

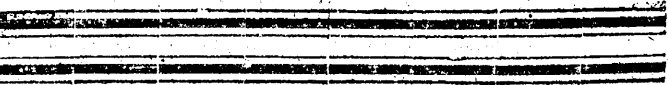
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A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E L A T E
M E R C A N T I L E D I S T R E S S E S,
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W I T H A F E W
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That now prevail amongst the greatest Part of the
I N H A B I T A N T S
O F T H E
W H O L E I S L A N D;
I N A L E T T E R T O T H E E A R L O F —

L O N D O N:
Printed for T. EVANS, at No. 54, Paternoster-Row.



A
L E T T E R
T O T H E
E A R L of -----.

My L O R D,

I Am fully satisfied your motive for going into any enquiry after the concerns of Society, is with a view to promote its welfare: and that your system of Ethics is not merely a set of ideas floating in the imagination, but a heart touched with good-will to men: happy should I be to give you any information that may lead to the advancement of your favourite object; the good of mankind. There are many reasons to believe, that the late mercantile distresses that have made so much noise, have not entirely arisen from the conduct of any one,

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two or three individuals: indeed the failure of a few considerable persons amongst that important body of men, may have been the cause of producing the disorders that hitherto have appeared; but the present critical situation of the trading part of this nation, must have originated from more general causes than the insolvency of a few houses of business (however capital in their professions) could possibly occasion: earnestly do I wish to find myself mistaken in the symptoms that already indicate to my poor apprehension the appearance of a great degree of distress, to a very large proportion of the English Manufacturers and Traders: and if upon a very close examination, there should be found in the situation of the affairs of this country, some general causes, which, in their very nature, must produce difficulties to the trading part of it; the consequences might so plainly appear as to induce those

[3]

those it concerns to attend to the welfare of their country, before the evils that might so justly be apprehended break loose, and spread too wide for a remedy.

I would be careful not to speak of grievances which did not exist, or to trouble your Lordship with the apprehension of evils that were groundless to expect. But if it be true, that the whole of this island is to be considered as a commercial country, and can only flourish while trade is prosperous, every man that feels himself attached to the Land of his nativity, cannot totally divest himself of his fears for the general welfare of his country, when he sees difficulties and distress falling upon the industrious Manufacturer and the frugal Trader in almost every part of the kingdom: this being at present more generally the case in Scotland, than it *already appears* to

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be in England, I shall confine what I have the honour to write to your Lordship on this occasion, to that Country.

It is not many years since Trade, in its progress through the World, first entered Scotland in any general degree, and of course the Inhabitants were in the same situation as those of every other country, where the various branches of commerce are in their infancy: property is but in few hands; and those that betake themselves to Manufactures and Trade, must, of consequence, be greatly indebted to the assistance of Credit. England was favoured with very singular advantages in the first planting of many of her most valuable Manufactures: the persecutions on the Continent sent her over a multitude of hands, not only experienced in the Trade they professed, but many of them with property sufficient to pursue it with advantage. The
Manu-

Manufacturers of Scotland had no such favourable circumstance to give strength to their first commencement: they had not only their Artists to instruct, but to support their industry with the means of success; and some of the Public Banks were instituted with the design of encouraging the increase of these most useful orders of men in society; and sums of money were lent by the Banks to all degrees of Manufacturers and Traders; and probably there are few Countries where the establishment of both hath become more general within the same space of time.

The increase of the trading people gave rise to private Banks in many parts of the country, who from motives of profit administered aid to the labours of the industrious; and by these means within the space of a few years, Manufactures were to be seen in a very
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general degree through most parts of the country, and from all states of maturity from the bud to the fruit.

The moderate price of all the necessaries of life, and the frugality of the inhabitants, made several Branches of Manufactures attended with tolerable success; and the conveniency of the good sea-ports, with which Scotland abounds, opened an easy passage to every market where the articles of British Manufacture were saleable; and the share which the inhabitants of this part of the kingdom had in the conquests of the late war, gave them a just title to partake of all the branches of commerce that followed the national victories; and the valuable returns that were then, and still continue to be brought to Scotland, make no inconsiderable part of the annual imports into the whole island.

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The success which the Providence of the Almighty favoured us with, in the late war, extended our general commerce so far beyond its usual degree, that the Capitals of the most wealthy parts of the Kingdom became disproportioned to the amount of their dealings, and the deficiency was supplied by the established Credit of our Bills of Exchange, both foreign and domestic; foreign, betwixt London and the other trading Cities in Europe; domestic, betwixt the trading Towns in Britain and the Capital: not only the Merchants in this and several other Countries raised large sums upon the Credit of their Bills of Exchange, but even the Contractors of Supplies for the Armies, and the Financiers of Princes, anticipated their real Funds by the Circulation of Bills of Exchange. The great number of considerable Merchants in Amsterdam, Hamburg, and some other of the chief tra-

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ing Cities, that failed at the end of the late war, was occasioned by the accumulated burthen of their Circulation; concurring with the quantities of base Coin, forced into their hands, from the feat of the war, in payment for their Merchandize. This affords a proof that no part of Britain was either the first, or the deepest engaged in this visionary method of raising money, by circulating Bills of Exchange, without any existing cause in real business for the negotiating of such bills; a practice which appears by its consequences, to be ever attended with such an expence from the addition of Commission to the Interest of Money, and also of such a risque from the common accidents to which people in trade are exposed, that one may venture to pronounce upon the experience of the times that are past, that the advantages of none of the branches of trade commonly known amongst us, are *equal* to
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the expence and hazard of raising money to support them by this means, and therefore must in the end, prove injurious to the Interest, if not ruinous to the Credit of whoever may be led either by necessity or the hopes of success, to use it as an expedient to furnish a Capital, for any of the ordinary operations in Trade. This may make it a matter of surprize, how so many men of experience in business, became so deeply engaged in a practice that concluded so much against their interest? I would now recal your attention to the situation of this Country in the late war, when it partook of the general increase of commerce that spread over the whole island: with the trade of the country the business of all the Banking Companies became greatly extended; some of the private Banks were raised into a state of rivalship with the public Banks, and the Notes of both being as current as Money,
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it afforded opportunities for the Managers of one Bank, running upon those of another, for large sums of Specie in payment of the Notes they had collected, for the purpose of obliging their rivals to contract the extent of their Notes that issued from them as the currency of the country: measures of this nature made it necessary for the Banks, to avail themselves of an optional clause in their Notes, either to pay them on demand, or to accept them, payable with interest, at the end of six months, from the day they were presented for payment: the numberless inconveniencies this occasioned, was productive of an Act of Parliament to prevent the ill effects the public had felt, from the too frequent use of this optional clause.

When this Act took place, it let loose the Holders of the Notes to make immediate demands of Money from the
Banks,

[11]

Banks, and the more the Notes of any of the Banks ingrossed of the currency of the country, the greater hazard they run of having sudden demands made upon them, this obliged them to keep in the hands of their Cashiers, large sums of Specie to guard their Credit; but to prevent their being exposed to danger, the Banks in general began to call in the sums they had lent to the people in trade, not many of whom were yet arrived at that degree of independency in their circumstances, as to enable them to repay the money without contracting their business; in many branches of the Manufactures, a certain sum of money is sunk from the first commencement, in the Building and Implements necessary for carrying it on; the rest of the capital is employed in the Article to be manufactured, and trusted out into the hands of the purchasers of the goods when finished, and custom has so generally fixed the time of payment betwixt the
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[12]

Manufacturer and Merchant, in every article, that it becomes a necessary part of the capital required by every trader, in proportion to the extent of his dealings: the Manufacturies of this country had too lately originated from the money lent them from the Banks, to enable them to repay it out of their profits; of course it could only be done out of the sum employed in the materials they manufactured; this at once disproportioned their business to the value sunk in the accommodations it required, as well as to the number of hands engaged for carrying it on, many of whom could not be discharged, being apprentices or persons hired for a term of years.

In the same situation with the Manufacturers are many persons in the Mercantile Branches, who had gone into them with the money commonly lent by the Banks upon Bond-security; and when the Banks began to call in the sums they had

[13]

lent, from that time were a number of Manufacturers and Traders reduced to the alternative of either contracting their different branches to such a degree, as would lay them under great disadvantages, or find some means of providing a sum sufficient to replace that which they were obliged to repay to the Banks.

In a country where Manufacturies and Trade prevail, more or less, almost in every Village and Town in it, there must be a great number of people whose property is equal to the extent of the business they are engaged in, or who are at least independent of such demands upon them, as may prove to any material degree hurtful to their interest, this is made more generally the case, by a wise custom that prevails almost over all Scotland, but to the greatest degree in the city of Glasgow.

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When a branch of trade appears to be beneficial, it is rarely attempted by a single person; a number of people in various ways of business join together and each pay in their share of the stock it requires, and the person they think fit to conduct it, does it under the inspection of the rest: if it proves unsuccessful, and they agree to decline it, upon the conclusion of the business each submits to his proportion of the loss, which rarely happens to be such, as to prove any interruption to the other branches in which any of them may be concerned with better success: for whatever share may belong to each partner, the capitals of those companies are almost always effective, and proportioned to the business they intend to carry on: this excellent custom has many other good effects; the designs of one man is by this means known to many, which not only checks the many hazardous enterprizes that the sanguine

[15]

sanguine hopes of individuals in every country, are found to lead them into, but it gives every separate undertaking the advantage of the experience of many men: a practice like this must ever give security to a trading country, and I have heard of none where it so generally prevails as in this.

But to return to that proportion of the Manufacturers and Merchants of this country that are most involved in the present distress: in common with the whole kingdom they had, with the increase of their success, gradually extended their dealings, and at the conclusion of the late war a great amount of their property was left in most of the Colonies and conquests of the nation; this had already led them into a necessity of imitating their neighbours in England and upon the continent of Europe, in having recourse to the Credit of

[16]

of their Bills of Exchange, to raise the sums they could not immediately command from abroad in payment of their effects; and when the Banks began to call in the sums they had hitherto liberally and uniformly lent to people in trade, they were led, by an almost unavoidable consequence, to avail themselves of the use of their Credit in London; and as the generality of the Manufactories and Trade in Scotland, was in a very thriving state, their Factors and Correspondents in London very readily allowed them the accommodation they required.

Soon after the conclusion of the war, another more general cause of necessity arose. The Manufacture of Linnens in Scotland, may be considered as much the Staple of that country, as Woollens are in England; the value of Linnens annually stamped for sale in Scotland, amounted

[17]

amounted in the year 1763 to half a million sterling. When the peace left all the foreign Manufactories at liberty, to avail themselves of the low price of labour in their countries, the Scotch Linnens ceased to be demanded at many of the Markets to which they had been sent during the war, and they were not only rivalled in their Sale at foreign Markets, but were also deprived of the opportunity of supplying the consumption of our own country. The Duty, chargeable on the Importation of foreign Linnens, not bearing any proportion to the difference in the price of labour, and the value of money at home, and in those countries where foreign Linnens are made: these are therefore very current in their sale, for almost every purpose of our own consumption, while the Linnen made in England, Ireland, and Scotland is crouded up in the Warehouses of the Manufacturers and their

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Agents. From this cause numbers of the working people belonging to this branch of trade, are exposed to great difficulties and distress, and their employers incapable of giving them relief: the Manufacturer is willing to labour, but there is little sale for the work of his hands.

I do not here mean to enter any farther into this matter, than to shew you the difficulties that must naturally arise to the people of any country, when the most Staple Article of its trade becomes interrupted in its sale: this being the case with Scotland, it greatly increased the necessity of many for that aid, of which they were disappointed in the regular sale of their goods, and this cause concurring with the reduction pursued by the Banks, was naturally productive of the increase of Bills of Exchange upon London.

A few

A few years ago, the Bank of England refused to discount the general run of Bills drawn upon the Factors for Scotland in London; this would have interrupted, in a great measure, the currency of the circulation of these Bills, had not the Bankers in London interposed their credit, and accepted the Drafts of the private Bankers in Scotland, who vested in their hands, as the fund for their reimbursement, the Bills drawn by the various Manufacturers and Traders upon their Agents in London: and the Bills upon the Bankers being unexceptionable at the Bank of England, the course of this business flowed as currently as before: but the simple transaction which began betwixt the Manufacturer or Merchant, and his Correspondent, now became burthened with a Commission both to the Banker in Edinburgh and London, besides the Interest of the Money: the accumulation of these charges has proved

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ruinous

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ruinous to many, whose business would long ago have placed them in easy circumstances, had they only been liable to pay simple interest on the sums they required. Many of the private Bankers in Edinburgh, whose property chiefly consisted in land, had likewise been indebted to Loans from the Banks, for a great part of their ready Money; this was branched out again, to a variety of traders, and when the Banks called in the sums they had lent, such of the private Bankers whose turn of mind had led them the greatest lengths in promoting the improvement of their country, by the aid they had given to people in various branches, became the most embarked in their necessities; and the numberless operations in business, both domestic and foreign, that had spread themselves upon the general support they had derived from the Banks, and this being withdrawn sooner than good

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good policy would have required, had the general welfare of the country been carefully attended to: the difficulties this conduct in the Banks occasioned, became in a great measure proportioned to the assistance they had afforded, and considering the design under which these Credits had been given, there were but few instances where the end of them was answered to such a degree of success in the circumstances of individuals, as to enable them to refund the money without manifest difficulties; but when this was done, a great part of the country felt the want of an institution to give fresh strength to industry in Agriculture, Manufactures and Trade.

In this situation of the country, the Bank of Douglas, Heron and Company opened, with a very large Subscription to its Capital, and under very liberal management, and the good effects of the aid it administered to the improvements

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ments in Husbandry, and the support of Manufacturers and Traders soon appeared to a degree that gave satisfaction to every well-wisher to the country: the unquestionable security of the Subscribers or Partners in this Bank, with the conduct of the Directors, recommended the Notes they issued to the general favour of the public, and they soon passed with the utmost currency through every channel of business, except the Offices of the Revenue, and the old Banks, to whom they stood in a state of rivalry: the directors seemed to be impatient that these also should comply with the general voice of the country and give the last sanction to their Credit, by receiving their Notes as currently as those of the Banks established by Charter; this was also soon granted them.

The advancing within the gates of the opponents of their interest, might have called upon them for great circumspection

[23]

spection, had they recollected with how much ease the Farmers-general of France, a few years ago, ruined the credit of M. Silhouette the financier, by complying in the first instance with his design, that made against their interest, and afterwards making a use of it, that had not occurred to his well-meant intentions. The currency with which their Notes flowed from their office conspired to lull them into a perfect security; generous in their motive, they seemed to fear no danger to arise from the amount of the Notes they issued, which soon appeared to make near two-thirds of the common currency of the Country.

The circumstances of necessity in which many people were for Bills of Exchange upon London, naturally occasioned a great demand for these in payment for their Notes: the security of their Bills, and the reputation of the

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houses

houses in London upon whom they were drawn, gave their Bills a degree of Credit which made them excelled by none in the ease with which they were to be negotiated or discounted, these rendered them desirable to all who had remittances to make, and saved Commission to so many, that the Notes of this Bank were continually going in for Bills upon London; this turned a large proportion of the Notes they issued (whether upon Bond, or in payment for the Bills they discounted) by a very quick transition into their Drafts upon London; the disproportion there must evidently have been, betwixt the real Capital paid in by the Proprietors, and the amount of the Notes issued by the Directors, soon raised the sum of their Bills above the value of the funds in the hands of their Bankers in London, this necessarily required them to become Remitters to replace the deficiency: this was often attended with
difficulty,

difficulty, and always with an expence and risque: another evil arose and became burthensome in the same degree as the value of their Notes exceeded those of other Banks; the more the balance at every settlement increased, the greater the command over them became for Bills upon London, or Specie; and as the Receiver had the choice of the Alternative, the Douglas Bank were made liable to furnish almost all the gold the trade of the country required: the necessity in which the Banks of Scotland are constantly under to pay large sums in specie, does not at all arise from any doubt of the security of their Notes, they are as universally received for all internal purposes in the country, as the Notes of the Bank of England are in any part of the kingdom: the gold demanded from the Banks of Scotland, is in some measure proportioned to the value of goods bought from England,
and

and the Guineas that are brought down by thousands at the expence of Scotland, are continually draining back again in hundreds through all the Manufacturing Towns in England, in payment for the goods sold into Scotland, the amount of which makes no inconsiderable part of the yearly sales of the English Manufactures, but the most valuable of them coming by land carriage, the importance of this channel of consumption for English goods is not to be estimated from the face of the Custom-house Entries; and it may at present be laid down as a general rule, that whenever large sums of gold are discovered to be sent from England to Scotland, that Scotland is paying large sums for Goods bought of England, and if an account was to be stated between them it would stand thus; Scotland chargeable with the expence of carrying down the gold, and England benefitted by the sale of the Goods for
which

which it is returned in payment. But to return to the situation of the Douglas Bank: the gold that hitherto had been brought down in common by the different Banks according to their several occasions for specie, was now transferred almost totally to the Douglas Bank, which, by the increased proportion of their paper in the currency of the Country, became necessitated to pay the differences on settling with the other Banks in gold: by this means the gold which had before been collected in many branches, now flowed thro' one channel, directly from London to the Douglas Bank, and tho' there is no reason to believe, that the whole sum brought down to Scotland this year, was more than it had been for several years past; but large sums now coming thro' a few hands from London, it soon attracted the attention of the watchful Guardians of Public Credit in Threadneedle Street. Thus the situation
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into which the Douglas Bank had been led, by an almost unavoidable gradation, at once presented the Directors of the Bank of England, with a very large sum of their Bills running upon London, at the same time that they were taking away heavy parcels of their gold: two objects equally alarming to that caution, which the government of great monied property indispenfibly requires. No fooner did the refolution of abridging the amount of the Bills (that hitherto had paffed at the Bank) appear, than immediate difficulties enfued, and moft to thofe whofe dependance upon the aid of Discounts was the greateft. But at the fame time that the Directors difcovered their defire of reducing the fum within the limits of prudence, they difcovered a moderation which manifested their attention to the welfare of Public Credit: by intimating their defign to the private Bankers of reducing the amount of the
Bills

Bills running upon them through the Bank, that their meafures might coincide with the Views of the Directors: but to prevent the convulfions that the fudden ftop to Discounts muft ever create to people in trade, who have been fo long accuftomed to that accommodation, as to place a dependance upon the continuance of it; the Directors ftill difcounted the Bills upon fuch houfes whofe folidity was proportioned to the amount of their engagements: with others, wherein this was thought greatly to exceed, the Bills upon them could not be done at the Bank, diftreff followed this difappointment to the Holders of many of the Bills upon thefe houfes, and the evil was greatly increafed upon the failure of the Bankers who firft ftopt payment, and fome other houfes who partook of the fame fate, having Bills running upon them, drawn by the Douglas Bank, and the return of fome of thefe fpread an
alarm

alarm amongst the Holders of their Notes, who immediately crowded in for payment. The Directors of the Banks established by charter, acted with singular prudence upon this occasion, for instead of running with equal error and haste to demand specie for the Notes they held of the Douglas Bank, they kept back their Notes and sent them Gold; well knowing that the business of a Banker could hardly be interesting if a deposit of Specie was always to be kept, equal to the demands that might be made: the Douglas Bank maintained its credit against the run that came upon them; and satisfied with their foundation, the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Country, gave public notice to their Tenants, that they should continue to take the Notes of the Douglas Bank in payment for their rents: but from the circumstances attending the Failures that had happened in London, many there became
alarmed

alarmed for the security of their property, and the additional caution of the Bank and Bankers spread difficulties in the *ways and means* of all degrees of people in trade, and when Bills accepted by some of the old established Bankers, were refused to be discounted at the Bank, the distress became general: and when the House of a second capital Banker was seen to be shut, the confusion that ensued seemed to make many Gentlemen in the necessary regard to their own preservation, forget that decorum which good-faith makes sacred amongst men in business: upon this occasion the Drafts of the Douglas Bank were refused acceptance by most of their Correspondents in London, and the commotion that this raised amongst all the Holders of these Bills, as well as of the Notes of the Bank in the country, induced the Directors to order all payments to be suspended: this was followed by an almost general stagnation of
business

business in the capital; those who possessed large sums in their Notes, could not apply them to the support of their Credit at home, or to the relief of their Correspondents in London; so that many people there and in Scotland became at once involved in the utmost distress; and many Houses whose real property far exceeded all their engagements, in the general discredit, could not bring their effects that were widely extended, to the relief of the present demands, were forced to stop payment: whenever this is the case with any number of considerable people in trade, the inconveniences that ensue to Society, are greatly increased by the misunderstandings of people whom distresses make suspicious, and the necessities of half-ruined fortunes render unkind to each other, and forget, that,

Good nature, and good sense, must always join;
To err, is human; to forgive, divine.

And

And certain it is, that nothing can so soon remove the disquietude, and repair the evil misfortunes have done, as a prudent and well-managed humanity: and it ought ever to be remembered, in a country where Trade is its support, if that spirit of adventure which animates every branch of real business, was to be discouraged with severity, commerce would soon languish and die with the very fear of becoming unfortunate.

A conduct more manly and truly noble rarely appears, than that which discovered itself in some of the first nobility of Scotland, who had placed their Subscriptions to the Douglas Bank, to encourage an institution their country greatly felt the want of, and when its Credit was reduced to the last extremity, these Noblemen did not wait to investigate the course that had been steered, by those who directed the helm of its af-

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fairs ; they knew its foundation was good, and with their original view in the establishment of the Bank, still connecting the idea of their country's good, they, with a spirit becoming their rank, made their property and their influence subservient to the relief of the Bank's necessity : the very large proportion of the currency of the country, which consisted of the Notes of this Company, and the very great amount to which their Bills upon London had arisen, made the general Credit of Scotland stand so closely connected with this Bank, as not only to justify the steps the Directors have so publicly taken for its support, but to make the interference of those Noblemen in its behalf, a matter of general esteem, deserving to be long remembered by every friend to his country. The Rents of Land, and the prices of all the necessaries of life, had gradually advanced, with the increase of the currency of Scotland :

[35]

land : whatever affects the latter must, by an immediate consequence, be felt by the other two : it is very plain : suppose the current Money in the hands of the people of any country to be suddenly contracted to two-thirds of its former extent, it naturally follows, that the produce of the earth, or the great necessaries of life, cannot meet with the same quantity of money at the market in which they are sold, as they did before such reduction : and if the *produce* of Lands fall in their prices, surely the Land itself cannot maintain its value ; it therefore follows, that it is the wisdom of the Landed-interest to support, by an Assemblage of its Credit, the Currency of a country : and a short consideration of the consequences that must in all human probability follow the neglect thereof, will shew the necessity of the *general* attention of the *Landed-interest* of Scotland to this matter at present for their

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own fakes, and will place the interference of those Noblemen, who so early stepped forward to the aid of the Douglas Bank, in its true point of view; and do equal honour to their humanity and their love of their country.

Besides the increase of the currency of Scotland, other causes have concurred to wind up the general Rents of Land to their utmost stretch: many estates have been bought since the end of the late war by Gentlemen who had acquired fortunes abroad; the attention habit had accustomed them to pay to their Interest, made the advancement of Rents immediately follow their purchases: necessity produced all the efforts of the Tenant to make the growth of his farm keep pace with the increased price he had to pay for it; from hence an opinion prevailed, that to advance the Rents was the first step to Improvements in Agriculture;
and

and the Land-owners in general, allowed this doctrine to contain the strongest conviction, and the implicit obedience they were pleased to pay to its dictates, soon made the Tenants feel a very great advance in the Rents of most of the Land out of Lease: some judicious and considerate Land-owners must, indeed, here be excepted, who would not allow even their own Interest to lead them, blindfold, to advance their Rents before they were sure their Tenants could bear it: they wisely considered Agriculture as a Science that required time to attain a tolerable proficiency in, before the Farmers in general could be enabled to pay any great increase of their Rents; others who thought their Lands might admit of an advance, were willing the Tenant should partake of the plenty his industry yielded to his master: if virtue was to ennoble, those lovers of the common-good of mankind deserve to be distinguished

[38]

guished in every country where such *antiquated* sentiments are still found to survive: the good old Countess of M-----, is an amiable instance of this singular humanity, and I hope she will live long to enjoy the pleasure of it on earth, and will feel the effects of her honest Tenants wishes, when she is placed above the reach of their thanks!

Wherever we meet with such instances of *real Nobility* in a country, we see ease and plenty smile upon all that live under their happy influence. But, as I said before, the Rents have been greatly advanced in general over all the country, and in some parts of it, to a degree that hardly admitted of the Tenants absolute wants being supplied, after paying the Rent of the Ground, notwithstanding the advantage which the increased currency of the country afforded in the sale of all
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the produce of the Lands. The natural attachment men have to the place of their nativity, and those so unqualified to travel as Farmers mostly are, will ever make them struggle to the last, before they leave the spot whereon they have been bred; it is therefore not to be wondered that many of them held their Lands till they could pay the Rent no longer, and a few unfavourable Seasons, to which the North and Highland part of Scotland is often exposed, completed the distress of many in that part of the country. If a sudden reduction of the amount of the current money is allowed to take place, the Land-owners need only keep their Rents at what they now are, and the distress of the Tenantry will gradually spread and become more general; this will be as effectually done, by *reducing* the currency of the country, as by *increasing* the *present* Rents: the Farmer must of course pay his Rent from

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the sale of the produce of his land, the value of this produce stands upon a point, where it is equally affected by the *Rent* of the Ground on which it is raised, and the *Quantity* of Money current in the market at which it is sold, and whether you *add* to the *Rents*, or *take away* part of the *Money*, it equally tends to render the Farmer unable to pay the Rent he did before the time of this advance or reduction, unless he has hitherto made such a saving to himself, after paying his Rent, as will enable him, either to pay more for the land, or receive less for what it grows: there appears reason to believe, from what can be discovered of the circumstances of the Farmers in general, that their present situation cannot admit of either of these, without laying greater burthens on them than they are able to bear; but can there be much danger in trying the experiment for two or three years? There are very
prevailing

prevailing arguments in favour of this essay; it is the *present* Interest of the Land-owners to do it, and in the next place it will save a world of trouble, and prevent the interruption of much ease and pleasure to Gentlemen who do not see that it is their business to consider any thing more than their own *immediate* concerns: suppose these reasons prevail, and the majority of the Gentlemen of the first fortune, rank and influence in the country, laugh the rest into the same opinion, and that all betake themselves to the more *important* preparations against the year 1775; and as to the Bank that has for some time past engrossed so great a part of the currency of the country, let those concerned in it be left to wade through the difficulties of their own situation; let them force back the sums they have lent, and pay their own engagements; and as to the Borrowers from this Bank, together with all the
Farmers,

Farmers, Manufacturers and Merchants besides, that want money, if they cannot borrow it elsewhere, let them stand upon their own bottoms or fall; if all these are left to take their own uninterrupted course, there is a question that will naturally arise in the breast of every man, who possesses one spark of public-spirit, and that is, What are the consequences that may reasonably be expected to happen therefrom to the country in general, and particularly the Landed-interest?

It is certain the Douglas Bank can soon discharge every demand upon it, after receiving back the sums they have lent; admitting this to be done, it is then to be considered, whether all or any of the other Banks will extend their aid to the public, to such a degree as may in some measure supply the necessities that must evidently ensue; there does not appear any

any good grounds to expect this, rather the contrary; probably any great extension is equally incompatible with their separate capitals, as it would be irreconcilable with the ideas of the Managers; it is therefore to the highest degree likely, when the sums lent by the Douglas Bank are forced back from the Borrowers, that a great number of very useful operations, in various branches, will be interrupted, and a great addition made to the number of valuable men who are already in distress, the most eminent of whom have for many years been the foremost in promoting the improvement of their country, not only by embarking in several branches of Manufacture and Commerce of great utility, but also by the disinterested aid they have given to many, whose genius and industry promised to do service to their country; and when the same men are known to be equally frugal and industrious, with a constancy

[44]

constancy that nothing but principle can produce; they must be allowed to be objects of great estimation in any country, so long as virtue is esteemed amongst men; there are also several degrees of men less eminent than these, that give life to many branches of trade; and again employed under their lesser circles a number of useful men; and it will plainly appear, when any objects of business in a country are either greatly contracted or totally stopt, that the people dependent upon them must either become less employed, or, what is more justly to be expected, these branches of trade will turn into channels foreign to the country, and the people drop off and forsake it: a decrease in the number of the people who consume the produce of the earth, strikes as directly at the reduction of its price at the market, as the decrease of the current money of a country does, the only difference is, that the

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one affects it by the *number* that can go to market, the other by the *value* they *have* to lay out, when both these concur, whether it is the Land-owner or the Farmer that exposes the produce of the ground to sale, he must, by an unavoidable consequence, feel their effects almost in the very proportion in which the consumers abate in their *number*, or the money of the country is reduced in its *quantity*: both these circumstances will most certainly concur, if that Bank, which for some time past has supplied so great a part of the currency of the country, is left to call in the sums they have issued, and no other Bank gives a supply of an equal quantity: and if all those Merchants and Traders who are at present in distress, are indiscriminately left without aid from their country, a declining trade and a decreased currency will come with their united effects against the Landed-interest, and if no proportionate abatement

[46]

abatement is made in the present Rents, the Farmers must soon partake of that distress which has so generally fallen upon the other branches of society, to whom they ever stand in the nearest degree of kindred: those liberal-minded Noblemen, who distinguished themselves in shewing a wise solicitude to support the currency of this country by their aid and countenance to the Douglas Bank, saw that they ought to begin here, to remove the evils that were breaking loose upon the trading part of the country, and when its consequences came to be felt by the body of Farmers, that they also must receive their share of difficulties, as it was not to be expected from Land-owners in general that they would remit any such proportion of their fixed Rents, as might be equal to the fall in the great articles of produce that must succeed those misfortunes: and when the Land-owner has maintained his
Rent

[47]

Rent till the Farmer has felt a great degree of distress, an abatement of the Rent may not then be the only inconvenience that may arise, and if it was, it is but rarely to be expected to meet relief: the Owners of too great a part of the country resign the most noble and important trust with which the Providence of the Almighty has invested them, to the care of a Factor, and the Tenants are left to labour under his iron-hand, so that the Landlord seldom sees their difficulties when they do arise, and the Steward will not; and if what has already *happened* may be allowed a just criterion for the government of our judgments in that which may be *expected* to follow in similar cases, what we have lately seen in many places in the North and Highland part of the country, may be considered as instances of what may be looked for by the rest of the kingdom. The common people of Scotland truly deserve
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the testimony my Lord Chatham so publicly gave of their character: they are indeed *an hardy and an intrepid Race of Men*; and I have had so many convincing proofs of his Lordship's fine perception in this instance, that I am satisfied they are the last men in the Island that are to be trifled with and oppressed: their conduct merits peculiar attention in those parts of the country where their Rents have already been advanced beyond what they were able to bear, and where they found they had but little reason to hope for redress from masters whom they saw were more attentive to increase their Rents, than they were to afford them relief from the difficulties brought upon them by severe Winters and the loss of Cattle, or the fallen prices at which they sold, since the time their Land had been made to rise in its value; still that country was dear to them on which they had been bred, and more so,

so, by descending to them from brave Ancestors; but when they found they were to hold it under oppressive masters, they broke the ties of their strong affections and firmly resolved to leave it: Are these, my uncourtly Alderman, the men of the country that love not *Liberty*? Whoever knows them so little as to believe that mistaken report, need only look at the difficulties through which *Hundreds* have already forced their way to join Freedom's Sons, beyond the Western Main.

The same causes may be expected to produce the same effects amongst a people who think alike, and whatever occasions great difficulties amongst the Farmers in this Country, will yearly increase the number of those who have led the way to America; these difficulties to the Tenantry of Scotland may now be expected to arise in a very general degree.

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gree, from the sudden interruption of several branches of trade, and the contraction of the currency of the country.

To prevent the emigration of these most useful men, by any general consent amongst the Land-owners to lower their Rents, is not to be expected; they, in all probability, will hold them up at what they now are, till they find they cannot possibly have it paid them any longer; and were this remedy then to be applied it will come too late to cure the disease: men of the most determined characters are the most silent in forming their resolutions, and rarely avow them till they are fixed, and then are not to be wheedled into a change of their measures: if the inhabitants of a village in Scotland were to say they intended to go to Carolina next summer, with their families, I confess it would greatly surprize me to hear afterwards that they had

had been prevailed with to lay aside their intention: that Tribunal, Common-sense, to which Dr. Oswald so ably appeals, is, indeed, superior to all the round-about distinctions of refinement, a proof of which we have in the conduct of these common people, when they find their labour cannot obtain their support, after paying the Rent of their Land; their conclusion is made in two words, *leave it*, and go to that country where we believe there is Ground for us all, equally cheap and fertile, and where, we hear, the Proprietors of it will allow us and our sons the plentiful enjoyment of all the necessaries of life; many of which, all our industry cannot procure us here. When such a report as this becomes generally known to the Husbandmen of a country, which both from its soil and climate requires much labour to cultivate, it is not to be wondered if a persuasion takes place in their minds, that their lives may be

more comfortable to themselves and their offspring in the fruitful lands of America, than ever they can be in their own country, were they to continue in it and only pay one tenth part of their present Rent: as this is truly the case, there is reason for the Landed-interest of this country to look at every event with the most watchful eye, that may in its consequences so affect the Tenantry, as to render it difficult for them to pay their Rents by the use of a moderate degree of labour directed by their best experience: whenever their situation approaches towards extremity, then does it become the *Interest* of the Land-owners of this country to remove the cause of distress to their Tenants, whether it arises from a bad Season, or the losses they sustain in their Sheep, Cattle or Corn; providentially this is seldom general, only here-and-there a part is taken away to shew us the tenure by which
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we hold the rest of that kind hand who ruleth all things well: but even upon such occasions common justice ought to induce the Landlord to take part in the Tenant's sufferings, if the pleasures of humanity did not make it a privilege to have the opportunity: but when causes have arisen that are so likely to affect the Tenants in general, as the late failures, and the consequent reduction of the currency of the country, it then becomes the wisdom of the great Land-owners to unite, and with one effort ward off the blow which their Interest must otherwise soon feel, sooner, perhaps, than is commonly apprehended; in a little time the train will be lighted, as it were, at both ends, and the working men in most of the Manufacturing Branches will be as unable to live on the wages they obtain for their labour, as the Farmer will be to pay his Rent out of the prices he can get for his produce;

and their common distresses may lead them together in search of a happier soil, and the same ship go freighted with a Colony complete---men to till the Ground, and others to make their Implements and Cloathing. The situation in which the working people in the Manufactories, in many parts of the country have been in for some time past, has been such as admits of no increase of difficulties; in general, notwithstanding their sobriety and care, if an ordinary Tradesman that has a wife and but three children, should happen to be ill, or unemployed, one month in twelve, he would, in all probability, be put behind-hand more than he could regain in a year to come; a little reflection will soon shew what must be their case if their present wages cannot be continued to them, or if they should be one day in the week without work, by the want of sale for the goods they make. If speedy attention is not
paid

paid to the great branch of the Linnen Manufacture, difficulties must accumulate amongst the numerous body of people employed in it; the most obvious manner of their relief would appear to be, by increasing the Duty on the importation of every species of foreign Linnen; and this would seem to be equally reasonable and necessary to Ireland, and some parts of England, as it is to the whole of this country; and if it is not attended to, it will become one avenue through which the Landed-interest will decay, but it is most likely this will be felt by degrees and imperceptibly, tho' certainly: but the effects of the reduction of the currency of the country will be greatly and evidently felt, if not prevented by some solid and adequate remedy. The misfortunes that have lately happened to many, and the difficulties under which a much greater number now are, have grown out of the natural
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situation of the country: the money lent by the Banks of Scotland, together with the foreign Credit of the country have been the two great supports by which the Manufacturers and Merchants have carried their Trade to its present extent, and with the increase of their dealings have raised the Rent-roll of Scotland to what it is at this day: the first support that was given to the trading part of the country has been withdrawn from them too soon, and increased their dependance upon the other till it has sunk under the load; and the Landed-Gentleman is exclaiming against the adventurous spirit of the Merchant, who has been the very instrument of making his Land of its present value, and in whatever degree this check may turn away the Manufactures and Commerce of the country, in that very proportion will the value of Land travel its way backwards, till that *Equilibrium* is again produced which must
 ever

ever subsist in every country; betwixt the *Quantum* of the current money, the *Price* of the necessaries of life, and the *Value* of Land; and however imperceptible this may appear, experience makes it evident, that each of those branches of the great concerns of society, act with irresistible force towards each other, and any attempt to maintain the value of Land after Trade and current Money are abridged, would be as fruitless as to strive to compress a liquid; no art or strength can force it beyond the space nature has given it to occupy, it will break through all bounds till it regains its natural situation: so must it be with the value of the Land of this country, and if the Rents are *only* continued a little too long at prices that are found very burthensome to the Tenants, it would be a delusion to expect any other consequences to ensue, than those that have already arisen in those parts of the country
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try where the Rents were too high for the Tenant, and held up till he left the Land, forsook the Village, and embraced the first opportunity of emigrating from his country, never to return to it again.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes or lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supply'd.

A person of your Lordship's talents, will see at one view the consequences to be expected, from the causes that appear, and in this light it must certainly have struck those Noblemen who upon the first breaking out of the difficulties, so generously interested themselves in the support of the Trade, Credit, and Currency of their country, as the only means to prevent the necessity of lowering

ing the Rents of their Estates when the effects of those disorders became felt in the country.

If the same apprehension should bring together a pretty large concurrence of the Landed-interest of Scotland; and were a few of the many men of fine sense and abilities amongst that body appointed to investigate this subject, along with half a dozen Merchants of the first consequence to the Commerce of different parts of the country, the gloomy aspect which now overspreads it, might soon be brightened up into the most agreeable prospect, both in the Trade and Agriculture of that part of the united kingdom: and however intricate large monied concerns may now be made to appear, it is an object Gentlemen need not at all be frightened to look upon; for it admits of no doubt, but the Credit and Currency of Scotland may be rendered

dered as permanent and adequate to all the purposes of its Trade, as the Bank of England can be to that part of the country it is in; but then, like it, the Currency of Scotland must not derive its sources from any foreign or remote aid, it must arise within itself, and if it is *internal* it will be *secure*; and however respectable it may appear to have connections with that most solid of all negotiable securities in this island, the Bank of England, it is a place with which neither the Credit or Currency of Scotland ought to have any thing to do; not that there can be the least ground for that mistaken idea, of the administration of this institution ever being directed by motives of prejudice or partiality: a part of their great revenues arise from the Interest of Money advanced on Securities that come from all quarters of the Commercial World, and it is unreasonable to suppose, that Gentlemen who are taken from

from amongst the most liberal Merchants, would ever descend to make a distinction which nothing but a want of good breeding could ever create: it is equal to them from whence Bills of Exchange are sent, so as the sum through any one channel exceeds not their idea of the security, or they see the money they advance applied to uses detrimental to their Interest; in either of these cases candour must hold them excused when they put a negative to Discounts: indeed the important offices held by those Gentlemen, might be so managed as greatly to affect the welfare of many, and turned to their own advantage, and at the same time carry with it no other appearance than prudence and the necessary regard they owe to the Interest and Security of the Incorporate Body they represent: and if ever the time should come when the Gentlemen that hold these offices forget, that neither a Society or Individual can

[62]

can get Riches without the help of others, they might then, by suddenly contracting the Discounts they had long permitted to pass, so shake the public confidence in the private Bankers, as to erect their own Body into one Great Monopoly of this species of traffick, now become so necessary to Commerce: the Bankers would then sink into mere Money-changers, and such of their Customers who were not important enough to do business with the Bank, would find themselves often disappointed in the small sums of Discount their Trade required, and as it is no unusual thing in London for many people of this rank to give such Credit as necessitates them to have the accommodation of Discounting the Bills they are forced to receive instead of Money; whenever the Banker's best Customer takes away his Money to the Bank of England, difficulties must ensue to many of those that make the second and
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[63]

third class of the trading people, and as these are by far the most numerous, distress will spread from hand to hand, till one general want is felt amongst them all: but this can never happen till the administration of the Bank is in the hands of Gentlemen who listen to the delusion of aggrandizing their stations, and prefer this to the real dignity of making them useful to a very numerous and valuable part of the trading people of this country: indeed the very great proportion of the business of the whole island, that now requires the Negotiation of Bills or Notes, makes the good government of public Banks, in every part of the kingdom, a matter of great consequence to the whole Trade of the country: in many very extensive branches, the property of the goods are seldom transferred from one person to another without a Bill or Note passing in consequence of it; and so far as my observation has led me, it appears
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that those who are *not obliged* to pay away or Discount the Note or Bill they have received before it comes due; compose, by far, the smallest number in every branch of Business: the conclusion that follows is, that the trading people who surround the greater or lesser Banks in every part of the kingdom, are now become, to a very great degree, dependent on those institutions which have arisen to eminence from the necessities of business that has far out-grown the amount of current money, and most so in those places where the establishment of Banks, or Bankers, and the accommodation they have been accustomed to receive from them, has created so general a dependence upon the continuance of their aid, that were the Managers, Directors, or Proprietors of those Banks of a sudden to deviate from a steady and wise administration, into a contracted suspicion, nothing could so effectually tend to the general

neral disorder and distress of the most numerous part of the trading people in the kingdom: there is, therefore, in the office of a Director of a public Bank, a trust reposed of the highest consequence to the public welfare; he ought to be a person of that good sense and resolution as at all times to steer at an equal distance from narrow suspicion on one hand, and an unguarded liberality on the other; the experience of this year has shewn us how dangerous it is for a Bank to launch out and teach a dependance upon its support superior to its foundation; and it is not altogether improbable, but the early part of next year may present the Public with the effects of the contrary part of the extreme, and convince us of this truth, that,

The Wise and Prudent conquer Difficulties,
By daring to attempt them: Sloth and Folly
Shiver and shrink at sight of Toil and Danger,
And make the Misfortunes they fear.

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To take men as we commonly find them, there are two *professions*, out of which there might appear to be some reasons for not chusing the Directors of a public Bank, those are the Gentlemen who are engaged in the business of a private Banker in the same city, and the Gentlemen in the practice of the law, the first may naturally be led to use the powers of his office to direct those rays which ought to shine equally on all around, into the contracted line of his own more immediate advantage, and by this means, a public Institution would, by degrees, as that influence prevailed, dwindle into a mere instrument of private advantage to a few; and if from the general tenure of the conduct of Gentlemen so circumstanced, there appeared any great degree of attachment to their own interest, or an earnest pursuit of objects of ambition, whatever their own success may plead in favour of their prudence;

[67]

dence; their arguments ought to be listened to with extreme caution, in directing the conduct of a Bank, if it was seriously intended that its measures should lead to the general advancement of a country's good. The *same* objection does not at all lay against the profession of a Lawyer, for being the Director of a Bank; the science to which he is bred, is a liberal one, and none more likely to produce a just way of thinking in all the concerns of society, and there are many living instances in this country of its having this effect: but in general the habits acquired in the practice of this profession are unfavourable to trade, and rather tend to disqualify a person from being publicly useful as the Director of a Bank. In spite of that dispatch, of which they have so bright an example at the head of their profession, Gentlemen bred to the Bar and the Chamber, do acquire that wise *deliberation* which proves

[68]

of the *happiest* consequences, in exercising all those with whom they have to do, in the great and necessary virtue of *patience*; but however beneficial it may be to mankind, in this instance, nothing can make a public Bank so little useful as slowness, delay, and adjournments: to give life to the affairs of a trading people, their business at the Bank, in the morning, should never be left undetermined at noon. There are some other objections to this profession in general for Directors, which ought not to be told to any but themselves; but there is a little circumstance, which, indeed, is so trifling, that I should not mention it if it might not sometimes give good men pain to see the least want of affability in a public Office: as sincere an answer is to be given with a smile as with a frown; and it is a pity it should ever be forgot, that strangers look more into the public Offices than they do at the Bars of the Courts of Justice, to form their

[69]

their opinion of the good breeding of the people of a country: custom, without any reason, seems to have taught mankind not to expect it at the Bar, but if a want of politeness is ever carried to any other public place of business, it is immediately considered as a defect.

Another impression unfavourable to business, is very apt to become an habit in Gentlemen bred to public Speaking, or the Details of the Chamber; every occurrence is made the subject of debate, and matters that a few figures, or a Yes, or a No, with a little thought, might decide, are lengthened out into address and negotiation, with which the principles of the Banking Business have little to do. I would beg, my Lord, not to be misunderstood; my objection to chusing Directors for a public Bank out of these two professions, of private Bankers and Lawyers, is only meant to the *profession*

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in general, as there are many individuals amongst both who possess talents and a degree of disinterestedness that makes them amongst the most deserving characters; indeed I should not have named any objection, was I not satisfied that the good of better half of the people of this country was in a very critical situation; and when this is the case, no man ought to pass over silently whatever concerns them, much less compliment away his sincerity, from motives of fear or mistaken delicacy.

To remove the distress which hath already arisen, and to prevent the impending increase of it, is to restore the general Credit of the country in all the great branches of its foreign dealings, and to maintain and strengthen its domestic currency; and as a public Bank, with *Funds adequate* to the country's Commerce and internal Trade, is the *first* step: the next

consideration

consideration is, under whose government are the most salutary effects to the general welfare to be expected? Doubtless, from the combined management of the Landed and Trading Interest: the advantage of both are the most closely connected with the consequences: compared with these, Law and private Banking stand neuter; strip them of the ornaments with which custom has adorned these two professions in society, and we see, that the first flourishes by the *Folly* and the last by the *Necessity* of mankind; surely then they are alike unpropitious to be employed as instruments to promote the *tranquility* and common *good* of a country. A set of Directors, composed of Gentlemen of Landed Estates, and of Merchants and Traders, could never concur in any little bye views of advantage to themselves or their own particular friends; their Interest lies in their Estates and their Trade, and they would

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not be led to look for it in any private indulgences from the society to which they lent a few hours of their time once or twice a week, for which they might well be allowed a suitable compensation: and to prevent any of that partiality which the best men will sometimes allow themselves to run into, no Loans of Money should ever be allowed but in the presence of many Directors, and these to assemble in one spot, and one book contain the thread of all their business.

The complacency of your Lordship's character gives me no fear in writing without reserve; to a person of inferior talents I might appear to treat a branch of business, which they consider as a mystery, with too much freedom; but to a person of discernment it will immediately occur, that systems far superior to this are to be measured by the plain rules of Common-sense; and who know,
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if ever matters of daily business become mysterious, or so scattered into *sub-divisions* as to make them complex, it may directly be pronounced that the affairs of such a system are approaching towards confusion, and that we are no longer sure of their being right than whilst they remain short, simple and obvious.

In the choice of men for the government of such a society, the Spanish rule, I think, ought not to decide, which says, never employ a man who has been unfortunate: I do not know but it may, at this day, be the same in the Commercial as it has been within our memory in the Political World, where men of the most amiable characters have had all the opposition envy could create, added to the difficulties of their station; and those whom a little time might have convinced us deserved better of their country, have been persecuted from its service by calumny and invective.

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But that equal right which every government ought to allow to the subject of every corner of it, does not so well apply to any confined provincial system, in which natives of that particular part of it ought to be preferred, there being many necessary circumstances, of which a stranger rarely attains a complete knowledge.

If, happily for this country, the necessity of supporting such an institution should appear to any considerable body of the great Land-owners, and if they do unite with the Trading People, to stop the consequences that are following the recent misfortunes; and if Gentlemen of property or abilities will be in earnest, and give up a little of their time and attention, either to *erect, repair, or enlarge* a Bank to the degree the present situation of their country requires, and if care be taken that its government is *uniform, liberal, and prudent,*
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every year will make it take deeper root, and as its healing branches extend, Agriculture will gain strength, and Trade will flourish; and then will it be most likely that the North part of this Island will be the last wherein Trade will fall the Victim to Luxury, and all her train of tumultuous consequences; and upon these Banks will Commerce rest till she takes her last flight with Liberty, her congenial spirit, and follow the course of the setting sun to the great Atlantic's further shore, there to dwell together till that sun shall arise which will set no more.

But allow me to suppose that the Landed-Gentlemen shall say, that they fear no such consequences to their Interest, to follow a contracted Currency or a declining Trade, as are here attempted to impress them with, and if they were obliged to lower their Rents a little, they would prefer that to engaging in mat-
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ters they do not very well understand, in which they are not sure but they might lose more than they could by any other means. I am not sure that lowering the Rents a little is the worst that can happen to them, neither am I sure but there are men amongst us in whom the love of human kind is stronger than their attachment to any spot of Ground called their country, and before they would see a great number of valuable people so oppress'd by Rents they *could not* pay, as to prefer begging their way out of their country in droves, to their staying in it; I will not say before they could bear to see many such instances as these, but they would take the side of humanity against all her foes, and to each village point their easy way to America, and leave behind them desolate Towns and uncultivated Lands to the solitary possession of their unkind masters. It is far from being an inconsiderable number, whom too severe terms

terms hath already forced away from their country, and the real distress which this year has made us acquainted with, cannot be more justly convey'd to a person, who never has had the pain of witnessing such scenes of woe, than it is in this passage of that beautiful poem, the Deserted Village:

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
 That call'd them from their native walks away;
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
 Hung round their Homes, and fondly look'd their last;
 And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
 For seats like these, beyond the Western Main;
 And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
 The good old Sire, the first prepar'd to go
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others woe:
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
 The fond companion of his helpless years,
 Silent, went next, neglectful of her charms,
 And left a Lover's for a Father's arms.

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With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
 And blest the cot where every pleasure rose;
 And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
 And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
 In all the silent manliness of grief.

The whole of this humane performance, from which these lines are taken, is so truly descriptive of what has already happened, that I cannot help looking upon its ingenious Author* as a venerable prophet, foretelling, with lifted hands, the miseries to come: and did we but know the feelings of many of the poor families who are for ever gone from their country, we might match, with real characters, those that are here so finely imagined: hundreds more are prepared to go, and many others, more wary, wait to receive from their trusty friends, who are gone before, the confirmation

* Dr. Goldsmith.

tion of the good land they are told awaits the claim of new inhabitants, to make it the *property* of them and their heirs for ever; so that it may truly be said,

Even now the devastation is begun,
 And half the business of destruction done.

And to the last degree I am convinced, that it is of the utmost necessity to the Interest of every man of property in this country to lend all his aid to stop the rising torrent; this can only be done by those measures of equity which allows every sober and industrious man to maintain himself and his family, in the bare necessaries of life, by the work of his hands, whether Farmers or Tradesmen, many of whom there now are that cannot do it with a much greater degree of labour than in general is required of the slaves in America. What then must be their situation? If many branches of trade, on which no small numbers are dependent

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shall either be greatly contracted, or remove from the country; if money becomes considerably scarcer, and provisions hold their price, a little more delay and it will be too late to prevent the falling price of Lands, by *maintaining the currency or supporting the Trade* of the country. If the effects of the present distresses are not soon prevented from gaining ground; Gentlemen must, of necessity, lower the Rents of their estates to keep any Tenants upon them; and do by constraint what Lord Hillsborough has lately done, with a noble freedom of mind that would do honour to an age famous for public virtue. But if the common people of this country are led, by the difficulties with which they obtain so scanty a share of the bare necessaries of life, to a general acquaintance with the comfortable effects that are likely to follow to themselves and their families, by going to America, it must not be expected

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pected that small concessions will keep them in a country where the very Taxes are much more than the Rent they would pay for the finest Land in America; and it will not be a very easy matter to deter them from going in search of it by representations of the severity of the Provincial Laws; none can well be more mild or more moderate than they are at present, or more likely to continue so, if we may judge by the reception the people of that country gave to *that celebrated Treatise, in Folio, called the STAMP ACT.*

If the cause of Emigration, from this once happy Island, did not arise from want and distress, it is besides matter of great concern to every person who is attached to his king and his country, every man that removes out of it tends to weaken its strength as an European State; and if ever the time should come, but

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far be that day removed, when the manly minister of another war wants to recruit the nation's arms, with an hardy and an intrepid race of men, from the mountains of the North, no measures may be able to raise sixty thousand * there, to the aid of our country's common cause: and were the Highlands the only part of Scotland that might be expected to become thinned of its inhabitants, by emigration, even this might be felt to a degree of some importance in our national strength; for in arms, every one of these men are worth a score of the cities feeble breed: but it must not be expected if difficulties spread and increase, that depopulation will be confined to the Highlands: the common people of Scotland are very much actuated by the same spirit, and the same impulse will

* The number of men, it is said, Scotland furnished in the late war.

will be felt almost to the same degree by them all, and indeed the *conditions* upon which they might change their situations in their own country for others in the Colonies, speaks so plainly to their feelings, that any public circumstance which they see their superiors allow, to cause any general increase of their difficulties to get a livelihood, will naturally lead them to make the comparison, and it is certain the conclusion they draw will fall against the Interest of their Landlord who may very soon find some inconvenience to replenish his Ground with half the number of Tenants who may find themselves tempted to leave the Land for which they pay dear Rents, in exchange for such as is probably more fertile, for which they will only have to give a small acknowledgment to make it their own. When once the minds of the people in general are awakened to the consideration of these things, there is another cir-

[84]

cumstance that will have its force in reducing the Land-owner's thousand to a hundred a year, this is the almost total want of that kindness and attention to the welfare of the common people, which so strongly attached their fathers to the hospitable Masters of the Land on which they lived. Far be it from me to give your Lordship the idea of a want of hospitality in this country to Friends or Strangers; perhaps there are few where both are more kindly received: that which here now appears to be wanted, almost as much as in any part of England, is that concern for the good of the common people, in the Land-owners and men of property, which alone can bind high and low, rich and poor together; this does not seem to arise so much from want of kindness as a want of that time and attention required to form a true knowledge of the difficulties to which their situation is exposed. In Scotland this
may

[85]

may be done with a great degree of certainty. The present appearance of distress to a numerous part of society there, is obvious, and in itself points out the remedy; and it is still within this country's reach to remove its increasing distress by taking away the causes of the present; and if strength is given, wherever it can be done with any tolerable degree of safety, the Trade and Currency of the country will soon revive, and every other branch of society maintain its ground: the most important ought to be the objects of the first and greatest attention, and there are few cases, amongst the individuals of real consequence to their country, where aid may justly be withheld from a fear of security: where two men are thought insufficient sureties for a sum required, four, six, or ten may be unquestionable; and thus by taking up the causes of distress from the various fountains out of which they will other-

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wife

[86]

wife spring, the Trade and Agriculture of Scotland may be so recovered and strengthened as to be the latest of the whole kingdom in their decline.

I shall now, my Lord, trespass a little further upon your condescension, to make a few remarks on the present situation of by far the most numerous part of the inhabitants of the whole Island, which must strike any person who has lately travelled through a great part of it with leisure and attention, and whose time has been divided betwixt London and different parts of the kingdom, in a pretty general intercourse with most ranks of men, particularly those on whom the Trade, as well as the strength of the state, must depend; and to a person of common observation, whose life has been favourable for acquiring this mixt knowledge of town and country, it must plainly appear, that there are at this
time

[87]

time, in London, and in general over the whole Island, the clearest indications of the actual existence of causes, which must, by the most unerring consequences, be productive of a declining Trade, and an accumulating weakness to the nation, as an European State; and when these causes are discovered, they will appear to lie too deep for any such partial remedies to remove, as are pointed out to Scotland as the means of reinstating her internal welfare, and to enable that part of the united kingdom to go on to bear its share of the national strength, by restoring all the health its members are capable of enjoying, as parts of the Body of the Constitution: but the causes of decay to the whole of the great national body, lie far back, and have arisen by slow degrees to the cumberous load under which it is now oppressed.

It appears to be invariable in all Commercial countries, that the state can only

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flourish

[88]

flourish while Trade is prosperous, and a little consideration on the situation of Society may convince us this must ever be the case.

When Providence waters the Labours of the Husbandman, and the earth yields him an abundant increase for his industry, plenty soon smiles through all the land; the whole family of Manufacturers are fed at a small expence, the works of their hands are completed at a moderate price, the Trader meets a ready sale for all the Merchandize of his country; industry becomes chearful with success, and every wind that blows spreads wealth and strength amongst them. The reverse of this model is, when the most plentiful harvest is rendered dear by the price of the Land from which it is raised; when the Husbandman rises early, and late takes rest, and with all the sweat of his brow, hath the utmost difficulty to procure food and
cloathing,

[89]

cloathing, after paying the rent of his ground;] the Bread of the Manufacturer must then be dear bought, his Wages must bear their proportion; all the articles of Trade become high priced: the stranger comes not to purchase in such a country; the warehouses of the Merchant are filled with unsaleable goods; and the Manufacturer ceases to be employed: the young, the unskilful, and ancient, soon find their utmost labour unequal to their necessities: they become poor, and a burthen to the society in which they live; and thus, by an unavoidable consequence, the difficulties of the Farmer, Manufacturer, and Trader, are made to increase: the acquisition of *foreign* gold does but inflame the account to a country whose strength is its *Trade*; and if the riches of all the Indies flows into its ports, if they tend to increase the price of the necessaries of life, they help to shut up
all

[90]

all the articles of export from such a country to every foreign market: the bulk of the inhabitants of every country must live by their labour; if they are ill employed they must become poor and needy, and the state to which they belong will become weak, if all the Gold and Diamonds in the World were lodged within their country. Suppose a Nation of but small extent, compared with its neighbours, its equality, much more its superiority, cannot depend on its numbers: its strength must arise from its individuals being more excellent than their neighbours: its fleets must be manned, and its armies recruited, with men rendered hardy by being bred to industry, and brave by being free and independent. Suppose the Trade of such a country to decline, the first person that feels its effects is the Merchant, and after him, the Manufacturer, and the Mariner: numbers then flock for safety into the

[91]

the profession of the Farmer, and increase the struggle betwixt the exorbitant Rent of Land, and the price the distressed many are able to pay for its produce. Suppose the inhabitants of a country in such a situation to be deprived of the privilege of leaving it, and continue pent up within its dominions, till poverty and distress has reduced the strength and courage of the bulk of the people, to an equality with the Inhabitants of a neighbouring State that possessed double the number, and whether the natives of the smaller nation were under the absolute command of one Lord or many, it could not be that they should long defend themselves, or their masters, against twice their number; though spiritless, yet as *strong*, as *brave*, and as *free*, as themselves.

To Gentlemen of high blood and good keeping this may appear extremely distant

tant to the situation of the Inhabitants of this country, I trust it is so with the greatest part of them, but a man must reconcile himself to discredit all his senses before he can believe that there is *not now*, all over England, thousands who are dispirited and depressed to the lowest degree, by poverty, distress, and want; neither is half their number composed of the idle or extravagant, but of such as are willing to labour, and know not where to be employed: and if your Lordship will imitate good old Somerset in the hard frost, you may, like him, unobserved, behold with your own eyes, some hundred instances hereof, without going further than ten minutes walk will carry you, to the N. E. of the Royal Exchange: there you may see the feeble Artist taking home his family's scanty morsel upon the skewer's point; and the children, like the half-fledged feathered race, with hungry impatience, wait the coming

coming of their parent bird, to proportion, with nature's equal hand, the little bit to the mouth that eats it. Here men may learn to prize and use the privilege of having Guineas, that justice and their wants can spare. But, it may be said, these distresses are confined to the people of some particular branches, or only continue for a season; did this appear to be the case, your Lordship's humanity might not have had the pain of this relation; but I am entirely convinced of the contrary, and that the difficulties of the lower ranks of the inhabitants, throughout the whole kingdom, has regularly increased upon them, by the most apparent degrees, for the last ten years: and if the evidence is taken from the closest examination of the circumstances of men who live by their Labour in any part of the country, it will be found, that a person of industry in his occupation, esteemed of tolerable capacity

[94]

capacity in it, and is constantly employed, has the utmost difficulty to supply the absolute wants of himself and his family; and take the instance of one, that is rather within the number, of which poor mens families generally consist: state on one hand all the Wages he receives, and on the other, the present cost of the common necessaries of life, and the conclusion to be drawn from both will astonish any man accustomed to easy circumstances, how it is possible for human life to be supported with so small a quantity of the articles it cannot want; not making any allowance for sickness or the least deviation into excess, for which great allowances ought to be made amongst those ranks of men whose situation in life does not allow them the advantages of well-informed minds for the government of their actions, but if both these are taken into the account, in the most moderate degree, and added to them,

[95]

them, a little fluctuation in the Branch of Trade on which their employment depends, it will then appear impossible but distress, misery, and want must be felt in all the various stages of extremity by the generality of the common people of this country, and this is unquestionably the situation of a great part of them at this day. That there are causes productive hereof is as undeniable as the effects which are seen; and as these causes appear in their very nature to be followed by a regular *accumulation* of the evil their consequences produce, the situation of those numerous parts of society they most affect, must ever continue to grow worse whilst the causes from which they arise remain in existence.

I shall lay no restraint on the freedom of my observations on what these causes are, and if they should appear narrow, mistaken, or ill-founded to a person placed

placed in an elevated station, who has the command of a more just and extensive prospect over the great concerns of his country, yet I am satisfied of the indulgence with which your Lordship will receive them from a person placed so far below you as to possess no such advantage.

Forty years ago, a fine writer, speaking of the growing Luxury of that time, says, in its extenuation:

Yet hence the Poor are cloath'd, the Hungry fed, Health to himself, and to his Infants Bread The Lab'rer bears.

It may be so in a limited degree, but where the employment of the bulk of the community *depends* on the *Commercc* of a country, every addition to the number, supported by internal Luxury, increases the burthen with which the produce and Manufactures of a country goes loaded to

to all foreign markets, and whenever the scale of Luxury preponderates in a commercial state, it as effectually prevents the passing of exports into other nations, as if a chain was placed a-cross the entrance of their sea-ports.

The numbers whom Luxury and its arts employ in this Kingdom, are become an heavy charge upon every stage of its Trading Branches; and hundreds of thousands are now every year collected from the industry of the useful members of the state, and poured out by lavish hands upon the innumerable race whom Luxury has raised to crowd the industrious hive, and live upon the honey that was never made by the labour of their tender hands.

Any Town in England that is frequented by Nobility or families of expence, may be received as a plain in-

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[98]

stance of the effects of Luxury in a Trading state; and it must at once appear how unfavourable it would be to the success of the most Staple Article of our Manufactures, to have the labour it required done at a place where all the necessaries of life were rendered dear and scarce by a number of extravagant consumers: oppose to this a town where there are but few whose wants are not supplied by the labours of their hands, and we shall immediately see the cause of Manufactures flying from the capital: apply this instance to the whole kingdom and we see the cause of those difficulties with which the articles of our exports now find their entrance into those foreign countries, where they even have the advantage of long custom to give them the preference, but foreigners now annex the idea of high-priced, or much money, whenever they hear the sound of the very name of England.

Those

[99]

Those in Ireland and in Scotland, who murmur at the absence of the richest people belonging to them, may console themselves with the advantage it gives them as Manufacturing and Trading Countries; it is true, they often loose by the absence of their Nobility and Gentlemen that aid which men of the most improved understandings and independent fortunes can always render to the country they live in: but notwithstanding these advantages, if the Nobility and Gentry were to take with them a numerous train, and spread dissipation and expence around them, there can be no doubt, as Manufacturing and Trading Countries, they would pay too dear for their presence, by the addition it would unavoidably create in the price of all the necessaries of life and labour, in the expence of which those countries that are our rivals in Commerce, are as much below Ireland and Scotland as these are

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below

[100]

below England, and as England in general is cheaper than London: this leads us to the fountain from whence all the evils flow; and we discover in the seat of government itself, the source that sends forth those streams of Luxury and expence that overspread the land, and destroy its commerce; and where its influence most prevails, there we see those fatal evils that every state should dread; a declining Trade, people unemployed, provisions high-priced, subjects decreasing in their number, by the hard conditions under which every poor man sees his children must be raised, giddy thousands forsaking fair Virtue's peaceful ways, and becoming a fruitless race; and as the idle and abandoned love not order, as their numbers grow they recruit the herd of members for sedition: Can consequences so obnoxious to government spring from government itself?

The

[101]

The records of history present us with many instances where the subversion of a government hath proceeded directly from its own measures: in such cases the existence of the causes, is seldom admitted as good evidence, till the effects appear: we are naturally unwilling to believe what we do not wish should be true; but when consequences begin to take place, it has often been too late to prevent the danger, even if all the members of a state were ready to unite in the endeavours to do it: and if there are causes which in their nature tend to weaken, and finally to destroy the strength and independence of a state, it is equally interesting to both prince and people, to examine if there are at present the marks of any such causes amongst them. This enquiry will take its date from that time when it first was made the Interest of one Englishman to buy the suffrage of another, to dispose of it again, with the

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freedom

[102]

freedom of his voice to the other branches of a government, whom recent experience had taught to fear the censure of the representatives of the people: and as favourite objects arose, *foreign* to the common good of the people, the necessity increased to have the sanction of an approbation the people themselves never would give; the smiles of government therefore shone upon her pliant sons, and their unwearied constituents were lured with gold and for ever sold their birth-right. Improving times hath reduced to system what necessity began, and many of those privileges which were possessed by numbers, and at stated periods, devolved upon the person of their choice, have long been held by purchase as the property of a single man, and as *Majority* gave the word of command, this object hath been pursued by the same uniform course in all the various changes at the helm, till by degrees a large

[103]

large proportion of the people's weight have been reduced into the possession of a few, and at their will, bartered for the object of their avarice or ambition; so that many of those who were formerly appointed and paid as the trusty and faithful servants of a community, have become independent of the people's choice; and tho' the name they still bear implies *Responsibility*, yet they have long since out-lived an idea that became so necessary to be forgot, when Honour or Interest were not bestowed by the people's voice: and those parts of the constituent number, who have not, or could not alienate the privilege of their choice, have often had it diverted from those men, on whom it would otherwise of course have fallen, who stood most recommended to the general esteem and confidence by the known ability and probity of their characters; instead of whom much pains and expence has been

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taken

[104]

taken with elective bodies, to make them prefer, (what no man naturally does) men whose conducts they knew less answered those marks, or men whom they did not know at all. Later times hath reduced this practise into a more compendious system, and the ruling power is relieved of the trouble of its interference by individuals of wealth or influence; and when their man appears, his voice is sooner purchased than that of the body from whence he comes, many of whose mouths are shut against complaint, by having done in the first instance for a small reward, what he afterwards does for a greater; and indeed Interest and Promotion are so generally made to lean to those who are most willing and useful, in forwarding the wishes of their superiors, that the idea of criminality is now changed into that of prudence to accept an offered advantage, and an emulation prevails who shall stand foremost on the list;

[105]

list; there are, undoubtedly, many of the elective bodies to whom this cannot justly be applied, but their being uncorrupted seems to arise more from the greatness of their number than their virtue, as there are few places where they can be brought within the reach of influence, but it is found to prevail: and those constituents who give their suffrages with a view to their own present advantage, relinquish the very claim to a disinterested representation; and if the proportion of the elective body, who act under the influence of such sentiments, may be estimated from those who avow their motives, it would make no small part of the whole number, to whom must be added, all those whose rights are held as the property, or under the sole direction of an individual, and these together affords the most satisfactory evidence that the Majority of that body, whose voice is of so much importance to whatever concerns the

[106]

the persons or property of the Inhabitants of this Island, are members who have been thus constituted, and who have actually paid a valuable consideration for the place upon which they sit, and therefore consider that they have a right to make any use of it they please, and hold themselves accountable to none but those to whom they in their turn, have surrendered the freedom of their voice, for a gratification received or promised. Now admitting in a society of five hundred and fifty, that three hundred of them really consist of such members, it must follow that they cannot be expected to act with any greater restraint under one Administration than another; at liberty to pursue the object of their advantage, it is of no importance to them by whom the mirror is held, if it is only steady, and constantly reflects upon them the warm rays of the Idol they worship. On the other hand let it be granted, that the

[107]

the remaining two hundred and fifty are the free unbiassed choice of the people they represent, that the constituents of every one of this number had a just sense of the importance of an office that possessed such power over themselves, and therefore were to the last degree attentive, that he in whom they reposed their trust should be the person amongst them whose life bore the nearest resemblance to those qualities which are given us, by one of the greatest legislators * the world ever saw, as the characteristics of those who ought to be chosen into offices of power over the people; That they should be able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness: And let it be supposed that the electors of this number really chose them by these marks, and that they when chosen considered the people's good as the rule of their conduct, and like all men who have arisen

* Moses.

[108]

arisen to the highest attainments in wisdom and virtue, acted with a diffidence in their own knowledge; and when a question occurred of a doubtful nature, they informed the people who had sent them there, that the matter in agitation was only of importance so far as its effects might concern them and their posterity, and therefore wished the oldest and the wisest amongst them would confer together, that they might have the assistance of their united experience to justify their conduct to their country, as well as to those amongst whom they stood: and allow it also to be granted, that they were entirely independent in their circumstances (by their wants being less than their income) and that they, in all things, acted as nearly as they could to what they believed the people would do were they present: in short, suppose that every one of these two hundred and fifty was a Savile, what does it avail if
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[109]

the Majority *only* of the society consider the advancement of their own interest as the leading motive of their conduct? And in that case the *voice* of the Majority is only another name for what is believed to be the *Interest* of the Majority; and though honour and advantage are not now thought to flow from the people, yet it is certain the supplies does; and therefore so far as money (under whatever name it goes) is the object pursued by the Representatives of the people, so far have they an Interest *contrary* to the Interest of the people, because what they receive the people pay; as such there is upon this ground alone, some reason to believe the society does not always speak the sentiments of the people: every separate case admits of distinct evidence; but to take the instance of one of the members of the society who last winter was the loudest in declaring, that they were the *People*, and in that
place

[110]

place alone they were assembled: there are many others that admit of shorter proof, but there appears a greater degree of justice in trying the merits of the question in the case of this very gentleman; the people of the community whose *name* he represents, were tempted a few years ago to sell their freeholds to my Lord —, a Majority of them did so: at the last election these freeholds were conveyed to nominal voters, one of whom afterwards refused to re-convey the property to my Lord, an action was commenced against him, and the man having added to the baseness of his employment the folly of giving an obligation, he was held to the performance of it; so that it is a fact publicly and perfectly known, that this part of the constituents all exist in the person of one noble Lord, and if he was in his place at the instant of the declaration being made, it was literally true, that all the
people

[111]

people the Honourable Gentleman represented were then really assembled: whatever pain it may give us to even doubt the want of a quality that would otherwise make the same character delight our hearts as well as our ears, whenever we listened to the finest flow of the brightest eloquence; but to receive the declaration as it certainly was meant to be understood, I should as soon expect the Gentleman to believe me, if I assured him that the people of Hindostân were assembled in Leadenhall Street, and to that place only we must go to hear the genuine language of their hearts.

After this sketch of the society itself, we shall now take a short view of a single branch of its measures for a few years past, and enquire at what time; and in whose administration, the Majority refused to grant any supplies that were desired of them? Or if such a Vote
past

past with difficulty under one administration, was it not given with its usual freedom upon the succession of the next more favourable influence? And if it was not very evident at the times of the largest sums being voted from the people, that they became burthened with a certain evil, by the expence of pursuits, wherein their good was extremely doubtful; and in which it could in no wise be said, that either their protection or defence were concerned. In short, a candid man must confess, that under all the change of ministers our memories can reach, the Majority of the Representatives of the people, have given their liberal concurrence to magnify the mountain which lavish hands have laid upon their country; and to bring the history down to the present hour, besides the great debt which justice demands should be truly paid, a long and large account appears of enormous Salaries, Sinécures, Pensions, Perquisites and Gifts, in a degree

gree the right of some, but so unjust to many, and so over-rated to all, that Equity would blush to claim the payment of them at Industry's hand. These are the causes of the *many* growing poor and the *few* growing rich; and as every year revolves, the load of an expensive Government takes Millions from the labour of the subjects in general, and transfers them into the hands of the great and opulent, and by its application being favourable to Luxury it gives a double edge to wound the nation's strength and commerce. Thus by just decree, the inability to give is produced by the abuse of that which before was given: and now in the midst of peace the yearly Taxes the Public pay, are found insufficient to prevent the Financier of the State from becoming the annual Institutor of the most destructive species of gaming, by which our very servant maids are taught to dwell upon the hopes of living without Industry, and

[114]

the example of a prize instructs thousands to commit rebellion against the wise ordinations of Providence, that men should live by their labour, and all the intemperate candidates for wealth quote the public patronage of the measures of the state, and with themselves ruin thousands. Those who would wish to form their judgments upon the evidence of no other authority than truth, need not distract themselves with multiplying calculations of how much we shall pay off in ten years peace; only allow the present charge of Government to stand as it does, and if that happy period should be extended to five times the length, the inability of the subjects, who bear the burthen of the Taxes, will increase by a tenfold proportion to the Scraps of reduction that hath been made since the conclusion of the last war: for we have the most demonstrable evidence from all that we can either see or feel, that the effects

[115]

effects of the present Taxation is of itself sufficient to destroy the ability of continuing to pay it, in the bulk of the Inhabitants of the kingdom, in the present situation of its Trade, the decline of which is greatly assisted by the causes that concur with the weight of the public burthen.

The splendid Servants of an expensive Government are seen through all the Land, and inflame vain Mortals Minds with Avarice and Ambition. Titles, Offices, and Emoluments, with all the honours such distinctions can give, are bestowed in proportion to the power and influence of those who will act in obedience to the Measures of Ministers of State: all arts are used; the whole earth is searched to find materials to build a pile whereon men may climb to posts of eminence, and havock is made of one quarter of the globe for treasure, to ap-

pease the contagion of their example, and every year surprises us with the sudden glories of men grown rich without Labour or Virtue; whose equipages shine like meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations.

This is not all, the noble Landlords of our country are led by the blaze of wealth to forsake the hospitable mansions of their ancestors, and leave the princely dignity of dispensing ease and plenty on all around them, to croud the overgrown capital, and throng amongst an undistinguished number to imitate the gilded insects of a day, in show and luxury. The evil our nation feels is but here begun: our country swarms with men grown rich by presents made to blunt the pointed steel, or to remove the more cruel necessity which Eastern Arts of Tyranny have taught Britons to inflict, or those who Western Slaves command, or the
numerous

numerous breed of Paymasters, Agents, Contractors and Commissaries; all these fly round the Land, and with the united powers of wealth and cunning corrupt the people and make slaves of freemen.

The country Gentleman finds himself rivalled at his very door, and many, by an honest zeal, are led to oppose their country's being represented by men who are known but by their Equipage, and whose Merit can only be estimated by the number of their Horses: but since half-thinking Voters have mistaken their interest for a bribe, and have loaded themselves and their country by bartering their voices for a gift, the country Gentleman not only engages with all the odds of wealth against him, but his native honesty stands opposed in the unequal combat, with all the address the schools of artifice can teach the

most fortunate and subtile of their students,

From hence an hundred causes rise to increase the price of Land and create the eager exaction of Rents, which have been so generally advanced over all the country, to counteract the weight of foreign wealth, and to furnish means of equal Luxury. Here we have the cause complete of all the mischief to which a nation could be exposed by its greatest foes: Lands, Rents, Provisions, Labour high-priced, and all the Articles of our produce carried to every market under terms of disadvantage, compared with those countries that are our rivals in every Branch of Commerce; our Exports of course decline, and so must the Imports, as poverty increases amongst the bulk of the people who are the consumers: and as every returning year sweeps up its millions, from the Subjects, thro' the
branches

branches of the Revenue and (I wish I could not add) the Church, the natural operation performed by both, is to give to the *few* what is taken from the many; and as the load moves along it reduces *thousands* of families to indigence, as it raises scores to independance; and every Horse and every Man that are added to the train of modern greatness, increases the burthen that now lays heavy on the lowest and middling orders of the Inhabitants of our country; and upon any little interruption to Trade or Credit disorder and distress spreads amongst them: and we must prevail with ourselves to patiently expect the daily increase of both, till the ingenious discovery is made, of raising *cheap Produce* upon *dear Ground*, of making *low-priced Manufacturies* by the labour of people who must live upon *high-priced Provisions*, and till it is found that *Commerce will increase and flourish best in countries*

whose productions cost most. But till these discoveries are made we must form our judgments of the situation of our own country by old fashioned maxims that have been found true in the experience of all others; and whoever compares the price of Land, Provisions, Labour and Taxes in Great Britain, with those of any other country in Europe; Man for Man, and Acre for Acre, will then rest satisfied, that so long as the causes continue which have produced the present inequality, so long must our Merchants be more and more incumbered, our Manufacturers be less and less employed, and the labouring people be more and more needy; every year will increase the riches of the opulent, reduce the property of the middling people, and increase the number and distress of the poor, and if the difficulties continue with which the generality of these are now overwhelmed, so that with all their care
and

and industry they cannot find means of procuring a bare subsistence, their numbers must decrease: if they have not the means of subsistence sufficient for themselves, how can they think of yielding a part of it to their offspring? If they are not able to take care of *themselves* even in their own illness, how can they bring up, and look after *Creatures*, who are in a state of continual illness, that is, *Infancy*? And when Depopulation has once gained much ground in a country the people drop off by an imperceptible and habitual malady; born in Langour and Misery, under the oppression of false Maxims adopted by Government, the people are destroyed without perceiving the Causes of their destruction; and it will be in vain to expect assistance from the children which may be born in future; this hope is totally over: people raised up under distress, are generally as void of courage as they are of industry.

Indeed

[122]

Indeed it is equally painful and astonishing to any person of common humanity, to see such numbers unable to procure themselves the absolute necessaries of life, in a country that is blessed with such abundance, but his surprize ceases when he looks on the heaps which are held under the hands of Avarice and only bestowed upon the objects of Luxury or Ambition, very little of which ever reaches the most numerous as well as the most useful part of the community, from whose industry it is drawn

This country can have few greater dangers to fear, than the *Causes* of that distress which is now so visible in it, the continuance of which must weaken and finally destroy those orders of the state on whom its strength depends, a little longer and the *Supplies* of an expensive Government,

[123]

Government, will, of itself, divide its subjects into a poor dispirited multitude, and a set of opulent and imperious Dictators; and if such as are able, continue to be permitted to remove to our happy Colonies, it may not be many ages till few will be left behind, but the Rich and Great, that may think their country worth defending, either for themselves or their Nobles; and if they were willing, the Chastisements of Power may not have left the common people Courage enough to stand against the bold step of a fierce Russian; and our Grandsons may think themselves blessed, in seeing the Land they live in become the province of more civilized masters. If some such consequences as these do not follow the continuance of the causes that have been accumulating for many years past, this kingdom must stand a negative in the annals of time to the History of the whole World. If the Inhabitants

[124]

tants of a country are allowed, by the moderation of their Government, to enjoy the comforts of life by the fruits of their Labour, and after contributing to the just support of the state that protects them, are left in the possession of some little property, they will ever be undaunted in the defence of it; but when an honest industrious man finds, with all his care, that there remains to him and his family but a very scanty share of Food and Cloathing, after paying the Rent to his Lord, and the Tax to his King, he begins to think he enjoys but a small proportion of the good things with which his country abounds; and when succeeding years still make his part less, Peace forsakes his Dwelling; the Tears of a Wife and the Cries of Children, raised by the acute Feelings of Hunger and Cold; give a pain that the heart of a Briton seems the least able to bear; the generous Breast turns from
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[125]

the Distress it cannot relieve, and in silence weeps its way from home, and perhaps the first object his full heart allows his eye to see, is the high-fed Horses, Dogs and Footmen of his Lord and Master. Suppose at this time our Country's Danger compels the poor Man's Arm to its Defence, For whom shall he stretch it forth? For whom shall he fight? For his King? He venerates his name by the report he has often heard of his goodness, but alas! he has felt no more of it, than if he had lived in the East Indies: For his government? No, he thinks it unjust; for if it does not Tax the poor man more than it does the rich, it leaves the rich man at liberty to make the poor pay all in the increase of his Rent: and as to his Laws he has as few motives of attachment to them that forbid him to kill a wild bird, which he knows belongs to no man so much as himself, as it takes its food from
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[126]

the earth tilled by his Labour, and paid for by the Sweat of his Brow; but surely every man will fight for his country? Most men that have hitherto fought for this country, have no idea of it separate to the person's ground on which they have lived, and this they have never remembered with pleasure, since they were exposed to Fines and Imprisonment for killing a Hare: but if a man will not fight for any temporal inducement, he will surely do it to maintain his religion? Alas! this the least of all, for he has been allowed to grow up, without the knowledge of any consolations from Religion, that he thinks of half the value of the Tithes. This is no vain Theory, I advance it as the Sentiments of Farmers and Plowmen, and will trust the truth to your enquiry, and I believe Farmers and Plowmen will ever be found to make the best Soldiers, whilst the native freedom of their minds remains un-

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[127]

broke by vexation; or till they are starved into a service they know they can never leave to return to the comforts of ease or plenty. But in short, the Courage of men in war, or their industry in peace, is founded upon a very simple rule: *every man will take more care of his own property, than that which belongs to another; and will not exert his utmost endeavours in the defence of that, which he has reason to fear another may deprive him of.* But it may be said, Soldiers seldom have much property to defend; admit this to be true, yet Soldiers are men, and take up arms with the feelings of the people amongst whom they have lived, and it has not yet been found that they change their Nature with their Cloaths. Our Fleets must ever be manned, and our Armies recruited, with men taken from amongst the common people; and when those hopes which animate the whole of hu-

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[128]

man kind, become blunted by long years of poverty, under the fear of *Power* or *Penal-Laws* multiplied to check the disorders of men grown desparate by distress; as the effects of these increase, so will the Nation's strength decline.

The Measures Government has permitted to be pursued for many years past, have had the uniform tendency of reducing the middling orders of the state to poverty, and are now become insupportable; and the continuance of those Measures will make the people, on whose bravery the strength and safety of our country depends, fall away like the Oaks in our Forests, and like them never be missed till they are wanted: and it would be a delusion to expect, that any thing *less* than that bravery, to which this Nation owes so many advantages, can continue to support it; and it will be in vain to expect the people to *maintain* their undaunted

[129]

ed courage, when the Freedom, Commerce, and Plenty from which it grows, is continually declining: and there are good grounds for considering it as a certain maxim, that no number of Inhabitants this narrow country can keep could long defend it after that resolution is lost amongst the common people, which springs from Property and Independence; and no form of Government in this Island can ever be long supported by such subjects against those countries to whose interest it stands opposed, and who have the odds of numbers so much in their favour; and the natural situation of our country can never enable it to receive much advantage from the most friendly of its Allies; neither could they ever give sufficient security against their becoming our enemies, this Island having already become the conquest of those it received for its defence. * And

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* The Saxons.

whatever may be the increasing strength of our Colonies, they are too remote to afford us much support; and, were they at less distance, some of them might not come with cordiality to our assistance till they have received instances of greater kindness than it is thought a Mother shews her Children when she turns them out of their House, or a Parent who only shews his authority by expressions of resentment.

In this country the security and independence of the Prince and the People stand inseparably upon the same ground, and the strength and power of the Crown cannot be more effectually injured than by reducing the Property or abridging the Freedom of the great body of the subjects; and whatever is productive of this is equally dangerous to both, and the danger is much more to be feared by the causes of it laying
concealed,

concealed, and without any appearance of violence working by imperceptible degrees till all the weight as well as all the resources of Government are silently conveyed into the Aristocratical scale, and by the power of Taxation being held in the hands of the Rich and Great, independent of the People, the whole burthen of the State is made to rest ultimately with the People at large; and instead of the Taxes being laid with an equal regard to all the inhabitants in general, and calculated to increase *in proportion* to the Luxury and Prodigality of *each* individual, the bulk of the Revenue is drawn from the laborious and industrious orders of the State, and the annual amount of the Taxes is now such as must by a very hasty progress destroy the ability of the Subjects to raise the Supplies every Year demands of them.

The Political may be compared to the Natural Body; and when the Constitution of either begins to decay, the heat keeps nearest the heart, and retires from the extremities. It is certain, had the small Tax that was laid upon the Colonies been exacted in specie and sent out of the Provinces, that in a few years a Dollar must have become the greatest rarity amongst them.

In the next degree to the Colonies are the remote parts of the kingdom; and admitting the Commerce of Great-Britain and Ireland to maintain its present extent, (the hope of which cannot be founded upon the evidence of a single fact) the amount of the Public Taxation, as it now stands, must of itself soon exhaust the specie of all the poorest parts of the country, and towns of the most trade and opulence will be the only places where any quantity of current

current money will remain: and, as money retires within circles more and more contracted, it will be accompanied step by step with increasing difficulties to the Community, as well as to Government itself, nothing being more certain, than that a State will receive more benefit from several thousands of subjects who enjoy a moderate competency, than from a few hundreds who are immensely rich.

The decay of every government has generally begun in the Corruption of its fundamental principles.

That this is the case with that Society who alone may be said to keep the Keys of the Public Money cannot admit of the least doubt.

The true state of part of that body is summed up by the excellent Wri-

[134]

ter of the FALSE ALARM, in these few words :

“ Many of the Representatives of the People can hardly be said to have been chosen at all. Some by inheriting a Borough inherit a Seat ; and some sit by the favour of others.” And to this may be added a long list of the Sons, Servants, and Dependents of the other Branches of the Legislature, into whose hands that power is now fallen, which manifestly was the plain design of the Constitution should ever be held and conferred by the great elective body of the nation ; but so large a proportion thereof has been sold, evaded, or betrayed into other hands, that it cannot now be said, with any degree of truth, that the Majority of that Society (which exercises all the privileges of genuine Representatives) in any wise breathe the sentiments of the people, but on the contrary

[135]

trary a great part of their number live in the open possession of emoluments themselves, and likewise become the yearly Granters of enormous sums to others ; and the People are made to tremble under the loads laid upon them by (those who are called) their own Representatives.

And, were a General Election to take place once in three years, or once every year, it could not mend the matter a whit ; nay, it might justly be expected to encrease the burthens of the People. The Elector who takes a Bribe, (call it by what you please, Money, Place, or Promise) and for that gives his vote to a Candidate whose Interest or Ambition induces him to bestow a reward, the same Elector may justly be expected to betray his trust into the same hands every year, were it in his power.

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[136]

And he that possesses a Borough would certainly make the same use of his right once each year as he now does once in seven.

And the Peer, who now procures the Election of his Dependent, might probably think the persuasion of his Influence not more criminal, if he made use of it seven times as often as he does.

It must be allowed, that the People would *now* be very partially represented; did all the Elective Societies stand as they were erected by the Constitution. But after taking a survey of the present situation of these Elective Bodies, and observing *the total decay of some, the alienation of many, the corruption of more,* and the evasions and illegal influence practised with almost all the rest; and then examine the Members sent in the *name* of those bodies, and the proportion

[137]

tion of them who are actually living upon the wages of the other branches of the Legislature; the honest conclusion every man must then make in his own mind is, that the People are not now, nor ever can be, *represented* by Gentlemen thus *chosen*, and allowed to be thus employed after they are returned; and that the power of controul over the *Majority* of that Society is entirely lost to the People whose symbol it is; and the disease may justly be thought *incurable*, when the remedy of the Evil is to be found *only in itself*.

Whoever loves truth for its own sake, cannot be satisfied to confine his enquiries after it to those places where he has any suspicion it is not to be found; and he that attends to this society, as the only place where he can discover the real situation of the people at large, must find himself led into a mistaken conclusion

conclusion of the causes of his country's distress, and in a little time the knowledge of the truth may arrive too late for the remedy: and the same day may discover, that the servants of the Prince, and the (Majority of the) Representatives of the people, have pursued the objects of their avarice and ambition till they have exhausted their Country's strength; and that the wealth and grandeur of our Aristocratical Lords has been raised at the expence of their Prince's independence and the People's peace: and the tyrannic fire has already descended even to the Magistrates of many of our Incorporated Societies; and they have learned to oppress the People, whose protection was the very design of their offices, and to usurp that property over which they were originally chosen by the Community as guardians for the People's use.

Nothing

Nothing is more evident than the noble design of our happy Constitution in giving privileges and power to the Magistrate, the Member, the Peer, and the Prince, that they were only to be exercised for the Public Good: the protection and defence of the People and their property was the plain intention of all the authority with which the People invested their Governors or Representatives; and this, it is certain, was the rule of their conduct for ages after societies were first formed, for their common safety and advantage.

It is now equally certain, that this order is totally inverted, and that at the present hour, there are but very few exceptions to be found amongst the Peers, the Members, and the Magistrates, who do not discover by the uniform course of their actions, that the People only live for them, and not they for the People;

[140]

People; and there is the strongest evidence to believe, that the only branch of the State at this day, who thinks the People's peace and happiness the rule of conduct, is the PRINCE.

With the other branches of the Legislature the People have lost their weight, and all things are out of course; they are oppressed to the last extremity by the burthenome Taxes laid upon them; and Scarcity, declining Trade, increasing Luxury, Disorders, and Penal Laws, multiply together, to complete the disquiet and unhappiness of society.

Your Lordship is much better acquainted than I can pretend to be, with the whole state of the Truths I have advanced; indeed, many of them are so obvious, that a tolerable knowledge of them might be caught in a Nobleman's flight betwixt town and country, and
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[141]

the causes and the consequences are so apparent, that they may be seen by him who only allows himself an hour's consideration in the week. I therefore do not write to inform your Lordship, so much as to shew you, that the effects of the measures of Government upon the People, are perfectly understood by the multitude, particularly the inhabitants of the city of London, many of whom have been transplanted from every corner of the Island, and their continual intercourse and correspondence with the people of the country, enables them to compare the evidence of one fact with another; and the knowledge of the situation of the whole kingdom is found in London, as the centre is shewn by lines drawn from the circle: and whoever is desirous of having a complete knowledge of the *real* situation of the people of this country, will obtain it in the most compendious
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[142]

dious manner amongst the dispassionate part of the citizens of London: independent by their industry, they speak what they know without hope of favour, or fear of censure; and their situation giving them the best opportunity of being informed of what is passing amongst the people, their voice ought ever to be listened to with great attention. The coolest men may often say more than they themselves approve; but upon whatever occasion the citizens of London in general complain loud and often, it may be taken for granted that there is good grounds for what they say: most of them are as well satisfied as your Lordship can be, that the best *private* character is naturally to be expected to prove the best *public* one; plain honest men know no such distinctions as to divide a man from himself, or to look for good fruit from a bad tree; and those who make it matter of wonder how many

[143]

many men of good sense and property could ever think of patronising a character that every one allowed was very defective, and before any evidence appeared of such a change of principles as could make him deservedly to be trusted; but the wonder will cease when we consider, that they did not support a man who opposed himself with firmness to a Majority, so much from a persuasion of his motives being *right*, as that those he resisted were *wrong*; and such as had the best evidence to believe that many names who stood high amongst the Majority, had waded to their seats through Bribery or Perjury, or both, thought themselves justified in using the instrument they did, and by aiding an unprincipled man, they hoped for success, by opposing, with the same weapons they saw were used against the public good. But the warmest in this cause begin now to stand still, and look about them, and ask one another, What they

they mean by an opposition to the Majority of a society, whose measures has uniformly tended to encrease the burthen of the people, under every change of leaders that an indulgent Prince has endeavoured to gratify his people with?

Nothing is so easy as to say, under such an Administration such and such Gentlemen will come into office, but what is to follow from thence, few or none of the leaders of any party can come into power that have not possessed it already; and perhaps there never was a time when the generality of the nation were better satisfied with the Prudence and Moderation of the great officers of the state than they are at present, and yet most of the thinking people of the land see that the situation of their country is continually growing worse and worse, and that our foreign Commerce and the internal welfare of the people are daily falling

falling victims to the burthens laid upon them by the State; and so long as the conduct of a Majority emphatically says to the Minister for the time being, that they will chearfully grant the sums he is pleased to say are necessary for the Public Service, it is of little importance to the People who are the Ministers, there being nothing more dangerous in its consequences to the general good of the People than to continue the yearly Supplies at their present amount.

It begins therefore now to be generally understood, that to hope for relief from the evils that prevail by the help of what is commonly understood by an *Opposition*, is a meer delusion, and only leads men to flatter themselves into an expectation of relief without having the least grounds for its support; and every new Minister convinces them, that their hopes were

[146]

as vain as a shadow, and as idle as a dream.

Many indeed began to think, when they saw reductions made in the oppressive Public Debt, that there was some reality in the designs of the present Minister, and they have patiently attended the progress, till they see it amounts to nothing more than to shew that a removal of the People's burthens was thought expedient, but as to the reduction itself, it is little more than the Feather blown from the Mountain's top; and people in vain look around them, without being able to discover a single man that has shewn himself in earnest to restore the power of restraint to the People, by assisting the common law to do them justice in any one of the many instances where the honest design of a true Representation is openly betrayed; and, notwithstanding the expulsion of
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[147]

a justly disqualified member, no set of men has been found to avail themselves of the advantage this precedent would have afforded them in the case of those who are by law disqualified. It is true, it may be said that the Society are the judges of all their own privileges. It may be so; but surely a branch of the Legislature would never hold for good and valid what almost every Attorney's clerk in the country knows to be an evasion and a fraud: and since so little has been done to restore to the People a genuine Representation, save only in the instance of a single Candidate whom the Law disqualified without the addition of a vote, it may be fairly concluded that all parties join issue in giving the smile of courtesy to whatever is illegal in Elections, and to many of the disqualifying perquisites annexed to the seats of Members. And in general the Electors and the Elected are so blinded

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[148]

by their own immediate interest, that it is visionary to the last degree to look for a settled Majority who will avert the calamities of their Country; by a steady, wise, and manly conduct, expressive of their feelings for the difficulties under which the People labour; and by their attention to the Public Expences prove, that they consider as their own the expending of the People's property, and with the real dignity of true Representatives of a brave and generous People, shew their attachment to their Prince by an uniform grant of the sum his own moderation has limited for the support of the dignity of his Crown, and with this the *necessary* supplies for the Naval and Military Establishments, and for the *just* expence of the Civil Government, and for faithfully discharging the Interest of the Public Debt; but here to stop with an unshaken firmness, and suffer no splendid Pensioner to live in state at an
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[149]

expence to the People, that must make a thousand honest men labour under continual poverty and wretchedness to support it.

A Majority of men actuated by these motives, and of that noble independence of mind that would think it meaner to live in ease at the cost of others, would soon prescribe bounds to the avarice of Placemen, and allow no advantages to be annexed to preferment that were oppressive to their country, but hold an equal scale betwixt the Reward and the Duty performed by the servants of a Limited Government.

Was this ever to be done, the violent and the factious would lose the objects that now inflame their breasts; for, were a controversy to be raised concerning the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, and to that controversy annex

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a degree of influence upon the condition of the subjects, it would be managed with as much heat and animosity as we now see it is in, who shall be Mayor, Member, or Minister.

But, was nothing more to be gained by a successful Opposition than a Salary worthy of the service, the spirits of the most zealous Partisans would soon be composed, and men would rest in peace, and become useful members of the Community they now disturb.

The Representatives of the People may justly be considered as their ambassadors to the State: and how do we admire the Man, who without any other support than his own noble firmness of mind, stems the torrent of a misguided Senate, and with well-seasoned language announces the thunder of his Country's justice against those that durst attempt

[151]

tempt to shed one drop of English blood! Surely then there is still as much virtue and love of glory left amongst us, as to oppose that torrent which bears down a whole country into misery and distress, and to lighten that load of the State, which makes floods of English tears to be shed under its oppressive weight.

Those Gentlemen, whose aid is most to be expected in removing the People's burthens, have not an adequate idea of the danger attending the delay, because they have little or no conception of the compulsory force of an argument that exceeds all fear of punishment, what I mean is, *the want of Bread*. And the more the People of a Country have been accustomed to Commercial and Maritime Employments, the greater is the danger when the measures of the State have reduced thousands of them to

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[152]

wretchedness; the first idea that comes into their heads is that which occurs to men at sea, when they think they are reduced to want by the selfishness or unskilfulness of their Officers, they think themselves justified in any attempt, and, if their situation appears to be dangerous, they consider that the Common Man has then as much at stake as the Commander, and obedience and distinction are forgotten together.

The basis of *Authority* is *Justice*; and when the People of a Country feel the latter is not the Rule of Action towards them, the former will fall to the ground, and when they are more and more convinced that all their sufferings are brought upon them by the beneficial abuse of the privileges of the Electors and Elected, they may be forced by their Necessities to think them the objects of their resentment, however contrary

[153]

trary it may prove to the removal of their distresses.

And, should it still be the misfortune of the Prince and People of this Country, that the Wealth and Strength of both must continue to be consumed by the insatiable avarice of their own Servants, Dependents, and Representatives, it is then plain to every man, who is at all acquainted with the real situation of the People, that their ability to support the present burthens of the State must be of very short duration; and, if our Ministers of State will allow their time and their abilities to be employed in unimportant pursuits, and suffer the distresses of their Country to continue accumulating, they may find themselves surpris'd by the sudden appearance of the alternative to which the People must find themselves reduced. And it ought ever to be remembered, that no proposition

fition can carry with it greater evidence of its own weakness, than to suppose that the Government of this Country can long *support itself* after the great body of the People are reduced to poverty.

When the difficulties under which the subjects labour have been brought upon them by the measures of their Government for a course of years, the People totally lose the idea of reverence for their Superiors and the Laws, and are not to be persuaded that their Rulers so much as *intend* their relief; and though they are used with moderation and tenderness, and not a shilling taken from them but by the authority of their Legislators, and nothing illegal committed against them, yet, when they are greatly distressed, they are scarce confined within the bounds of obedience. But when their situation approaches towards
extremity,

extremity, and they feel a General Oppression, if no act of violence is shewn them, yet Poverty alone begets Despair, and the People rush upon precipices and destruction, when heavy loads and exactions have reduced them to wretchedness.

The time is already arrived, when the People are no longer to be amused with the expectations of relief from whence it can never arrive. The cause of their Misery solely rests in the load laid upon them by an expensive Government; and, if relief is seriously intended them, it is a mere delusion to expect it from any other quarter than by lessening the burthens of the State: here only must the friends of their Country, the friends of Mankind, fix their eye, and not allow their attention any longer to be diverted by the visionary controversies betwixt Whig and Tory, Patriot
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[156]

and Courtier, whilst each by turns riot in the fullness of emoluments drawn from the Public Industry. Away with the idle phantom of all Oppositions that have not for their objects the People's real relief, and to restore to them their just and adequate weight in the Legislature.

The friends of the People mislead themselves, in hoping to see the Public Distress removed, by those who have already possessed the Powers of Administration without attempting to lessen the charge of Government, as it is certain the first step to be taken for the general relief is the reduction of the Supplies yearly voted from the People; and the least reflection must convince us, that all besides is a dream, out of which we must ever awake into the discovery of more and more distress amongst us.

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[157]

For instance, might we indulge ourselves in the supposition of a sum being struck off from the expences of the State equal to the Excise paid by the Malt Distillery, and a total prohibition take place against the use of Grain, in making an article destructive to the health of all who use it; in favour of which all the arguments that can be brought have no other foundation for their support than the amount of the Duty, and the emolument of some fifty or an hundred of the greatest makers and venders of this pernicious drug: The consequence of this to the Public would be, that more than *two hundred and fifty thousand quarters of Corn*, lost each year in making of Spirits in and about London only, would be saved for the useful Purposes of Consumption; and this quantity of grain alone *is equal to the Bread used in twelve months by two hundred thousand people*, converting the
Barley

[158]

Barley and Rye used by the Distillers at the present Price into Wheat.

I shall trouble you with another supposition, not so much from any probability of its ever taking place, as to shew, by the effects it would have upon the condition of the People, that their real relief, and the restoration of flourishing Manufactories and Trade in this Country, can only begin by taking off the shoulders of the subjects the charge of their Government, and supposing this was ever to be done to a degree equal to the amount of the Land-tax, and accompanied by a law to compel the reduction of the rents of land in proportion to the tax actually paid by the Landowner. When this was done, it cannot admit of a doubt but this reduction in the rent of the ground, would soon insinuate itself into the price of the produce; and Provisions, Labour, and Manufactures,

[159]

tures, would feel its good effects; and all branches of Merchandize would regain their strength and credit in proportion to the ease that was felt by the subjects, and the reduced price of all the articles of our Exports.

Whatever is short of some such general influence, can never be found to remove the evils under which this Country labours.

Indeed, it now appears to be intended, to lift the People up into the hopes of being relieved from their burthens, by Millions to be brought from the East.

Nothing can be a stronger emblem of the fate of Government itself, than the *difficulties in which that Company appear to be involved*, and to see before them the affairs of the greatest Commercial Body perhaps in the World, tumbling
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[160]

into disorder and ruin under the hands of its own Directors, and the richest branch of Trade rendered unable to pay the demands upon it by the avarice and injustice of its own servants.

But, admitting the Revenue collected in the East was brought home to reduce the debt of the State, compare this with the conduct of an individual, and it is exactly parallel with a man, who, from a principle of *mere honesty* to pay his creditors, or to provide for his family, is willing to do it by Robbery or Fraud.

Men, who have been admitted into a Country by the inducement of advantages arising from honest commerce, and when mutual intercourse had recommended them to confidence, then to begin, by intrigue and violence, to *wrest* from the People (whose unsuspecting hospitality had received the strangers) their

[161]

their very Country, and by all the arts of Oppression extort from them their Personal Property; the open robber or the thief are perfect innocence compared with men like these; and whatever may be the triumph of their victories, or the splendor of their wealth and greatness, it would be a pollution to the lowest class of honest society to admit, for its members men who have shewn themselves such enemies to all the rules of its safety and happiness.

I would not wish to be understood to indiscriminately involve, under the same sentence, all who have returned from India. I make no doubt but the King has many worthy subjects who have been, and now are in Asia; and there is no need of going beyond the bounds of charity to fix our judgments of those who deserve the contrary characteristic, for those men put their own case beyond

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[162]

all doubt who have accumulated scores of thousands in a shorter period than it is possible to have acquired them by fair means, and the evidence of their criminality accompanies the avowed possession of their sudden fortunes. And it is a stain to the National Justice to receive with favour subjects who return with wealth obtained by the known violation of the laws of any Country, no matter how remote.

With what abhorrence do we look upon our *good allies*, who openly join in the Division of the Dominions of their defenceless neighbours!

But this is a conduct worthy of Princes, compared to the armed robber who brings away by force the riches of a People amongst whom they were only received *to trade*.

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[163]

And that policy, which only changes the Governors of a State without affecting the Condition of the Subject, is honourable compared with the sly intrigue which steals away the Treasures of an Empire. And shall Great Britain share the Booty, and dignify the Thief! Shall the charge of a *Protestant Government* receive any part of its Supplies by a Revenue arising from Territorial Possessions acquired by Rapine and Violence, and held by the Public Injustice of any part of its Subjects!

The dignity of the British Nation is degraded by permitting any association of those that bear its name to *live* in licensed Fraud and Tyranny. And a *Government*, that stoops to these for the resources of its aid, sinks itself to an equality with the Barbarian State.

And, should the Majority of the Legislators of a People do this, all wise and

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good men know what they have to expect. The *place* alters not the nature of the *deed*: Injustice is the same whether it is committed under the light of the rising or the setting sun; and they that would receive the *reasonable* wages of a Government, any part of whose Revenue was by themselves voted to be paid by the allowed Oppression of a Foreign Nation, may truly be feared at home; and he, whose avarice would induce him to live at the unjust expence of a Stranger, may reasonably be expected to go the same length with a Native.

And when Injustice has been authorized by the Measures of a State, whether it was done to the People of a Foreign Nation, or exercised upon its own Subjects, the consequences ever appear to have been nearly the same, equally offensive to that JUSTICE which presides over all the inhabitants of the earth, whose unerring wisdom appears
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in the history of all nations to have proportioned the consequences to the malignity of their actions; and they are short-sighted Statesmen who do not continually keep in view, the greatest instruction that the Records of the Ages that are past affords.

With each individual this truth must be left to be adjusted in his own case, the great retribution being generally concealed from every human eye till the last moment for amendment expires, and is but seldom expressed, save in that apparent want of real felicity which Conscious Virtue and Favour Divine alone can give. But Communities and States, being limited to an earthly existence, must there receive the just reward of their combined measures; and when we have examined the history of a Country for a few years together, this truth becomes as clear to

[166]

our apprehension as the light of the sun. And the same evidence we have of the Being of this Universal Government we have of its Design—that it ever tends to the Good of all the Human Kind. And those Kingdoms, whose Government hath usurped their authority, to render *many* unhappy for the advantage of a few, have ever found that no wisdom or strength could finally prevail in support of whatever in itself was morally unjust; and in the end the *many* must get the better of the *few*, by the same means by which the *few* had got the better of the *many*.

Of all the measures of a Government that intrench upon the Rights of the Subject, those Laws that are made *to fasten upon Property are the worst*. They are not indeed levelled at the Lives and Liberties of the People, but nothing ties up their hands more effectually;

[167]

tually; and whilst the great wheel of an expensive Government turns round, it winds up the Property of the Subjects at large; and was a Peck of Wheat sold for a Penny, the poor Man must want Bread, if the amount of the Public Taxes is disproportioned to the Wealth of the People who are compelled to pay them. The Subject may enjoy Liberty of Conscience, their Persons be free, and their Houses sacred; but when the burthens of the State reduces their Trade, and exhausts their Property, the Extremity of every Evil is brought upon them in the Single Cause of their Poverty.

Upon this point rests the Justice of the Legislature; in their hands are held the Scales betwixt their Subjects and their Servants. And shall they extort with one hand Millions from the Great Family of the Industrious, the Poor and

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[168]

the Needy; and with the other squander thousands upon services that can only be truly said to be performed in AIR? For Hundreds, of Unworthy Greatness, live in State at the People's cost, who cannot say that they perform to the Public any EARTHLY service. And Justice must be deaf, as well as blind, to enable those who do, to ride in pomp upon the Ruins of the People.

The Cause which I serve scorns the name of all Party or Personality. It is the Oppression of an Expensive Government of which we complain. It is the General Relief of the People from the unjust part of the burthens of the State for which we contend. In this Cause the Common Man becomes an Hero; and when Thousands are ready to perish with hunger, the very idea of being but remotely conducive to their relief, raises every Honest Man above himself;

[169]

himself; and those, that join to assist the diffusion of benevolence to a Whole People, are in the path that assimilates Man to his Divine Creator.

An Association with these objects for its end all will join, but those who live upon Public Money, or trade in Popular Favour, or the Tyrant, or the Slave, or those, the worst of all, whose unfeeling hearts can sit at ease, or turn aside, and unpitied and unrelieved let Old Age and Infancy weep together for want of Bread.

Men the counterpart of those I have named, must ere long, join in taking the People's part, and till they can regain their lost weight in the Legislative scale, may prevent the Public attention from being misled by ideal objects, set up to delude them into a vain expectation of relief, whilst they continue to labour

[170]

labour under burthens that are so lucrative to their Oppressors. First, the Nation was amused with its Colonies being made to bear a part of its heavy load. Then Unaccounted Millions were to be brought to its aid. And after these had slipped through the Public Sieve, then the Nation's Grievances were to be removed by a Triennial Election of the Mercenary Representatives of Hireling Constituents. And the time that has been spent in attending to the unpropitious object of Popular Clamour, is an insult to our Country's Common-sense. And now the People are tired of wrangling for a straw, and the Multitude are awakened out of their dream by hunger and cold, lest they should dwell upon the Cause that keeps draining from the People the means of their support, a Great Object is started, just in time to catch our love of Novelty, and to feed us with the hopes of our
National

[171]

National Distress being transformed into Plenty by the Treasures to be yielded to us from a Country whose Inhabitants have but lately died by Thousands for mere want of food.

But could the Riches of the East be transported to this Country, and diffused through all the Inhabitants of the Land, it might indeed afford resources to a Committee of Ways and Means for a season, but it would soon be exhausted by the Demands of a State whose Dependents can know no limits, whilst those that possess the power of Taxation, continue to reap advantages from the burthens they impose upon the Subjects.

And were the Mines of Peru dedicated to the relief of the People of the Land, the means of Charity would fail, and be unequal to the distress of our
poor,

poor, so long as the Expence of Government to its Subjects remains as it is.

The internal welfare of this Country acknowledges the force of no Foreign aid. The Enemies of Great Britain laugh at all attempts to support her Power and Commerce, except by the Frugality of her Government, and the industry of her Subjects. The arbitrary Rivals of our State raise their exultations with the increasing Expence and consequent Luxury of the former, because they know it must be followed by decay and weakness amongst the People, whose strength the Experience of Ages has convinced them, is not to be resisted so long as they remain *free* from the Oppression of their own Governors, and *independent* by a successful Industry, in the various links of the great chain of Commerce that surrounds our Island.

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When this begins to break, and internal poverty prevails, they behold with joy the British Subjects sinking down to an equality with their own; and their victory would be complete, could their favourite doctrine once mislead our Government into the pleasing delusion of all who possess Authority, *That Kings reign for themselves alone.* This is the first spring of that monstrous distinction between the interests of the Subjects and those of the Prince; and however sincerely he wishes the happiness of his People, when those under his Authority are yearly receiving their thousands from the People, an Interest is set up contrary to the welfare of the Subjects, and Ambition, with a train of inordinate desires, stalks at the head of it, and all complaints against them are turned into discord; and the Truths that ring throughout the Realm expire and die away at the gates of the Palace. The Prince's

[174]

Prince's cares, as well as his intelligence, are then contracted within very scanty limits; and he is too often alarmed by artful and designing men, and taught to consider his People as an Enemy to be dreaded; and when that dread is impressed, it gives reality to the ideal danger. All confidence is then soon destroyed; and the necessity of living guarded against a seditious Populace is inculcated; and Standing Armies are kept in pay, to be a burthen and a terror to those who most deserve, their Sovereign's love and peculiar care. And as the Expence of the State impoverishes the Subjects, it appears to jealous Greatness, as the means of securing the subjection of the People. An oppressive Taxation on the one hand is accompanied by Distress and Murmurs on the other; and the dark seeds of Civil Discord, like a smothered flame, lies concealed in the very heart of the State,

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[175]

till with one loud roar it breaks out through all the Land.

Were we leagued with the Enemies of our Country for its destruction, they could require no other assistance to complete their wishes, than to have the power of Taxation held in the hands of a Majority of men, whose avarice and ambition lead them in chains of Dependence to submit to the will of Ministers of State, who consider not how their splendor grows out of the misery of others, and of the tears extorted from thousands of the People to furnish means for the extravagance of Courtiers, who are continually crouching their Master's presence, to shew their grateful praise for the greatness of his Munificence, by which they would make Injustice assume the mein of Virtue, and conceal from the best of Princes what numbers of his honest Subjects groan in wretchedness,

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[176]

to support the Royal Bounty. And when this is found to out-live the ability of the People, Poverty and Luxury are haftily approaching to their oppofite extremes.

When every department of Government is become an intolerable charge to the People, the Empire then by its own weight is tottering to its fall; and a few years more may prove Mr. Prior's Question was prophetic.

May not our Pow'r and Commerce be fuppreffed,
And Arts and Empire learn to travel Weft?

But thofe that are Fatalifts in Government appear to be the moft miftaken of their feft; as this would juftify a degeneracy of manners, and reduce defpair to fyftem. Old Age is unknown to the Body-politic; and a fituation never occurs wherein it is allowed us to relinquifh all hopes of our Country's being relieved.

[177]

elieved from her difficulties; and the prefent fufferings of fo great a part of the People, may in one day awaken them all to a fenfe of the danger to which they have expofed themfelves, by permitting the Right of *Election* to be held by fo fmall a part of the Community, did the Conftitution of the Commons even now retain its original form. But when they are fhewn to what an inconfiderable number that fmall part is reduced, by the unworthy means which have deftroyed their fide of the Legislative Triangle, their united voice may regain them their genuine weight; and by a frequent jealous choice of the men on whom they devolve fo much authority, may upon a fure foundation raife a lafting Monument to the PEOPLE'S Security, and by infcribing it with all the Evils to which they are now expofed, it may ftand the Great Land-mark of all Ages

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[178]

to come, and every year re-gild the unalterable admonition written on its Capital. *In this Land no Man is suffered to live, of whom it can be proved, before a Jury of his Peers, that he received the Bribe of a Slave for the right of his voice. And he who is elected to the service of the People, and receives the wages of any other Master, shall die the death of a Traitor to his King, and an Enemy to his Country.* And every Father shall teach his Sons, that their lives depend upon the honest exercise of the Privilege of a Freeman, who is trusted with part of the Power over the Lives, the Property, and the Liberty of Millions. And all Posterity shall be told the affection they owe to the descendants of a King, who lived at the time when the Freedom of the People was bought and sold as common traffic, when a Great People were brought to the brink of ruin, by the Majority of the

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[179]

the Representatives of a slavish, corrupt, and inconsiderable part of their number; and when a whole Country groaned under the Oppression of a nameless crew of little Tyrants, whose pride, arrogance, and luxury, had grown to an intolerable height, out of the plundered Wealth of the People; then did the cries of Distress reach the Throne of the amiable Prince who filled it, and he and all who loved his Government, joined with the whole body of the People in restoring to them a just and genuine Representation, that through them their pure sentiments might always breathe. And, whenever a young and inexperienced Prince ascended the Throne of his Ancestors, he might know where to hear the voice of all his People, and never be exposed, by the Pride, the Avarice, or the capricious passions of his Ministers, to the greatest Evil that can befall a Prince—the aver-

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[180]

tion of his People. And when the support of Government, and the Good of your Majesty's service, was founded in the Royal ear by the substitutes of his Authority, he might be blest with the opportunity of proving the wisdom and honesty of his Counsellors, by the touchstone of his faithful Commons, freely elected, and dependent on none but God and the People. He will then find himself the Sovereign of a People equally spirited and complying; and, at the same time that they set bounds to the extravagance of Ministers of State, the Dignity and Power of the Prince will be the Glory of the People.

The stability of his Government will then have its foundation in the affections of his People, the affections of mankind being ever attached to the principles of Justice, of Public Faith, and zeal for the happiness of the Human-kind.

[181]

kind. This is the Government that will reign over a *willing* People. The Spirit of the Constitution is then diffused amongst them; they are alive and active in every part of the dominions, and are all as one hand and one heart; and every Village is the Seat of Government.

But so long as the Subject is broken-hearted under the burthens of the State, and Power is supported by the sweat of his brow, of what moment is it to him who are his Oppressors? That Authority which distresses the People will never be well defended, for those that have not spirit to resist internal Oppression, will soon submit to any Deliverer that appears; and many of the People are now ready to promise themselves, that the time is at hand when Government itself will no longer allow the People's weapons to be turned against them,

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[182]

them, and for its own safety will not see the Nation's strength wasted under the Oppression of Instruments, whom an unsuspecting People has raised to the power of their own destruction. And we now begin to look up to the First Officers of the Crown, and think we trace the finger of a kind Providence to us, in those whom our much-loved Prince has appointed to fill the great departments of the State, and to assist him in the important business of his Government. And as we have the utmost reason to believe that nothing is dearer to our Sovereign than the happiness of his People, we have an assurance, from the most attentive survey of the separate characters that form the present Administration, that they will not add to the number of those, who have shut up from the people the blessings they would otherwise receive under his Government. And we cannot allow ourselves to

[183]

to think, that the present Ministers will pass away and leave behind them no traces of their conduct that tend to the People's good and real relief.

But should this be the case, how greatly will the Generations to come be disappointed, in not finding a single page in our History filled with measures truly beneficial to their Country, in the reign of a King, who may justly be called the Father of his people, by his being the brightest example of private virtue in his dominions; and assisted by Ministers, in whom posterity is told nature and education combined, to qualify them for the discharge of the great offices of the State with disinterested dignity, and many of them as it were bred from their youth to fill the very departments they possess; and that some of them went higher still, and lived as candidates for more than mere Earthly advantages!

[184]

advantages! When our sons are told all this, how will it surprize and disappoint them to discover nothing more, than that they were advanced to the highest honours of the State at such a time, and on such a day they resigned their office or their breath, without filling the space between, with any actions that shewed a sincere attachment to the happiness of a numerous people!

And, whatever we may now think of the calm, the wise, and pious Statesmen, they will surely be thought by the Ages to come, on whom *that pure light* will shine brighter and brighter, that the great and good men of this day were strangers to the language of the kingdom to which they were going, and totally unacquainted with what was solid Glory, when they could content themselves with any thing short of an anxious solicitude for the good of the
Human-kind.

[185]

Human-kind. And they will think us to have been utterly mistaken in our opinions of Virtue, when we annexed the idea of it to the characters of men who went no farther than to turn to-and-fro upon the hinges of their office, and help to perpetuate the distresses of their Country, by living upon the mortgage of an half-ruined people.

Surely it will not be thus; we can never be so much mistaken in the principles of action in the great members of the present Administration, whose conduct, we hope, will be transmitted to all Ages as the highest instances of the love of their Country; and the history of the present Reign be recorded as the example of all future Kings and Ministers, as having led the way to save a numerous, brave, and generous people from ruin; and at a time when their Country was sinking into the extreme

[186]

treme of Distress, by the oppression of accumulated burthens, they nobly step forth and proclaimed, by the *disinterested* greatness of their lives, that whoever dedicates himself to the service of his Country, should consider it as insolvent, and unable to requite his services; and that the application a Nobleman gives to the Common Good of his Country is above all price.

He is unfit to govern who is not prepared to meet Ingratitude, and to hear the Ridicule or Reproach of the Great or Little Vulgar; if the sacrifice a Statesman makes does not spring from generous motives, the part he acts is foolish and absurd. The only true principles of action are the love of Glory and the ardor of Virtue. Actuated by these incentives, of what moment is it how our services are received? The recompence of True Virtue does not depend

[187]

pend upon the caprice of a Multitude. The Common Man, indeed, may be induced, by the hopes of hire, to spend his life in labouring for a pittance to maintain it. But a Man of Rank born to affluence, when he relinquishes the indulgence of ease and plenty, and voluntarily devotes himself to fatigue in the service of his Country, he greatly derogates from the dignity of his character, and the generosity of the act, that desires wages for it; it is depreciated by payment. The Man of Family and Fortune, who attends to the advantage of Salary, sinks himself to an equality with the Mercenary Slave; nor is the case altered by the Quantity of Reward. He who thus appraises his talents, and converts them to profit at the expence of his Country's Industry, is to the full as venal as the Soul that sells itself for a piece of Money.

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[188]

And the same may be said of the allurements of Ambition. Honours and Titles, what are they but Wages? He who desires them has his Hire. Gentlemen of abilities must either *give* or *sell* themselves to the Service of their Country. The former is the act of Freedom; the latter, of Slavery, and unworthy the name of a Nobleman.

And if a British Minister of State could not be independent upon his Private Fortune, unless he condescended to live in all the plainness of manners of an AUGUSTUS, he might not find it attended with any indignity to his rank, except in the opinion of those empty admirers of gilded Folly, whose applause must ever be the censure of all the Wise and Good. And if a Chancellor of the Exchequer, or a Secretary of State,
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[189]

was to allow himself but one House and two Servants to attend him in it, if by the force of his Example his Master's Treasury was kept full, instead of empty, and the People flourishing and brave, instead of poor and dispirited, it is probable every Foreign Nation, would pay more deference to a Prince, who was served by such Ministers, than ever they have been found to do to those, who have allowed their time and their wealth to be spent in useless and expensive shew.

And whenever our Country is blessed with an Administration, who truly discover that they act superior to selfish objects, and with a manly fortitude express their abhorrence of that vain grandeur which is so impertinent to men of real business; those who are led by Ambition and Avarice, to clamour
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[190]

mour for Places and Preferment, will then grow sick of their pursuits, the bribe will fall from the hand of the Corruptor, and one half of the incentives to acquire Wealth by wicked means will be lost, when the First Characters in the State only look for their Distinction in the Wisdom and Virtue of their lives. Men of real Dignity will then be known from the false.

The Memory of these will not survive the taste of their Coach-maker and the Colour of their Livery; whilst the Names of the former will be placed amongst those Kings and Statesmen who are renowned for the love of their Country, and their actions transmitted to all Ages to come, with the History of those that have devoted their lives to the good of Millions,

[191]

lions, and have been so highly favoured of their Maker as to become his willing Instruments to bless Mankind.

P. S. Your Lordship will think I have greatly over-rated the quantity of Grain consumed by the Distillery, in calling it Two hundred-and-fifty thousand Quarters; when the account given to the Committee the other day, says it will not exceed from 135,000 to 150,000 quarters.

It is certain that *one* Quarter of Grain is made use of for every *three* Pounds of the Revenue arising from the Malt Distillery, and the whole sum being last year 450,000 l. it follows that there could not be much more than 150,000 quarters consumed in that part of the Distillery upon which the Duty is chargeable;

able: *But then the Grain used in the Distilleries for Exportation, is left out of the account: when this is added to the Quantity upon which the Duty is paid, it is certain the whole will not be less than two hundred-and-fifty thousand quarters, used each year in making Malt spirits, for Home Consumption and Exportation: and were the evidence taken from the people who actually apply the Grain to this pernicious purpose, there is reason to believe that the quantity destroyed in the Distil-Houses, in and about London only, will be found to exceed 250,000 quarters each year. And supposing the annual average produce to be right, as it was stated to the Committee, it appears that the Distillery consumes more than one thirty-fifth part of the Grain used in making the Bread and Beer for the Inhabitants of the whole Kingdom, and therefore must affect the*
 general

general average price of Grain more than the bare proportion of the quantity taken from the necessary supply.

But to deduct the quantity of Grain now destroyed by the Distillery, from the short Crop of the present year, it must create a much greater advance in the price of the Grain used in making Beer and Bread than those who are supported by the Distillery or the Revenue, may be willing to admit.

It must be some time before any considerable supply of American Corn can possibly arrive, and our Prices must be much higher before any part of Europe will be tempted to allow their Grain to come to our Markets, and during the delay, the Pit of the Distillery is swallowing up our own produce with unabating greediness, and the expectation of being stopped, occasions the Grain to be taken away from the Markets and transformed into Liquid Fire with double dili-

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gence.

[194]

gence. And supposing the prohibition of the Malt Distillery, should not take place till March or April next, those who know the quantity of Corn it requires, to glut the mouths of the Stills in and about London, have a well grounded apprehension for what all beside will think an absurdity—that the distress of the ensuing year, will actually be increased by the endeavours a benevolent Prince recommended to be used for the relief of his people. And if a regard to the Duty paid by the Distillery, prevails over every consideration for stopping it, the alarm that has been given to that opulent branch, will make its unbounded grasp consume more Corn from this time, till the uncertain crop of next year is reaped, than in all probability will be imported into the Kingdom within that period.

And were we certain that Corn and Provisions would arrive in our ports, with a dispatch answerable to the praise-worthy
diligence

[195]

diligence of Government, in passing the laws for their importation, what is to follow from thence? When those foreign supplies are brought to our relief, they are not to be *given away* to the poor and distressed; and it is certain that thousands of unemployed working people are totally without money to buy their provisions; when the wheels of our Commerce are so over-loaded with the public burdens, as to stop many of the subordinate Trades, the Manufacturing People are at once without work and Money, and when this is the case, Provisions are equally out of their reach were the prices as moderate as the most sanguine expectation could propose: But at this time scarcity and high-priced Provisions *concur* with want of employment and an inability to procure them. The common people in London generally live in Luxury compared with the country poor in all our Manufacturing Towns.

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[196]

This week the unemployed workmen in a very populous district of the capital, have gone a begging in little companies to the houses of their former employers: great indeed then must be the distress of those whose situation is always worse; what must be their misery when they begin to feel the effects of hunger and winter, with united severity? In *one month's time* may begin to appear, *the last effects* of that policy which would maintain an enormous public expence, by the continuance of a Revenue insupportable to the people, whose accumulating distress and ruin, with that of the state, whose strength they are, nothing can prevent, but a *substantial* reduction of the present charge of Government to its Subjects.

LONDON,
December 5, 1772.

F I N I S.

Errata, page 104, line 3, for *conducts* read *conduct*.
117, line 15, for *bride* read *bribe*.