyond which credit will not be extended.

REGARD being had to theſe *natural* limits, credit muſt always be uſeful to a nation, while it ſupports and encreaſes induſtry and uſeful labour.

BESIDES the credit given by private dealers one to another, and the advantages ariſing from ſuch credit, equal or greater ad-

advantages may be gained by a more regular and publick credit, given by Banks under proper regulations, and eſtabliſhed by proper authority.

THE credit of theſe Banks, as well as credit of all other ſorts, may be ſaid to create a new ſpecies of money; which, like all other kinds of money, muſt contribute to raiſe the prices of labour, of proviſions, and of all other commodities. But this is neceſſary in commerce, promotes induſtry, and is, upon the whole, a manifeſt advantage.

IT may be granted therefore to Mr. Hume, that Bank-notes contribute to encreaſe the price of labour, and, perhaps, of all ſorts of commodities. But this is not a valid argument againſt banking; ſince it is only by increaſing *induſtry* and *conſumption*, that Bank-notes encreaſe theſe prices. Mr. Hume confeſſes, that even a greater quantity of ſilver and gold doth not encreaſe prices immediately; that a certain interval is required, before it produces this effect; that it muſt firſt quicken

the diligence of every individual, before it encreaſes the price of labour *. In no other way can Bank-notes encreaſe the prices of labour or of goods: Notes muſt, therefore, be beneficial. Nor does any other diſadvantage ariſe from them which doth not ariſe equally from money. It is true, they have no *intrinſic* value; in which reſpect money is preferable to them. But they are equally uſeful in all kinds of domeſtic commerce. They produce as much induſtry, as is produced by the ſame quantity of money, and ſerve for money in every caſe, except in tranſacting with foreigners.

BUT might not we have the ſame induſtry *without* the notes? It is abſolutely impoſſible. As no man can trade to ſo great an extent without credit, as with it; ſo paper, taken in payments, muſt go farther than money alone. When a ſpirit of induſtry is once raiſed, it may require a larger circulation of ſpecie to ſupport it, than the gold or ſilver in the country can ſupply. In this caſe there is an abſolute

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Money.

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neceſſity for Paper-credit. When there are many induſtrious merchants or manufacturers, who could uſefully employ greater ſums than they poſſeſs, or can have on credit from private hands, they can never carry their trade to the utmoſt length, if there is not a *Bank* for furniſhing them with *this neceſſary* credit. It may therefore be allowed, that Bank-notes raiſe the prices of labour and goods; but this is not ſo properly the effect of the notes, as of that induſtry which they raiſe and aſſiſt, and which, with all its diſadvantages, is confeſſed to be beneficial to a nation.

WHETHER in any one year half a million is brought into a commercial country by trade, or iſſued out by Banks, in notes, upon good ſecurity, it will ſerve for the ſame purpoſes. Part of it will be laid out in producing more of the ſame kinds of commodities which the country produced before; another part in making theſe kinds better; another in raiſing new manufactures at home; another in procuring more foreign goods. The farmer will raiſe more and better grain; the grazier

breed more and better cattle; the manufacturer make more and better cloth; the artiſan make better work, and in a greater quantity; and the merchant will extend his foreign trade. Thus, the notes will propagate and ſupport greater induſtry; which will do greater ſervice, by encreaſing the ſubſtance of a nation, than it can do harm, by raiſing the prices of labour and of proviſions.

BESIDES; it is not upon the quantity of current ſpecie *alone*, that prices depend; they rather depend on the proportion between the number of buyers, and that of ſellers. If there are more buyers than ſellers, the prices riſe, and riſe in proportion to the greater number of buyers. When the demand is leſſened, or the ſellers exceed the buyers, the prices fall: if the demand is much leſſened, they fall greatly. Again, this proportion between buyers and ſellers depends on a thouſand accidents, that make one ſort of goods more neceſſary, faſhionable, or ſaleable, than another. Thus, when money abounds moſt, the prices of *ſome* things fall very low; and

and when it is very ſcarce, the prices of *other* things are high. The moſt neceſſary things, ſuch as corn and cattle, will depend leaſt upon faſhion. Yet theſe depend upon it in *ſome* meaſure. At ſome times, and in ſome nations, greater quantities of thoſe neceſſary commodities are conſumed than in others. But corn, and other things that are moſt neceſſary, depend oftener upon worſe and better crops and ſeaſons, and upon the proportion between the crops of different countries.

BESIDES the quantity of money, the manners of the people have a great influence in altering the methods of living, and determining the prices of labour and of commodities. Theſe manners are changeable, and are found very different after long intervals of time. It is commonly ſaid, that a crown, two or three hundred years ago, ſerved the ſame purpoſe which a pound does at preſent*. This is true; but not always, perhaps, in the ſenſe in which it is commonly underſtood. In ſome

* Mr. Hume's Political Diſcourſe of Money.

caſes, no doubt, one could have purchaſed, for one crown, as much, as he can now purchaſe for four. In other caſes he could not. But conſidering the different methods of living, there is a ſenſe, in which it is *always* true. In thoſe days, in which a quarter of a pound was equivalent to a whole pound at preſent, men needed leſs than they do now. They wanted only corn, beef, and beer, coarſe cloaths and coarſe furniture. A little money purchaſed them. Men of the ſame rank in our days want finer cloaths, finer furniture; and, beſides corn, beef and beer of a better kind, they muſt have ſpiceries, fruits, and wines, and ſtand in need of more money to procure them. Thus, the methods of living and men's opinions are conſtantly changing; and a variety of circumſtances, beſides the quantity of current ſpecie, contributes to make labour and proviſions dearer at one time than at another.

Mr. Hume * ſeems to be no leſs miſtaken in the limits, which he aſſigns to trade, than in his opinion of Banking.

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Money.

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According to his maxims, trade gives check to itſelf; and there is a limit, beyond which it *cannot* be encreaſed. Poorer nations, that is, nations with leſs money or foreign commerce, can work cheaper than thoſe, that are richer; and muſt, therefore, carry away their trade. On this head, much has been ſaid of the dearneſs of labour and of proviſions in England, of their cheapneſs in France; that the French can work cheaper by a third. It is foretold that the French muſt gradually carry away the whole foreign trade of England; ſince they can underſell the Engliſh in foreign markets.

As to this particular fact, that the French work cheaper than the Engliſh, I ſhall not examine it. It cannot, however, be true in all caſes. An Engliſhman muſt, no doubt, be better fed, and earns higher wages by the day; but he will work many things *by the piece*, as cheap, or cheaper than a Frenchman. He works harder, and can do more work in the ſame time. Further, there are places in Britain and Ireland, where proviſions are as cheap as in France.

But,

But, be this as it will, and though it ſhould be granted, that, in ſeveral caſes, poorer nations will work cheaper, and be able to underſell thoſe that are richer; richer and more commercial nations will, in general, be able to make many things, which poorer nations either cannot make at all, or cannot make ſo well. Hence they may maintain a greater foreign trade, notwithſtanding a greater quantity of money. Trade is, indeed, limited, becauſe the earth and every thing in it are limited. One nation can never extend its trade *in infinitum*, or over all the earth. But a richer nation, by a proper management, may always maintain its ſuperiority in trade over a poorer. Nay a greater quantity of money or credit, inſtead of being a loſs, will often be an advantage for this end. It is not evident either from reaſon or from experience, that there muſt be an equilibrium in trade, as in fluids. One may eaſily account, from other principles, for the circulation of trade, and for its ſhifting its ſeat from one nation to another.

BUT,

But, in truth, neither the riches, nor the happineſs of a nation depends ſo much on foreign trade, as many merchants are apt to imagine. Though ſuch gentlemen are better furniſhed, than others, with the knowledge of *particular* facts, they are often miſled by prejudices, are too confined in their views, and too much conſider their own particular traffic. After all that they have aſſerted concerning the neceſſity of foreign trade, it may juſtly be maintained, that ſuch a nation as Britain, with a large territory, may be great and flouriſhing, may be more powerful than ever it has been hitherto, by induſtry and domeſtic commerce, without an extenſive foreign trade.

A nation, where the people are not bred to war, but are chiefly employed in agriculture, manufactures, and other arts of peace; if they lye on a continent, where their neighbours have great ſtanding armies, they alſo muſt have a ſtanding army, or a very good militia, to defend them from foreign invaſions. If they poſſeſs an iſland, ſuch as Britain, and have not

not a great ſtanding army, or a good militia, they muſt have as much foreign or domeſtic trade, as will enable them to ſupport a good navy for their ſecurity. Foreign trade is likewiſe an advantage in other reſpects. It opens an eaſy communication with all parts of the globe. It gives us the means of enlarging our knowledge of nature and of mankind, and of acquiring a ſhare of the riches of every nation. If it be managed with wiſdom, it may be a more ſpeedy mean of acquiring wealth than domeſtic commerce alone. If there are no mines in a country, without foreign trade it cannot have either ſilver or gold. But ſuch an iſland as Britain, can never be ſaid to depend chiefly on its foreign trade for its greatneſs and riches. A nation, whoſe territory is ſo ſmall, that its native produce is not ſufficient to feed and cloath its inhabitants, cannot ſubſiſt without a foreign trade. The Britiſh are in different circumſtances. Their iſland is more than ſufficient to feed and to cloath its inhabitants, though they were much more numerous than they are. No doubt they will be the better for ſome foreign delicacies

cacies and ornaments. They will ſtand in need of ſome foreign materials for improving their domeſtic commerce. But theſe can be procured without an *extenſive* foreign trade. If the people be generally induſtrious in improving their lands, and in making the beſt uſe of the produce of their own iſland, they may both become very numerous, and enjoy the neceſſaries and comforts of life in great plenty, with little foreign trade. This is made out by the author of the Queriſt beyond the poſſibility of a reply. This is confeſſed by Mr. Hume*; who acknowledges, that, when induſtry and manufactures are once introduced into a nation, they may loſe moſt of their foreign trade, and continue, notwithſtanding, a great and powerful people. Nay, this gentleman ſcruples not to affirm, that the diſadvantages to the foreign trade of England, ariſing from the high price of labour, are not to be put in competition with the happineſs of ſo many millions of the commons of England, with whoſe ſuperior riches, above thoſe of any

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Commerce.

other people, the high price of labour is ſo cloſely connected.

SUCH a maxim is ſuitable to a humane diſpoſition. Agreeably to ſuch a benevolent ſentiment, we ought to extend our notions of trade, and conſider not only how much money it gains to a nation, but how far it is conducive to the happineſs of the people. That government and policy is beſt, where moſt people are moſt happy and eaſy. Neither government nor trade ought to be managed with the *ſole* view of procuring vaſt riches to a *few*, at the expence of *grinding* the faces of the poor, and of rendering the labouring people, who are the great body of a nation, miſerable. The ſyſtems of too many, both merchants and landed gentlemen, tend to no other purpoſe. While ſuch gentlemen ſwim in luxury, and *have more than heart could wiſh*, they grudge a ſmall pittance to the lower claſſes of mankind. We ought to propoſe more *equitable* and more *merciful* ſchemes. By conſidering things in this light, we may ſee, how much the policy of England is preferable to that of France.

IT

IT is not propoſed to compare the taxes of England with thoſe of France, or to determine, which of them are higheſt, or impoſed with the greateſt judgment. When the expences of the French armies and government are ſo great, when ſuch vaſt ſums are actually levied, when both the people and their parliaments make ſuch loud complaints of their taxes being ſo burdenſome, it is ſcarce to be conceived, that the difference in the price of labour and of proviſions in France and in England ſhould ariſe from the difference of taxes. So far as it is real, it ariſes from another ſource. The Engliſh gentry in general are richer than the gentry in France, excepting thoſe of very high rank. The middling people in England are richer than thoſe of the ſame rank in France. The commons in France are much poorer, and live more poorly, than the commons in England. Riches are more univerſally diffuſed in England, than in France. Wherever this is to be found, *cæteris paribus*, prices muſt be higher. Hence, the difference in the prices of labour and of proviſions in France and in England is chiefly owing to

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the poverty of the commons in France, and to the riches of the commons in England: a truth, which ought to be acknowledged for the honour of Engliſh policy. Accordingly, Mr. Hume * confeſſes, that the great advantage of England above any nation at preſent in the world, or that appears in the records of any ſtory, conſiſts in the riches of its artiſans and common people; which, in his eſteem, is moſt ſuitable to human nature, augments the power of the State, makes the burden of taxes feel light on every ſhoulder, and ought to endear to Engliſhmen that free Government under which they live. Thus, were we obliged to make a choice, compaſſion, as well as good policy, might engage us to prefer a ſcheme, by which the *bulk* of a people will be eaſy, to another, that bears hard upon the *multitude*. But, in truth, England may have abundance of foreign trade, notwithſtanding the higher price of labour. An extenſive foreign trade is the natural conſequence of a great domeſtic commerce; ſince it is

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Commerce.

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ſcarce poſſible, that an induſtrious nation, conſiſting of ten millions of people, ſhould not work up many commodities, which they do not want at home, and ſhould not exchange them for the commodities of foreign nations.

E PART

PART II.

Of National Debts; and of the Source of the National Debts of England.

SECT. I.

Of National Debts.

THE caſe of public banks and that of public debts ſeem to be very different. In a commercial nation the inſtitution of banks, if not abſolutely neceſſary, is, at leaſt, of great advantage. As it keeps the money always encreaſing, it is calculated, in the nature of the thing, to promote induſtry and trade. But public debt can never be profitable in its own nature, though it may ſometimes be both neceſſary, and attended with accidental advantages.

THE cuſtom of hoarding up, in the publick treaſuries, great ſums of money,

which prevailed much in antient times, and is ſo highly applauded by Mr. Hume *, has, at firſt view, a very ſpecious appearance. It was indeed ſuited to nations, which, like thoſe of antiquity, lived in ſimplicity, and had a greater turn to agriculture and paſturage, than to trade †.

IF a nation had few commodities or manufactures to export, it was neceſſary for it to have a good ſtock of money to purchaſe corn in times of ſcarcity; or if a nation, that was chiefly addicted to agriculture, aſpired at foreign conqueſts, it was neceſſary for it to have great ſums of money provided beforehand, in order to enable it to ſend an army into another country.

THOUGH ſuch nations may conſiſt of a greater number of people in the ſame extent of ground, than nations, which have more money, and carry on a greater foreign trade; though by their labour and

† In his Political Diſcourſe of Public credit.

* See the Diſſertation on the numbers of mankind, in ancient and modern times. Page 95, 96, &c. to 104. See alſo the Appendix Page 270, 271, 272.

induſtry at home they may have all the neceſſaries of life in great abundance; though they may be more able to defend themſelves againſt an invaſion, and may be ſtronger at home, than a people more addicted to trade; yet they cannot raiſe ſuch great taxes, nor raiſe them ſo eaſily and ſpeedily, as commercial nations. Conſequently, they cannot maintain ſuch great armies abroad, and may often be leſs ſignificant in the ſcale of nations for maintaining the balance of power. Such nations muſt, therefore, be extremely frugal. And the Public muſt lay up great ſums of money for purchaſing proviſions in times of ſcarcity, or for their warlike expeditions, if they do not reſolve to live on plunder, and to force their ſubſiſtance wherever they go; which will often prove a very dangerous experiment.

BUT nations, which carry on a great trade, and have much money, as they can raiſe greater taxes more ſpeedily, and with leſs burden to the people, are not obliged to the ſame rules of frugality. Nay, hoarding up great ſums of ſilver and gold

in the public treaſury will often be a loſs to the Public. In place of ſuch a policy, it will be better if the Government levy no greater taxes than are neceſſary for the preſent exigencies of the State, and leave as much money, as poſſible, in the hands of the people, to enable them to carry on a more extenſive trade. Hoarding up money in the public treaſury is like a private man's locking up great ſums in his cheſt, which he might lay out to advantage upon intereſt, or in trade.

FOR this reaſon, the great quantities of plate, that are ſaid to be in France in the churches and private houſes, cannot be of any advantage in trade. What neither circulates, nor is a fund of credit, can have no influence in commerce. The French could carry on a much greater trade, if all this plate were circulating. The Britiſh too could carry on a greater trade, if every man poſſeſſed of plate would either employ it in trade, or lend it to ſuch as would. In this reſpect, the Engliſh and Dutch, who encourage ſervices of china and other earthen ware inſtead of ſervices of plate, act more

more in the true ſpirit of trade, than the Genoeſe. For the ſame reaſon, the tax on plate can hardly be reckoned impolitic *; ſince, by leſſening the quantity of plate, it prevents the want of bullion for the neceſſary exigencies of the State. In general, it is both ſounder and more merciful policy (as Sir Matthew Decker maintains in his Eſſay on Trade) to lay taxes on articles of luxury rather than upon the neceſſaries of life.

ON the ſame ground, one cannot ſee the advantage of ſuch banks as Mr. Hume propoſes, which lock up all the money, give out paper inſtead of money, and never augment the circulating coin †. If there is no other ſecret in the bank of Amſterdam, if all thoſe vaſt treaſures, which have been laid up in its dark caverns from time to time, have remained untouched hitherto, it ſeems to be altoge-

* Mr. Hume ſuſpects, that the tax on plate is impolitic in Great Britain. See his Diſcourſe on the Balance of Trade.

† In his Political Diſcourſe of Money.

ther unſuitable to the policy of ſuch a mercantile people †.

AFTER all, a poorer State chiefly addicted to agriculture and paſturage, and leſs employed in procuring the elegancies and ornaments of life by an extenſive trade, may be, in many reſpects, preferable to a richer commercial nation. The inhabitants of ſuch a poorer country may be more numerous, more healthy, and more virtuous. They may, by being more warlike, be more able to defend themſelves at home; and may likewiſe be abundantly provided with the real neceſſaries and conveniencies of life. In ſuch a caſe they may adopt every frugal ſcheme. They will not need Paper-credit, and but very little money. At the ſame time, they may be very happy; happier, perhaps, than richer commercial nations. But, if they will not be ſatisfied with ſuch ſimplicity; if a people muſt have delicacies and ornaments, and

† The author of the Queriſt puts a very proper query on this head, "Whether money lying dead in the bank of Amſterdam would not be as uſeleſs as in the mine?" 5th edition 1750, query 242.

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the trade and manufactures that are neceſſary to procure them; they muſt not exclude thoſe maxims, that are ſuitable to ſuch an end. It is ridiculous to be perpetually extolling trade and manufactures, while we are conſtantly railing at what is evidently connected with them, or neceſſary to procure them. This is to act inconſiſtently, and to aim at impoſſibilities.

TAKING things in this view, it may be eaſily demonſtrated, that public debts are not ſo diſadvantageous in rich commercial nations, as in nations where the agriculture bears a greater proportion to the trade and manufactures.

A private man may be obliged to borrow, and may borrow with great advantage to his private affairs. The ſame thing holds in the caſe of a nation. If the Government has ſome grand and uſeful ſcheme in view, either to drain marſhes, to render rivers navigable, to encourage ſome branches of induſtry, or to maintain their liberty or trade againſt a powerful and ambitious enemy, and cannot raiſe the neceſſary ſums

by

by taxes in due time; it may be prudent to borrow the money, and to eſtabliſh a proper method of repaying it at leiſure *. If the people have a confidence in the Government, the ſecurities given by the Public, bearing a certain intereſt, may not only become a fund of paper-money which may eaſily be transferred from hand to hand, but become ſo convenient for merchants or others, that they may very reaſonably riſe above par. Thus there may be a ſolid foundation for ſtocks or public funds. Merchants, having part of their eſtates in the ſtocks, which they can command at pleaſure, may either be more ready, than it would be poſſible for them otherwiſe to be, for any profitable adventure in trade; or, if no ſuch adventure offers, may have a moderate intereſt for their money. In this there is a manifeſt advantage. Without doubt, the trade of England has been promoted, and its mer-

* It is not therefore univerſally true, That a nation ought never to borrow, but always to raiſe within the year the money neceſſary for the current ſervice. This is a good general rule; perhaps it ought ſeldom to be departed from. But, in ſeveral caſes, it may neither be poſſible, nor be expedient.

chants

chants had advantages from the nature of their ſtocks, above thoſe of other nations *.

* The following queries, propoſed by the ingenious Biſhop of Cloyne, ſerve to illuſtrate the nature of public funds, and ſhew, that what originally flowed from neceſſity and want, may afterwards become beneficial to the State.

Query 233d. Whether the credit of the public funds be not a mine of gold to England? And whether any ſtep, that ſhould leſſen this credit, ought not to be dreaded?

Query 234th. Whether ſuch credit be not the principal advantage that England hath over France, I may add, over every country in Europe?

Query 235th. Whether by this the public is not become poſſeſſed of the wealth of foreigners, as well as natives; and whether England be not, in ſome ſort, the treaſury of Chriſtendom?

And afterwards, treating of the bank of Amſterdam, he aſks,

Query 296th. Whether it be not the greateſt help and ſpur to commerce, that property can be ſo readily conveyed, and ſo well ſecured by a *compte en banc*, that is, by only writing one man's name for another's in the bank-book?

Query 297th. Whether, at the beginning of the laſt century, thoſe, who had lent money to the public during the war with Spain, were not ſatisfied by the ſole expedient of placing their names in a *compte en ban*, with liberty to transfer their claims?

Query 298th. Whether the example of theſe eaſy transfers in the *compte en banc* thus caſually erected, did not tempt other men to become creditors to the public, in order to profit by the ſame ſecure and expeditious method of keeping and transferring their wealth?

IT is evident likewiſe, that the ſchemes carried on by the money thus borrowed by the Public, and become a part of the National Debts, may ſo much promote the trade and riches of the nation in certain caſes, that, by a moderate tax upon the additional riches, a ſum may be raiſed ſufficient both to pay the yearly intereſt, and gradually to repay the principal.

IT is true, ſome moneyed men, who have large ſhares in the ſtocks, may give over trade, and ſatisfy themſelves with the intereſt of their money on government-ſecurities. This may often be a loſs; and, when it happens, I ſhall not cavil with

Query 299th. Whether this *compte en banc* hath not proved better than a mine of gold to Amſterdam?

Query 300th. Whether that city may not be ſaid to owe her greatneſs to the unpromiſing accident of her having been in debt more than ſhe was able to pay?

Much to the ſame purpoſe ſays a celebrated French author, ſpeaking of England, "It will have a ſure credit, as it will borrow within itſelf, and pay itſelf. "It may happen, that it will undertake enterprizes "above its natural ſtrength, and improve againſt its "enemies thoſe immenſe fictitious riches, which the "confidence repoſed in, and nature of its government "will render real."

De l'Eſprit des Loix, tome i. *liv.* 19. *chap.* 27.

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any of our writers about a name, and call theſe gentlemen merchants *. But ſuch gentlemen may have got their money as honeſtly, as others have got their lands: they may uſe it as honeſtly, and with as much advantage to the Public. If ſome of them take undue advantages of riſing or falling ſtocks to gain exorbitant profits, or take undue methods to raiſe the ſtocks; they may not perhaps do more harm than landed men by raiſing their rents too high, by ſqueezing their tenants, by *hoarding* up their corn in times of ſcarcity, and by grinding the faces of the poor. *Landed* men ought to be cautious of propoſing to aboliſh the public debts by a law, or taking away the eſtates of the ſtock-jobbers, *as idle and uſeleſs members of the State.* If ever all *rich, idle, uſeleſs* members of the ſociety ſhould be puniſhed, ſtockjobbers would not be the *only ſufferers.*

IT is not eaſy to aſſign limits, or to determine, how far a nation may go in bor-

* The writer of the Three Eſſays refuſes to call them merchants.

rowing.

rowing. Neither, indeed, would it be good policy. It is much better to keep far on the ſafe ſide, and never to ſtretch the public credit. But, certainly, the limits for ſuch a rich commercial nation as Britain, are larger than many have imagined. Dr. Davenant, in the end of the laſt century, when the public debts were about fourteen millions, was poſitive, that, if they were ſuffered to riſe higher, nay, if they were not gradually cleared, England muſt be undone *. Yet we have ſeen them riſe to thrice that ſum, while the nation is become richer than it was before. How-

* 'Tis in vain for the author of the Three Eſſays (pag. 15, 16.) to pretend, that this prediction has been verified by the change, which has happened in the property of the lands of England ſince the Revolution: A change ſo great, that he imagines a greater would not have happened even after a Turkiſh conqueſt! 'Tis evident, Davenant had no view to changes of this nature; he meant, that the lands would be much worſe cultivated, whoever had the property; that the inhabitants would be greatly diminiſhed, and would become poor. In this ſenſe, which is the true one, the prediction has failed. Davenant was a man of more ſagacity, than to conſider the change of hands, and the ſhifting of property, as a certain indication of decline. This is often the ſymptom of the encreaſe of trade and riches (as ſhall be ſhewn afterwards.) It often happens under the beſt and happieſt Governments. But, if Britain was to be overrun by a Turkiſh or any abſolute Monarch; if we were to loſe our liberty and free Government; all the miſchiefs, that were predicted by Davenant, and many others, would happen. At the ſame time, the property of lands might remain more fixed, than when trade and riches were encreaſing. Hardly, indeed, could there be any cauſe of altering property, but the arbitrary will of the tyrant. The monarch, indeed, might take an eſtate from one of his ſlaves, and beſtow it upon another. But, amidſt the oppreſſions and inſecurity under ſuch a Government, we cannot ſuppoſe ſuch a quick encreaſe of riches, as would enable the Induſtrious to purchaſe eſtates ſo faſt, as in times of greater liberty and ſecurity.

HOWEVER a limit muſt certainly be. No nation can contract debts without end. Public debts may be too high. One may be authorized to ſay, the debts of Britain are high enough at preſent; ſince the legiſlature appears evidently to be of this opinion, and ſeems anxious to have them reduced.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the SOURCE *of the* NATIONAL DEBTS *of England.*

WHEN we conſider the vaſt debts, that have been contracted in England; in one view, it ſeems impoſſible intirely to juſtify the conduct, which has been the cauſe of them; in another, ſuch high debts are not a bad ſymptom of the times, and mark a peculiar diſtinction betwixt the temper of the nation before and ſince the Revolution.

WHEN a free government is able to contract great debts by borrowing from its own ſubjects, this is a certain ſign, that it has gained *the confidence* of the people. If foreigners are eager to have a ſhare of its funds, this ſhews the confidence of the *neighbouring nations*. If it be true, that the people of Britain have entruſted the government with more than ſixty millions, and foreigners with more than twenty, ſuch a government muſt have

have *a firm credit*. 'Tis by this firm credit, among other things, that the government ever ſince the Revolution has been remarkably diſtinguiſhed from the government during the four preceding reigns.

How often have we been told, with a particular emphaſis, That all our debts have been contracted ſince the Revolution? To ſuch, as know the hiſtory of former times, the mention of this is unneceſſary. None of the four preceding reigns had *any credit* with the people. Before the Revolution the nation could place no confidence in its governors; for they were continually giving them ground of jealouſy, and were ſecretly undermining, or openly invading, their conſtitution.

How openly did James the Firſt of England propagate a ſlaviſh ſyſtem, as the true ſyſtem of the Britiſh government. "The abſolute power of kings; their "hereditary, indefeaſible, irreſiſtable, di-"vine right; the rights of their ſub-"jects being originally derived from

" their grace and favour, and being " revokable at their pleaſure, or in " caſes of neceſſity, of which they them- " ſelves were the ſole judges; their right " to levy money at their pleaſure, and in " what manner they found moſt expedient, " without conſent of parliament; their " right to preſcribe to the conſciences " of their ſubjects, at leaſt, to regulate " all external forms and ceremonies in re- " ligion by their ſovereign will and au- " thority; their right to call members of " parliament to account, to try, judge, and " puniſh them at common law, for their " ſpeeches in parliament:" theſe, and ſuch like ſlaviſh principles, were common topics of his converſation. He inculcated them upon his courtiers. He talked of them openly at table. He could ſcarce conceal them from his parliaments, and made an aſſent and conſent to theſe ſlaviſh doctrines the high road to honour and preferment.

During the reign of Charles I. the rights of the ſubjects were ſo openly violated, as gave an univerſal diſguſt, and made the king

loſe the confidence of his people. Charles himſelf entertained too high an opinion of the authority of kings. Nor need we be ſurpriſed that the nation was extremely alarmed, after ſeeing the court diſcover ſo ſtrong an inclination to rule without parliaments, and take ſuch wide ſteps, to eſtabliſh an arbitrary government, both in church and ſtate.

WHEN we reflect on the attempts, that were made againſt our freedom during this reign, we ought not to be ungrateful to the memory of thoſe generous patriots, who, in oppoſition to an arbitrary court, ſo bravely aſſerted the cauſe of liberty, and maintained the rights of the people. We ought to applaud that valour and love to their country, which ſhone conſpicuouſly in their character. But as an enormous ambition and enthuſiaſtic rage at length mixed in their counſels, and hindered them from finiſhing happily what they had ſo gloriouſly begun; in ſo far they deſerve to be condemned; nor could they ever obtain a firm credit with the people.

IT is needleſs to enter minutely into the ſpirit of thoſe times. One would not be fond of bringing too ſevere an accuſation againſt the two firſt kings of Great Britain. At the ſame time, many of their meaſures cannot poſſibly be defended. Whatever were the virtues of thoſe princes as men, as kings they manifeſtly aimed at arbitrary power. Whatever were the crimes and weakneſſes of thoſe who oppoſed them, a warm oppoſition in thoſe two reigns, ſeems to have been neceſſary for preſerving Britiſh liberty. It is extremely difficult to be wholly impartial. Mr. Hume * has not been able to hinder himſelf from ſhewing a viſible bias in favour of King Charles I. and of the party who ſupported him; and againſt the zealous defenders of civil and religious liberty. It is very poſſible, that I am biaſſed on the other ſide. The religious puritans of thoſe days had great weakneſſes; but thoſe weakneſſes were more excuſable than the ſuperſtitious bigotry of Charles's court and miniſters. Thoſe who govern ought

* In the Hiſtory of Great Britain, vol. 1.

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to be wiſer than the people who are governed. In matters of religion, ſuch as have authority ought to ſhew indulgence to ſcrupulous conſciences. But the court of King Charles I. knew nothing but ſeverity. Contrary both to juſtice and to good policy, they embroiled the nation for the ſake of *ſome unneceſſary ceremonies* in worſhip. The defenders of civil liberty, no doubt, fell into great exceſſes, and carried their claims too far. But our hiſtorian treats them with a ſeverity not agreeable to that gentleneſs which he uſually exerciſes towards political miſtakes. It is even with caution, according to Mr. Hume, that we ought to aſcribe the praiſes of a good citizen to *Hamden*, though celebrated by hiſtorians of the moſt *oppoſite* parties, for virtue and integrity in private life, affability in converſation, penetration and diſcernment in counſel; temper, art and eloquence in debate; induſtry, vigilance and enterprize in action; and valour in war *. Nay, ſo cautious is the hiſtorian, that he ſcruples to determine poſitively, whether this generous lover of liberty was actuated

* Hiſtory of Great Britain, vol. i. page 353.

by private ambition, or by honeſt prejudices. How much more generouſly would he have been treated by the nobler antients, who would not have ſcrupled to beſtow the higheſt praiſes on his heroic patriotiſm, and would have conſecrated his name with the Ariſtides's, the Brutus's, and the Cato's of the antient world.

IN judging of the merit of ancient parties, it is not equitable to compare *their* principles and manners with thoſe of a *more enlightened age*. This is not the ſureſt way of forming a ſound judgment of their pretenſions. To do juſtice to our brave forefathers, we ſhould not compare *their* ſpirit and opinions with the opinions and ſpirit of *our* times, but with thoſe of their cotemporaries and antagoniſts. We ſhould conſider the neceſſities to which they were reduced, and what ſpirit was ſuitable to the age in which they lived. Times of civil war and fierce diſſention about religion, notwithſtanding the courage and military bravery which they tend to produce, notwithſtanding that noble ardor for liberty, and fervent zeal for religion,

gion, with which many are remarkably inſpired, may juſtly be called unfortunate to thoſe that live in them. Beſides the external calamities of war, with which the world is afflicted in ſuch times, they beget an uncommon keenneſs, if not acrimony, of temper. We need not, therefore, wonder ſo much, as Mr. Hume, that our generous anceſtors, who were engaged in ſuch arduous conflicts, carried ſome things too far; and that their genius, though ſuitable to thoſe fierce times in which Providence had caſt their lot, appears ſo different from the milder and more ſociable ſpirit of the preſent age.

KING Charles II. had reigned but a ſhort time after his reſtoration, when he loſt the confidence of his ſubjects. The reſtoration of this prince in ſo haſty a manner, without ſome ſuch ſolemn declarations of the rights of the nation by parliament, as were afterwards made at the Revolution, can be juſtified only by the *neceſſity* of a ſpeedy ſettlement at that time. Such an entire confidence was not a little

dangerous. The true friends of liberty ſoon had reaſon to repent of their complaiſance. This indolent and inactive prince diſcovered that he inherited the principles of his father; though he would neither run the riſk, nor take the trouble of eſtabliſhing his favourite ſyſtem. Guided by French and popiſh counſels, he ſoon loſt the hearts of his people. How poorly did he ſhut up his exchequer, to avoid paying a million and a half of debt, that he might be better able to aſſiſt the French to conquer the Dutch, contrary to the intereſt of the nation! What unjuſt, ſevere, and fooliſh attempts were made in his reign, as well as in his father's, to ſettle what will always be impoſſible to ſettle, in a free and proteſtant country, an *exact uniformity* in matters of religion! But ſeverity to proteſtant diſſenters, and a ſecret management in favour of the church of Rome, were prevailing maxims in thoſe two reigns.

THE deſigns of his ſucceſſor James II. to eſtabliſh an arbitrary government, and to reſtore popery, were viſible to the whole nation

nation, opened the eyes of the people, and brought about the Revolution.

WHAT confidence could the nation place in princes of ſuch characters, who were continually ſtruggling with their parliaments, and diſcovered a manifeſt inclination to be free of them altogether! What *wiſe* men would have *truſted* ſuch princes with their money! None of the four princes before the Revolution had *credit* enough to obtain ſuch great ſums as the people have chearfully contributed ſince that memorable æra.

THIS confidence of the people ariſes from the moſt obvious and palpable appearances, and is founded on the moſt juſt and reaſonable grounds. Since the Revolution, our princes have avoided thoſe rocks on which their predeceſſors ran with precipitation. The Britiſh have enjoyed greater liberty and ſecurity than were enjoyed in the preceding reigns. The great body of the people find themſelves eaſy and ſafe. The adminiſtration is equitable and mild. The Sovereign ſummons the parliament

parliament regularly, according to law. The King and his parliament meet and part amicably. They enact ſuch laws as are thought proper. Sometimes the landed, ſometimes the trading intereſt, is more immediately conſidered. Great regard is paid to the general opinion of merchants and of the people. If they are offended at any law that has been enacted; if *deſigning* men have raiſed a clamour, and rendered the people uneaſy; ſuch is the lenity of the Britiſh government, ſuch their regard to the *voice* of the Public, that, though the people, perhaps, had no juſt reaſon to have been uneaſy on account of the law itſelf, yet if this law was not thought of importance enough to juſtify the ſuffering them to remain uneaſy under it, it has been known, that, the very next ſeſſion of parliament, the miniſtry have made the motion to repeal it. Inſtead of flagrant attempts to ſtretch the prerogative, as in former times, the people can ſee nothing but legal government. If it is doubted, whether the King can execute any particular, neceſſary, or ſalutary project, by virtue of his prerogative, inſtead of urging the

the *plea of neceſſity*, as was frequently done before the Revolution, or catching at ſuch an opportunity for *enlarging the prerogative* without law; a bill is immediately brought into *parliament* to explain, or to enlarge the powers of the Crown. Amidſt affected cries of ſlavery and oppreſſion by the diſaffected or diſcontented, no body can obſerve inſtances of this oppreſſion. Every induſtrious man is able not only to live by his induſtry, but to live in much greater plenty, than in France, or under any abſolute monarchy. He finds, indeed, the prices of many things higher, than they were in former times; whether from taxes, or for other reaſons, he does not perhaps inquire. Neither does he calculate, how much he pays towards clearing the public debts. But, without any ſuch calculation, he finds more money to pay thoſe higher prices, and fees, that every one may *live happily* under a *gentle* adminiſtration, and the protection of law. Such a concurrence of favourable circumſtances makes the people eaſy. They have *confidence* in the government, and are not to be moved either by the alarms given by the

the timorous or diſcontented, or by the arts of the diſaffected, and their ſtudied repreſentations of oppreſſion and poverty amidſt the greateſt liberty and plenty.

BUT have there been *no* miſmanagements under the government ſince the Revolution? Has this government fallen into *no* errors? Has it been guilty of *no* abuſes? Whatever may be ſaid by fawning paraſites, the beſt friends of the Revolution will not ſay this. They do not doubt, that men without virtue, or without ability, have too often been employed; that ſuch men have miſmanaged public affairs, and embezzled the public money; that frauds have been committed; that ſervices have been paid for, which were never performed; that others have been purchaſed at an extravagant price; that many deceitful arts have been employed in the management of the ſtocks; and that ſuch abuſes have too ſeldom been puniſhed. Though they are far from believing that the balance of power in Europe is an idea *intirely imaginary*, they will not aſſert, that we have not burdened ourſelves *too much* to preſerve

preſerve it. Far are they from thinking, that *all* our foreign wars and negotiations have been conducted with the *greateſt* ſkill and ability; that our taxes have been impoſed with the *deepeſt judgment*; that our revenues have been managed with the *ſtricteſt frugality*. They cannot believe, that, if the adminiſtration ſince the Revolution had been entirely patriot and frugal, the public debts would have riſen ſo high, or not have been ſooner reduced. All human governments are ſubject to abuſes. The government, ſince the Revolution, has not been exempted from them. Generous friends of liberty will not deny it. They will not proſtitute their honour. They will not defend what is wrong. When they celebrate the government ſince the Revolution, they do not celebrate it on account of *the frugality* of the adminiſtration, or the watchfulneſs of men in power, either in preventing or in puniſhing abuſes. What they celebrate is of a different nature. By the Revolution the conſtitution has been rendered more perfect. That admirable and ſingular mixture of a hereditary limited monarchy and ſplendid ariſtocracy.

ſtocracy, without the power of oppreſſing, and of an equal democracy without its unſteadineſs and confuſion, ſhines with ſuperior luſtre. By means of the Revolution, the proteſtant religion, which ſeemed continually to be in danger from the influence of popiſh kings or popiſh queens, is perfectly ſecured. By means of the Revolution, we enjoy an entire ſecurity from all kinds of perſecution, liberty of worſhipping God according to our conſciences, ſafety to our perſons againſt arbitrary impriſonments, ſecurity of our lives and properties from arbitrary judgments, freedom from all taxes, penalties, or puniſhments, without conſent of parliament, liberty of ſpeech and debate, of writing and printing, in the moſt ample manner we can deſire. Theſe are bleſſings which we have poſſeſſed more abundantly than ever we did before. Such a perfect liberty and ſecurity have given ſo great encouragement to induſtry and trade, that, notwithſtanding our high taxes and great national debts, we are much richer and more powerful, than before the Revolution.

THOUGH

THOUGH the true friends of liberty will never deny weakneſſes in the adminiſtration, they cannot but ſee, at the ſame time, that many of the abuſes which they confeſs and lament, naturally ariſe from the freedom of our government, and are evils nearly connected with the bleſſings we enjoy above moſt other nations. There can be no unmixed happineſs in this world. A nation cannot have *juſt enough* of any thing, and no more. If it enjoys a ſufficient meaſure of liberty, it muſt be content to take along with it a certain portion of licentiouſneſs. If it will have the *moſt perfect* ſecurity againſt illegal impriſonments or arbitrary judgments, it muſt lay its account to ſuffer many criminals to eſcape. If it would preſerve the influence, dignity, and independance of the rich, and not break the ſpirit of the commons, it cannot expect to be without parties and factions. Wherever there are ſtruggles and conteſts for power and authority, *diſhonourable* as well as *honourable* methods of acquiring them will too often come into vogue. Where power is divided among many different perſons and bodies of men, the diſtribu-

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tion is the great mean of preſerving freedom, and of preventing thoſe enormous acts of tyranny, which are exerciſed under abſolute monarchies. But it often embarraſſes the adminiſtration, and makes the ſprings of government move more ſlowly. A king of Britain, as he cannot do the thouſandth part of the miſchief which may be eaſily done by an abſolute monarch, ſometimes cannot do ſo much good. His beſt intentions may be fruſtrated by contending parties *. Where there are parties

* As it can rarely be ſuppoſed, that abſolute monarchs will be diſpoſed to do good in any extraordinary degree; as they are ſurrounded with flatterers from their birth, and their education ſeldom tends either to give them the largeſt views of what is beſt, or beſt diſpoſes them to purſue it; as they muſt be often miſled, by their courtiers, to prefer other conſiderations to the general intereſt of their ſubjects; as there are indeed but few examples of abſolute princes who have been *eminently* good, and every abſolute prince is capable of doing the greateſt miſchief; abſolute monarchy always has been, and always muſt be, the greateſt ſcourge of mankind. According to Mr. Hume (in his Political Diſcourſe of Commerce) "the poverty "of the common people is a natural, if not an infallible, "conſequence of abſolute monarchy." In this view, it is the beſt policy for nations to ſet proper bounds to the power of their kings. This the Britiſh have happily effected, and have eſtabliſhed the wiſeſt monarchy that ever was in the world.

and

and factions, it is no wonder that perſons, whoſe greateſt merit conſiſts in their powerful connexions, are ſometimes choſen into offices. No form of government can have all advantages. The beſt is that which has the moſt and the greateſt. If a nation will have moneyed men and rich merchants, who ſhall be able both to carry on a great trade, and to advance money for the urgent occaſions of the government, it *muſt* admit ſtock-jobbing. If it will preſerve a due balance of power abroad, and baffle the unjuſt attempts of an ambitious monarch, who diſturbs the peace of mankind, encroaches on his neighbours, and would enſlave the world, it muſt ſometimes put itſelf to the expence of maintaining armies for its defence. If it is more rich and opulent than other nations, the adminiſtration *muſt* be more expenſive, and muſt pay all its officers and ſervants at a much greater rate *. Thus

we

* Mr. Hume has obſerved (in his Political Diſcourſe of Money) that all rich trading countries, from Carthage to Britain and Holland, have made uſe of mercenary troops; that the pay of all ſervants in rich countries muſt riſe in proportion to the public opulence;

 and

we may eaſily ſee the original ſource of many abuſes, that are juſtly complained of.

"KING William's wars! King William's wars!"—A great topic of declamation to ſuch as are diſaffected. It muſt be owned, that it is ſcarce poſſible, without knowing many ſecret tranſactions, to explain the reaſons, and to ſhew the neceſſity of foreign wars. But the wars, entered into by King William immediately after the Revolution, and that projected by him a little before his death, as far as the Public can judge, ſeem to have been undertaken upon the moſt honourable occaſion *. It was *glorious* for the nation to chaſtiſe the pride of an ambitious monarch, who had aſſiſted King James with his

and that our ſmall army in Britain of twenty thouſand men is maintained at as great expence, as a French army thrice as numerous. Therefore, according to this writer, we ought not to expect to be as frugal as the French, till the commons of England ſhall be as poor as thoſe of France.

* We find a very abſurd aſſertion (in the Three Eſſays, page 11.) That it is the intereſt of landed men and merchants to ſubmit to any inſult, rather than engage in a war; ſince they muſt bear the whole burden of it.

fleets

fleets and armies, and, like a deſpotic maſter, would force the Britiſh to ſubmit to a prince whom they had proſcribed †. It was *generous* to make an atonement to Europe for the weakneſſes of Charles II. not only in ſuffering, but in aſſiſting, the haughty Lewis to trample on the faith of treaties, and on the rights of nations. It was *neceſſary* for their own intereſts, to join their arms with the reſt of Europe, which the encroachments of Lewis XIV. had at length rouſed to take juſt vengeance, and to concert proper meaſures for their own ſecurity.

BUT it cannot be expected, that the flatterers of a tyrannical power in Church or State will ever be reconciled to the memory of William III. How glorious is it for him, that he was ſo much hated by them while alive, and that his memory has been ſo much perſecuted ſince his death! Even

† This is the language of Monſieur Voltaire: Mais reconnaitre ainſi pour leur roi un prince proſcrit par eux, leur parut un outrage à la nation, & un deſpotiſme qu'on voulait exercer dans l'Europe. *Siècle de Louis* XIV. tome i. chap. 16.

the elegant Monſieur de Voltaire, poſſeſſed of as much freedom of thought as is to be obſerved in moſt writers born under an abſolute monarchy, is far from doing juſtice to this great man.

ACCORDING to Monſieur Voltaire*, King William III. was more remarkable for depth of judgment, than beauty of genius or force of imagination. In his manners he was plain and modeſt, uſually grave and reſerved, and never lively but in a day of battle. He deſpiſed all kinds of ſuperſtition, and never perſecuted any perſon whatſoever on account of religion. He had the valour of a ſoldier, and reſources of a commander; and, though he loſt many battles, left behind him the reputation of a General much to be dreaded. He had an abſolute influence in Holland, but did not deſtroy its liberty: Nor had he any inclination to render himſelf abſolute in England. Without being popular he was a great politician; and was, indeed, the ſoul and prime mover of the

* Siecle de Louis XIV. chap. 16.

half

half of Europe. Hitherto this Hiſtorian ſeems diſpoſed to do juſtice. In what follows his good diſpoſition towards this great prince is not ſo evident. He died (ſays he) without giving any anſwers to what the Engliſh Clergy ſaid to him about their religion, and diſcovered no anxiety about any thing but the affairs of Europe. If M. Voltaire intended this as a tacit accuſation of impiety, it is ſcarce pardonable in an author who affects ſo much to deſpiſe *ſuperſtition*. He has palpably miſtaken the character of King William, and put an unjuſt gloſs upon the reſerve that appeared in the laſt ſcene of his life. This hero affected not ſhew or popularity during his life: he had too great a ſoul to alter his manner, and to affect them at his death. Having often faced death in the field with courage, he felt its actual approaches without any concern for himſelf, and had no other concern but for the welfare of Europe.

To judge of him from his actions, and to put the moſt natural conſtruction on his conduct, the welfare of Europe, and

the preſervation of liberty were always in his view; the accompliſhment of theſe great ends the main buſineſs of his life.

ACCORDING to M. Voltaire, the Prince of Orange had conceived vaſt deſigns, nay, was more ambitious than Lewis XIV. This may be allowed; there are few great men without great ambition. But the ambition of Lewis and that of William were entirely different. Lewis was ambitious of rendering his power abſolute at home, and of deſtroying any remainder of liberty that was to be found in France: William was ambitious of preſerving the rights and liberty of his country. Lewis was ambitious of ſubduing and enſlaving all the neighbouring nations: William of protecting them againſt the attacks of Lewis. Lewis attacked Holland from pride and a deſire of glory; It was the glory of William to defend that ſinking State. Lewis was ambitious of deſtroying the proteſtant religion in France: William, of protecting and preſerving it in Britain. Lewis was ambitious of making conſcience yield to his deſpotic ſway: William,

William, of preſerving the rights of conſcience ſacred and inviolable. Lewis's ambition was accompanied with injuſtice and cruelty, both to his own ſubjects and to his neighbours: William's, with juſtice and mercy. To finiſh the compariſon: Lewis was diſappointed of his ambitious purpoſe to eſtabliſh an univerſal monarchy: William ſucceeded in his great deſign of humbling tyrants. William in his life ſet bounds to the power of Lewis, and ſtopped the career of his conqueſts. By the execution of the ſchemes which William had projected while alive, even after his death he brought down the high ſpirits of Lewis, and ſpoiled him of his former trophies.

IT is difficult even for men of liberal minds wholly to diveſt themſelves of the prejudices of education. M. Voltaire is a ſtriking example. Though he allows, that King James's going over to France at the Revolution was the æra of the true liberty of England *; that the wars which

* Ce fut là l'epoque de la vraie liberté d'Angleterre. *Le Siecle de Louis* XIV. tome i. chap. 14.

King William projected and Queen Anne profecuted, were in reality the wiſhes of the nation*; that Lewis XIV. had taken up arms himſelf againſt his own nephew, againſt his ſon's brother-in-law, and againſt another prince nearly allied to his family; that the Duke of Savoy fought againſt the huſband of one of his daughters, and againſt the father-in-law of the other: yet, paſſing over theſe examples of ambition in thoſe two princes with a gentle cenſure, he attacks the Prince of Orange moſt unjuſtly, in a manner truly abuſive, and altogether unworthy of the fine ſenſe and penetration of ſuch an ingenious hiſtoriographer.

" THE moſt criminal undertaking in all " that war, was the only one that was " truly ſucceſsful. William ſucceeded en- " tirely in England and Ireland: in other " reſpects ſucceſs was balanced by loſſes. " When I call this undertaking criminal, " I do not examine, whether the Britiſh, " after having ſhed the father's blood,

* Les meſures etaient les vœux de la nation. *Le Siecle de Louis* XIV. tome i. chap. 16.

" were

" were in the wrong, or had juſt reaſons, " to baniſh the ſon, and to defend their " religion and their rights: I only ſay, " that, if there is any juſtice upon earth, " it did not belong to the daughter and " ſon-in-law of King James to turn this " prince out of his own houſe *".

SELDOM has Mr. Voltaire ſuffered ſuch an exceptionable paragraph to drop from his pen, or treated his ſubject ſo ſuperficially. The daughter and ſon-in-law of King James were not either unjuſt or criminal in giving a ſeaſonable aſſiſtance to Great Britain againſt the unlawful attempts of that prince. The rights of kings and of their heirs, and all the rules of ſucceſſion, muſt ever be ſubjected to the

* L'entrepriſe la plus criminelle de toute cette guerre, fut la ſeule veritablement heureuſe. Guillaume reüſſit toujours pleinement en Angleterre & en Irlande. Ailleurs les ſuccès furent balancés. Quand j'appelle cette entrepriſe criminelle, je n'examine pas ſi la nation, après avoir repandu le ſang du pere, avait tort ou raiſon de proſcrire le fils, & de defendre ſa religion & ſes droits: Je dis ſeulement, que s'il y a quelque juſtice ſur la terre, il n'appartenait pas à la fille & au gendre du Roi Jâques de le chaſſer de ſa maiſon. *Le Siecle de Louis* XIV. tome i. chap. 15.

general

general good and exigencies of nations. No race of kings can juſtly lay claim to an unalterable right of ſucceſſion in all events, and upon all ſuppoſitions whatever. The rights of nations and the authority of laws are ſuperior to the rights and authority of kings. Notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt ties of gratitude and natural relation to any king, it will ever be juſt and glorious to deliver an oppreſſed nation, and reſcue a ſinking State from his tyrannical power. Neither humanity, nor gratitude, nor natural affection, can bind up any of his family from defeating his unjuſt and deſtructive ſchemes againſt a whole people. If open force be neceſſary for this good purpoſe, the neceſſity renders it lawful. Gratitude and natural affection can oblige to nothing more, than treating the perſon and family of the Prince with due tenderneſs and reſpect. This was abundantly taken care of at the Revolution. The Prince of Orange at all times ſhewed as much regard for King James, as filial piety demanded; and, on certain delicate occaſions, treated him with a generoſity which marked the greatneſs as well as goodneſs

goodneſs of his mind. M. Voltaire has been blinded by his prepoſſeſſions. Though he was able to overcome the prejudices he had contracted in favour of a ſuperſtitious religion, he could never thoroughly perceive the odiouſneſs of tyranny, nor diveſt himſelf of an admiration of abſolute power. So fatal is it to have been born under a deſpotic prince. Had M. Voltaire written with as much taſte and impartiality on this, as on many other ſubjects, inſtead of condemning the Revolution, or accuſing the Prince of Orange of injuſtice, he would have fallen down and worſhipped, and taught the wondering world to revere that Liberty, which ſhone ſo brightly on Britain at that happy period, and was ſo little known among the neighbouring nations.

BUT it is leſs ſurprizing, that a French man, who *profeſſes* himſelf an admirer of what the author of a late Eſtimate * calls the gallant reign of Lewis XIV. ſhould be leſs favourable to the memory of that

* An Eſtimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times, p. 138.

hero,

hero, who defeated the deſigns of his favourite monarch. We may rather wonder that the author of the Eſtimate, who hath enjoyed the bleſſings of Britiſh liberty, even while he confeſſes that the people of Britain gained an acceſſion of liberty, and Britiſh parliaments a new dignity and power by the Revolution, ſhould not place the happy inſtrument of thoſe valuable acquiſitions in a fairer light, and repreſent his conduct in brighter colours. The deliverer of Britain from popery and arbitrary power is not celebrated for wiſdom in counſel, bravery in war, hatred of tyranny, or love of liberty; but appears in the obſcure light of an *election-jobber*, diſtributing places and penſions, in order to the *making of parliaments*.

WILLIAM III. ſays he, found an eager deſire, in members of parliament, to obtain lucrative employments in exchange for their concurrence in granting ſupplies and forwarding the meaſures of government, to be the national turn; and ſet himſelf, like a politician, to oppoſe it. He therefore ſilenced all he could by places or penſions:

penſions: And hence the *origin* of making of parliaments *.

I WILL not ſay, that every author is obliged to write panegyrics, or to celebrate the greateſt heroes: but no author has a title to be *unjuſt* to any man whom he introduces in his writings: neither is it lawful to impute to him errors or crimes, for which he is not chargeable.

I DO not inquire, how far the practice of *ſilencing* all, who laid claim to lucrative employments, by places or penſions, obtained in the reign of King William. I abhor bribery in all its ſhapes, and condemn the miniſter, who offers a bribe to any member of parliament to vote againſt his conſcience. If he offers the bribe to engage him to vote according to his conſcience, I will make no apology for him †. Offering bribes, in any caſe, is criminal in its own nature; nor can the end ſanctify the means. I do not vindicate that meaſure, which was approved even by the au-

* Eſtimate, page 109. † Ibid. pag. 114, 115.

ſtere

ſtere Cato, who thought it lawful to foil Cæſar at his own weapons, and to offer a greater bribe, than was offered by the tyrant, to defeat his wicked deſigns *. But, whatever danger may be conceived from the practice of making parliaments, or from attempts of this kind, if it was intended by the author of the Eſtimate to fix the æra of the commencement of this practice at the Revolution, or to aſcribe the origin of it to King William III. he is altogether miſtaken. It is true, the four princes of the Houſe of Stewart were not fond of Parliaments. They often endeavoured to govern without them. But when they found it neceſſary to have recourſe to them, they ſpared neither coſt nor intrigue, both to influence the elections of members, and to gain them to their meaſures after they were elected; and thus uſed great efforts to make parliaments. Did not Charles I. try to break the party that had been formed againſt his meaſures, by conferring honours and lucrative offices on the chief men in the oppoſition? In Charles II's reign, the names and prices

* Sueton. in Jul. Cæſ.

of

of the penſioners of the Court were publicly known. Did not James II. cloſet members of parliament, and uſe all ſorts of arts to gain a parliament to favour his deſigns?

IT can ſcarce be imagined, the author of the Eſtimate could be ignorant of all this. I will not ſuppoſe, that he intended to aſcribe the origin of the pernicious policy of attempting to make parliaments, to the great King William.

IT is juſtice to put the moſt favourable ſenſe upon the words of a writer. If the words, uſed by the author of the Eſtimate, are capable of this ſenſe, I will ſuppoſe he intended them in honour to King William, and meant no more, than that whatever endeavours had been formerly uſed to make parliaments, yet parliaments had never actually been made till the reign of King William. And this much at leaſt muſt be granted, if we will uſe the ungracious and unconſtitutional phraſe of making parliaments, that, during the four reigns preceding the Revolution, parlia-

ments

ments could ſeldom be made, and were therefore ſo often haſtily diſſolved. During theſe reigns, both the parliaments and the people entertained jealouſies of their kings. Thoſe jealouſies, for which their conduct had given too much ground, put it out of *their* power to *make parliaments*. It has only been ſince the Revolution, after the nation had ſecured their rights in the moſt ſolid and ample manner, and there was no longer any apprehenſion of popery and arbitrary power, that there has been ſo good a correſpondence between our princes and their parliaments.

IT is true, this good correſpondence has often been aſcribed to other cauſes, that are not ſo honourable. Much has been ſaid of bribery and corruption. He would deſervedly be laughed at, who would not allow that a great deal of it is true. He is not a good citizen who does not lament it ſincerely. However, one may be a good citizen, and yet think better of his countrymen, than the author of the Eſtimate. It may be unpopular, perhaps, it may be reckoned bold, to aſſert it; but it is hoped, it

it will be found true, that it is not in the power of any miniſtry, in the preſent times, by the higheſt offers, to bribe either the repreſentatives or their conſtituents to part with the rights, and give up the conſtitution, of their country. "A gift blindeth the wiſe, and perverteth the words of the righteous *." Places and penſions will have too much influence: yet it is greatly to be hoped, if a trial were to be made, a majority would be found to aſſert the dignity of our parliaments, and the liberty of our people.

NO doubt, we may often be too laviſh of our money, and not ſufficiently attentive to the public intereſts. Inſtead of giving check to raſh and forward miniſters, who would fooliſhly engage us in unneceſſary quarrels; inſtead of chaſtiſing indolent and puſillanimous miniſters, who neglect the honour of their king and the ſafety of their country; we may ſometimes be lulled aſleep, and miſled by miniſterial arts. But, notwithſtanding the effeminacy and vena-

* Exodus xxiii. 8.

lity of our times, it is greatly to be hoped, that, upon equal provocation, both our parliaments and people would be as untractable as before the Revolution; that, having been accuſtomed during ſeventy years to ſo glorious a liberty, we would endure the greateſt hardſhips, rather than part with it; and that the poſterity of thoſe heroes, who brought about the Revolution, will not look either upon it, or upon the happy inſtrument who ſo greatly conducted it, as the ſource and origin of their preſent corruption; but will conſider the ſettlement made at the Revolution as the great charter of their freedom, and the heroic prince who conducted it as raiſed up by Providence for the good of mankind, and the defence of injured nations.

IT is much in this light the ingenious Mr. Hume has conſidered the Prince of Orange, and the eſtabliſhment at the Revolution. For, though none will accuſe him of being prejudiced againſt the princes of the Houſe of Stewart, he allows, That the fluctuation and conteſt of the Engliſh government were, during the four reigns preceding

preceding the Revolution, much too violent both for the repoſe and ſafety of the people: That foreign affairs at that time were either entirely neglected, or managed to pernicious purpoſes: That, in the domeſtic adminiſtration, there was felt a continual fever, either ſecret or manifeſt, ſometimes the moſt furious convulſions and diſorders: That the Revolution forms a new epoch in the conſtitution, and was attended with conſequences much more advantageous to the people, than the barely freeing them from a bad adminiſtration. And though he ſcruples to determine, whether we in this iſland have ever ſince the Revolution enjoyed the *beſt ſyſtem of government*, he affirms in the ſtrongeſt manner, that we have enjoyed the moſt intire *ſyſtem of liberty*, that ever was known amongſt mankind *.

As to the Prince of Orange, who conducted this great undertaking, though our Hiſtorian will not prefer his virtue to that of Ariſtides, Leonidas, Epaminondas, Pelopidas, Timoleon, the Cato's, the Bru-

* Hiſtory of Great Britain, vol. II. pag. 443.

tus's, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and all the other heroes, whoſe virtues have been recorded in the annals of hiſtory, he has, however, erected a very noble monument to his glory. "The Prince of Orange, he "ſays, throughout his whole life, was pecu- "liarly happy in the ſituations in which "he was placed. He ſaved his own coun- "try from ruin. He reſtored the liberty "of theſe kingdoms (Britain and Ireland.) "He ſupported the general independency "of Europe. And thus—it will be dif- "ficult to find any perſon, whoſe actions "and conduct have contributed more emi- "nently to the general intereſts of ſociety "and mankind *."

THUS our lateſt Hiſtorian, more than fifty years after the death of this prince, has contributed to render his memory and the memory of the Revolution immortal. In truth, the Revolution, and the ſettlement of the government that was made at that time, was one of the beſt conducted enterprizes, one of the moſt important events, one of the moſt beneficent tranſ-

* Hiſtory of Great Britain, vol. ii. pag. 420, 421.

actions,

actions, and, finally, one of the moſt ſolemn, deliberate, juſt, and prudent eſtabliſhments of government, that perhaps ever happened in the world. And, among all the great men, who have been famous in later ages, it will be difficult to name one, who had *greater virtues* and *fewer weakneſſes* than King William III.

BUT there is no unmixed happineſs on earth. Every thing is attended with diſadvantages. Britons have been put to conſiderable expences to ſupport the Revolution. No ſooner had the happy change been made, than we were obliged to defend what we had ſo bravely atchieved againſt the power of Lewis XIV. who would have reſtored King James. After the death of King William, Lewis, contrary to the faith of treaties, acknowledged the Pretender to be King of Great Britain. Such an outrageous affront, offered to the King and kingdom, according to the accounts given by Mr. Voltaire *, effectually rouſed the Britiſh nation to arms, and

* Le Siecle de Louis XIV. tome i. chap. 16.

kindled another war. Both theſe wars were expenſive, and involved the nation in debt; but they were no leſs neceſſary for our ſecurity againſt the power of France, than for the ſupport of the Revolution. The negligence and bad policy of Charles II. had ſuffered the power of France to become dangerous to all Europe. It was neceſſary for Great Britain to enter into meaſures with the States on the continent, to curb this exorbitant power. This put us to expence. Nor muſt we grudge neceſſary expence of this kind, till the formidable power of France ſhall be broken, and that kingdom be brought down to the level of the neighbouring nations. This might have been happily accompliſhed in the reign of Queen Anne, had the negotiations for peace been as wiſely and as nobly conducted, as the operations of the war had been magnanimous and ſucceſsful. But, unfortunately, that opportunity was loſt. May the preſent be more wiſely improved, and to the honour of his preſent Majeſty. If the French do not yield to every thing neceſſary for our ſafety, may he humble the pride of France in a war by

by ſea, that ſhall be more glorious and ſucceſsful, than any land war under the greateſt of his predeceſſors.

IF we reflect on the ambitious ſpirit of the French Government for more than an hundred years paſt, we need not wonder, that we have been obliged to maintain expenſive wars againſt ſo enterpriſing a nation. Had the Government avoided ſuch wars altogether to ſave a preſent expence, had they remained ſtupidly unconcerned about the intereſt of their country and that of Europe, or had they, like King Charles II. favoured the ambition, and promoted the dangerous deſigns, of France; they had acted both ingloriouſly and unwiſely. But their efforts, notwithſtanding the narrow conceptions of ſuch as would debar us from intermeddling in the affairs of the continent, muſt tend greatly to their honour. However, it is far from my intention to enter into any queſtion about particular engagements, or to aſſert, that ſeveral unneceſſary expences have not been incurred during our late wars againſt France.

BESIDES the wars in which the nation has been engaged againſt a foreign power, we have been laid under the diſagreeable neceſſity of defending our conſtitution againſt the diſaffected at home, who have never been able to overcome the prejudices of education, and to diveſt themſelves even of the moſt ridiculous and abſurd principles which had been taught them by their parents, or had been the diſtinguiſhing tenets of thoſe parties in which they had been early engaged. It is to theſe early prejudices, it is to miſtaken notions of loyalty and of the reverence due to government, and not to any wicked intention, one would wiſh to impute the oppoſition that has been made to the Government ſince the Revolution. "As mere nonſenſe "as paſſive obedience ſeemed (ſays the no-"ble author of the Characteriſtics) we "found it to be the common ſenſe of a "great party among ourſelves, a greater "party in Europe, and, perhaps, the great-"eſt part of all the world beſide *." We need not wonder, therefore, that ſuch paſ-

* Eſſay upon the Freedom of Wit and Humour.

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ſive principles, notwithſtanding all their abſurdities, ſhould have taken ſo deep root, if we reflect on the pains that were taken to propagate them, during the reigns of four ſucceſſive princes, who uſed their moſt ſtrenuous endeavours to eſtabliſh this paſſive ſyſtem, and both ridiculed and perſecuted the patrons of a free government.

BUT, though we can make allowances for the weakneſſes of mankind, we cannot help condemning their erroneous and dangerous ſyſtems of government. We cannot but be ſorry, that they are ſo much deluded, and that there are, among Britons, ſome, who, like the Cappadocians of old *, have refuſed to be free, and account

* Juſtin. lib. xxxviii. cap. 2. His words are, "Sed "Cappadoces, munus libertatis abnuentes, negant vi-"vere gentem ſine rege poſſe."

As the Ancients had not a clear idea of a limited monarchy of the beſt kind, nor had ever ſeen ſuch a government as the Britiſh, under King, Lords, and Commons, they looked upon the government of kings as oppoſite to a ſtate of liberty. Where kings are arbitrary, or, as Juſtin expreſſes it (ſpeaking of the moſt early kings, lib. i. cap. 1.) "Populus nullus legibus "tenebatur: arbitria Principum pro legibus erant." The oppoſition is moſt juſt; but where the King is limited,

account themſelves unworthy of that liberty, which was ſo bravely purchaſed at the

limited, as in Great Britain, there is more liberty and ſecurity, than under any other kind of government whatſoever. It can hardly indeed be denied, that an ariſtocracy, or a democracy, where mankind are more upon a level, is better calculated to encourage genius and activity, than any monarchy whatſoever. But this advantage is more than compenſated by the dangerous factions which naturally ariſe under ſuch conſtitutions. It may ſafely be affirmed, that perſons of all degrees enjoy more liberty and ſecurity under the Britiſh monarchy, than perſons of the ſame rank enjoyed under the Athenian, Roman, or any other of the ancient ariſtocracies or republics. For this reaſon, the celebrated Monteſquieu, many of whoſe principles concerning government are not only more juſt and noble than thoſe of his countrymen, but worthy of a free man; and ſhew, how well he underſtood, and how greatly he admired the Britiſh conſtitution; had good ground (in his De l'Eſprit des Loix, liv. xi. chap. 6.) to find fault with Harrington for his plan of a republic ſo much inferior to that limited monarchy of England that was before his eyes. The plan formed by Harrington is one of the beſt models of a republic that was ever conceived. Could we ſuppoſe it once fully eſtabliſhed in a *virtuous* age and nation, it might laſt long, and ſeems to have few principles of diſſolution. But Harrington erred in imagining that ſuch a republic could have been either erected or preſerved in the age and nation for which it was projected. Such a perfect republic requires a higher degree of virtue, than is now to be found amongſt any of the nations with which we are acquainted. The limited monarchy of Great Britain ſeems to be the moſt perfect government of which mankind

the Revolution. Nay, but we *will* have a king *, ſay they, an abſolute, uncontroulable, irreſiſtible king, and will be as much enſlaved as the French or any of the neighbouring nations. In oppoſition to all ſuch ſlaviſh reſolutions, we will aſſert our liberty: and, as we muſt impute a conſiderable part of our debts to the neceſſity we have been laid under of defending it againſt the ſecret plots and open attacks of the diſaffected, we muſt look upon *them* as accountable for no ſmall part of the expences of the Government in ſupport of the Revolution, notwithſtanding their loud complaints againſt theſe very expences.

How fatally miſtaken are thoſe deluded aſſerters of the hereditary indefeaſible rights of kings, and of their abſolute, irreſiſtible, uncontroulable power over their ſubjects. How ungenerous is it, as well as unjuſt and contrary to good policy, in

mankind are capable in the preſent condition of the world. Of Britain it may be ſaid, no leſs than of Cappadocia, but much more to the honour of Britain, "Vivere gentem ſine rege non poſſe."

* Firſt Book of Samuel, chap. viii. ver. 11—20.

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any of the people of Britain to rebel againſt the ſettlement made at the Revolution, or the family now reigning: a family which, without having uſed any influence whatſoever to obtain the crown, have been called, in a caſe of neceſſity, by the choice of the nation, to take poſſeſſion of it, in order to defend the civil and religious rights of the people of Great Britain: a family, which ſucceeds to the Crown as the neareſt heirs of our ancient princes, after the *juſt and neceſſary excluſion of the Popiſh* Line: a family, which, during the ſpace of forty years, ſince its acceſſion to the throne, has governed intirely according to law: a family, under which this Iſland has been greatly inriched *, and which is now ſo firmly eſtabliſhed upon the throne.

GENEROUS men will be far from inſulting the misfortunes of any family whatever. They will not rejoice in their calamities, even when theſe calamities have been brought upon them by their own miſmanagement. They will diſdain to aggravate their weakneſſes, or miſrepreſent

* This ſhall be proved afterwards.

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any of their deſcendants. But, for the ſake of truth, from the love of juſtice, from a regard to the dignity of our parliaments, and to the rights and liberties of the people of Great Britain, they muſt be ſuffered to put the queſtion, What family would the diſaffected in this iſland ſet up in oppoſition to the juſt and merciful princes of the family on the throne? Do not the family, to which they are ſo fatally devoted, aſſert their abſolute, indefeaſible title to our ſubjection, independent on any choice, or conſent, or advantage of ours? Do not they aſſert, that they are accountable to none but God and their prieſts, for the injuſtice they may exerciſe towards their ſubjects? Do not they maintain, that they ought not to be reſiſted upon any pretence whatſoever? What more ample dominion could one lay claim to over his cattle? By their education muſt they not have contracted an averſion to Britiſh liberty, conceived high notions of the abſolute power of kings, and learned an abject ſubmiſſion to the maxims, and a deep reverence for the ſuperſtition, of the church of Rome? Inſtead of endeavouring to

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gain the favour of the Britiſh nation, and recommend themſelves to our regard, have they not choſen, even ſince the rebellion in the year 1745, to be more cloſely connected than formerly with the Pope and conclave, by ſuffering one of their ſons to be a Cardinal? an inſtance of bigotry, or contempt of Britiſh Proteſtants, ſcarce to be paralleled, and ſuch an extraordinary piece of policy * as can hardly be interpreted otherwiſe, than as a ſign of their deſpairing ever to make good their claim to the Crown of Britain; or, if they can be ſuppoſed not to deſpair, as bidding defiance to all Britiſh Proteſtants, and declaring how much they deſpiſe any oppoſition that can come from the Britiſh nation. This is the family the diſaffected would ſet upon the throne. But what ought not a brave and wiſe Proteſtant nation to expend in defending the Proteſtant religion, and the freedom of their government, againſt the efforts of

* According to the principles of an hereditary, indefeaſible right of a family to a throne, and agreeably to the forms of the Church of Rome, Cardinal Stewart may be choſen Pope, and, upon the death of his father and brother, and their heirs, may become heir to the Crown of Great Britain.

ſuch

ſuch a family *? Liberty can never be bought too dear.

* This nation (ſays a celebrated French author ſpeaking of England) will love its liberty prodigiouſly, becauſe this liberty will be real: and it may happen, that, to defend it, its people will ſacrifice their money, their eaſe, their intereſts; that they will burden themſelves with taxes the moſt grievous, and ſuch as a deſpotic prince would never dare to impoſe upon his ſubjects. *De l'Eſprit des Loix*, tome i. liv. 19. chap. 27.

PART

PART III.

Of National Riches; and of the Riches of Great Britain.

SECT. I.

Of NATIONAL RICHES *in general.*

A Nation may be opulent and flouriſhing at the ſame time that public debts are high. This will appear to be the condition of Britain at preſent. It is capable of a very clear proof, and is a ſubject worthy of our conſideration.

IN our inquiries concerning wealth, it is uſual to conſider ſilver and gold as the moſt ſubſtantial riches, as well as the moſt neceſſary means of procuring them: but neither the one, nor the other, is true. *Induſtry* is the *chief mean* of Riches: It is far more neceſſary than ſilver or gold. The moſt ſubſtantial riches conſiſt in the abun-

dance of thoſe things which are neceſſary for the ſupport and comfort of life. Where theſe neceſſaries are in plenty, it is of little conſequence what the money or the bullion is, or whether there is any money or not. Money ſerves only for an eaſier exchange of commodities, and to fix their various values in proportion to one another. In this reſpect it is *uſeful*. It may alſo be conſidered as *real* wealth; both becauſe the precious metals have a *certain intrinſic* value, and becauſe mankind have agreed to uſe them as a common ſtandard. But, compared with the cattle, corn, and other commodities, money is certainly a trifle *.

SUPPOSE each man in the nation had 3 *l.* in caſh, and there were ten millions of people, we would have thirty millions of coin; a greater ſum, perhaps, than is abſolutely neceſſary for our commerce. Yet how ſmall a proportion do thirty millions

* Dr. Davenant, who wrote many pieces on Political Arithmetic in the end of the laſt century; the Biſhop of Cloyne, in his Queriſt; and Mr. Hume, in his Political Diſcourſes, agree in this opinion about money.

lions bear to the whole value of the lands, and all the other wealth of Britain and Ireland!

SUPPOSING, again, that, at any one point of time, every man loſt all the caſh in his cuſtody; how ſmall a part of their real ſubſtance would be loſt by the generality either of the poor, or of the rich!

ONE cannot determine certainly concerning the increaſe or decreaſe of riches merely by the plenty of the circulating coin. We muſt take into the account the paper, or whatever paſſes currently in commerce. Millions of coin may be exported at particular times, either for war, foreign ſubſidies, or other kinds of foreign ſervice, or to pay for foreign commodities, without the leaſt danger of impoveriſhing the nation. In the laſt caſe, of purchaſing foreign commodities, we get goods to the value, which, in the courſe of trade, will bring back the money, and will often bring it back *with intereſt*. It muſt ever be of ſmall conſequence, whether we have the money, or goods which will cauſe the

money to return. In the other caſes of war or foreign ſervice, the money does not return; but it will be only a ſmall part of our money, and a much ſmaller part of our real ſubſtance, that will be exported in this way. And, as it may be neceſſary for our ſafety, ſo a rich commercial nation may be well able to afford this expence, and continue rich and flouriſhing notwithſtanding.

SILVER and gold, which only repreſent more ſubſtantial riches, are of a fluctuating nature. It is not eaſy, it ſeems even impoſſible, to trace their various motions, or determine when they are in greateſt plenty upon the whole. The moſt ſubſtantial riches are more viſible. We may conclude with certainty, that the wealth of any country is increaſed, when the number of the people has increaſed; when the fields and gardens are better cultivated, and produce better kinds, and a greater quantity of fruits; when the country breeds more numerous ſtores, and better kinds of cattle; when the houſes are more magnificent, and more richly furniſhed; when the

the people are better cloathed, and their tables are more elegant; when their warehouſes are filled with a more valuable quantity of goods; when the prices of their lands, and moſt other commodities, are raiſed; when their manufactures are increaſed; when their commerce is more widely extended; and there is greater induſtry, than was known in former times. If all theſe ſymptoms, or ſuch of them as are moſt material, concur, the nation muſt certainly be increaſing in riches. In ſuch circumſtances the ſtate of the coin is but of ſmall moment. A nation, which, during any particular period, has loſt a million of its ſilver and gold, but improved its lands, and acquired valuable commodities to the extent of ten millions, muſt be in a better condition at the end of that period, than it was at the beginning of it.

SECT. II.

General Obſervations concerning the PRESENT OPULENCE *of Great Britain.*

TO apply the obſervations, made in the laſt ſection, to Great Britain in particular: one may appeal to the moſt inconteſtable accounts of paſt times, and to ocular demonſtration at preſent, Whether there is not a remarkable increaſe of valuable improvements, in agriculture and manufactures, ſince the Revolution?

IT is confeſſed, during a few years after the Revolution, before the government was fully eſtabliſhed, the wars, which we were obliged to undertake againſt France, lay heavy upon the nation. The high taxes, which we were obliged to levy for ſupporting thoſe wars; the interruption that was given to trade; the loſſes the nation ſuſtained both by ſea and land; the high intereſt and high premiums, that were given for ready money, before the Government was reckoned fully ſecure: theſe cauſed no ſmall

ſmall diſtreſs, perhaps for ſome time made the nation poorer. Undoubtedly they prevented that increaſe of riches, which otherwiſe would have been the natural conſequence of the ſecurity and liberty gained by the Revolution. Could we have been equally ſecure, we would have been richer without thoſe wars and taxes. But it is alſo true, that, as the Government gained gradually a greater firmneſs, as the great victories we obtained over the French during the reign of Queen Anne gave great ſpirits to the nation, as the acceſſion of the family of Hanover to the throne ſecured the Government and rendered the ſettlement at the Revolution complete; ſuch a perfect eſtabliſhment of freedom and ſecurity has made trade and riches flow in upon us in a greater proportion than formerly. This is evident from the augmentation of ſhipping, the lowneſs of intereſt, the increaſe of rents, and the high price of lands; which the beſt calculators have determined to be the ſureſt ſigns of the increaſe of riches.

THERE cannot be a more unſuſpected witneſs in this matter, than Doctor Davenant, who publiſhed ſeveral eſſays upon the trade of England in the end of the laſt century. This gentleman cannot be accuſed of partiality to the Revolution, ſince he endeavours to ſhew, that the riches and trade of England were at the greateſt heighth in the year 1688, and that both had declined by the expenſive wars and high taxes from the Revolution to the peace of Ryſwick. Yet if we conſider the ſymptoms he hath marked of flouriſhing and declining nations, it will be evident, that, according to his principles, Britain has been greatly inriched ſince the peace of Ryſwick *. "A great number of mer-
"chant-ſhips, ſays he †, eſpecially a great
"royal fleet that can be readily manned,
"numerous and coſtly buildings, with rich
"furniture, great quantities of plate, rich
"apparel, great ſtores of native manufac-
"tures and foreign commodities, are the
"true ſymptoms of great wealth." But—

* In the year 1697.

† In his Diſcourſe, "That Foreign Trade is beneficial to England."

"where

"where a nation is impoveriſhed by bad
"government, by an ill managed trade,
"or by any other circumſtance, the inter-
"eſt of money will be dear, and the pur-
"chaſe of lands cheap; the price of labour
"and proviſions will be low; rents will
"every where fall; lands will lie untilled;
"and farm-houſes will go to ruin. The
"yearly marriages and births will be leſ-
"ſened, and burials increaſed. The
"ſtock of live cattle muſt apparently di-
"miniſh. Laſtly, the inhabitants will by
"degrees and in ſome meaſure withdraw
"themſelves from ſuch a declining coun-
"try." Is this the preſent condition of Britain? If this writer was now alive, would he not acknowledge, that the ſtate of Britain is entirely the reverſe of what he moſt prudently foreſaw would be the infallible conſequence of a bad government, and ill managed trade? As the appearances are all of a contrary nature, he would ſee with joy, that Britain has been greatly inriched ſince he wrote his Diſcourſes.

MR. HUME, in his Political Diſcourſe of Intereſt, conſiders intereſt of money as the true

true barometer of the State, and its lowneſs as a ſign almoſt infallible of the flouriſhing of a people. It proves, ſays he, the increaſe of induſtry, and its prompt circulation through the whole State, little inferior to a demonſtration.

ACCORDING to the ingenious Biſhop of Cloyne, the comfortable condition of the Commons is one of the ſureſt marks of national wealth. Whether, ſays he, can a people be called poor, where the common people are well fed, cloathed, and lodged? Again, Whether it be not a good rule whereby to judge of the trade of any city, and its uſefulneſs, to obſerve whether there is a circulation through the extremities, and whether the people round about are buſy and warm *?

THESE authorities are of much greater weight, than that of the author of the Three Eſſays, who is continually crying Poverty. Never, perhaps, was there a more extravagant aſſertion, than that which

* The Queriſt, Queries 2d and 52d.

we

we find in the third page, "That, if King "William had conquered France, and "given up every moveable thing in it to "indemnify the people of England, rich "as that country then was, it would not "have been ſufficient to have paid our ex-"pences. Nor would France, after ſuch "devaſtation, have fared ſo ill as England "hath done."

IN oppoſition to ſuch extravagant aſſertions concerning the poverty of England, it is maintained, in a late Eſſay upon the National Debt and the National Capital *, That the whole ſtock of England, including the coin, the perſonal eſtate of each individual, and the whole value of the land, has increaſed an hundred millions Sterling, during ſixty years after the Revolution, more than it had done during ſixty years before it. In the year 1628 it was 333 millions. In the year 1688 it was 616 millions. In the year 1748 it amounted to 1000 millions.

* This Eſſay was publiſhed in 1750, by Andrew Hooke, Eſq.

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IT is not, perhaps, ſafe to warrant all the principles and calculations, either of this gentleman, or of any other calculator in political arithmetick. Such calculations can ſcarce ever be exactly true, though they are uſeful to direct our inquiries in theſe matters. But Mr. Hooke has proceeded on very probable grounds, and ſufficiently proved, not only that England is richer, but that it has increaſed in riches, in a higher proportion ſince the Revolution, than it had done before *; and that the loud cry of poverty, as the effect of wars and taxes, is wholly chimerical.

WOULD it ſatisfy thoſe gentlemen, who profeſs ſo ſincerely to lament the misfortunes of their country, it will be confeſſed that we have been far from profiting ſo much, as we might have done, by the Revolution. Conſidering how chearfully our princes go into every ſcheme, that is offered to them by their parliaments, and what

* If we are not poorer by the Revolution, we are great gainers upon the whole, as our liberty, and the Proteſtant Religion have been more amply ſecured.

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attention is given to the general ſenſe of the nation; conſidering the princely eſtates, the ample powers, and great influence of our nobility and gentry, with the freedom and ſecurity of our *Commons*; it might have been expected, we ſhould have been both richer and more powerful, than we are. We are neither ſo eaſy at home, nor ſo revered abroad, as our advantages ought to have rendered us. This is owing to the keenneſs of our factions, and a too general want of virtue. But after making juſt conceſſions on the one ſide, it ought to be granted on the other, that, notwithſtanding all miſmanagements and weakneſſes, we ſtill remain a rich, a great, and a powerful people.

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SECT. III.

Of the Riches of NORTH BRITAIN.

IN a ſmaller nation, where good agriculture and manufactures have been lately introduced, improvements will be more ſenſible than in a kingdom of greater extent, more populous, and where good agriculture and an extenſive commerce have been of longer ſtanding. For this reaſon though England is much richer than Scotland, and the improvements of the Engliſh much greater, the improvements in Scotland may be more ſtriking and ſenſible.

IN inquiring into the ſtate of Scotland, we ſhall find ſo clear an evidence of increaſing riches, as can ſcarce be reſiſted. Nevertheleſs many in Scotland make loud complaints of poverty, and inſiſt on ſeveral phænomena as infallible ſymptoms of decay. We are able to explain theſe phænomena, and to ſhew that they are perfectly conſiſtent with an encreaſing opulence.

lence. Whence we have the ſtrongeſt preſumption, that appearances of the ſame kind cannot be inconſiſtent with an increaſe of riches in England: it will be proper, therefore, to make ſome obſervations on the ſtate of Scotland, not only as it is a part of Great Britain, but as they will be uſeful for illuſtrating the ſtate of England.

THAT the fields and gardens in North Britain are better cultivated, and that the country produces greater ſtores of corn and cattle, can be conteſted by no man in his ſenſes.

THE prices of lands are raiſed at leaſt from fifteen or ſixteen to twenty-three years purchaſe. The rents of eſtates and of houſes, and the prices of moſt other things, are alſo greatly increaſed. This can as little be diſputed.

As the Scots have more inſtruments and utenſils of all kinds than formerly, ſo they have many more artiſans and manufacturers. They work much more in wood,

in

in iron, copper, and other metals. Nor can any one be ignorant, that their manufactures of cloth are prodigiouſly augmented. Thus both their commodities, and the prices of them, are ſenſibly increaſed; which, according to an indiſputed maxim, is a ſure ſign of greater wealth.

THEIR ſhipping and commerce is moſt viſibly increaſed. If in ſome few places we ſee fewer ſhips and leſs trade, this is much more than compenſated by the great increaſe of trade in other places upon their coaſts.

IF ſilver and gold were to be accounted the moſt ſolid treaſure, what vaſt additions have they got ſince the Revolution? Some families perhaps have changed their antique plate for china ware: but what a trifle is this to the additional plate throughout the kingdom! How few families of any tolerable rank want a decent quantity of plate? How few had any at the Revolution?

A ſuperior induſtry is the cauſe of this ſuperior wealth. Before the Revolution there

there were few manufacturers or artiſans. Agriculture and gardening were in a very low ſtate. The farmers did little more than till and ſow their fields late in the ſpring, and reap them late in autumn. They were idle both in ſummer and in winter. Since that time there is a great addition of artiſans and manufacturers; and in many places the farmers are employed throughout the whole year. There are ſtill many juſt complaints of idleneſs. The Scots have not equalled the Engliſh in induſtry. But a taſte for improvements in manufactures and agriculture, and an inclination to induſtry, is gaining ground every day in Scotland.

INDUSTRY, indeed, is the great ſource of wealth. It avails much more, than ſilver and gold, or the greateſt natural riches. Though a country be bleſſed with a ſoil capable of producing the fineſt crops and of feeding numerous ſtores of cattle; though there be plenty of natural wood and rich mines; though its ſeas, lakes, and rivers abound with fiſhes, and there be ſafe and convenient harbours: amidſt all theſe na-

tural advantages, it may have few inhabitants, and theſe few may be ill provided for. "Dii omnia vendunt laboribus." Without labour a nation may ſtarve in the midſt of plenty. Without labour every thing muſt languiſh.

THIS labour is laid out in cultivating the ſoil, in working in the mines, in fiſhing in the ſeas and rivers, in procuring materials for manufacture at home or abroad, in manufacturing thoſe materials, in exporting the overplus, after our own neceſſities are ſupplied. Theſe materials, either in their natural ſtate, or manufactured, become riches to the country. If ſpent at home, they make greater numbers live more comfortably; if carried abroad and exchanged for foreign commodities, bullion or coin, in the courſe of trade, they make an addition to the national ſtock. Not only the original prices of all materials, which the country produces, but the price of that labour, which is beſtowed on manufacturing and exporting them; not only the wages of all the working hands, but the wages of clerks, ſupercargoes,

goes, and all others who are in any manner neceſſary for the merchant, become an additional fund of wealth, and increaſe the price to foreigners. The price of labour is often much greater, than that of the original materials. Induſtry has a thouſand methods, by which it adds to the wealth of nations.

IT is not poſſible to eſtimate preciſely, how much the Scots have got by their ſuperior induſtry. But it is eaſy to ſee, that they muſt have got a great deal. The labour of one employed in agriculture may be eſtimated exactly, by knowing the rent of the land, the neceſſary charges of maintaining the labourer, the price of the materials and tools employed in the labour, the price of keeping the tools in repair, and the price of the produce. The labour of a farmer's ſervant throughout the year muſt maintain the ſervant himſelf, yield him a little at the end of the year, help to pay the farmer's rent, maintain ſuch of his family as do not labour, and likewiſe enable the farmer to lay up a little for his children. At this rate, it is very valuable.

The labour of artiſans and manufacturers muſt be computed at more, as a greater expence is neceſſary to prepare them for their employment. But, without pretending to the greateſt exactneſs, let us ſuppoſe every one's labour at a medium to be worth only nine pence a day, (which can ſcarce be thought too high, ſince many of our artiſans and labourers gain a ſhilling to themſelves, beſides the profit they bring to thoſe that employ them) and computing the number of land-labourers, artiſans, and manufacturers of all kinds, above the number at the Revolution, to be 100,000 *, who work 300 days of the 365, a number which will not perhaps be thought too high, if we conſider how much more labour is employed in agriculture and manufactures, than formerly: by this computation, the value of one year's induſtry will amount to the ſum of 1,125,000 l. above what it was at the Revolution. Whether theſe calculations are perfectly exact or not, whoever

* Though it ſhould be granted, that there were as many hands employed in agriculture before the Revolution, as are at preſent, it is certain there was much leſs labour, ſince many of thoſe hands were idle during a great part of the year.

conſiders

conſiders things in this light, will ſee a vaſt ſource of wealth: computing the people of Scotland at a million, if they got ſo great a ſum yearly, it would give twenty-two ſhillings and ſix pence ſterling of additional wealth to every perſon in the kingdom.

IT will be worth while to conſider the progreſs of induſtry, and to trace out the order, in which it produces its happy effects. This will throw a new light upon the ſubject of our inquiry. Notwithſtanding the inſtability of human affairs, the ſame ſet of manners may be long preſerved, and a country accuſtomed to idleneſs and rapine may continue long poor and uncultivated. If a ſpirit of induſtry is once raiſed, and continues to grow, its firſt effect is to add to the ſtock, and increaſe the riches of the country, which, without foreign conqueſts, can be done only by increaſe of labour. After this, it gradually increaſes the number of the people, by furniſhing better means of ſubſiſtance, and by encouraging marriage. But in ſuch a country as Scotland, whither few foreign-

ers reſort, it multiplies the people much more ſlowly, than the riches. The wealth of ſuch a nation will be much ſooner doubled, than its inhabitants. Nay, a very great increaſe of riches, by increaſing luxury, may prove a hindrance to marriages, and may prevent a proportionable augmentation of people. Agreeable to ſuch principles, it ſeems evident from ocular inſpection, that the riches of Scotland are more increaſed than the people. Whence it follows neceſſarily, that Scotland is not only richer, but richer in proportion to its inhabitants. From which another concluſion is eaſily drawn, that, ſince North Britain has a greater ſtock of proviſions and commodities in proportion to the people, and theſe commodities do not periſh, the Scots muſt export more, and have a greater foreign trade, than they had in former times.

THUS all the different means of proof concur in eſtabliſhing this concluſion, that Scotland is much richer than it was at the Revolution, by the increaſe of agriculture, manufactures, and trade.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Objections to what has been aſſerted concerning the increaſe of RICHES *in* NORTH BRITAIN *conſidered.*

NOtwithſtanding the arguments for proving that Scotland is much richer, than before the Revolution, ſuch is the force of prejudice, that many in Scotland cannot be convinced of it. They will grant, indeed, what many among the Engliſh deny, that *England* has gained greatly by the union of the two kingdoms, but contend earneſtly, that *Scotland* has been undone by it. The caſe is far otherways: both England and Scotland have gained greatly: England, by a more perfect peace and ſecurity; ſo that, having nothing to fear in regard to thoſe parts that lye neareſt to Scotland, it can with ſafety cultivate them to great advantage: Scotland, by a ſhare of the Engliſh trade, by a more ſpeedy propagation of the Engliſh ſpirit for agriculture and manufactures, and by the happy progreſs, that has been made

towards a complete reſcue of the commons from that ſlaviſh dependance which was formerly ſo common, and ſtill prevails too much, in North Britain.

IN truth, the Scots have loſt nothing, that can be called ſubſtantial. They have loſt, indeed, what every nation, which is united to a greater, muſt loſe, even when the union is abſolutely neceſſary for the proſperity of the ſmaller one, and has been eſtabliſhed upon terms greatly to its advantage. The Scots cannot expect to have the *intire* management of affairs upon the north ſide of Tweed. They have loſt the *name* of independance. Two or three of their *old Palaces* may poſſibly decay. It would be ludicrous to inſiſt upon the want of the ſplendid proceſſion of their nobility and gentry, and upon the brilliancy of a court, during the ſeſſions of the Scotch parliament. Neither is the greater conſumption, which was occaſioned by thoſe ſeſſions, and which, by the bye, even in thoſe days, was but a trifle to Scotland in general, of much greater importance. To compenſate theſe *trifling* loſſes they have obtained

obtained *ſubſtantial* advantages. In place of a *Scotch*, their affairs are under the direction of a *Britiſh* parliament; an aſſembly which is much better conſtituted, has much more authority, and is more able to provide for the general intereſt of Britain, than the Scotch parliament could do for that of Scotland. In place of *empty titles* and an inſignificant pomp, they have acquired the more ſolid bleſſings of ſecurity, liberty, and riches.

A great clamour has ſometimes been raiſed about the declining ſtate of Edinburgh, the antient metropolis of the kingdom. No doubt, this city, having formerly been the ſeat of government, may be ſuppoſed to have ſuffered more in proportion by the Union than moſt others; yet, if we conſider the buildings that have been raiſed, and the improvements that have been made in the houſes within the city, the houſes, ſtreets, gardens, and other improvements in the neighbourhood, the greater quantity of labour and manufactures of various kinds, and the greater ſtores of all ſorts of goods for merchandize;

dize; we will eaſily ſee upon what inſufficient grounds ſuch a cry has been raiſed and ſupported.

BUT, if North Britain is become ſo much richer, whence is it, it will be ſaid, that we ſee ſo many beggars and poor people? Whence is it, that more merchants become inſolvent, and more landed gentlemen ſell their eſtates, than before the Revolution? Whence is it, that merchants deal leſs in lending than formerly, and that many farmers are pinched to pay their rents, whoſe predeceſſors could lay out money at intereſt? Nay, whence is it, that the number of the people is leſſened, and that we ſee ſo many places in this part of the iſland, that were formerly well peopled, now almoſt deſolate, without houſes or inhabitants? Are not theſe ſymptoms of a declining ſtate? Neither is it difficult, according to ſuch calculators, to account for this poverty, ſince ſo much money is yearly carried out of the country by the nobility and gentry, who ſpend their eſtates in England; and ſince luxury increaſes ſo faſt, as muſt not only render Scotland poor,

but end in a ſpeedy and univerſal ruin. Theſe things are loudly complained of, not only by the diſaffected, but alſo by many ſincere, though timorous, friends of the Government.

IT will be eaſy to account for every one of thoſe phænomena, which is real, notwithſtanding the increaſe of riches; nay, to ſhew, that ſuch appearances may be a natural conſequence of that very increaſe. Speculations of this kind are not diſagreeable, and illuſtrate the nature and effects of induſtry and commerce.

ONE thing is of the greateſt importance in this argument; nay, the whole reaſoning may be ſaid to depend upon it, "Whether the number of the people is decreaſing." Whenever a country is loſing its inhabitants, this is a moſt dangerous ſymptom. It is true, in a nation conſiſting of more than a million, we may very well ſuppoſe, there may be ten thouſand, that are entirely idle and uſeleſs. We may ſuppoſe them incapable either of adding to the riches of a country by their induſtry,

induſtry, or of defending it by their counſels or arms. Theſe idle hands may be a burden on the uſeful and induſtrious. They may be good for nothing but conſuming the produce of the country. Such perſons may be ſpared, and the country be better without them, being freed from the load and expence of maintaining them. The reſt of the people will be richer and more able to carry on trade and manufactures. A State can never be richer or ſtronger by any but uſeful hands. However, as juſtice, humanity, and charity, oblige every nation to maintain many uſeleſs perſons; as it is impoſſible to make the diſtinction, and export only the uſeleſs; it muſt be a bad ſymptom in general, when the number of the people is diminiſhed.

In a nation where there is a greater ſtock of corn, of cattle, and of all ſorts of commodities, than formerly, if at the ſame time the prices of thoſe goods, inſtead of being diminiſhed, are increaſed, there muſt be more buyers. If it were otherwiſe, the prices would fall. Again, if there are more

more buyers, either there muſt be more people in the nation for home-conſumption; or, if there is not, there muſt be a greater export and foreign trade: upon which ſuppoſition the nation muſt be richer. Which was to be proved.

But, in truth, as the nation muſt be richer, we may alſo conclude, that the number of the people will not be diminiſhed. A greater foreign trade does not commonly cauſe the people to decreaſe. Exceſſive luxury, the conſequence of great riches, may ſometimes have this effect; but luxury has not arrived at this ſo fatal heighth in North Britain. It is only when luxury hinders the people from marrying, waſtes their wealth, or renders marriage barren, that it becomes ſo baleful. In other reſpects, it tends to increaſe. If the luxury of great people requires ſuch a number of unmarried ſervants as puts a ſtop to uſeful labour, it muſt leſſen the number of inhabitants. But, as more work is daily going on in North Britain, and the number of labourers, artiſans, and manufacturers, is increaſing, if the

number of idle hands is alſo augmented by the luxury of the Great, the number of thoſe in the inferior ranks cannot be diminiſhed. Again, as the commons are far from being able to live in luxury, though their condition is evidently better, their better circumſtances, inſtead of preventing, will rather encourage, marriages: and, as to thoſe in higher life, though luxury will have a pernicious effect in other reſpects, yet, their number bearing but a ſmall proportion to that of the whole people, the effects of the luxury of the Great, in diminiſhing the number of the whole people, will ſcarce be diſcernable.

SUPPOSING it, therefore, to be certain, from the greater quantity of labour that is carried on, and from the more eaſy circumſtances of the commons, that the number of the people in Scotland is not diminiſhed, it will not be difficult to account for all thoſe appearances, which the diſcontented inſiſt upon as infallible proofs of a declining condition.

FOR,

FOR, 1. Though the people have not been diminiſhed ſince the union of the two kingdoms, yet, in ſeveral places of Scotland, a cuſtom has been introduced of uniting two or three ſmaller farms into one. Several cottagers in particular places have been removed, having been thought idle, and rather a loſs, than an advantage, to the neighbourhood. In other places, ſome arable grounds have been turned into paſturing fields, which require fewer hands to cultivate them. In ſome caſes, greater wealth and commerce draw ſome from more barren to more cultivated and populous places, from the country to towns, and from the northern to the ſouthern parts of Scotland. By theſe alterations, there are fewer people in ſome pariſhes, than formerly. Yet this deficiency is more than made up by the greater numbers of merchants, ſhop-keepers, artiſans, and manufacturers in towns and greater villages. Thither do the cottagers and land-labourers reſort, when they leave their former habitations. Several towns may be named, whoſe inhabitants are

greatly

greatly increaſed even ſince the Rebellion in 1745.

2. IN ſo far as poverty flows from ſloth and idleneſs, it is natural to conceive, that, in a greater number of people, there ſhould be proportionably a greater number of beggars.

3. As the expences of living increaſe, and luxury prevails, which has truly been the caſe ſince the Revolution, and will generally be the caſe when nations grow richer, the ſame quantity of money will not go ſo far as formerly. Conſequently, if men gain nothing by induſtry, but live upon rents, which either are diminiſhed, as has happened to thoſe who live on the intereſt of money; or which are not increaſed, or do not increaſe, in proportion to the additional expences of living; all ſuch people muſt become poorer, notwithſtanding the general increaſe of riches. Now, there is always a conſiderable number of perſons, who are ſupported in this manner.

4. WHEN

4. WHEN trade is increaſing, and a nation is enriched by it, this proves a ſtrong temptation to many to launch out into too extenſive ſchemes, and to venture farther than their ſtocks will bear. And, as unlucky adventures muſt often happen in trade, this muſt neceſſarily give occaſion to more frequent bankruptcies, than will happen in poorer countries where there is little trade. In poor countries there will be but few and ſmall debts; for little credit will be given. In general, as more people deal in trade, there will be more frequent bankruptcies, and, as the trade is greater, they will be for greater ſums. Yet this trade will enrich the country in general, and theſe bankruptcies will be of little detriment upon the whole.

5. THOUGH the increaſe of induſtry may greatly augment, and has actually augmented, the value and rents of the lands in Scotland; yet the lower and middling ranks, the richer merchants, and other gentlemen who do not live upon rents, but by induſtry, will become ſooner eaſy, and acquire the moſt early ſhare of the in-

creaſing wealth. Such people are generally moſt frugal, and moſt attentive to gain. They have neither ſo keen a taſte, nor ſo much time for expence and luxury, as landed gentlemen, or ſuch as have nothing to do but to purſue their diverſions. Gentlemen in this condition are commonly moſt expenſive at all times. In times of greater riches, they are provoked to greater expence by the general taſte of the nation, and by ſeeing merchants and others, whom they reckon their inferiors, approaching nearer them in their genteeler method of living. Mean while, though their rents are raiſed, they are not raiſed ſo early, or in proportion to their taſte for luxury. Hence, in an opulent commercial nation, a great many of the ancient nobility and gentry will at ſome times be obſerved to grow poorer, and will at laſt be obliged to part with their great eſtates to thoſe induſtrious lawyers, phyſicians, merchants, and others, who have been more frugal. We need not, therefore, be ſurpriſed, that, when riches increaſe, there are many poor people in a nation. The maxim will hold in general, That,

That, where there are many rich, there will alſo be many poor.

WHY, therefore, ſhould the writer of the Three Eſſays * lament ſo heavily, that the halcyon days, which were ſeventy years ago, are miſerably changed; and that his friend's eſtate of 900 *l.* a year cannot now go ſo far, as it could have gone in the days of his grandfather? The writer would impute this difference to high taxes; but he ought to impute the greateſt part of it to the increaſe of riches. If any gentleman is indolent in not improving his eſtate when he has good opportunities, what can be expected, but that he ſhould grow poorer, as the nation increaſes in riches? This is the natural order of things. It would, ſurely, be too much for the nation, out of complaiſance to an inactive Squire, to put a ſtop to its induſtry and trade, by which it is in general much enriched. The eſtate, which in the Three Eſſays is ſaid to be much leſs conſiderable than it was ſeventy years ago, is ſuppoſed to lie in England. The gentlemen of this

* Page 33.

kingdom, no doubt, deſerve great regard; but a greater regard ſtill is due to the *whole* body of the people. The commons, conſiſting of merchants, farmers, and artiſans, are indeed the glory of England. The riches of theſe inferior ranks of men, depending on their freedom and induſtry, according to Mr. Hume*, give the advantage to England above any nation at preſent in the world, or that appears in the records of any ſtory. Scotland has not hitherto had the happineſs to have ſuch wealthy and independent commons. However, in its preſent condition, it is evident, that the ſame ſum of money cannot go ſo far as formerly, and that thoſe, who have made no addition to their eſtates, muſt appear poorer than in ancient times.

6. WHEN there is much money to be lent by private hands, this is far from being a ſure ſign of the increaſe of riches. To form a certain concluſion, one ought to attend to many different circumſtances. If there are many frugal people, who ſpend

* In his Political Diſcourſe of Commerce.

leſs

leſs than they have, though they have but little, what little they can ſpare they will be willing to lay out upon intereſt, provided they cannot diſpoſe of it to better advantage. This muſt have been the caſe before the Revolution, ſuppoſing the fact to be true. But after the union of the two kingdoms, when by commerce with England better methods of agriculture and manufacturing were diſcovered, and new ſources of trade were opened, as the induſtrious part of the nation became richer, inſtead of laying out their money on intereſt, they often improved their grounds, purchaſed a better ſtock of cattle, enlarged their manufactures, or extended their trade. This turned to better account, but diſabled them from lending. Where there is a great deal of money to be lent, and the lenders are ſuch as live on their rents, without induſtry or buſineſs; this ſhews, that theſe perſons live within their income. This is happy for their families, and often profitable for the Public; though caſes may be put, in which ſpending their whole rents, which would prevent lending, may turn out more to the benefit of the

country. If, notwithſtanding an increaſing trade, and an opulent manner of living, the merchant can afford to make purchaſes, or lay out money on intereſt, this is indeed a ſign of immenſe wealth. At other times lending money may be a bad ſign, and only ſhew that the merchant does not know how to turn his money to greater advantage in the way of trade. Thus, it is eaſy to ſolve thoſe appearances, which are ſo frightful to ſome unfortunate people, who can never diſcern the proſperity of their country.

IT will be full as eaſy to make it appear, that, though a conſiderable ſum is yearly carried to England by the nobility and gentry, this does by no means exhauſt the country; nor will the argument from this topic anſwer the purpoſes of thoſe, who raiſe ſo loud a clamour on this head.

IT is true, ever ſince the union of the two crowns in the perſon of James VI. of Scotland, many of the Scotch nobility and gentry have been in uſe to ſpend ſome part of their rents in England. It is alſo true, that

that more money has been carried to England ſince the union of the two kingdoms than formerly. It is confeſſed, this is a diſadvantage in ſome reſpects: if 50,000l. Sterling be carried to England yearly, this is much the ſame, as if the Scots owed the Engliſh the capital of a million, computing the intereſt at five per cent. So much are the national riches diminiſhed. The Scotch nobility and gentry cannot be vindicated, if without any real neceſſity or juſt reaſon, they live too much in England, and will not reſide at the fine ſeats of their anceſtors even in ſummer or autumn. There is certainly a *greatneſs and generoſity* in not abandoning our friends or our country when they are poor. Whatever can be juſtly conſtrued into a contempt of either of them muſt be highly criminal. But after all, great latitude muſt be allowed in caſes of this nature. Men are not bound by any tie to live in any particular place, merely to keep money in that ſpot of the earth. One need not wonder, that there ſhould be ſo great a reſort to London: ſo large and opulent a city muſt furniſh buſineſs and entertainment, to ſuit various diſpoſitions, and to allure

multitudes from every quarter. The ſame attracting force may be obſerved in the large capitals of every other country *. No wonder therefore, that men of rank in Scotland ſhould incline to ſpend ſome part of their time in ſuch a metropolis.

Without inquiring, whether a very large capital is more advantageous, or diſadvantageous to a nation; whether the capital of Great Britain is not like a head too large for the body; or, whether Scotchmen are or are not to be blamed for living ſo much at London; it is evident that North Britain is not impoveriſhed by their reſort to the capital; but, on the contrary, is daily increaſing in riches; and that the Scotch nobility and gentry carry away only a part of their increaſed

* Aſpice agedum hanc frequentiam, cui vix urbis immenſæ tecta ſufficiunt. Ex municipiis et coloniis ſuis, ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluxerunt. Alios adducit ambitio, alios neceſſitas officii publici, alios impoſita legatio, alios luxuria, opulentum et opportunum vitiis locum quærens: alios liberalium ſtudiorum cupiditas, alios ſpectacula: quoſdam traxit amicitia, quoſdam induſtria, latam oſtendendæ virtuti nacta materiam: quidam venalem formam attulerunt, quidam venalem eloquentiam. Nullum non hominum genus concurrit in urbem, et virtutibus et vitiis magna præmia ponentem.

Senec. in Conſolat. ad Helviam, cap. vi.

rents. This, if it were neceſſary, might be illuſtrated by a particular computation: but without any calculation, it is apparent, that the rents in North Britain, having been raiſed, in ſome places to double, in others to a half, a third, or a fourth, more than before the union, and being ſcarce diminiſhed any where, the increaſe of rents muſt be underſtood to be greater than any ſum, which the nobility and gentry can be ſuppoſed to ſpend in England. From which it may be juſtly concluded, that, ſince the union, Scotland has gained in the rents of lands and houſes, as well as in trade and manufactures, and that not a peny of the ancient rent is ſpent in England.

THE only remaining objection to the aſſertion, that Scotland is enriched ſince the union, is taken from the luxury, that has prevailed ſince that period, and is ſaid ſtill to be increaſing. But of all objections this is certainly the weakeſt. In truth, it proves the contrary to what it is brought to eſtabliſh. Nothing can be more inconſiſtent, than, with the author of the Three Eſſays *, to complain of the ſcarcity of

* Page 19.

gold and ſilver, of the decay of trade and manufactures, and of the ſlow progreſs of agriculture, and, at the ſame time, of the increaſe of luxury and expence of living. This writer, indeed, confeſſes, that one would ſcarcely believe ſuch a conjunction could happen. What *may be believed*, I ſhall not pretend to ſay: ſome believe very odly; but, whatever this writer or any one elſe may believe, one may venture to affirm, that ſuch a conjunction in any nation is abſolutely impoſſible.

GREAT complaints are made of luxury; and made moſt deſervedly. But, in truth, the increaſe of luxury in any nation is an infallible teſtimony of the increaſe of wealth. An individual may be worth 5000l. per annum, and ſpend only a ſingle thouſand. He may augment his eſtate without augmenting his expences. But this ought never to be ſuppoſed of a whole people. If a nation become generally richer, the bulk of the people will incline to increaſe their expences. Landed gentlemen in general are too much diſpoſed at all times to go beyond their incomes, and incumber their eſtates. But, if their rents

increaſe, their temptations to live higher will prove ſtronger. Even the induſtrious part of the people will add ſomething to their former expences, when they are better able to afford it. If, on the contrary, they do not grow richer, this cannot be ſuppoſed of the generality. If luxury is on the growing hand, riches muſt be increaſed in proportion. There is only one exception to this political maxim. For, if a nation is indebted to foreigners for the means of ſupporting its luxury; if foreigners have a juſt demand upon it for ſums equal to the additional expences above thoſe of former times; it is certainly poorer. What is due to foreigners muſt always be ſubtracted from the national riches. And, if any nation ſpend more than it really has, it muſt become poorer, and prove bankrupt at laſt. But how little can either South or North Britain be ſuppoſed to owe to foreign merchants! I do not ſpeak of the public debt; this ſhall be inquired into afterwards: I only conſider the debts of private perſons. Now, the balance of what Scotch merchants owe to foreign nations above what foreigners owe to them

at any particular time, muſt certainly be very ſmall, compared with the whole riches of the nation. Nay, the balance may be ſuppoſed to be often on the ſide of Scotland. Other debts, which the Scots owe to one another, are of no conſequence in the preſent argument, and do not affect the common riches of the nation.

WHAT abſurd and ridiculous notions are we apt to conceive concerning luxury! In one ſenſe, almoſt every thing may be reckoned luxury. In another, there is much leſs than is commonly believed. Defining luxury to be a too elegant or refined, or a too ſumptuous, method of living, in a moral ſenſe it is always bad; for it is a great corrupter both of mens genius and virtue. In a political ſenſe, it is alſo bad, as, upon the whole, it renders a people weak in conſequence of their vices. God forbid, that I ſhould endeavour to leſſen the horrors, which wiſe and good men have moſt juſtly conceived of it, or that I ſhould not prefer the innocence and virtue of a nation to its riches. Not only ought a virtuous man to deteſt luxury, but, abſtracting

abſtracting from morals, a ſound politician, who conſiders only the ſtrength of nations, ought to paſs the very ſame judgment. For virtue, by rendering a people more honeſt and valiant, makes them ſtronger either for attack or for defence; though it does not always render them opulent. It is only a high degree of virtue that can ſecure good morals and great riches at the ſame time; yet it always tends to preſerve a nation longer, and render it more ſecure. On the other hand, luxury enervates a people. Yet, where it runs through all ranks, it can only be ſupported by ſuperior riches.

THOSE maxims, that are juſt when applied to the luxury of particular perſons, cannot always be applied when we conſider a whole people. A private citizen may ſpend more than he has, and may at laſt prove bankrupt. It is altogether improbable, that this ſhould happen to an induſtrious nation. The bulk of an induſtrious people never were, and according to the common principles of human nature never will be, diſpoſed to exceed their

their revenues. Such people are commonly attentive to gain. The love of profit is ſtronger with them, than the love of pleaſure. In conſequence of this they live within bounds, and the far greateſt part of them are frugal. It is chiefly among men of great fortunes, who gain nothing by labour, that we ſhall find the diſpoſition to extravagant expence. In an induſtrious nation theſe form but a ſmall body. Such of them as run in debt, do it gradually. And, as rich induſtrious men come in their places, it is of leſs conſequence to a nation. But we need not put the iſſue of this matter upon probabilities only; in truth, it is as impoſſible for a whole nation, as for particular perſons, to ſpend more, than they have, without being indebted to others. In ſhort, if luxury has been increaſing in Scotland, ever ſince the Revolution, riches muſt have increaſed in proportion.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Anſwers to Objections againſt what has been aſſerted concerning the wealth of ENGLAND.

IF Scotland is evidently richer than it was before the Revolution, no good reaſon can be aſſigned, why England ſhould not be ſuppoſed to have been equally fortunate. England is the land of liberty; London, the center, from which this liberty flows to the reſt of the iſland. The rays of liberty, like thoſe of light, are denſer when nearer the center. The Scots are at a greater diſtance. The Engliſh are nearer, and muſt have peculiar advantages. During ſeveral ages, they have been a richer and a more induſtrious nation. They have had greater ſkill in agriculture and manufactures, and better notions of trade. In general, they ſeem to have leſs curioſity than the Scots, or rather to be more ſteady in their purſuits. Their artiſans and dealers of every kind confine themſelves to fewer branches of trade or manufactures, and divert leſs to

othe

other objects not connected with their chief employment. This makes them more expert and ſucceſsful in thoſe particular branches of trade which they purſue. All theſe are ſo great advantages, that it is ſcarce to be thought, the Engliſh have not made proportionably greater advances than the Scots; unleſs it is ſuppoſed, that their more early application to trade, and their having carried it to ſo great a heighth before the Revolution, hath rendered it impoſſible, or very difficult, for them to multiply their trade in the ſame proportion, as may eaſily be done by the French or Scots, who have more lately applied themſelves to commerce.

BUT, be this as it will, the improvements of England ſince the Revolution are very great. Compared with England, Scotland is extremely poor; and in all taxes, impoſed for the expence of government, ought to be conſidered in this light. All the ſigns which indicate an increaſe of riches are viſible in England. Its agriculture is much advanced, the value of lands is raiſed, the intereſt of money reduced, the quantity of ſhipping of all kinds, and

and of the Royal Navy in particular, prodigiouſly augmented. Numerous ſtately buildings have been raiſed, and all things appear more grand and magnificent. From all which it might be expected, the minds of the Engliſh would be eaſy upon this point, and not be perpetually haunted with the dreadful ſpectres of poverty and ruin.

YET not long ago, an eſſay was publiſhed, to prove that the foreign trade of Britain is faſt declining. This eſſay has been aſcribed to a merchant lately deceaſed, who was no leſs eminent for his riches and extenſive trade, than for large and generous notions of commerce, and for a firm patriotiſm *. A gentleman of ſuch a character could have nothing at heart but the good of his country. He could not have any intention to miſlead

* Sir Matthew Decker: his book is intitled "An "Eſſay on the cauſes of the decline of the foreign trade, "conſequently of the value of the lands, of Britain, and "on the means to reſtore both."

This piece ſeems to have been compoſed about the year 1740, and has been printed oftener than once.

his countrymen. Yet, this worthy citizen actually misleads, and sets before us a very disagreeable view of our affairs.

NOT only hath he asserted, that the foreign trade of England declines, but he seems to infer, that the loss of it makes us decline in all other respects, and that upon the whole the nation is growing poor. If this be not his meaning, or if he would allow, that we are growing rich upon the whole, we might be less concerned about our foreign trade, or any particular branch of that industry by which we are enriched.

ON this subject of foreign trade two suppositions may be made. 1. That, tho' upon the whole we are gainers by it, we are not so great gainers as at some former period. If this be true, it is a disadvantage; unless by applying less to foreign trade, we bestow our labour at home on an industry that is more profitable. It is certainly more profitable to improve our barren lands to the value of a million, than only to gain half a million by foreign commerce.

2. IT

2. IT may be next supposed, that, upon the whole, we are losers by our foreign trade; and our loss may be computed to amount to a million, or half a million annually, or to any other sum. Even upon this supposition, we may be growing richer upon the whole; for, if we only lose annually half a million by our foreign trade, while we are improving our barren lands and stock of cattle to the value of a million, we are certainly gaining half a million yearly.

IT may be added, that our gains by domestic industry, and by the improvement of our lands and stock of cattle, are of the most solid kind. They are more truly profitable than gains to the same nominal extent by foreign trade. The labours, by which we procure them, are more healthful; they keep our countrymen at home, keep our people more innocent, promote better morals, preserve simplicity of manners, prevent luxury, and are less uncertain and precarious. Foreign trade, no doubt, may be very profitable. In some cases,

may bring quicker gains. But our merchants, and many others of our countrymen, value foreign trade too highly, when they lay it down as a poſition, that a nation cannot become rich and powerful without a great and increaſing foreign trade.

IT is true, if we are every year loſing by our foreign trade, we muſt gradually loſe our ſilver and gold. Not an ounce of either of them will be left among us in the end; and we muſt uſe paper or other materials for circulation among ourſelves. According to the author of the Three Eſſays, and other writers, this is all we have at preſent. Nay, according to the calculations of ſome of our merchants, who have been raiſing an alarm ever ſince the beginning of this century, long before this time there muſt not have been a ſhilling in the country; as the balance of trade is ſaid to be almoſt every where againſt us. But the great quantity of coin and plate that is to be ſeen, is an infallible proof that there is an error in their computations,

and

and that, upon the whole, the Engliſh are ſtill gaining by their foreign trade *.

To give an exact and complete account of the foreign trade of Britain; to compare the quantity and value of our exports and imports; to diſtinguiſh preciſely, when, and where, and how far, the balance of trade is either on our ſide, or againſt us; is too great an attempt for the moſt ſkilful of our merchants. It is not propoſed to launch out into ſo wide an ocean. But, without any ſuch detail, it will not be difficult to ſhew, that Sir Matthew Decker has not proved, that the foreign trade of Britain is declining; and that all the appearances, upon which he builds his opinion, may be ſolved upon other principles.

HE takes notice † of the long credit taken by ſhop-keepers; the great number of bankrupts; the great arrears of rent owing all over England, which the land-

* If the quantity of ſilver and gold in plate, coin, and bullion, is continually increaſing in any nation where there are no mines, that nation muſt be gaining by foreign trade.

† At the beginning of his Eſſay.

lords every where complain of; the great number of farms thrown upon the landlords hands; the vaſt increaſe of the poors rates. All theſe appearances, in ſo far as they are real, have been explained already. They are the natural conſequence of great luxury, and great luxury is the effect of great riches.

BUT, beſide thoſe phænomena already explained, Sir Matthew Decker obſerves, that many petitions are preſented to parliament, complaining of the decay of the woollen manufactures, and of the ſtarving condition to which the poor are reduced in the cloathing countries: two facts, the truth of which I do not examine; for, ſuppoſing them to be true, they prove no more than that one branch of foreign trade is decayed; which may be ſupplied by others. Trade is very variable in its nature. All the branches of it cannot flouriſh equally at all times. Particular cauſes may make *ſome of them* languiſh at times at which commerce is in the moſt proſperous condition *upon the whole*. When ſeveral nations in Europe, rouſed by the example of the

the Britiſh, are ſetting up manufactures, and encouraging their people to trade, this muſt neceſſarily produce alterations. No wonder, that our rivals the French, and other nations upon the continent, ſeize ſeveral branches of commerce; or that our own merchants, intent upon gain, give up a leſs profitable branch of trade, and prefer a more profitable. As a balance on our ſide, many branches of trade have been both eſtabliſhed, and carried to a great length, ſince the Revolution; in particular, ſeveral, by which we ſave vaſt ſums, which formerly we paid to the French, and which at preſent add conſiderably to the national wealth *.

THE lowneſs of the price of wool, which is conſidered as another ſymptom of the decline of the woollen manufacture and of our foreign trade, may be accounted for, in ſome meaſure, by the increaſe of the breed of ſheep in Britain and Ireland, and by the difficulty of ſmuggling wool into France, notwithſtanding the high

* See Poſtlethwayt's Univerſal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, under the article TAXES.

prices it gives in that country. It is not propoſed to examine the ſtate of the wool, or how far the woollen manufacture is decayed. This is a ſubject more proper for others, than for the author of the Characteriſtics. But it may be obſerved in general, that the cheapneſs of the materials is an advantage to a manufacture; and that materials may increaſe ſo much, that their prices may be low even when there is a great demand for the manufacture into which they are wrought.

THE other bad ſymptoms of a declining foreign trade, that are mentioned by this writer, ariſe from the ſtate of the exchange, bullion, and coin. It is ſaid, the exchange was more againſt us in the year 1740, than formerly. But does any man know, how the exchange ſtands between London, and *all* the places with which the Engliſh trade? or does he know, how much we loſe or gain by every city, or by every branch of trade? Except he know this in the conſtant courſe of trade, he cannot know how the exchange ſtands upon the whole, or draw firm concluſions from the courſe of it.

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THE ſcarcity of ſilver coin is given as another ſign of the declenſion of our foreign trade. But, if we have greater plenty of guineas and of foreign gold, this will compenſate the ſcarcity of ſilver. There is an obvious reaſon for this ſcarcity: our ſilver and gold coins are not properly adjuſted in proportion to the reſt of the coins in Europe; ſo profit may be made by exporting the lateſt coined and the heavieſt of our ſilver money. This is a loſs, no doubt; but it doth not prove, that our foreign trade declines.

THE laſt bad ſymptom, obſerved by the writer of the Eſſay, is that the mint lies idle, and that little or no new coin appears. On this, he lays down two maxims, both of them falacious. "The barometer "of the general trade of a nation is its "mint. If plenty of treaſure is brought "in, and little carried out, part of it will be "continually coining, and much new mo-"ney will appear; the certain ſymptom of "a flouriſhing trade *." Is not the reverſe rather to be expected? and may not the

* Eſſay, page 2.

maxim

maxim be turned another way? "If plenty "of money is brought in, and little carried "out, the coin will not be diminiſhed, but "be increaſed. There will be no neceſſity "for a new coinage, ſo little new money "will appear; the certain ſymptom of a "flouriſhing trade."

THIS argument will appear ſtronger, if we conſider the circulation of paper.

HIS ſecond maxim is of the ſame kind. "*If much treaſure be brought in, yet "more be carried out, the mint muſt lie "idle. Little new money will appear; "the ſure ſign of a decaying trade." The reverſe appears rather to be the truth: "If "much money be brought in, yet more be "carried out, the mint muſt not lie idle, "as coin will be daily more ſcarce. There-"fore there will be a great deal of new "money appearing; the ſure ſign of a de-"caying trade." However, as merchants are beſt able to judge of theſe maxims, it is beſt not to be poſitive on this ſubject of the mint: only, in general, it ſeems to be

* Eſſay, page 2.

true,

true, that a greater or leſs quantity of coin is not a *certain* ſign, either of increaſing poverty, or of growing riches.

THUS, notwithſtanding his knowledge of trade, this eminent merchant has not proved, that the foreign trade of England hath declined. Such a decline is not probable, ſince the number of merchants and of ſhips is daily increaſing. It is ſcarce to be thought, that our merchants would perſiſt in carrying on a loſing trade. We ſee the very ſame appearances as if we were gaining; for, if our merchants are gaining, whatever they gain muſt, at laſt, be brought to our fields, cities, and harbours. Merchants can ſecure their gain no where elſe, except they lend it to foreigners, or place it in foreign banks. I do not find, this is alleged. Wealth is thought to be no where ſo ſafe as in Britain. We ſee daily additions made to our ſhipping. Our harbours are in a better condition. There is plenty of naval ſtores. We have all ſorts of foreign commodities. Our own fields are better cultivated. Therefore the

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preſumption certainly is, that our foreign trade, as well as our domeſtic induſtry, is increaſed. But, after all, the queſtion of the greateſt importance is not, "Whether "we gain or loſe by foreign trade?" The more important inquiry is, "Whether we "are growing richer or poorer upon the "whole?" If it would put an end to diſputes about foreign trade, more might be granted, than can poſſibly be demanded by ſuch as are moſt anxious about it. Grant that during the laſt ſixty years we have loſt half a million yearly by foreign trade, or, which is the ſame thing, have exported bullion or coin to that value, amounting in the whole to thirty millions; the moſt timorous dealers in exchange can aſk no more. So great a loſs ſeems abſolutely impoſſible, conſidering the immenſe quantity of additional plate that has been got within this period. Yet, even upon this hard ſuppoſition, as the nation has gained to a much greater value by the improvement of our lands and home-manufactures, we are a great deal richer upon the whole.

WE

WE ought not, however, to neglect the good advice of this worthy citizen. He has ſaid enough to put us upon our guard, and hath ſuggeſted many uſeful methods for recovering ſome branches of trade, which we may have loſt, and for improving ſuch as may be in danger. The nation is, undoubtedly, greatly obliged to him for his good wiſhes and uſeful endeavours; but he has been miſled by the greatneſs of the commerce of England. The Engliſh have been continually improving their trade from the days of Queen Elizabeth: ſo it is at length come to a great heighth. The advantages, which they have gained by it, have ſtirred up the emulation of other nations. Ever ſince the reign of Lewis XIV. the French have made great efforts to rival us in trade. Being an ingenious and ambitious nation, they have ſucceeded very far in their deſign. Viewing the great advances which the French have made, and which are more ſenſible during the laſt forty years, one is apt to imagine, that the Engliſh trade, though really much greater, begins to decline. As it was great before, the later increaſe of it becomes leſs perceptible.

perceptible. It is impoſſible, in the nature of the thing, that the trade of any nation can be *continually* increaſing, and bring in greater and greater ſums in a perpetual ſucceſſion. It muſt often be at a ſtand. It may often be ſo great, that it will not be eaſy to enlarge it. It may often appear to decline, when it is really, though inſenſibly, increaſed. But, while we ſee ſuch goodly appearances and improvements in our fields, cities, and harbours, we have infallible teſtimonies of increaſing riches.

IT is not however intended to aſſert, that our country might not be much more improved, and the commerce of Great Britain rendered much more flouriſhing. It would be eaſy to propoſe many excellent ſchemes for promoting this deſign. Many notable ones have been offered to the public with this view. Among others, Sir Matthew Decker, and Mr. Tucker of Briſtol *, have made ſome grand and magnificent propoſals for raiſing taxes more

* In his excellent Eſſay on the advantages and diſadvantages which reſpectively attend France and Great Britain, with regard to trade, &c.

advan-

advantageouſly for the publick, and for improving and embelliſhing our country. Such propoſals merit the higheſt applauſe; they diſcover an exalted patriotiſm, and an enlarged mind, and juſtly deſerve the notice of men in power. Could *any* thing tend ſo much to their honour, as giving due attention to public-ſpirited ſchemes, ſelecting ſuch of them as are juſt and practicable, and employing their intereſt and authority to have them eſtabliſhed? How hard is it, that ſo many are wholly taken up with their own ſelfiſh and *little* views, in procuring a precarious power, when they might obtain a more honourable and ſolid intereſt, by *real ſervices* to the Public! When it is ſo eaſy to ſhew the advantages of many noble propoſals, it is unhappy, that it ſhould be found ſo difficult to put any one of them in execution.

BUT while Sir Mathew Decker deſerves the higheſt praiſes for endeavouring to correct our errors, he has fallen into a miſtake concerning the effects of our taxes at preſent. For the ſame reaſons, for

which we have taken notice of other errors in his Eſſay, it will be neceſſary to correct his miſtake on this head; as it has raiſed too great an alarm, and tends too much to diſquiet the minds of the people.

ACCORDING to this gentleman's principles *, when the Government raiſes 4,650,000 l. by exciſes, cuſtoms, and ſalt duties, and raiſes ten per cent. or 465,000 l. for collecting them, both ſums amounting to 5,115,000 l. the people pay in conſequence no leſs than 10,869,375 l. and adding the poor's rate, and the reſt of the taxes, which he calculates at 4,420,000 l. the ſum of all the taxes amounting at this rate to 15,289,375 l. he concludes, that, computing the people of England at eight millions, and their expences at 8 l. per head, (64 millions in the whole) more than 31 per cent. of their whole expences is chargeable on the taxes.

THIS is a high calculation. The method of inſtituting it is ſomewhat intri-

* Page 35.

cate. It is ſuppoſed that thoſe, who pay the five millions immediately to the Government, muſt, on this account, raiſe the prices of their goods to their cuſtomers. Theſe cuſtomers, again, muſt lay the advanced prices of the goods, which they have bought, on the cuſtomers to whom they ſell them. Theſe again muſt lay the advanced prices upon their cuſtomers; and ſo on in ſucceſſion, through all the orders and individuals in the State, till, at laſt, the goods arrive at the conſumers.

WITHOUT inſiſting, that this argument, if it is ſolid, muſt affect trade in all countries, where taxes are levied by cuſtoms or exciſes, and ſo muſt affect our rivals as well as ourſelves; it is, in its own nature, too ſubtile; it is built on too precarious principles, to be convincing, and ſeems more ſuitable to a *metaphyſician* than a merchant. This will be evident from a few obſervations.

ACCORDING to Sir Matthew Decker, ſince the price of ſhoes muſt be advanced

by the tax on leather, the grazier, the butcher, the tanner, the leather-cutter, and the ſhoemaker, who buy, each from the other in ſucceſſion, muſt lay upon their cuſtomers, firſt, the advanced prices of the ſhoes they wear: ſecondly, the advanced prices of the wages of their journeymen, who muſt raiſe their wages to anſwer the advanced prices of ſhoes; thirdly, the money paid on account of all the former advanced prices, in conſequence of the tax; and laſt of all, a reaſonable profit on this money as traders. At this rate this writer muſters up twelve advanced prices in ſucceſſion, which the wearers of ſhoes muſt pay for the tax beyond the bare duty. And as both ſoap and candles are taxed, he places twelve advanced prices more on ſhoes, on account of the tax on ſoap, and other twelve on account of that on candles. He obſerves further, that the ſame thing muſt hold in all taxes on the neceſſaries of life; and that the dearneſs of all neceſſaries muſt advance the price of all labour, and force the maſter-tradeſmen to raiſe on their cuſtomers the taxes and advances on their conſumption.

By

By theſe methods he finds, that the ſubjects, who conſume the goods, pay more than the double of the tax which is levied by the Government.

But all theſe calculations ſeem to be founded on conjecture alone; and their incertainty will appear, if we conſider, that any reaſonable rule that can be laid down for eſtimating theſe advanced prices, muſt carry the matter much further than Sir Matthew Decker himſelf hath computed, or than any man can admit.

The moſt equitable rules for making any probable computation ſeem to be, (1.) That every perſon whatſoever, who ſells his goods, or labour, in the way of trade, from the firſt who pays the tax immediately to the Government, to the laſt who furniſhes the goods to the conſumers, muſt not only exact from his cuſtomers all the money which he paid on account of the tax, but a reaſonable profit on this money, in the way of trade, as well as upon that part of his ſtock which is laid out on the prime coſt of goods. (2.) That

as the common intereſt of money is reckoned too ſmall a profit in trade, a greater profit muſt be allowed on the money that is paid on account of the tax. At which rate, theſe profits may be computed at 10, at 15, or at 20 per cent. and in ſome caſes will reach higher.

THIS caſe will be ſimilar to that of compound intereſt; in which, if the intereſt is at 5 per cent. the principal is doubled in fewer than 15, tripled in fewer than 23, and quadruplicated in fewer than 29 years. If the intereſt is ſuppoſed to be 10 per cent. the principal is doubled in fewer than 8, tripled in fewer than 12, and quadruplicated in fewer than 15 years. If the intereſt is ſuppoſed to be 20 per cent. the principal is doubled in fewer than 4, tripled in fewer than 7, and quadruplicated in fewer than 8 years. Computations of the ſame nature may be made for other higher proportions.

Now as Sir Matthew computes no fewer than twelve advanced prices on ſome taxes, and, according to his method of calculating, might

might undoubtedly, in ſeveral caſes, reckon more; and as the profits of merchants on money laid out in trade may be ſuppoſed always more than 5, and ſometimes more than 10, 15, or even 20 per cent. it is eaſy to ſee, that taxes ought to be raiſed to the conſumers, not only to double, but to triple, quadruple, nay, in a higher proportion; which yet no man can poſſibly imagine to be true. There muſt be a fallacy therefore in this argument. Little ſtreſs can be laid on ſuch computations; and the people of Britain need not be ſo greatly alarmed at the taxes impoſed by cuſtoms and exciſes. If there is no fallacy, they are in no worſe ſituation than other nations.

I DO not however enter minutely into the nature of ſuch taxes; I will not aſſert, that the Government might not raiſe equal ſums, with greater eaſe to the people. I approve of many of the ſchemes ſuggeſted by Sir Matthew Decker and others, and wiſh that a ſpirit of patriotiſm may prevail more and more, to render them effectual.

PART IV.

Of the Payment of the National Debts.

IF Britain be conſidered at preſent with reſpect to piety, morals, or public ſpirit; if we examine the national genius, either for the nobler arts and ſciences, or for war; no doubt, there are many things alarming in our condition. But nothing, that relates only to money, or to trade, ought to give anxiety to true patriots, excepting perhaps the greatneſs of the public debts. For though we have ſufficient funds for ſupporting the public credit, and for clearing the national debts, yet great debts are embarraſſing in their own nature, and, unleſs they are prudently managed, may, in certain circumſtances, involve us in difficulties and confu-

ſion. For this reaſon every lover of his country ſhould ardently wiſh to have the public debts paid, and ſhould chearfully contribute his endeavours towards ſo good an end.

AT the ſame time, there is no juſt reaſon to apprehend, that the nation either is impoveriſhed by theſe debts in the mean time, or is unable to extinguiſh them without diſtreſs, whenever they ſet heartily about it. There is a fund of wealth in Great Britain, I do not ſay inexhauſtible, but ſuperior to that of any other European nation, not excepting even the Dutch, who, notwithſtanding their immenſe trade and vaſt quantity of ſilver and gold, are far from having ſuch ſolid funds, or being in ſuch advantageous circumſtances, as the Britiſh. Great Britain has ſubſtantial funds vaſtly ſuperior to all our debts and neceſſities, even though we are engaged in war.

Suppoſing that we owe eighty millions; eighty millions do not exceed, or only exceed a very little, perhaps they do not even amount

amount to, the yearly revenues of the people of Great Britain and Ireland. According to Davenant's calculation for the year 1688, there were more than five millions and a half of people in England, each of whom, at a medium, ſpent 7l. 9s. 3d. a year. Whether we conſider the number of the people, or their yearly expence, the computation was not too high. It is computed, there are ten millions of people in Great Britain and Ireland at preſent. And, as there are ſuch high complaints of our luxury, we may allow 8l. 10s. for every man's expence, or eighty-five millions for the expences of the whole people. Again, ſuppoſing that a fourth part, or twenty of the eighty millions, are due to foreigners, and that we export a million annually to pay the intereſt at five per cent. at this rate, the yearly revenues of the people of Great Britain and Ireland, after paying what they owe to foreigners, do not amount to leſs than eighty-four millions ſterling *. With ſuch a vaſt

* The author of the Three Eſſays has not a juſt conception of the wealth of England when he imagines (page 11) that the Engliſh could not hold it long without being undone, if they were obliged to ſend 600000l. yearly

fund of wealth, can we be at a loſs to fall upon proper methods of extinguiſhing the whole, or what part of the public debts we find neceſſary? Were we to conſider the whole nation, as a private gentleman of a good eſtate, who owed no more than a year's rent, it would give us a favourable proſpect of our affairs. There is certainly ſome ſort of reſemblance. Though the iſland, or the rents, trade, and induſtry of the inhabitants, cannot be ſold like an eſtate; yet the public revenues or the revenues of the whole people are like a perpetual annuity: and if a nation in ſuch circumſtances would raiſe their taxes, and ſpend no more than formerly, like a private gentleman, who raiſes his rents without encreaſing his expences, they muſt be able to pay their debts without being in the leaſt incumbered.

But leaving it to his Majeſty and the Parliament to conſider, how ſuch ſalutary

yearly out of the country. The Engliſh ought not to give away their money without good reaſons; but though they ſent away a greater ſum, they would not be ſoon exhauſted.

ſchemes

ſchemes may be beſt promoted, methinks it would not be difficult for private perſons, with no very great degree of public ſpirit, to aſſiſt greatly in accompliſhing this excellent deſign, nay, to accompliſh it without any loſs to themſelves, and without any augmentation, nay, with an abatement of the taxes. There is no myſtery in all this. If the ſtory be true, the honeſt man, who lately ſent 100l. to one of the miniſters of ſtate to help to pay the public debt, has led the way and ſet us a fair example. Nay, he has done more than is neceſſary. For there is no neceſſity for private perſons to advance their money. It would be ſufficient, if the richer ſort would voluntarily entruſt the Government with their plate, and ſubmit to the ſmall inconveniency of wanting the uſe of it for a ſeaſon. In imitation of the generoſity of ſuch a worthy citizen, who contributed an hundred pounds for ſo good an end, may a public ſpirit ſpread itſelf among the people, and every one run with his plate to the public treaſury, that the public debts may be more ſpeedily paid. What an immenſe quantity of plate is there in this iſland!

How

How many millions of the national debt might be ſwept off by it at once! This would be an advantage to the Government, if no intereſt were demanded for the uſe of the plate. The benefactors of the public would ſuffer no loſs, ſince their plate is a dead ſtock to them at preſent, and they would have parliamentary ſecurity for its being repayed with the full value of the tax upon the plate and of the original workmanſhip. Mean time, let thoſe taxes, which are underſtood to be moſt burdenſome, or to bear hardeſt on our trade, be aboliſhed, and only ſuch as are eaſily borne be continued for ſome years longer. In this method, in the firſt place, the reſt of what is at preſent the national debt, and bears intereſt, or what part of it ſhould be thought proper; and next the new debt, might be cleared. Can parting with our plate in this manner be ſaid to require a very *high* ſtrain of public ſpirit? How eaſily may plate be wanted! How honourable to want it on ſuch an occaſion! Might not a few grand examples render the want of it faſhionable? Might not the whole nation be engaged in ſuch a ſcheme

ſcheme with eagerneſs, and every man, who had plate, rejoice in having an opportunity of contributing to the good of his country?

WE have not the leaſt reaſon to apprehend, that there is any neceſſity for ſuch a ſcheme, nor to dread any danger to the public credit. The Britiſh legiſlature is ſufficiently able, and, we truſt, will not fail, to take care of the public welfare. But it becomes ſubjects under ſuch a happy conſtitution to attempt what is great and generous, and to ſhew a forwardneſs to ſecure their free government againſt the moſt remote dangers. The ſlaves of an abſolute monarchy need give themſelves no trouble about their government, they cannot be *worſe* than they are; but the ſubjects of Britain are bleſſed with a conſtitution, worthy to be preſerved till the end of time.

ANY ſcheme of offering our plate to the Public may, indeed, be thought romantic. It is ſo, perhaps; and can hardly be expected to ſucceed in an age no ways remarkable

markable for public ſpirit; but it is generous at leaſt. If we are diſpoſed to go beyond the common rate, it is better to imitate thoſe heroes of romance, who were remarkable for juſtice and magnanimity, than, as if we were heroes of a different character, and indifferent about honeſty, imitate the author of the Three Eſſays in ſuggeſting inglorious ſchemes of ſtopping the credit of public banks, and in endeavouring to excite opulent nations to defraud their creditors by aboliſhing the public debts, inſtead of honeſtly paying them: let the miniſters of a deſpotic monarchy applaud ſuch fraudulent counſels. Let tyrants break their faith, and abuſe the people, whom under the pretence of loans they have forced to ſurrender their money: but let the citizens of ſo opulent a nation as Britain, let the happy ſubjects of ſuch a free government, be aſhamed of diſhonourable propoſals, and deteſt inſinuations of violating public engagements. Such counſels are equally contrary to the commercial intereſts of Great Britain, and to the ſpirit and genius of the Britiſh conſtitution. The Britiſh

Britiſh government would not ſuffer ſuch propoſals to be openly made without teſtifying their indignation, did they not conſider their honour and faith as above all ſuſpicion, and treat even their moſt peeviſh and diſcontented children with a more magnanimous indulgence, than an abſolute monarch dares venture to allow to the greateſt favourites amongſt his ſlaves.

PART

PART V.

Of the National Genius and Capacity for Self-Defence.

WHILE the people of Britain are poſſeſſed of great wealth, and enjoy the moſt ample liberty, a Britiſh author has lately ſtarted up *, who, granting

* The author of The Eſtimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times.

Though this book has gone through ſeveral editions in a ſhort time, it cannot be inferred, either that the taſte of the age is not ſo ſuperficial, as the author hath aſſerted, or that his book is unluckily adapted to this ſuperficial taſte. A ſolid and uſeful book may ſometimes have a run in a ſuperficial age; and *vice verſa*. However, it is eaſy to account for the popularity of ſuch pieces as the Eſtimate. The writer of it had no reaſon to imagine, that his deſign was not popular. Few things are more popular, than ſeverity againſt national vices. Thoſe divines, who paint their audience blackeſt, raiſe the moſt dreadful ſpectres, and ſpeak the worſt of the times and of human nature, are frequently the moſt popular. One may often obſerve whole companies more highly entertained with frightful tales, and horrible relations, than with the moſt juſt deſcriptions of nature and of human life.

all, that can be demanded on either of theſe heads, maintains at the ſame time, that Britain is going faſt to deſtruction. According to this author, our liberty has degenerated into licentiouſneſs, and our wealth has produced ſuch an effeminacy of manners, as has almoſt extinguiſhed the good principles, and deſtroyed the genius and capacity of the nation. If it can be reckoned any happineſs, he indeed allows, that there is ſcarce ſo much courage remaining, as will excite us to a civil war, or raiſe violent commotions at home. He is not therefore apprehenſive of any internal danger *. But he pronounces us ſo defenceleſs againſt foreign nations, that we run the greateſt riſk of becoming an eaſy prey to any bold invader, and in particular of falling before the ſuperior genius of the French.

THO' both charity and juſtice forbid us to impute any bad deſign to this author, it is not eaſy to find out the good tendency of his performance. It may be kind, no doubt, to hold up a true mirror to the pub-

* Eſtimate, p. 125.

lic,

lic *, and to ſet the vices of the age in a proper light: but whatever benefit may be expected from a true mirror, or a juſt repreſentation of errors and misfortunes, it is dangerous to preſent a glaſs of ſuch an unlucky conſtruction, that it diminiſhes moſt of the beauties, and heightens blemiſhes ſo much, that he who ſees his face in the glaſs is in hazard of being frighted out of his ſenſes, and of ſwooning away at the ghaſtly appearance.

WHAT the author of the Eſtimate imagines to be a mirror, ſeems rather to be an inſtrument of this unfortunate kind. This gentleman has unluckily fallen into the ſame error, for which he blames the "ſpe-"culative and virtuous in every age, who "have been apt to aggravate its manners "into the higheſt degree of guilt, to ſa-"tyrize rather than deſcribe, and to throw "their reſpective times into one dark ſhade "of horror †."

I ſincerely lament the impiety of the age. I am ſorry there ſhould be ſuch good rea-

* Eſtimate, page 15. † Ibid. p. 27.

ſon

ſon to complain of our bad morals, and of our want of public ſpirit. I am far from approving many of our methods of education. I much diſlike the reigning taſte and diverſions of many of our men of faſhion and politeneſs. I moſt heartily condemn their paſſion for gaming, their luxury, effeminacy, and falſe delicacy. I would not affirm, that the national genius and capacity for ſcience, legiſlation, or war, is the higheſt of the kind, or that we have philoſophers or poets equal to ſome in former times. We cannot pretend to have generals equal to the duke of Marlborough, or ſuch ſeamen as admiral Blake. In ſhort, our vices and weakneſſes are too evident not to be confeſſed, and moſt ſincerely lamented by every good man. Yet we are not ſo deſtitute of genius and capacity, as is maintained by the author of the Eſtimate. If he intends to ſay, as ſeems very probable *, that his country has loſt its fame, and that his countrymen in general are become the contempt of Europe, he hath

* Eſtimate, page 83, 84.

certainly

certainly carried the matter too far. The Britiſh are by no means contemptible; for with all their weakneſſes they are envied and admired among the neighbouring nations.

IF we conſider in what age or nation, upon a due compariſon of all circumſtances, one would have choſen to live, it may be affirmed with leſs caution, than is uſed by the author of the Eſtimate, "That there "is no time nor country, delivered down "to us in ſtory, in which a wiſe man "would wiſh ſo much to have lived, as in "our own *," or in which the body of the people have lived in ſuch plenty, liberty, and ſecurity.

IF we conſider our principles and manners, as indications either of our virtue or depravity, or of our genius or want of capacity, this author's aſſertions, after all his ſoftenings and limitations, are unrea-

* The author of the Eſtimate, page 15, puts it no higher, than that a wiſe man would wiſh this "in "ſome reſpects." But he might have put it much ſtronger.

 ſonably

ſonably ſevere. In no other light can we view ſeveral expreſſions, "That religion is "evidently *deſtroyed* in England †; That "the honeſt pride of virtue is *no more* ‡; "That the principle of honour is either "loſt or totally corrupted; That no ge-"nerous thirſt of praiſe is left among us §; "That the principle of public ſpirit or "love of our country is perhaps leſs felt "among us, than even thoſe of religion "and true honour ‖." The author has indeed expreſsly declared, that there are exceptions: but upon the whole he is too ſevere.

IF we confine the inquiry into our principles and manners according to the plan of this writer, and the leading queſtion ſhall be, "How far the preſent "ruling manners and principles of this "nation may tend to its continuance or "deſtruction *?" this author has much miſtaken our circumſtances, and pronounces too boldly on our weakneſs and want of defence.

† Eſtimate, page 175. ‡ Ibid page 59. § Ibid. page 61. ‖ Ibid. page 62. * Ibid. page 24.

"THAT

"THAT fortune by no means rules the "world; that there are general cauſes, "natural or moral, which operate in every "ſtate, and which raiſe, ſupport, or overturn "it †," will be diſputed by none. Nevertheleſs, every defeat, or unſucceſsful expedition, is not to be aſcribed to the manners and principles of the whole people, or of thoſe of higher rank; but may often be accounted for by particular cauſes.

THE greateſt, wiſeſt, moſt proſperous, virtuous, and magnanimous nations, in times of their greateſt proſperity and virtue, have met with greater diſappointments and defeats, than the Britiſh have met with in the preſent war. Four times were the Roman armies beaten by Hannibal in Italy itſelf in the beginning of the ſecond Punic war. Our misfortunes in war have not been ſo great, nor of ſuch long continuance, that we muſt impute them to a general ſtupidity or cowardice, either of thoſe in lower or higher ranks. Other reaſons undoubtedly may be aſſigned.

† Eſtimate, page 12, 13.

IT is dangerous to decide haſtily in ſuch caſes. Whether particular victories or defeats are owing to ſome particular cauſe, or ought to be underſtood as the effects of the general temper and genius of a nation, is often a perplexed queſtion: it is often impoſſible to be determined, except by thoſe who know the ſecret ſprings of action. It is often an uſeleſs queſtion, and frequently iſſues in a diſpute rather about words than things. Without detracting from the wiſdom of the Britiſh councils, or from the bravery of the Britiſh troops, during the war in the reign of queen Anne, there are, at leaſt, plauſible reaſons for aſcribing no ſmall part of our ſucceſſes in that war to the great military genius of the duke of Marlborough. At ſome particular times the ſafety and glory of a nation have been known to depend upon one, or a very few. In great nations this will rarely happen, if they are not ſubjected to a deſpotic monarch. When it happens, the caſe is very dangerous. This is not the caſe of Britain at preſent. We ſtand on a broader bottom, and our national

capacity for ſelf-defence reſts upon a ſurer foundation.

BY the conceſſions of the author of the Eſtimate, " the character of the manners " of this age and nation is by no means " that of abandoned wickedneſs and pro- " fligacy *. The common people of this " nation ſeem poſſeſſed of bodily ſtrength, " hardineſs, and courage. There are no " better fighting men upon earth. They " ſeldom turn their backs upon their ene- " my, unleſs when their officers ſhew the " way, and even then are eaſily rallied, " and return to the charge with the ſame " courage †. The ſpirit of liberty happily " ſtill ſubſiſts among us, though not in its " genuine vigour. The love of liberty " is not extinguiſhed. We all wiſh to " continue free: nay, in his opinion, the " ſpirit of liberty hath been ingrafted by " the arts of policy in other countries, but " ſhoots up here, as from its natural cli- " mate, ſtock, and ſoil: whence its de- " ſtruction by external violence will pro-

* Eſtimate, page 26. † Ibid. page 88, 89.

" bably be no more than temporary *. The writer likewiſe allows us " humanity, " or

* Eſtimate, page 17—20.

This is the moſt comfortable proſpect the author of the Eſtimate hath given us of the affairs of Britain. Deſpotiſm prevails almoſt univerſally. Mankind are enſlaved by tyrants. An arbitrary power rages in the world. Among the few nations, which have preſerved their liberty, Britain ſhines foremoſt in riches and fame. But according to the author of the Eſtimate, we are rolling to the brink of a precipice; Britain ſinks under the ſuperior genius of the French; the fatal hour approaches, and its liberty is in great danger of being deſtroyed by external violence. Slender are the hopes he gives us of eſcaping: the probability lies againſt us: our deliverance is only poſſible. " A deſpairing nation " (ſays he, page 221) may yet be ſaved, by the wiſdom, " the integrity, and unſhaken courage of ſome great " miniſter." I dare ſay it is true: but if Britain is as much ſunk in indolence, cowardice, and venality, as this writer apprehends, this is ſcarce poſſible. Even the great king William, who will be acknowledged to have been as able a ſtateſman as any who can aſpire to be a miniſter at preſent, notwithſtanding the wiſdom and rectitude of his ſchemes, is ſuppoſed to have been obliged, contrary (as will be confeſſed) to his natural diſpoſition, to oppoſe the national turn, by ſilencing all he could with places or penſions. The power of a miniſter at preſent (in times confeſſed to be more corrupted) can ſcarce be ſuppoſed greater but in ſo far as he has it in his power to ſilence a greater number by the ſame methods. This only cheriſhes the diſeaſe, brings us nearer to the criſis, and renders our deſtruction more certain. Our ruin therefore, according to this writer, may be called next to inevitable. But he

" or pity to the diſtreſſed;" and perhaps flatters us too much, when he adds, " That humanity is natural to the nation, " and that the nation hath always been " diſtinguiſhed, by it, and poſſeſſes it in a " higher degree than other countries *." He likewiſe allows us another virtue, which he grants to be of the higheſt conſequence " the pure adminiſtration of juſ- " tice, as it regards private property †."

gives us greater hopes of recovering our liberty, and, of conſequence, our former glory and felicity, though liberty ſhould be deſtroyed by external violence. " It " is probable (ſays he) its deſtruction will be no more " than temporary." In this iſland " liberty ſhoots up as " from its natural climate, ſtock, and ſoil." To the preſent generation this may be thought to give little comfort: to the cowardly, effeminate, and ſelfiſh it will give none: but how conſolatory is it to the generous and diſintereſted lovers of Britain, who can be happy in foreſeeing the grandeur and felicity of their country in ſucceeding ages! To ſome ſuch extenſive proſpect, or to ſome ſublime philoſophical idea, " that " the preſent deſtruction, even of the greateſt nation, " is of ſmall conſequence in the univerſe," it muſt have been owing, that the writer of the Eſtimate, amidſt his melancholy proſpects of the preſent ſtate of Britain, ſhould appear ſo calm and compoſed, as to be able to ſtudy elegance of phraſe, and ſearch after antitheſes and elaborate turns of expreſſion, that occur every where in his book.

* Eſtimate, page 20, 21. † Ibid. page 22.

Theſe are goodly materials, not only for preſerving internal peace and happineſs, but for defending us againſt external force. The ſtrength and good principles of the common people in any country, eſpecially in Britain, where they are more high ſpirited than any where elſe, ought not to be reckoned ſo deſpicable as the writer of the Eſtimate imagines *. We may reaſonably expect, that their force and weight would not be inſignificant againſt a foreign invaſion, though deliverance ſhould not ariſe from any other quarter; and that in times of extremity (according to the language of the Eſtimate) ſome leading mind or ſuperior intelligence would naturally ariſe from among themſelves to give impulſe and direction to their enterprizes in defence of their country †. If the love of liberty about a century ago rouſed them to defend their rights againſt a powerful party at home, and inſpired them with matchleſs valour, may it not be expected, that the poſterity of thoſe men, the robuſt and hardy commons of the ſame nation,

* Eſtimate, page 25. † Ibid. page 25.

not

not enervated by the luxury of the Great, but inured to labour, would, in a time of extremity, be ſtirred up to defend their country, and all that was dear to them, againſt any army that could poſſibly invade them from France.

BESIDES the natural ſtrength and courage of our commons, and the acknowledged remainders of a ſpirit of liberty, humanity, and regard to property, diffuſed through all ranks; if we compare ourſelves with our neighbours on the continent, in particular with our rivals the French, whoſe maxims and policy are ſo greatly extolled in the Eſtimate *, we have no reaſon to grant, that we are deſtitute of the means of ſelf-defence in the genius and principles of thoſe of higher rank.

WHAT cauſe have the Britiſh nobility and gentry given their countryman to imagine, they have leſs military honour and public ſpirit, than the French? A few individuals may behave ill. Both

* Eſtimate, page 141.

French

French and Britiſh officers have turned their backs; the French as often, and as diſhonourably, as the Britiſh. But what is this to either of the nations? or muſt our officers in general be therefore reckoned ſtupid or cowardly? Either of the nations may produce greater men in every profeſſion at ſome particular times: but from nothing, that has happened of late, have we juſt ground to eſtabliſh an univerſal preference in favour of the French. A Britiſh army at preſent will not be afraid to meet the French in any field with equal numbers. They will dare to fight them, though the number of the French be ſuperior. Our ſeamen of every rank are at leaſt equal to thoſe of the French, both in ſkill and courage. Our troops ſhew undoubted bravery in battle. The intrepidity of the Britiſh officers at the battle of Fontenoy has been celebrated by a foreigner *. It is allowed by the writer of

* In the Hiſtory of the War of 1741, aſcribed to Monſieur Voltaire.

This hiſtorian, beſides applauding in general the courage of the Britiſh troops, obſerves, that in time of action the officers behaved with great calmneſs and compoſure;

of the Eſtimate, that the French manners are as vain and effeminate as our own *. It is one of his maxims, that "where "effeminacy and ſelfiſh vanity form the "ruling character of a people, thoſe of "high rank and quality will, in gene-"ral, be of all others moſt vain, moſt "ſelfiſh, moſt incapable, moſt effemi-"nate †." Why, therefore, ſhould it be imagined, that French generals, admirals, or miniſters, muſt be ſuperior to Britiſh?

IT is difficult to compare the influence of religion in two ſuch nations as France and Britain, the ſpirit and the principles of it differ ſo widely in them; the religion of France leans ſo much to ſuperſtition and to external ceremony; that of Britain ſo much to the pure love of God,

compoſure; that they called to the French to fire; that the troops advanced ſlowly, as if they had been going through their exerciſes; and that the majors were ſeen laying their canes to the guns of the ſoldiers to cauſe them to level them in the proper manner. This battle was fought long within theſe twenty years, during which period, according to the author of the Eſtimate (page 117) our effeminacy and debility has been ſo much increaſed.

* Eſtimate, page 135. † Ibid. page 130, 131.

and

and to moral virtue: religion is treated ſo differently by the public in the two nations; the French are ſo much over-awed by an arbitrary court and a tyrannical clergy; the Britiſh, from the mild ſpirit of their government, and from the happy moderation of their clergy, enjoy ſo much religious freedom; that, in order to determine the force of their religious principles, it is not ſafe in this, nor, indeed, in any other caſe, to truſt ſolely to external appearances of devotion.

As to the *real* quantity of piety and of virtue, it is impoſſible to *calculate* it at any time. At one time external appearances may be very decent; there may be great gravity and ſolemnity in the looks; the outward forms of devotion may be obſerved with zeal, while religion has not taken firm poſſeſſion of the heart. That ſort of religion which flouriſhed during the reign of Charles I. when, to the great diſquiet of the nation, the influence of the court was exerted to ſupport and to impoſe modes and ceremonies in worſhip, is not much applauded by any party at preſent.

Nor do we admire that enthuſiaſm, which prevailed under the adminiſtration of Oliver Cromwel. It is common now-a-days to repreſent ſuch flaming appearances of piety as hypocritical. On the other hand, it is certain, that there may be many lively ſentiments of piety in the heart, under a leſs religious appearance: ſo that it is, perhaps, in truth, more than any man can determine, whether there is not in Britain, at preſent, as much *real piety and virtue*, as was in it at any point of time ſince the Reformation. If the impreſſions of religion ſeldom appear ſo fervent in the preſent age, they ſeem to be more univerſal, than in former periods. Mankind often mean well, even when their external appearance is not irreproachable. Though they inwardly love piety and virtue, and obſerve the more important duties of life, they comply too much with looſer modes and faſhions in things eſteemed leſs ſubſtantial. What is by ſome imputed to vanity, to luxury, and to ſelfiſh effeminacy, may often, no doubt, be attributed to a ſocial taſte, to a friendly diſpoſition, or to love of elegance impro-

perly displayed. As the appearances of piety and virtue under a graver form are sometimes hypocritical, so when the better sort of a nation are not profligate, nor abandoned to wickedness, which is confessed to be the case at present *, amidst luxury and refined sensuality there may be more solid piety and virtue, than is commonly believed.

THE writer of the Estimate hath been too hasty in his censure of lord Verulam. "Lord Verulam (says he) hath somewhere "observed, that *times of atheism are civil* "*times*. He had been much nearer "the truth had he affirmed that *civil* "*times were times of atheism*. He mis-"took the cause for the effect †." It hath escaped this writer, that lord Verulam hath made this very observation. "Learned "ages (says this great philosopher) espe-"cially, if peaceable and prosperous, are "reckoned among the causes of atheism ‡."

If

* Estimate, page 26. † Ibid. page 165.

‡ Causæ atheismi sunt: divisiones circa religionem, si plures fuerint; nam unica divisio zelum utriusque partis adauget; verum numerosæ atheismum introducunt. Alia causa sunt scandala sacerdotum; cum eo res redeat quo innuit S. Bernardus; Non est jam dicere, Ut populus, sic sacerdos; quia nec sic populus ut sacerdos. Tertia est, consuetudo profana ludendi et jocandi in rebus sanctis, quæ sensim reverentiam religionis atterit. Postremo ponuntur, secula erudita, præsertim cum pace et rebus prosperis conjuncta.

Verulam Sermones fideles, De atheismo.

If this observation is just, it may help in some measure to account for that impiety, which is complained of in the present age. For, notwithstanding the complaints made by the author of the Estimate *; notwithstanding all its defects, the present must be allowed to be a *learned* age. But be this as it will, the great lord Verulam makes another observation, which no religious doctor will deny, that "a smattering of "natural philosophy inclines men to athe-"ism, when a deeper knowledge of na-"ture brings them about to religion †." Whence we may conclude, notwithstanding the complaints of the irreligion of the times, that, since natural philosophy has

* Estimate, page 41, 42, 43, 86.

† Verum est tamen, parum philosophiæ naturalis homines inclinare in atheismum, at altiorem scientiam eos ad religionem circumagere. *Verulam Ibid.*

been of late ſo remarkably cultivated and improved in Britain, this deeper knowledge has imprinted a deep ſenſe of the Divinity upon the minds of many.

WITHOUT the imputation of bigotry, it may likewiſe be affirmed, that the proteſtant religion may be expected to have at leaſt as powerful an influence in Britain, as popery has in France, to inſpire its votaries with the love of whatever is great or good. It is ſaid, indeed, that "deſ-"potiſm arms itſelf with terror; and, by "checking the open and avowed profeſ-"ſion, checks, in a certain degree, the "progreſs of impiety †." But whatever effects deſpotiſm may have on the *profeſſion* of religion, the eſtabliſhment of freedom muſt have equal or better effects in promoting *real virtue* and *piety*. And, though "opinion having its courſe" is ſaid to be a "bad diſeaſe," it is confeſſed at the ſame time, that the cure would be fatal *. Whence it may juſtly be maintained, that, notwithſtanding the advan-

† Eſtimate, page 169. * Ibid. page 170.

tages

tages accruing to religion from the deſpotiſm of France, there may be at leaſt as much real virtue and piety, of conſequence, religious principles may laſt as long, in Britain, as in France; though the author of the Eſtimate ſeems to be of another opinion ‡.

THE clergy are, perhaps, leſs reſpected in Britain, than in France. They are, ſurely, leſs reſpected than they ought to be. Worthy clergymen are too often contemned by ſuch as are neither ſo good, nor ſo wiſe, as themſelves. Yet it can ſcarce be admitted, that this contempt is ſo general, as the author of the Eſtimate apprehends. Indeed, if the greateſt part of them reſemble thoſe politer ones, whom this author deſcribes, among whom he ſays, "it is grown a faſhionable thing to deſpiſe "the duties of their pariſh, to wander "about, as the various ſeaſons invite, to "every ſcene of falſe gaiety, to frequent "and ſhine in all public places, their own "pulpits excepted; or, if their age and

‡ Eſtimate, page 169.

" ſituation ſet them above theſe puerile " amuſements, to ſlumber in a ſtall, haunt " levees, or follow the gainful trade of " election-jobbing *;" we need not wonder, that they are contemned by both good and bad. But, it is to be hoped, there are only a few who deſerve this character. It is to be hoped, that the writer has been too ſevere upon this order, as well as on other profeſſions; and that the generality of the clergy both are, and deſerve to be, honoured and reſpected. Notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt efforts of ſceptics and of free-thinkers, it is probable the clergy will not fall into general contempt. Indeed, ſuch as are vicious, ſuch as in a free proteſtant country ſet up too high claims to authority in matters of religion, ſuch as demand too great regard merely on account of their gown and band; or ſuch as are conceited, proud, inſolent and overbearing, and allow no virtue in any man who will not blindly ſubmit to their order, may, perhaps, be deſpiſed. And, if clergy of

* Eſtimate, page 84, 85.

ſo

ſo exceptionable a character ſhould be much contemned, it is none of the worſt ſigns of an age. It is not ſurely a proof, either that the profeſſion of a clergyman is generally contemned, or that religion has loſt its influence in the world. But to proceed.

THE author of the Eſtimate will needs maintain, that, though the manners of the French are as vain, as ſelfiſh, and as effeminate, as thoſe of the Britiſh, the French have greatly the advantage of us in reſpect of national defence. And for this he offers his reaſons. But, on examination, theſe reaſons will be found weak; and ſome of them muſt ſound odly in the ears of a true Briton.

FIRST we are told, that the effeminacy of the French does not, like that of the Britiſh, affect their national capacity, becauſe " their youth are aſſiduouſly trained up for " all public offices, civil, naval, military, " in ſchools provided at the public ex- " pence, and the candidates for public

" employ go through a ſevere and labo-
" rious courſe of diſcipline *."

THAT there are ſuch ſchools in France, and that they are on a better footing than any of the ſame kind in Britain, will not, perhaps, be denied. Nor will any impartial man maintain, that the French do not diſcover a ſuperior ſkill in ſeveral branches of their police. But, though one ſhould be willing to do them juſtice, he cannot but ſee that the writer of the Eſtimate ſeems to lay a greater weight upon the inſtitution of their ſchools, than it will bear.

IN a nation where the manners are vain and effeminate, it is ſcarce to be thought that the youth of better faſhion will be obliged to go through a very ſevere and laborious courſe of diſcipline; at leaſt, that any courſe of diſcipline, through which they can be ſuppoſed to go when they are young, can prevent the bad effects of effeminate manners, with which they are ſurrounded as ſoon as they appear in the

* Eſtimate, page 135, 136.

world.

world. In fact, the extraordinary effects of this ſevere diſcipline are ſeldom to be felt by experience. The Britiſh will meet the French with equal numbers either by ſea or by land.

No doubt, a courſe of proper diſcipline, ſuch as we read of during ſome periods among ſome of the ancient nations, the Spartans, for inſtance, and the Romans, will do much to inſpire valour and patriotiſm. But it is not eaſy to entertain the ſame high opinion of a French education. A vain, luxurious, ſelfiſh, and effeminate people can ſcarce be ſuppoſed capable of directing a proper education: nor can their country be a proper ſcene for it. French education is certainly very defective. But though it were better than it is, it is not ſufficient for fitting the youth to be generals, admirals, or miniſters of ſtate. When we ſearch after proper perſons to direct public councils, or to command armies and fleets (and this is what the author of the Eſtimate is in queſt of) we will find that a French education goes but a little way. To qualify for ſuch important offices,

offices, beſides genius, honeſty, activity, there is a neceſſity for obſervation and experience in a riper age. If our countrymen behave ill, it is not becauſe in general we are worſe educated than the French: our bad behaviour ought to be imputed to cauſes which operate on the French as much as on the Britiſh.

2. IT is pleaſant to find it given as another reaſon, why the effeminacy of the French manners affects not their national capacity, that "the youth in France only "expect to riſe in ſtation, as they riſe in "knowledge and ability *." Perhaps the Britiſh youth form the ſame expectations. It is hoped they have as good reaſon to do ſo. But the French as well as the Engliſh youth will find themſelves diſappointed, when they come out into the world. The kings of France cannot, any more than thoſe of Britain, ſee every thing with their own eyes. It will be impoſſible for them to know the perſonal merit of every one they employ. They muſt truſt to their

* Eſtimate, page 136.

miniſters. If the manners of the court of France are, as they are confeſſed to be, as vain and effeminate as thoſe of the court of Britain, why ſhould not the caprice of a favourite, the affection of a miniſter for his relations and friends, the intrigues he muſt enter into to ſupport himſelf againſt the plots of his rivals, or even indolence, ſloth, and luxury, as often pervert his choice in procuring commiſſions and offices, as the like cauſes will pervert a miniſter in England? It is ſaid the power of our parliaments gives riſe to dangerous factions in Britain. But there may be, nay, in truth there are, as violent factions, as baſe and unmanly intrigues, in order to obtain the good graces of a king of France, as there can be in Britain to obtain a parliamentary intereſt, and recommendations to court favour. In fact, it will be found, that there are as fooliſh and as unworthy promotions in the one country, as in the other.

AGAIN, 3. the warlike ſpirit of the French nobility, and the principle of military honour, are ſaid to prevent the dangerous

gerous effects of their effeminate manners. "Though commerce (ſays the author of "the Eſtimate) is encouraged in France, "it is chiefly encouraged among the com- "mons: while the people are allured to "trade by every kind of motive, and al- "lowed to reap the chief profits of it, "the nobleſſe or gentry are in honour pro- "hibited from commerce *." The leading ranks in France are not ſo rich, as in England; and, being diſcouraged from trading, their poverty drives them to the profeſſion of arms as the neceſſary means of ſupport †. Hence the French are both a commerical and a warlike nation. The effeminacy of their manners is corrected, and the danger ariſing from it much prevented by the greater remainder of military genius.

IN this repreſentation there are ſome things, which cannot be conteſted. Indeed, the Britiſh reckon themſelves happy, that they cannot diſpute the truth of them. The gentlemen of France go into the army more frequently, than the gentry in England.

* Eſtimate, page 205. † Ibid. page 204.

The Engliſh are not under the ſame neceſſity as the French: the gentry and nobility are rich, and the profeſſion of a merchant is honourable among the the former. No miniſtry nor favourite of the king can make them uneaſy, tho' they live at home upon their eſtates, and neither go themſelves nor ſend any of their family to the court or to the army. The French nobleſſe are poor. It is reckoned diſhonourable for them to trade. Should they decline going to the court, or entering into the army, the court has many methods of diſtreſſing them. So they muſt fly to the army for their ſupport and protection. But this does not render a French ſuperior to a Britiſh army. Indeed, the Britiſh ought rather to be preferred, ſince its leaders are not more ſelfiſh, more vain, or more effeminate, than thoſe of the French; and the private men in the Britiſh ſervice muſt be confeſſed to be better, the commons in Britain being at leaſt equally courageous, and generally more robuſt and high-ſpirited, than thoſe of France.

THERE

THERE is another reſpect, indeed, in which the French have the advantage. Their armies are more numerous; and to this, rather than to any ſuperior bravery, their ſucceſs in the late war is to be aſcribed. In this reſpect it is not propoſed to make a compariſon. The Britiſh will yield to their rivals the honour of having ſuch great armies: they prefer the arts of peace: their Government conſults their happineſs, and does not, like the French, employ them in frequent wars without neceſſity *. The great armies in France are a heavy burden upon the people; the Britiſh, being ſurrounded by the ſea, ſtand not in need of ſuch defenders: but if at any time the Government want an army, they are able to raiſe it, and have abundance of their nobility and gentry to court military employments, and fairly to diſpute the honours of the field with any of the armies of France.

4. IF the French, therefore, are better ſecured, than the Britiſh, againſt the danger

* Eſtimate, page 205.

of

of their vain and effeminate manners, it muſt chiefly be by the deſpotic power of the king. It is this, which, according to the author of the Eſtimate, aided by the principle of military honour, ſecures the national ſpirit of union. The monarch's power gives unity and ſteadineſs to every movement of the ſtate *. In a country, where freedom is eſtabliſhed, and manners loſt through the exorbitance of wealth, the duration of religious principles can be but ſhort. Deſpotiſm arms itſelf with terror; and, by checking the open and avowed profeſſion, checks, in a certain degree, the progreſs, of impiety: whereas it muſt be acknowledged and lamented as one of the unalterable defects of a free government, that opinion muſt have its courſe †. The national ſpirit of union is naturally ſtrong in abſolute monarchies: in free countries it is naturally weak ‡. The reſtraints laid on the royal prerogative at the Revolution, and the acceſſion of liberty thus gained by the people, added to our parliaments a new dignity and power.

* Eſtimate, page 140. † Ibid. page 169, 170.
‡ Ibid. page 103.

Hence

Hence the members, ſenſible of their influence, made demands on the crown; and the conſtituents, ſenſible of their influence, made demands on their repreſentatives. Thus the loweſt cobler preſſes upon the miniſter. If the different claimants are veſted with lucrative employments, the wheels of government run ſmooth. If any large body of claimants are diſſatisfied, the political uproar begins, and public meaſures are obſtructed or overturned. Thus the grand chain of political intereſt has been formed. The origin of making parliaments is to be traced from the reign of king William III. but the art at that time was but in its infant ſtate. The ſyſtem gathered ſtrength by degrees. The grand chain of political ſelf-intereſt has been at length compleated, and a foundation laid in our principles and manners for endleſs diſſentions in the ſtate. Thus, faction is eſtabliſhed among us. But theſe miſchiefs are much prevented in France by the deſpotic power of the monarch *. In this manner does the author of the Eſtimate ſet forth the diſadvantages

* Eſtimate, page 107—123.

of

of Britiſh freedom, and the advantages of a deſpotic power in France.

Of one thing, however, ſo far as I have obſerved, he hath omitted to take notice, namely, that the exorbitant trade and wealth, which he confeſſes we poſſeſs at preſent *, are owing to the ſecurity and liberty, which the nation gained at the Revolution above what they had enjoyed in the preceding period. Though this did not occur to this writer, it is, indeed, the truth. And by adding this circumſtance to thoſe which he hath obſerved, the ſeries will ſtand connected as follows: By the Revolution we have gained ſecurity and liberty: ſecurity and liberty have produced an exorbitant trade and wealth: this wealth hath very near deſtroyed the principles of religion, honour, and public ſpirit, and hath prodigiouſly corrupted our manners. Bad manners, when there is nothing ſufficient to give check to their natural conſequences, muſt firſt enervate, and then ruin, a nation. One of theſe principal checks is the

* Eſtimate, page 209.

 deſpotic

deſpotic power of the king. This has a happy effect in France, to ſecure the nation againſt the dangers ariſing from their luxury and effeminacy. We have not this advantage in Britain. Formerly our kings had certain prerogatives, which might have been uſeful in this reſpect; but we have loſt theſe advantages ſince the Revolution, by the reſtraints which were laid on the royal prerogative at that time. Hence, there being now nothing in our conſtitution to give due check to our bad manners, their natural conſequences muſt have their full effect, and we run the greateſt riſk of going to deſtruction. This ſeems to be the ſtate of the caſe, according to the writer of the Eſtimate.

In all this I am far from accuſing this gentleman of any intention to caſt black and odious colours on the revolution, or of being unfriendly to the dignity and powers of our parliaments, and to the liberty of the people of Britain. I only take notice of the conſequences of certain principles. I do not ſuppoſe the writer was ſenſible of theſe conſequences. I can eaſily

ſee how an author, out of love to his country, and from an honeſt indignation againſt the depravity of its manners, in aſſigning the ſources of this depravity may unawares ſuffer expreſſions to drop from his pen, which may bear hard upon that very ſyſtem which himſelf eſpouſes. It is not uncommon even for doctors to write inconſiſtently, and to lay down poſitions, from which dangerous conſequences may fairly be inferred. But in general it is unfair to impute conſequences to any man which he does not acknowledge, or which are contrary to his open declarations. Such an imputation cannot but do harm both to the man who is guilty of it, and to the cauſe which he defends.

The writer of the Eſtimate applauds the ſpirit of liberty, and the ſtruggles it maintained formerly with the tyrants of the times *. He allows the rebellion in the year 1745, to have been miſchievous †. He acknowledges, that the friends of liberty are the friends of Britain ‡. He

* Eſtimate, page 18. † Ibid. p. 92. ‡ Ibid. p. 91.

confeſſes, that our conſtitution is of a ſuperior nature to that of France *. Out of affection and regard to ſuch a conſtitution, though he thinks "opinion's having a free courſe" to be a "bad diſeaſe," yet he declares againſt any attempt to cure the diſeaſe, merely becauſe it is an unalterable defect of a free government †. Though he has conceived a bad opinion of the preſent age, and formed the moſt frightful ideas of the dangers ariſing from a free government, except in ſimple and virtuous times ‡, yet he declares for a free government even in our degenerate times.

THUS, he appears a generous friend to liberty, and an enemy to deſpotiſm. At the ſame time he is greatly miſtaken concerning the dangers which he ſuppoſes to ariſe from liberty, and the bleſſed effects which he aſcribes to deſpotiſm.

OF all this gentleman's errors, this is ſurely the moſt unlucky and the moſt dangerous. He hath fallen into other miſ-

* Eſtimate, p. 218. † Ibid. p. 170. ‡ Ibid. p. 108.

takes. There are few profeſſions, perhaps, to which he hath wholly done juſtice. In general, he is too ſevere in his reproofs: but ſuch errors are more harmleſs; they may even be attended with ſome accidental benefit. If ſuch exaggerated repreſentations of vicious and effeminate manners do not drive the nation to deſpair, they may ſerve to awaken it. No benefit, indeed, can ariſe from the advantageous light in which he places French councils and generals. This rather tends to intimidate our armies in time of war. Yet probably it will do little harm, as our ſoldiers, not acknowledging the ſuperiority of this French, will not truſt to his opinion, nor be frighted by romantic diſplays of French heroiſm. But the views which he gives his countrymen, of the dangers ariſing from liberty, and of the advantages of the French deſpotiſm, not only tend to excite a diſtaſte of liberty, to reconcile the minds of the people to deſpotic power, and to beget an admiration of abſolute monarchy, but may be expected to have a bad influence, eſpecially if the nation ſhall ſuffer any conſiderable loſſes in the preſent war. It is ne-

 ceſſary,

ceſſary, therefore, to expoſe ſuch a dangerous miſtake, and to provide an antidote againſt the fatal poiſon.

IT is true, if this gentleman's aſſertions concerning the conſequences of liberty and deſpotiſm are ſound, there is no help for it, we muſt ſtand to them. But happily this is not the caſe, and this writer's ideas on this ſubject are wholly viſionary.

FOR what reaſon ſhould it be thought, that, except in virtuous times, the power and dignity of parliaments, and the liberty of the people, muſt be ſo dangerous, and that deſpotic power in the prince muſt be ſo uſeful, to prevent the bad conſequences of effeminate manners, ſince this effeminacy has at leaſt as great influence on the prince and his power, as on any thing elſe? Effeminacy muſt principally affect thoſe in higher life. It eſpecially infects the court and the officers of the army. The prince cannot ſee every thing with his own eyes: he cannot govern entirely by himſelf: he muſt be informed by his courtiers: his meaſures muſt be much directed by his miniſters. The

The manners of theſe gentlemen, it is confeſſed, are vain, ſelfiſh, and effeminate. This muſt corrupt their ſchemes and adminiſtration? The power of the king, be it ever ſo great, muſt be employed to ſupport and execute the effeminate and ſelfiſh ſchemes of an effeminate and ſelfiſh miniſtry. Why, therefore, ſhould the king's *deſpotic* power give ſo great ſecurity againſt the bad conſequences of ſelfiſh and effeminate manners? Inſtead of giving check to the evil, a deſpotic power tends much rather to prevent all hopes or poſſibility of a remedy to ſuch a dangerous malady.

IN the conſtitution of France there are not any effectual reſources in a ſtate of corruption. The king's deſpotic power cruſhes all who oppoſe the fooliſh and pernicious projects of his corrupted miniſters. The Britiſh conſtitution has a manifeſt advantage in this reſpect. Corruption may creep in among the people; it may gather ſtrength by degrees. Times of inward peace, opulence, and ſecurity, ſuch as we have enjoyed ſince the Revolution, may unfortunately carry this corruption to a great

heighth. The love of money is the root of all evil *. Too high a value for life, and too ſmall a ſenſe of honour, are equally baſe and dangerous. It muſt be confeſſed, all the three prevail too much at preſent. Corruption, no doubt, may riſe ſo high, as to overpower whatever would reſiſt it. Thus, no nation, no conſtitution is abſolutely ſecure; but, if there are effectual remedies in any conſtitution againſt deſtruction, they are to be found in the Britiſh. In France there is nothing that can make head againſt the wicked intentions, deſtructive negligence, or fatal ſtupidity of a wicked and effeminate court. But in Britain the voice of the middle ranks among the people has a mighty influence. Theſe are always the laſt to be corrupted. In their integrity and activity there is a grand reſource. When thoſe in higher life are ſunk in depravity and effeminacy, if there is any genius or honeſty left in the nation, and ſcarce can any civilized people be ſuppoſed wholly deſtitute of either of them, the cry and influence of this part of the

* 1 Timothy, vi. 10.

people will often be able to find them out, and bring them into play. Our conſtitution, therefore, having ſuch a high mixture of freedom, is better fitted, than the deſpotiſm of France, to preſerve us from deſtruction.

BUT, God be thanked! there is no neceſſity to have recourſe to extraordinary remedies. Our moſt gracious ſovereign, who is ſo juſtly beloved by his people, with the aſſiſtance of the legiſlature, is fully able to ſupport the nation againſt the power of France. The brave and virtuous part of the people ought not to loſe their courage, or to deſpair of the cauſe of their country.

THE nation (ſays the author of the Eſtimate) "ſtands aghaſt at its own misfor-"tunes; but, like a man ſtarting ſud-"denly from ſleep by the noiſe of ſome "approaching ruin, knows neither whence "it comes, nor how to avoid it *." Here we have a lively image; the ſimile is fine; nothing is wanting but ſolidity. One

* Eſtimate, page 149, 150.

would think the French had not only made themſelves maſters of the plains of America, but had beat us on the plains of Saliſbury, and were marching faſt to London to pillage a defenceleſs capital *. But, in place of ſuch remarkable defeats, hitherto, if the advantage is not on our ſide, the loſſes are pretty equally balanced betwixt the two nations †, that of Minorca alone excepted. By the loſs of this important iſland, the conqueſt of our forefathers ſince the Revolution, we have not

* The author of the Eſtimate ſeems apprehenſive of ſome ſuch event. He ought not to be blamed. Would to God, every Briton was awakened out of ſecurity, and believed a French invaſion and the rout of an army events that are far from being impoſſible; and from a ſenſe of this would ſubmit to every meaſure proper to prevent the danger. Then ſhould we be as ſafe againſt all foreign invaſions, as we are now from internal commotions.

† If it be true, as ſeems very probable, that we have greatly hurt the French trade; that the inſurance upon French ſhips is very high; that the French finances are much incumbered; and that the French government cannot borrow money for double of the intereſt, at which our Government may have it in Britain; the advantage, perhaps, will be found on our ſide, notwithſtanding the loſs of Minorca, and of ſome of our forts and back ſettlements in America.

only

only loſt an uſeful ſtation for our ſhips, but, which is of greater moment, have ſuffered in our national honour. Yet there is no reaſon why we ſhould deſpond, or apprehend univerſal ruin. Excepting the caſe of Minorca, we have been rather *diſappointed* in our expectations of ſucceſs againſt the enemy, than met with any conſiderable defeat or actual calamity.

In religion, when a ſinner deſpairs of mercy, his condition is deſperate: while he ſinks under the weight of his ſins, he is incapable of repentance. There is a reſemblance in the condition of a whole people. To aggravate national calamities, national vices, or national weakneſſes, does not become a patriot. It is nobler far, and more uſeful, for the people of Britain to imitate the firmneſs and magnanimity of the Roman ſtate. After the entire deſtruction of their army at the battle of Cannæ (a misfortune ſo great, that nothing but the total rout of a Britiſh by a French army near the metropolis of the iſland could be compared to it) this magnanimous people thanked their conſul, that he had not deſpaired of

the

the common-wealth *. To promote ſuch a courageous ſpirit, to prevent a baleful deſpondency,

* Nec tamen hæ clades defectioneſque ſociorum moverunt, ut pacis unquam mentio apud Romanos fieret; neque ante conſulis Romam adventum, nec poſtquam is rediit, renovavitque memoriam acceptæ cladis. Quo in tempore ipſo adeo magno animo civitas fuit, ut conſuli, ex tanta clade, cujus ipſe cauſa maxima fuiſſet, redeunti, et obviam itum frequenter ab omnibus ordinibus ſit, et gratiæ actæ quod de republica non deſperaſſet. *Tit. Liv. Lib.* xxii. *Sect.* 61.

There were ſome, however, among that courageous people, who, ſtruck with the greatneſs of the calamity, and deſpairing of being able to defend their country againſt the ſuperior genius of Hannibal and the Carthaginians, were deliberating about the abandoning Italy, and about ſheltering themſelves ingloriouſly in the territories of ſome of the neighbouring monarchs: preferring a mean, ſlaviſh, and precarious life, under a tyrant, to freedom, or a glorious death, in defence of their country. But the brave Scipio ſoon put an end to ſuch cowardly reſolutions. The account is from Livy, and deſerves to be read in the beautiful original.

Quibus conſultantibus inter paucos de ſumma rerum nunciat P. Furius Philus conſularis viri filius; "Nequicquam eos perditam ſpem fovere: deſperatam "comploratamque rem eſſe publicam. Nobiles juvenes quoſdam, quorum principem L. Cæcilium Metellum, mare et naves ſpectare, ut, deſerta Italia, ad "regum aliquem transfugerent." Quod malum, præterquam atrox, ſuper tot clades etiam novum, quum ſtupore et miraculo torpidos defixiſſet, et, qui aderant concilium advocandum cenſerent; negat concilii rem eſſe Scipio juvenis, fatalis dux hujuſce belli. "Audendum

deſpondency, and not to juſtify any ill-concerted puſillanimous meaſures or conduct, hath the writer of the Characteriſtics taken upon him to offer ſome reflections on the ſtate of the Public.

AT the ſame time he will be far from either deluding or ſeducing the people, and "ſaying Peace, peace, when there is "no peace *. As with lies he will not "make the heart of the righteous ſad, "whom God hath not made ſad, ſo neither will he ſtrengthen the hands of the "wicked, that he ſhould not return from

"dum atque agendum non conſultandum, ait, in tanto malo eſſe. Irent ſecum extemplo armati, qui rempublicam ſalvam vellent. Nullo verius, quam ubi ea cogitentur, hoſtium caſtra eſſe." Pergit ire, ſequentibus paucis, in hoſpitium Metelli. Et quum concilium ibi juvenum, de quibus allatum erat, inveniſſet, ſtricto ſuper capita conſultantium gladio, "Ex mei animi ſententia," inquit, "ut ego rempublicam populi Romani "non deſeram, neque alium civem Romanum deſerere "patiar. Si ſciens fallo, tum me, Jupiter Optime "Maxime, domum, familiam, remque meam peſſimo "leto aſpicias! In hæc verba, L. Cæcili, jures, poſtulo, cæterique, qui adeſtis: qui non juraverit, in "ſe hunc gladium ſtrictum eſſe ſciat." Haud ſecus pavidi, quam ſi victorem Hannibalem cernerent, jurant omnes: cuſtodiendoſque ſemetipſos Scipioni tradunt.
Tit. Liv. Lib. xxii. *Sect.* 53.

* Ezekiel, xiii. 10.

"his

" his wicked way, by promiſing him life †."
God knows, there is enough of irreligion, luxury, vanity, ſelfiſh effeminacy, ſtupidity, and cowardice, to awaken the concern of every true patriot, and to ſhew the neceſſity of correcting our errors. Thoſe of higher rank in life eſpecially, ought to exert themſelves to recover their own honour and the honour of the nation. From the Eſtimate, which has gone through ſo many editions, and from other writings, they may learn, how multitudes are diſpoſed to think of their conduct. Would they retrieve their character, would they regain the good opinion of their country, they muſt make a vigorous uſe of the riches and ſtrength of the nation. The time is not too late. Though engaged in a war againſt a powerful enemy, we have many reſources. Great as the power of France muſt be acknowledged to be, it muſt be much greater than it is; effeminate as we are repreſented, we muſt be much more effeminate than we are, before the French can expect to conquer this iſland. The

† Ezekiel, xiii. 22.

Britiſh

Britiſh ought not to deſpiſe their enemy. Yet when we conſider our ſituation, in an iſland, the greatneſs of our naval power, that our enemies dare hardly ever meet us in open ſea, can only infeſt our trade by privateering, and are obliged to ſteal their ſhips of war out of their harbours at ſuch times as they may hope to eſcape our ſuperior ſquadrons: when we conſider that our iſland affords us all the neceſſaries of life in great abundance; that by domeſtic induſtry and foreign commerce we have acquired money, that is, the ſinews of war, and are poſſeſſed of plenty of arms and all kinds of military and naval ſtores; that we are upon a reſpectable footing in the Eaſt Indies, and that our colonies in America are far ſuperior to thoſe of the French in wealth and numbers of people: when we conſider that there are more than two millions of men in Britain as robuſt and high-ſpirited as any in Europe; that Britiſh ſeamen in general are at leaſt equal, if not ſuperior, to the French; that a body of commanders can be drawn out of our nobility and gentry not more effeminate than their rivals, equal to them in honour,

public

public ſpirit, and valour: in fine, when it is conſidered, that, whatever ſmaller diviſions there are among us, we will unite againſt the French, under a King of known juſtice and courage, beloved by his people, ready to gratify their deſires, and to comply with the propoſals made him by his parliament; ſo many advantages, in a naval war, create a juſt confidence, that, notwithſtanding ſome diſappointments to our juſt expectations at the beginning of the war, the ſuperiority will at laſt be found to be greatly on our ſide.

To all the advantages already mentioned, I ſhall add another, which is of the greateſt conſequence; and with it I ſhall conclude all that I intended. The French are all ſubjected to the deſpotic, uncontroulable power of an arbitrary monarch. The Britiſh are free under the protection of law. Inſtead of looking on deſpotiſm as an advantage to the French, or on freedom as a diſadvantage to the Britiſh, the Britiſh ought to account their liberty as a mighty advantage on their ſide both in peace and in war.

I SHALL not enlarge on the ſuperior influence of freedom in promoting arts and ſciences, in advancing learning and philoſophy, and in encouraging commerce and agriculture. This has been ſo well and ſo often explained, that it is now generally confeſſed by all ſorts of writers. I ſhall only take notice in general, that, if we conſider the *nature* and *internal conſtitution* of free governments, and compare them with deſpotic monarchies, it will appear, that free ſtates are the only proper nurſeries of arts and ſciences, and that it is ſcarce poſſible they could have ariſen under deſpotic monarchies *. And, if we conſult *experience* and the hiſtory of the world, we ſhall find, that the arts *actually* aroſe under free governments; and that, though they have been tranſplanted into abſolute monarchies, and have flouriſhed in a certain degree under them, both arts and commerce have flouriſhed moſt and longeſt in free nations.

* See Mr. Hume's Eſſay on the Riſe and Progreſs of Arts and Sciences.

IT is more material, in the preſent queſtion, to conſider the influence of freedom in times of war, and to examine the chances of a free government againſt an abſolute monarchy. To make the compariſon juſt, we muſt not oppoſe a free government of the beſt kind to an abſolute monarchy of the worſt, or a deſpotic monarchy of the beſt form to the worſt kind of republics; but muſt ſuppoſe each of them to be the beſt of its kind, or rather to be as good as hath exiſted, or can reaſonably be ſuppoſed to exiſt, in the world, and to be as well governed, and as much free from corruption, as ſuch a government commonly is. Without this precaution we cannot make a proper compariſon.

IN all political queſtions it will be difficult to lay down general rules which will hold at all times. In all events, and in all human affairs, there is ſo great a diſſimilarity, that few caſes are exactly alike. Much will ever depend upon particular circumſtances. At certain times, either a free or a deſpotic government may ſuddenly ſubdue and ſwallow up the other. At certain

tain times, a free government may be weak through faction and luxury, while an abſolute monarchy is ſtrong by the force and wiſdom of ſome of its inſtitutions, or by the happy genius of its prince or grand vizir.

BUT, abſtracting from theſe particular circumſtances, it is eſſential to the idea of every free government, that the power be not wholly veſted in one man, but be diſtributed among different individuals and different bodies of men; by which means each man's condition approaching much nearer to an equality with that of his neighbours, than can be ſuppoſed under an abſolute monarchy, and no man being wholly contemptible, ſuch a government may well be called a government, not of men, but of laws. Under ſuch a conſtitution there neither is, nor indeed can be, ſuch oppreſſion or arbitrary procedure, as under a deſpotic monarchy. Every man is not only ſafer *, but may ſee that his life, his perſonal

* It is ſurprizing it ſhould be aſſerted, that a ſubject in France is as ſafe as a ſubject in Britain. "Private

"property

perſonal liberty, and his property are more ſecure, than under a deſpotic monarchy. Hence it will not only be natural for him to feel a greater boldneſs and firmneſs of mind, but he has reaſon to conceive, that he has a greater intereſt in the government, than any man can have under an abſolute monarchy. He has ſtronger motives to love, ſupport, and fight for his country. The attachments to the family, the perſon, or the glory of the prince cannot be ſo powerful under an abſolute mon-

"property ſeems to me (ſays an ingenious author in "his Eſſay of Liberty and Deſpotiſm) fully as ſecure "in a civilized European monarchy, as in a republic. "Nor is any danger apprehended in ſuch a government "from the violence of the ſovereign, no more than we "commonly apprehend danger from thunder or earth-"quakes, or any accident the moſt unuſual and extra-"ordinary." What may be apprehended, I will not pretend to ſay. Mens ſafety does not depend upon what they may apprehend, but on the real nature of their condition. One may be in great danger, when he does not apprehend it. Whether one is in ſafety, muſt be determined not from what does, but from what may, happen. A ſubject in France may be merry and jovial; but he has not an equal ſecurity with a ſubject of Britain, of not being thrown into priſon never more to be heard of. Though few are ſtruck dead with thunder, yet no man on earth is as ſafe from thunder as if he were above the clouds.

archy,

archy, as the amor patriæ under a free conſtitution. Therefore the ſubjects of a free government (cæteris paribus) muſt be more vigorous and more valiant, than thoſe of an abſolute prince.

AGAIN, in a free government, little depends on the character and genius either of any one man, or of a few men. Its wiſe inſtitutions, cuſtoms, and laws muſt be ſuppoſed more ſteady and durable, and conſequently more able to form the people to virtue: whereas, under an abſolute monarchy much will always depend on the genius and abilities of the prince, and of a few of his favourites. A prince, endowed with a mighty genius, may ariſe; one, who may be greatly ambitious of true glory, and may be both willing and able to promote the happineſs and grandeur of his people. But, if ſuch a monarch had a predeceſſor of a different character, or if he is ſucceeded by a weak or vicious prince, ſo much muſt be done during a ſingle life, that there will not be ſufficient time for training up his ſubjects to ſo high a degree of virtue, as may be done eaſily

where the inſtitutions are more durable, and where the laws have a more uninterrupted influence. In the common courſe of human affairs, a ſucceſſion of two or three great men is rarely to be ſeen in any one family. Hardly can it be expected, that a royal education, in an abſolute monarchy, ſhould give a better chance to the families of princes.

IF it be ſaid, that abſolute monarchs have an advantage over republics, becauſe they can keep their counſels more ſecret; this will be found more ſpecious than ſolid. Either theſe occaſions are very rare, in which an abſolute ſecrecy is neceſſary for the public ſafety; or, if they occur more frequently, free governments are not incapable of all that ſecrecy which is needful. A limited royal authority, with certain diſcretionary powers and prerogatives in the prince, is not inconſiſtent with the higheſt freedom. The king may concert the moſt important deſigns with one man or with a few. The generals of republics may have as great powers as thoſe of abſolute monarchs. There is an advantage,

advantage, no doubt, in many caſes, in a certain degree of ſecrecy and caution. However, the wiſeſt and beſt counſels are thoſe which need leaſt to be concealed; and thoſe, who either affect, or need to affect, a myſterious air of ſecrecy, are certainly the weakeſt politicians.

THOUGH it is a common objection to free governments, that they are liable to factions, yet in matters of the greateſt importance they are upon the whole more ſteady than abſolute monarchies.

UNDER free governments different parties may prevail at different times. One miniſtry may come in place of another. Plans of leſs conſequence may be altered. Contrary meaſures may be purſued. But, where the chief intereſts of a nation, or its immediate ſafety, are at ſtake, it will be difficult to conceal this from a free people, or to render them indifferent about their moſt important concerns. What tends either to the immediate ruin of a people on the one hand, or, on the other, to render them ſecure, is not ſo difficult to be

underſtood, that a great number in a free nation ſhould not be capable of diſcerning it, and of pointing it out to their fellow-citizens. In a free country, thoſe who govern, be they many or be they few, muſt have a regard to the ſenſe of the people, and keep their more important intereſts more ſteadily in view, than under a government where the voice of the people is leſs ſignificant.

INSTEAD, therefore, of concluding, that the counſels of an abſolute monarchy muſt be ſteady, we may conclude, on the contrary, that, where ſo much depends on the ſingle opinion or caprice of an arbitrary monarch, or of his prime miniſter, ſtability of conduct, even in things of the greateſt importance, can hardly be expected. The counſels in ſuch a government muſt be fluctuating in their own nature; for abſolute governments are liable to ſudden changes and violent convulſions. Under free ones, the wiſdom, virtue, or activity of one man or party may correct the folly, wickedneſs, or indolence of another; an advantage, of which an abſolute monarchy is deprived. A wiſe

wiſe and an able prince of an active and enterprizing temper may ſometimes accompliſh mighty deſigns, within his own dominions, of which he is entirely the maſter. He may ſometimes give law to his weaker neighbours. A weak and inactive prince, who ſucceeds, may, if he chances to have an able miniſter, follow the plan that has been laid down by the greater genius of his predeceſſor. But, on the whole, the counſels of a deſpotic monarchy may be expected to be unſtable and uncertain.

IF France be cited as an inſtance of the contrary; if it be alledged, that this monarchy has purſued a ſteady plan for aggrandizing the nation, ever ſince the beginning of the reign of Lewis XIV. if not from that of Henry IV. the anſwer is eaſy. It is ſuggeſted by Mr. Hume *: "If the "world is ſtill too young to fix many ge-"neral ſtable truths in politics, which will "remain true to the lateſt poſterity; if we "have not as yet had the experience of above

* Eſſay of Liberty and Deſpotiſm.

"three

" three thouſand years; if we want ſuf-
" ficient materials upon which we can
" reaſon in the ſcience of politics; if it
" is not fully known what degrees of re-
" finement, either in virtue or in vice,
" human nature is ſuſceptible of, nor what
" may be expected of mankind from any
" great revolution in their education, cuſ-
" toms, or principles;" much leſs can we form any certain concluſions from the appearances of the French monarchy during only an hundred years.

How ſoon was an end put to all the grand deſigns of Henry IV! A fatal proof how little an abſolute monarchy can be depended upon.

NOTWITHSTANDING the political adminiſtration of cardinal Richelieu, the reign of Lewis XIII. furniſhes us with little that was truly great.

IT may be doubted, whether Lewis XIV. notwithſtanding all his inſtitutions for encouraging commerce, notwithſtanding his great ſucceſs in war during forty years, did

did not leave France poorer and weaker, than he found it when he entered on the adminiſtration of the government. According to monſieur de Voltaire, who rather writes a panegyric than a hiſtory of this prince, before the peace of Utrecht France was drained of men and money. Some parts of it were ravaged by an hoſtile army. Verſailles was alarmed as well as the reſt of the kingdom. It was debated at court, whether the king ſhould retire to Chambort. In ſhort, this hiſtorian confeſſes, that the latter part of the reign of Lewis XIV. was diſtinguiſhed by calamities *, and that at his death he left debts amounting to 180 millions ſterling †. So dearly did the French pay for the ambition of this their boaſted monarch, and for the victories gained by him during the firſt part of his reign.

FRANCE has flouriſhed more under his ſucceſſor, though his genius is not thought ſo brilliant as that of Lewis XIV. But how ſoon may a king in France of a dif-

* Le Siecle de Louis XIV. Tom. i. chap. 22.
† Ibid. Tom. ii. chap. 28.

ferent

ferent character from that of Lewis XIV. or of Lewis XV. or a prime miniſter the reverſe of Colbert or Fleury, alter the whole face of the French monarchy, and render it as inſignificant, as it has lately appeared important, in the ſcale of nations. France narrowly eſcaped being diſmembered in the reign of queen Anne. The preſent diſſentions between its parliaments and the clergy, for the moſt deſpotic governments cannot prevent parties, may be followed by extraordinary conſequences, and excite civil diſſentions, which no deſpotic monarch can pacify. The grandeur of the French monarchy can as little be aſcertained, as that of other monarchies, which have flouriſhed during a reign or two, and have afterwards ſunk into feebleneſs and contempt. No nation can be aſſured of eternal empire. All our conjectures concerning ſuch ſubjects muſt be extremely uncertain. But if we will examine probabilities, Britain, whether we conſider its government or its ſituation, bids fairer, than any other, for duration.

IF we conſult the hiſtory of the world, the power and firmneſs of free governments,

ments, and the weakneſs of deſpotic monarchies, will appear more manifeſt. The free ſtates of Greece overthrew the huge armies of Xerxes, and preſerved their greatneſs againſt all the power of the Perſian monarchs. Thoſe deſpotic princes, who were maſters of ſuch extenſive dominions, and commanded ſo many millions of people, did not think themſelves ſafe from the power of the Greeks as long as they purſued one common intereſt. It was, therefore, the policy of the Perſian monarchs, by the force of money and by intrigues, to excite quarrels, and to ſow jealouſies among the Grecian ſtates, that they might not unite to attack the Perſian empire. In this disjointed condition, Philip of Macedon gained ſome advantages over the Greeks, and broke their ſtrength in ſome degree. But this Philip of Macedon was not an abſolute monarch. The Macedonians were conſidered as *free* men. Their condition was certainly very different from that of the Perſians and the other Aſiatics, who lived under deſpotic monarchs. Beſides, Philip never pretended to an abſolute conqueſt of the Greek ſtates. He rather affected

affected to be their protector, and their general againſt the Perſians, than their king. He did not weaken them ſo fully, as not to be deſpiſed by the Lacedemonians in the midſt of his glory *. His ſon, Alexander, was a great conqueror: but, as he was not a deſpotic monarch, ſo he fought not againſt free nations, but againſt deſpotic monarchs and their ſlaves. The ſingle city of Tyre, famous for its trade and riches, and ſituated in an iſland, made a braver defence, and reduced him to greater perplexities, than all the reſt of the Perſian empire: ſo difficult is it for the greateſt monarchs, who ſubdue abſolute monarchies with eaſe, to conquer a maritime power, ſituated in an iſland. The Roman republic ſubdued all the abſolute monarchies with which it was ſurrounded. Never was it brought into any real danger, but by the free ſtate of Carthage. It was not conquered at laſt by any of the neighbouring kings, but by

* When he had called all the ſtates of Greece to ſend deputies to Corinth, the Lacedemonians deſpiſed his meſſage. Lacedæmonii et legem et regem contempſerunt. JUSTIN, lib. IX. cap. 5.

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one of its own citizens. While it preſerved its freedom, the fierceſt and moſt numerous armies of barbarians, from the northern regions of Europe, could make no impreſſion on its dominions: but, being reduced to a deſpotic monarchy, this huge empire fell a prey to the poſterity of thoſe barbarians. In modern times, the free ſtates in Switzerland have preſerved their country and their conſtitution, in ſpite of all the abſolute monarchs of Europe. About 200 years ago, a few provinces of the Spaniſh monarchy, being driven to it by oppreſſion, formed themſelves into a common-wealth, and, during a long war, withſtood the whole power of Spain. In a later period, they bravely defended themſelves againſt Lewis XIV. and baffled all his attempts in the midſt of his glory. Abſolute monarchs have often ſubdued one another. The Tartarian Tamerlane, the deſpotic lords of the Saracens and of the Turks, have overrun great tracts of the earth, and have deſtroyed feebler deſpotic monarchies, corrupted with vice and luxury. But examples of free ſtates falling before abſolute monarchies are very rare. Were the

French

French remarkably leſs corrupted than the Britiſh, Britain would have more to fear. But when it is acknowledged, that the manners of the French are as vain and as effeminate, as thoſe of the Britiſh, it is not the deſpotiſm of France, and the freedom of the Britiſh Government, that will give the French the advantage. In truth, if we may be allowed to form conjectures about the times or the ſeaſons, and about thoſe grand events, which the great Father of the world hath put only in his own power, it is not Britain, that ought to tremble for fear of France; but France, that ought to dread the bravery and the naval ſtrength of the free Britons, if their juſt indignation ſhould be rouſed to ſtrike home and avenge the wrongs of their country. God forbid, that ſo great, ſo free, ſo happy a nation, as Britain, ſhould be ſo impious and ſo ungrateful towards God, or ſo unjuſt to themſelves and their poſterity, as not to be of good courage, and to behave themſelves valiantly for their people and the cities of their God *.

* 1 Chronicles, xix. 13.

FINIS.