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A SHORT
HISTORY
 OF
PRIME MINISTERS
 IN
GREAT BRITAIN.

*Nam qui nimios optabat honores
 Et nimias posebat opes, numerosa parabat
 Excelsa turris tabulata, unde altior esset
 Casus, & impulse praeceps immane Ruina.
 Quid Crassos, quid Pompeios evertit, & illum
 Ad sua qui domitos deduxit flagra Quirites?
 SUMUS nempe Locus nulla non arte peritus. Juv.*



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A SHORT
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 Prime Ministers, &c.



It has been the just Observation of Travellers, That no one Man is more to be distinguished from another by his Features, than one Nation is from another by its peculiar Turn of Genius. The Manners of every Country are so adapted to the particular Form of Government, that prevails amongst them, that it is scarce possible to alter the *one*, without first debauching the *other*. The several Revolutions, that have happened in the States of *Europe*, are so many Demonstrations of this Truth. It seems indeed to have been the Wisdom of Providence to establish so evident a Test, by which every Nation might plainly perceive what Steps must naturally lead to their Destruction, that so no Nation might be destroyed, but by its own Consent. If therefore

(4)

at any Time a FREE PEOPLE (by Nature hardy, by Custom frugal and industrious, and by their Situation incapable of subsisting but by their own Labour, Manufactures and Trade) should behold Luxury, Sloth, Vice and Corruption breaking in upon them, like a Torrent: and should discover a *Man in high Station* to be the Promoter of this destructive Change of Manners: they can no longer doubt that He is engaged in a Design to enslave them. And if such a Nation should tamely suffer their *Corrupter* to continue in the Exercise of Power, they may justly be accused of consenting to their own Ruin; for Statesmen are not easily frightened from their Purpose; much less are they subject to Repentance for their Crimes. Necessity drives them on; and He, who has once made an open Attack upon the Constitution of his Country, will never think himself safe from publick Justice, but by its total Subversion; which therefore He must accomplish at the Peril of his Head.

There is no *Singularity* in the Genius of the *British* Nation, that has been more remarked by Foreigners, nor more censured by polite Writers (who were born under absolute Governments) than our *strong Inclination to a Change of Ministers*; but had these Gentlemen been better acquainted with us, they would have found this *Love of Change* never grew to any Height till the Power, which our Constitution distributes amongst *several Ministers*, was all centred in *one Man*. And to our Honour be it said, there is no Turn more peculiar to a *Briton*, none that has more frequently preserved our Liberties, than that insuperable Hatred to a PRIME MINISTER, which has always prevailed in this Kingdom. It may well be called our *Palladium*. Whilst we retain *That*, our Constitution must be out of Danger; whensoever we are debauched from it,

(5)

it, we, like the rest of our Neighbours, must become *Slaves*. For it seems next to an Impossibility, that *Great Britain* should be ripened for Chains, but by such a *Creature of Power*; and proportioned to the Hazard our Constitution is in by a PRIME MINISTER, has been the national Antipathy in all Ages to this *Preliminary Tyrant*.

Whilst Power is lodged in many Hands, we both obey and cherish it. There is nothing in it to alarm us. *Several great and able Men*, jointly engaged in *one Administration*, but acting independant of one another in their different Stations, is the only Model of Government suited to the Legislature, suited to the very Genius of the *British* Nation. *Ministers*, on such a Foot, are mutual Checks upon each other; each of them has his distinct Set of Adherents, some of whom Alliance, Friendship, Esteem, and perhaps Expectations unite in his particular Interest; but his main Support must be the Character he bears in his Country. When a Number of such *great Men* join, they draw with them a large Body of the Nation, and cannot therefore act but upon Principles, that may preserve to *Them* their Popularity amongst their Fellow-Subjects. Such a Ministry is built upon the strong Basis of the *People's Affection*. It is *That*, which gives *Them* Strength to do their Master's Business, and their *Master* can offer such Men no Degrees of Power or Wealth, that would be an Equivalent, even in Point of Interest, to the Loss of their *Character*.

Reverse this noble Prospect, and behold the Power of many Ministers *strunk up into the Fist of one ambitious Man*. Can such an one subsist by any Art, but *That of Corruption*? He can have no personal Interest, to draw any *Numbers* along with him. Men of real Worth and Influence in their Country

(6)

Country are too much his Equals (perhaps Superiors) not to scorn to act under him. Men of great Abilities will scarce employ them as the *mean Tools* of another's Power. What He wants therefore in *Weight*, the PRIME MINISTER must endeavour to supply in *Numbers*. And as he cannot gain *These* by his natural Strength, he must introduce an *effeminate Luxury*, that may supplant the innate Sturdiness, for which the *English* have so long been famous, and by corrupting our *Manners*, he may come to corrupt our *Votes*. And if he can, by an extravagant Way of living amongst the Gentry, bring many of them into a necessitous Dependance, He may for some Time maintain his Power against the Bent of a whole People. But even This must fail him; for as *Corruption* is the PRIME MINISTER's sole Instrument of State, so That by Degrees will grow so very *craving*, that he will find it hard to satisfy. Then it is, that He becomes desperate in his Projects; his *Creatures* are no longer *true* to him than whilst they are *feeding*; his other Fellow-Subjects (oppress'd and plundered to gorge *These*) are all united to his Ruin; and he has no other Method left to screen himself from their Resentments, than by throwing into his *Master's* Hand such an *absolute Power*, as may be sufficient to protect him against the whole Kingdom, if his *Master* be weak enough to stand upon the narrow Bottom of his *Minister*.

This has been, and This must be the desperate Game of every PRIME MINISTER in this Country. Justly therefore is *such an one* the Object of the People's Hatred. Should we ransack the *British* History, we shall find our wisest Monarchs had no *such Minister*; and amongst *those Princes*, who had, we learn that some were betrayed by their MINION, as soon as He saw the sovereign Power

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(7)

was too weak to protect him; others, we read, lost both their Crown and Life in too obstinate an Adherence to a *hated Favourite*; and some, tho' very few, have saved themselves, by honourably giving up a *wicked Minister* to the Justice of an *injured Nation*. To set This in a clear Light, I shall briefly run through all the Reigns, from the Conquest down to the Restoration.

WILLIAM THE FIRST, who was by Nature formed to keep, as well as gain a Crown, never would trust his Power in *one Hand*. But when the most potent of his *Ministers* (Odo, Bishop of *Bayeux* and Earl of *Kent*) had, by his rapacious Management of the publick Money, amass'd a mighty Treasure, and was forming a Scheme to *establish himself independent of his Master*, the Historian *Kennet's* informs us, that the *wise King* "took him from *Hist. of*
" amidst a Confluence of Noblemen and Gentry, *England,*
" who attended on Him, and at once disappointed *Vol. I.*
" ed all his ambitious Views, by a strict Imprisonment, and he was afterwards obliged to abjure the Realm. *p. 111.*

WILLIAM THE SECOND, whom our Histories represent as a Prince of a fierce and avatitious Temper, was *wholly* under the Influence of *Ranulph*, *Hist. of*
Bishop of Durham, who, by new Methods of *England,*
squeezing and oppressing the People, so fed his *Vol. I.*
Master's insatiable Thirst after Money, as to become the *p. 117.*
principal Director of his Counsels. His male Administration disposed the Subjects to revolt. One Conspiracy broke out in the Year 1095; and another more formidable was ripe for Execution, when the King's Death prevented it. He was killed in the *new Forrest* by one *Walter Tyrrel*; whether by Mischance, or by Design, is not agreed; but the Historian tells us, "That this Prince *ibid.*
" might have had an absolute Government of all *p. 117.*
" his

his Subjects, had he fought it by endearing Acts;
 but seeking to establish it by Force, he made
 both himself and his People miserable.

1100. HENRY THE FIRST, who is justly reckoned
 amongst the wisest of our Princes, had no PRIME
 MINISTER. He sought out the most able Men in
 his Kingdom for the Offices of State, preferring
 such only as were acceptable to the People. The
 Historian observes, "That he took the best Cour-
 ses to please and gratify his Subjects; by seeing
 himself that no Corruption, or Oppression should
 burden the Country; by making frequent Pro-
 gresses to observe how his Realm was order'd in
 every Part of it; by being affable and easy of
 Access, so that all might enjoy his Company;
 and by being hospitable, so that all might share
 of his good Cheer.

Hist. of England, Vol. I. p. 123. Nothing so much endeared him to the Nation, as
 the committing to a streight and loathsome Prison
 Ranulph of Durban, the PRIME MINISTER and
 Oppressor of the former Reign." And after
 That, when one of his own Ministry, Robert Earl
 of Mallet, had by his Conduct incurred the
 Peoples Hatred, "he first disgraced him, and then
 stript him of his vast Estate.

ibid. p. 123. KING STEPHEN, according to our Historians,
 1123. was elected to the Crown upon this Considera-
 tion; that by preferring one, whose Title was
 weak, the Nation might be better secured in
 their ancient Liberties, than they could be un-
 der one, that came to the Throne by lineal De-
 scent. Accordingly the Fealty sworn to him
 was upon Condition that he observed the Te-
 nor of a Charter, wherein the Rights and Liber-
 ties of the Subject were declared." But his
 PRIME MINISTER Alberic de Ver having led him
 into arbitrary Measures, the Nation revolted from
 him

ibid. p. 127.

him to the Empress Maud, who was the rightful
 Heir of the Crown by Descent. She too had a
 PRIME MINISTER, the Bishop of Winchester, who,
 though Brother to Stephen, had set the Crown on
 her Head; but in whom she reposed too great a
 Confidence. For this ambitious Statesman (per-*ibid.*
 ceiving the Londoners averse to Maud, and that
 the whole Nation began to dislike her) consulted
 his own Interest by a private Treaty with her Com-
 petitor, and having obtained his own Terms, obli-
 ged his Royal Mistress to quit the Kingdom, and
 retire to her own Dominions beyond Sea.

HENRY THE SECOND in all his Reign had but
 one PRIME MINISTER; to whom all the Troubles,
 or the Seeds at least of all the Troubles of his Life
 were owing. This was the famous Thomas Becket,
 who was for some Years the sole Manager of all
 Affairs of State, and was intrusted with the Care
 of the Education of the King's eldest Son. But
 this wicked Minister was no sooner raised to an in-
 dependent State, than he entred into an open Op-
 position to his Master; distressed him in all his
 Councils; and concerted such Measures with
 the young Prince, who had been under his Tuiti-
 on, as produced an open Rupture between the
 Father and Son, which lasted even after the Au-
 thor of it had been long bury'd; and to which the
 ill Conduct of Queen Eleanor not a little contri-
 buted. Many indeed have imputed all the Dis-
 asters of this unhappy Reign (which ended in a
 Conspiracy of the two Sons against their Father,
 that broke his Heart) to the Judgments of Heaven
 upon the King, inasmuch as he had sinned against
 the Laws of Nature and of Conscience in the Be-
 ginning of his Reign, by an open Violation and
 Disobedience of his Father's Will.

(10)

1189. RICHARD THE FIRST, as he spent the greatest
ibid. p. Part of his Time beyond Sea, so he unhappily vest-
 151, ed his whole Power in the narrow Hands of one
 153. PRIME MINISTER, *the Bishop of Ely*; who soon
 exerted his *Authority*, independent of his *Master*.
 History informs us, that he not only imprisoned
 and oppress the King's best Subjects, but even
 turned out his *personal Favourites*. He excluded
 the Nobility and those Ministers, whom the King
 had joined in Commission with him, from any
 Share of Government, and acted in so arbitrary
 and insolent a Manner, as render'd him odious to
 the whole Kingdom. The Nation, no longer able
 to bear with his Oppression, invited from beyond
 Sea *Earl John*, who had thereby an Opportunity
 of assuming the Government, whilst his unhappy
 Brother the King (being taken Prisoner by the
 Emperor, in his Return from the Holy Land) had
 well nigh lost his Life and Kingdom, by thus im-
 prudently putting the Reins of Government into
 the Hands of *one ill-chosen Minister*, who could
 not hold them.

1199. KING JOHN, who succeeded him, was a poor,
 weak Prince, govern'd by the Man, who had the
 best Address to flatter him, and most of all by
 such, who offered him new Methods of raising
 Money on the People. By this Secret *Hubert*,
ibid. p. Archbishop of *Canterbury*, became the *sole Director*
 150, of his Councils; which he conducted in such an
 160. arbitrary Manner, as to raise a civil War; in the
 very Beginning of which, this *pecuniary Projector*
 dyed. His Successor in Favour and in Power was
John Gray, a *Norfolk Man*, who for his private
 Interest (as the Historian reports) engaged his
 Master first in *idle Contests abroad* with the Pope
 and the King of France; and then persuaded him
 to mean Submissions to these very Enemies, he
 had

(11)

had procured him, which disgusted all the Sub-
 jects at home; for the Nation could not bear that
 Strangers should offer *Indignities* to the King and
 Kingdom, with Impunity. This *Norfolk Man*,
 being thus become the Object of the People's Ha-
 tred, next procured for his *Master* a considerable
 Body of *foreign Troops*, which he kept in Pay, in *ibid. p.*
 order to conquer his own Subjects; and this bad ^{167.}
 Step drew on an Invasion; so that our wretched
 Country was wasted by two contending Armies,
 till the unhappy Monarch himself, being in the End
 deserted on all Hands, was poisoned at *Swineshead* *ibid. p.*
Abbey, and died unpitied, as he had lived unbe- ^{168.}
 loved.

HENRY THE THIRD, a Prince unable to learn ^{1216.}
 Wisdom from his Father's Misfortunes, was all his
 Life a wretched Prey to *Favourites*. *Hugh*, or
Hubert de Burgh was the first; of whom the
 Historian says, "That he forced the People to ^{Hist. of}
 "pay as he pleased, and not according to their ^{England,}
 "Lities." His ill Conduct bred an Insurrection a- ^{p. 173.}
 gainst the King, who at length forsook him; being ^{ibid.}
 convinced of this Ministry's Folly, in expending ^{174.}
 the Treasure of the Nation in *fruitless and shame-*
ful Expeditions, and of his *Fraud*, in applying no
 small Share of it to his own private Use; and for
 his male Administration he was both disgraced
 and imprisoned. But no sooner was the poor Mo-
 narch delivered from this destructive *Engrosser of* ^{ibid.}
Power, than he fell into the Hands of another;
Peter, Bishop of *Winchester*. This Man and his
 Creatures so harrass'd the Kingdom with Taxes,
 that the King was forced to summon a Parliament,
 in order to prevent a civil War. "The Barons ^{ibid.}
 "sent the King Word they would not come to
 "Parliament, till he removed the Bishop of *Win-*
 "chester from his Court; which if he refused to
 "do,

(12)

do, they would turn him and his evil Counsellor out of the Realm, and choose a new King." And indeed this unhappy Reign was afterwards but one continued Scene of Oppression and civil War, occasion'd by the *wicked Ministers*, who successively engross'd the Sovereign's Ear, and made him quarrel with his worthiest Subjects; till at last one *Prime Minister* (*Simon de Montfort*, Earl of *Leicester*) whom he had raised from nothing, employed all the Power his Master had weakly put into his Hands, in Opposition to him. He first raised an Army, and then attack'd the King at *Lewis*, where he defeated and took him Prisoner, and kept him under close Confinement for near two Years, himself all the while governing the Nation in his Name; till the brave *Prince Edward* slew this traiterous *Prime Minister* at *Evesham*, and thereby set both the King and Kingdom at Liberty.

EDWARD THE FIRST, who well may be ranked amongst the greatest Princes, that ever reign'd in this or any other Country, never bestow'd his Confidence on *one Man* only, but sought the ablest of his Nobles for publick Posts, in which he gave to each an equal Share of Power. He severely punished every one in Employment, who was found guilty of Oppression or Injustice; and no less than thirteen of his Judges were at one Time condemn'd by him for *Extortion*, and fined 100,000 Merks, which was then as much as 800,000 would be at this Time. To this wise Prince we owe the best Laws in Being to this Day, for securing the Liberties and Properties of the Subject; for he in all Things consulted his People's Interest and their Inclination rather than his own. And in nothing was his Sagacity more remarkable, than in foretelling his Son's unhappy Fate.

EDWARD

(13)

EDWARD THE SECOND (as History informs p. 202. us) was very popular at first. "Never Prince came to the Crown with greater Love and more general Applause of all his Subjects, than he did; which might have been secured to him by a little wise Management." But when it appeared he hated all *his Father's real Friends*, and *ibid.* that he violated his Father's last Will, by recalling *Gaveston* from Banishment, the Aversion to him grew as universal as the Applause had been. His *Prime Minister Gaveston* became so odious to the *ibid. p.* Nation, that the *Nobles* rose in Arms against him, *203.* and having seized upon him, they executed him *p. 204.* without a Tryal. This *Minion* was no sooner destroyed, than two others arose in his Stead; the *p. 206.* *Spensers*, Father and Son. These Men so vexed *p. 207.* the People with their arbitrary Impositions, that it drew on a civil War; in which one of the *Spensers p. 209,* was taken by the Nobles, and put to Death as a *210.* Traitor; and the poor Monarch himself lost his Crown and his Life soon after.

EDWARD THE THIRD, in his Minority, was *1327.* under the usurp'd Tuition of the Queen his *Mo-ibid. p.* ther. During her weak Administration, *Mortimer*, *211.* was *sole Minister*. His base Murder of the deposed King, his scandalous Treaty with the *Scots, p. 212.* his rapacious Sale of publick Offices, and his open Robbery of the Nation's Treasure, had so dishonoured and incensed the whole Kingdom, that whilst he was wholly taken up with inventing new Methods for aggrandizing himself and all his Kindred, the *Nobles* conspired to seize upon his *Per-ibid.* son; which being done, they forced the Queen to call a Parliament; in which she herself was stript of all her ill-conducted Authority, and her *Minion Mortimer* was hang'd and drawn at *Tyburn*. During the rest of this long and glorious Reign, *ibid.* there

there was no *Prime Minister*, but many of those Statesmen, whom the King employed, were at different Times called by him to a strict Account for base Practices, in raising *oppressive Taxes*, and for *corrupt Dealing* in the Treasury. The Chancellor, Treasurer, Chief Justice, and Five more, were for these Crimes imprisoned in the Year 1340; and the Archbishop of *Canterbury* was disgraced for the same ill Conduct in 1341. The severe Punishments inflicted by this *wise Monarch* on corrupt Judges; the wholesome Laws made by him to repress Luxury and Vice of every Kind; his watchful Care over our *British Trade* and Manufactures, and the wise Acts of Parliament passed by him, for the Encouragement and Improvement of our staple Commodities; the many glorious Successes his Arms were blest with Abroad, and the happy Quiet his Subjects enjoyed at home, are all of them so many Demonstrations, that this great King was not in the Hands of a *Prime Minister*.

RICHARD THE SECOND, by not treading in these Steps, lost both his Crown and his Life. The Historian relates, "That he came to the Throne with great Advantages; the People were enamoured with him, and received him for their King with universal Joy and Satisfaction; the Loss of their brave King, so lately deceased, was quite forgotten, being swallowed up with the Hopes of that Happiness, which they promised themselves under this his Successor." But the Scene was so entirely changed in a few Years Time, and the Taxes grew so insupportable, (more from the *Method of collecting them*, than from their Quantity) that one Rebellion was no sooner quell'd, than another broke out. The King himself seem'd only to have assumed the Government, that he might throw his own Power into the

Hist. of England, Vol. 1. p. 216.

ibid. p. 218.

p. 234.

1377. Hist. of England, p. 237.

ibid. p. 244. 246. 247.

the Hands of a corrupt *Prime Minister*, *Michael de la Pole*, Earl of *Suffolk*. He had grown so suddenly from a low to a rich Estate, by *Bribery* in his Office, and by *embezzling* the publick Money, by Grants from the Crown to him and his Family, and by oppressing the Subjects with *illegal Taxes*, for which he afterwards compounded with them in private; that in the End, the Parliament petitioned the King to remove him from his Councils; and the King, being in no Condition to dispute the Point, at length consented to this Demand. "And then (says the Historian) it appeared how good a Prince King *Richard* was, when separated from *evil Counsel*."

"The guilty Minister was with the Royal Approbation deposed from all his Offices; his Estate of 1000 l. a Year (equal to 10,000 l. now) was confiscated, and he was fined in Twenty Thousand Merks." But the poor Monarch could not long hold the Reins of Government himself; he soon chose another *Prime Minister*, full as wicked as the former, *Robert Duke of Ireland*. His first Step was to screen *Michael de la Pole*; he perswaded the King to remit his Fine, and restore him to his Estate, and to discountenance those Nobles who had procured his Disgrace; telling his de-luded Sovereign, "That the main Aim of those Nobles, who procured the Sentence on *Pole*, was to dethrone him by disgracing his Minister; for that it was an easy Inference, that the King is not fit to rule, who knows not whom to trust. By these and such like Arguments the King was wrought up to the Ruin of those Lords, whom these bad Ministers accounted their Enemies." Several Projects were formed to destroy them by Force; but the universal Love the Nation bore them made this impracticable.

ibid, p. 255.

p. 256.

ibid.

Hist. of England, Vol. 1. p. 257.

ibid. p. 258.

ble. The Minister try'd to pack a Parliament; but That too was found impossible, the Nation being in a Flame against the Court. These Attempts, proving unsuccessful, produced a civil War, in which the Ministerial Forces being routed, the Duke of Ireland and the Earl of Suffolk were both forced to fly from publick Justice. " But the chief Tool of their Power, Sir Robert Tresilian, being seized, was condemned in Parliament, and, pursuant to their Sentence, drawn through the City of London on a Hurdle, and hanged at Tyburn. " After this publick Act of Justice, the Nation was at Quiet for some few Years, till the Earl of Rutland (after that created Duke of Aumerle) became Prime Minister. He, fearing the Fate of his Predecessors, resolv'd to remove those sturdy Patriots out of the Way, who had accomplish'd the Ruin of the Duke of Ireland and Earl of Suffolk. He therefore pack'd a House of Commons by wicked Means, and got the Earl of Arundel and others to be impeached, condemned and executed. This, and many other Acts of Oppression, so disgust'd the City of London (from whence the Disgust spread through the whole Kingdom) that every Thing was ripe for a civil War. In this Condition were Affairs, when the Prime Minister, as if design'dly to compleat his Master's Ruin, perswaded him to go over to his Dominion of Ireland; where he had no sooner landed, than the Duke of Lancaster, with a small Body of Foreign Troops, invaded this Kingdom; and having seized upon some of the chief Instruments of the Minister's Tyranny, and put them to Death, was by the whole Nation received as their Deliverer. The King, upon this News, returned from Ireland, with an Army sufficient to have maintain'd his Crown, had they adher'd to him; but

ibid. p. 261.
p. 363.
ibid. p. 276.
p. 278,
279.
p. 280:
ibid. p. 281.
Hist. of England, Vol. 1. p. 283.

see the Fidelity, that may be expected from all Prime Ministers! The Duke of Aumerle, to whom the present Distress of the King's Affairs was chiefly owing, was the first that deserted him; ibid. p. dismiss'd his best Troops, and fled over to the Duke of Lancaster, with 500 Men. Richard the Second was soon after himself betrayed into the Hands of his Enemy; deposed from the Throne by his Parliament; and at last murdered in his Prison.

Henry the Fourth, who succeeded him, as he came to the Crown by the People's Choice, so he maintained himself in the Possession of it, by consulting their Interest. He never placed his Power out of his own Hands; his Reign was indeed disturbed by civil Wars, which his disputed Title, and the Burden of necessary Taxes drew upon him; for, as the Historian observes, People do not love to buy even Happiness too dear. But his wise Conduct, the able Ministers he employ'd, and the Equality he maintain'd in the Distribution of his Favours, with his constant Care of the Trade and Honour of this Nation, made him at last a Victor over all his Enemies, both at home and abroad, and laid the Foundation of his Son's Greatness and Glory.

Henry the Fifth, during his short but glorious Reign, had no Prime Minister. The Historian says, " He chose his Counsellors amongst the gravest and wisest of his Nobility; he went through many Parts of his Kingdom, and received all Complaints of Misadministration with Chearfulness, even from the meanest of his People. All Abuses of his Authority he immediately reform'd, not sparing the greatest of his Ministers, when he found them guilty of Misdemeanors; " telling them, " That since

1399.
1399.
305.
1413.
308.
333.
ibid. p.
ibid. p.
ibid.

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" They

“ They had no Respect to *His Honour*, which
“ was wounded by *their Injustice*, He could have
“ no Motive to favour them, but punish them the
“ more severely; because, for the Sake of a little
“ Gain or Friendship, They had robb'd him of
“ what he most valued, his People's Love and Af-
“ fection.

1422. *Henry the Sixth* was the Reverse of his wife
and great Father, in the whole Conduct of his
long, weak, and turbulent Reign. He had no
sooner taken into his Hands the Power of the Go-
vernment, than he bestowed the whole Admini-
stration of it on one *wicked Minister* or another,
till by their Means he was deprived of his Digi-
nity, Liberty and Life. *William de la Pole* was
his first *Prime Minister*, and was supported in

Hist. of his Power by the Ascendant the Queen had gain'd
England over her Husband, even after the King had con-
Vol. I. p. ceiv'd a just Aversion for him. The Oppression
393. of the Subject at home, the Losses we sustain'd
ibid. p. abroad, and the Contempt brought upon our
395. Councils, by *Suffolk's* Ignorance and Blunders, rai-
sed the Nation's Discontent to the highest Pitch.

p. 397. They said, “ It was no Injury to pitch upon
“ another King, since the present Sovereign had
“ deposed himself in Effect, by suffering the Queen

p. 401. “ and *Suffolk* to over-rule all.” The Commons at
length impeach'd him for Treason, and the Lords
committed him to the Tower; but during a Re-
cess of Parliament, the Queen procured his En-
largement, and restored him to his former Favour.

p. 402. This was so highly resented by the Nation, that
the Court were obliged at last to banish him, in
order to save his Life; but That proved ineffec-
tual; for the Ship in which he embark'd for
France, was pursued and taken by another Ship
belonging to the Duke of *Exeter*, and *Suffolk* him-
self

self was beheaded by the Captain near *Dover*
Sands. The next *Prime Minister* in his Reign
was the *Duke of Somerset*; who, as History in p. 409.
forms us, “ rose high in Favour with the King and
“ Queen, ruling and governing all, as he pleased.

“ The Nation was by no Means disposed to a Re- p. 411.
“ bellion against the King; (for no Harm was
“ meant Him, good Man, who did no Ill to any,
“ and desired the Nation's Welfare in all Things)

“ but against the Queen, the *Duke of Somerset*,
“ and his Cabal, who usurped the regal Autho-
“ rity. The first Attempt the Nobles made

“ was on the *Duke of Somerset*, whom they
“ caused to be arrested in the Queen's Bed-
“ Chamber, and sent to the Tower, in order

“ to answer the Crimes that should be laid to
“ his Charge in the ensuing Parliament. Accord-
“ ingly he was there accused of high Treason;

“ but by the Queen's Influence that Parliament was
“ dissolved and the Duke was set at Liberty.”

Upon This, the Nobles rose in Arms, and declared
for the *House of York*; the Court too raised an
Army, which was totally defeated; the King him-
self “ was taken Prisoner, and the *Prime Minister* p. 412.
“ was slain in the Action.” The rest of this Reign

was one continued Scene of civil War, till it end-
ed in the King's Murder, and in the Transfer of
the Crown to another Family. The Character gi-
ven this Prince in History is, “ That he might

“ have been as good a King as *England* ever had,
“ if he had been guided by a wise and good Coun-
“ cil; but he was ruled by *Favourites* and by his
“ Queen, whose ambitious Assuming the regal
“ Power beyond her Sphere made it thought no
“ Rebellion to take it out of her Hands, and put
“ it where it would be better ordered, and was
“ more due. The King's Fall was much pitied,
“ because, as to his Person, undeserved; but the

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(20)

- “ common Good so much required a Change, that
 it was judged beter *One suffer an Injury, rather
 1461. than the whole Nation perish.*
Hist. of Edward the Fourth, though perhaps too much
 England, addicted to Pleasure, was in the main a wise and
 Vol. I. able Monarch. He never had a *Prime Minister*;
 P. 433. but relyed upon the Advices of a *well-chosen Coun-
 cil*, and on his own Abilities. This Conduct ac-
 quired him a Crown, and This recovered it for
 P. 441. him, when it was snatched away by the *Treachery*
 of some, in whom he most confided. As his own
 P. 445. good Capacity always led him into the Measures,
 most conducive to the Honour and Interest of the
 Kingdom, so That made him in general more an
 P. 449. Object of the Peoples Affections, than was to be
 expected in a Time of such Confusion and Blood-
 shed. The only Weakness of his Reign (and, as
 P. 478. Sir *Thomas More* observes, by which Occasion was
 P. 481. given after his Death, to the Usurpation of his
 P. 482. Brother *Richard*) was his over Fondness for the
 Queen; at whose Importunity he promoted her *fast
 Friends*, beyond what either their Birth or Abilities
 could entitle them to; by which the *ancient Nobil-
 ity* and the *great Commoners* were disoblged.
 1483. *Edward the Fifth*, by this bad Politicks of his
 Father, lost his Crown and Life.
 1483. *Richard the Third*, in his short Reign, afford-
 ed no Instance of a *Prime Minister*, unless the
 Duke of *Buckingham* may deserve that Title. He
 P. 499. it was, who first set the Crown on this *Usurper's*
 P. 501. Head; but either he was not gratified, according
 to his Expectations; or else he was apprehensive
 that his *Master* could not long maintain his ill-
 acquitted Dignity; for he soon after engaged in
 a Conspiracy against him, which proved *fatal* to
 them both; for the *Duke* was at first taken and
 beheaded as a *Traytor*; but the Storm, he had
 raised,

(21)

raised, was not to be quelled, but by the Death of *ibid. p.*
 the *Usurper*.^{512.}

Henry the Seventh was indeed too prudent a^{1485.}
 Prince, to trust his *whole Power* in the Hands of
 any *one Minister*; and yet he often gave more Au-
 thority to a *Few*, than was consistent either with
 his great Sagacity, or his Interest. An unhappy^{p. 636.}
 Love of Money frequently betrayed him into this
 Mistake in Government, and made him rather em-
 ploy the *base Instruments* of gratifying that Pas-
 sion, than THOSE, who were better qualify'd for
 the real Service of the State. To this *unpopular
 Foible*, in a *British Sovereign*, were owing many
 of those Insurrections, which, under a weaker Po-
 litician, must have ended in Destruction. The *Hist. of*
 oppressive Subsidy in 1489 (though granted in England
 Parliament) caused a Rebellion in the *North*, in^{Vol. I. p.}
 which the chief Promoter of the Tax, the *Earl of*^{593.}
Northumberland, fell a Sacrifice to popular Resent-
 ment. Another Parliamentary Aid in 1496 was
 so grievous to the *Cornish Men*, that they rose in *ibid. p.*
 Arms, to oppose the levying it; and after some^{617.}
 Success in the *West*, marched in a Body on to^{p. 618.}
 London, and came as far as *Black Heath*, where^{p. 619.}
 they encounter'd the royal Forces in a pitcht Bat-
 tle. Towards the latter End of this Reign, the
 King's Love of Money increasing with his Age,
Empson and *Dudley*, THOSE LEECHES OF THE *ibid. p.*
 PEOPLE (as Lord *Bacon* calls them) built their^{629.}
 Greatness upon their *singular Talents* of devising^{p. 630.}
 new Methods, how to raise Money; in which they^{p. 631.}
 so cruelly squeez'd and oppress'd the Subjects,
 whilst the King's Coffers abounded with Treasure,
 which he could not use, that in the End the whole
 Kingdom was disposed to rebel. The Historian
 therefore recounts it, as one of the Felicities of *ibid. p.*
 this Reign, “ That an opportune Death with-^{635.}
 “ drew

“ drew the King from any future Blow of Fortune ; which certainly, in regard of the great Hatred of his People, had not been impossible to have come upon him.

1509. *Henry the Eight* found no other Method of re-
Hist. of England, giving up to publick Justice those two wicked
Vol. 2. Ministers, *Empson* and *Dudley* ; who, being
p. 3. guilty of that very worst of Treasons, alienating
p. 5. the People's Hearts from their Sovereign, were be-
ibid. p. 6. headed on the 18th of August, 1510. This wise
Act procured the new King the whole Nation's
Love ; which he preserved for many Years, till
the oppressive Conduct of his own Prime Minister,
p. 14. *Wolsey*, staggered their Loyalty. The Character of
this ambitious Statesman has been so often set forth
of late, in all its Colours, that I shall only ob-
serve at present, that he engaged his Master in
ibid. p. many fruitless, inglorious Expeditions abroad, which
16. sunk the Honour as much as they drained the
p. 24. Treasure of the Nation ; that He was so insolent
p. 50. as to usurp the regal Stile ; seldom speaking of
p. 55. his Master's Actions, but under the Title, *We did*
p. 58. *so* ; that he sold his Sovereign's Alliance, by Turns,
ibid. p. to every Potentate in Europe ; till at length there
25. was scarce a Prince left, who thought it worth the
30. 34. purchasing, and last of all, that he accumulated
p. 70. 83. so vast an Estate, as to form a Project of making
85. himself independent of the Crown. I shall end
p. 106. *Hist. of England*, his Character, with what the Writer of those
Vol. 2. Times, the most partial to him, the *Lord Herbert*
p. 124. says, “ One Error was that *He* and *His* were
p. 125. “ invested with a hateful Multiplicity of Offices, and
ibid. p. “ Places ; which as it drew much Envy on the
149. “ Cardinal in particular, so it derogated no little
“ from the regal Authority, while one Man alone
“ seemed to exhaust it all. Since it becometh
“ Princes

“ Princes to do, like the good Husbandman, what
“ they sow the Ground, which is to scatter, and
“ not throw all in one Place. The Disgrace and
“ Imprisonment of this overgrown Monster of
“ Power (in which he died of Grief) soon reco-
“ vered the straying Affections of the People, who
“ were never more effectually gain'd, than by such
“ a Sacrifice ; but this happy Turn lasted not long.”
The popular Discontents were revived by the
many Changes in Religion, and by the exorbitant
Power thrown into the Hands of *Cromwel*, who
was made *Privy Seal*, *Lord Chamberlain*, *Knight*
of the Garter, and *Vicegerent General in Spirituals*.
To him *Lord Herbert* attributes the Taxes in
1536, which occasioned a most formidable Rebel-
lion in *Lincolnshire*, *Torkshire*, and other Parts ; and
consisted of no less than 30,000 Men, who were
not dispers'd, but upon Promise of calling a
Free Parliament. To him he likewise attributes the
heavy Taxes in 1539, which he says, “ equally
“ oppress'd both the Clergy and the Laity ; and
“ made the Author of them so universally hated,
“ that the King gave Way to the Accusations
“ against him ; and then it was evident he must
“ fall. For it was impossible that one, who med-
“ dled so much in all the great and publick Af-
“ fairs, should not in diverse so mistake and err,
“ as to incur the Note of a Criminal, when In-
“ quisitions were made against him. The Dis-
“ grace and Imprisonment of *Cromwell* was receiv-
“ ed by the People with many Acclamations,
“ that witness their Joy ; so impatient are they usu-
“ ally of the good Fortune of FAVOURITES. And
“ all former Faults being imputed to Him, every
“ one began to hope for a better Age. He was
“ attainted in Parliament of Crimes great and
“ enormous, and such as deserved capital Punish-
“

ment; but as He was not permitted to answer for himself, the Proceedings were thought rigorous; but so few pitied Him, that all was past over, and he was executed on *Tower bill*, in July 1540. The rest of this Reign, as it was free from any *Prime Minister*, so was it likewise from Rebellions.

1547. *Edward the Sixth*, during his short Reign of Minority, had no less than two *Prime Ministers*. The first was the *Duke of Somerset*; who, though Uncle to the King, and Protector of the Kingdom by Election, could not avoid the Fate, that in this Country naturally attends on too much Power, when vested in the Hands of one Subject. *The engrossing the Regal Authority* was his only Crime; This raised *Insurrections* through the Kingdom; This united the Chief of the Nobility against him; This procured his Imprisonment in the Tower in 1549; and lost him his Head in 1552. The ambitious Author of his Ruin, the *Duke of Northumberland*, succeeded him in Power, and soon became the Object of the Nation's Hatred; He even contrived to fix the Crown upon a *Lady*, who had married into his own Family; and when he had brought his Royal Master to consent to that Settlement, he was strongly suspected to have poisoned him. *Sir John Hayward* and *Godwyn* both agree, that this Suspicion was founded on no trivial Conjectures. The former of these Writers [325.] says, "The People left nothing unspoken, which might serve to stir Hatred against *Northumberland*, and Pity towards the King; but the Duke was nothing moved hereat; for being equally obstinate, both in Purpose and Desire, and mounting his Hopes above the Pitch of Reason, he resolved then to dissemble no longer, but began

" openly

ibid p. 225.

Hist. of Eng. land.

Vol. I.

p. 308.

ibid. p. 296.

p. 300.

p. 306.

p. 307.

p. 324.

ibid. p. 325.

p. 326.

p. 327.

p. 325.

p. 325.

p. 325.

" openly to play his Game; a Game, for which he justly lost his Head in the succeeding Reign. *Queen Mary*, in her Reign, had but one *Prime Minister*, *Gardiner*, Bishop of *Winchester*; who made the Nation a Scene of Blood and Desolation, in order to obtain for himself a Cardinal's Hat. For that Purpose, he promoted and accomplished that hateful *Spanish Match*, which, had it proved fruitful, must have made this Island a Province dependent on *Spain*. It met with the universal Disapprobation of the People, and raised a Rebellion; which, but for an accidental Disappointment, had probably overturned the whole Government. This avowed Disgust occasioned those Articles in the Treaty of Marriage, whereby the Liberties of this Kingdom were secured, as much as Words can secure against Power. *Gardiner's blundering Politicks*, in contriving so unnatural an Alliance, soon involved the Nation in a War with *France*, in which we lost that important Harbour of *Calais*; a Loss, which so affected the poor, deluded *Queen*, as to be the immediate Occasion of her Death. *Queen Elizabeth* succeeded; and, in her long, wise and glorious Reign, not one *Prime Minister* appeared. Her People's Love was the strong Basis of her Government, as their Interest was the only Drift of her Councils. *Camden* says, "On all whom she ever admitted into her Ministry, she bestowed her Favours with so much Caution and so little Distinction, as to prevent any from getting the Ascendant over Her; whereby she remain'd Mistress of her self, preserving their Affections, and her own Power and Authority entire". Upon this Maxim she always modell'd her Ministry; therefore, in 1568, she protected *Cecil* (afterwards *Lord Burleigh*) even against her

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greatest

p. 333

Hist. of England.

Vol. I. p. 351.

ibid. p. 339.

p. 341.

p. 341.

p. 345.

ibid. p. 354.

p. 356.

ibid. p. 358.

1558.

Hist. of England;

Vol. I.

p. 369.

Hist. of England;

Vol. I.

p. 417.

greatest personal Favourite, the Earl of Leicester, who with other Lords had conspired his Overthrow; and some Years after, she as firmly supported Leicester against the Artifices of Cecil. She sent the Earl of Leicester in 1586, to assist the Dutch against the King of Spain. He was thereupon chosen Governor of the united Provinces; but no sooner did the States complain of him, for abusing his great Power, but this just Queen recalled her Favorite with Disgrace. The Person, whom she next honoured with the highest Marks of her Favour, was the Earl of Essex; but when he began to affect a Superiority over his Fellow Ministers, assuming more Authority than his Mistress intended, for his Share, she openly curbed his overweening Ambition; turned him out of his Employments; and called him to Account for his Conduct in them. This aspiring Statesman hereupon enter'd into Cabals against her Measures, in order to force himself into Place; his principal Scheme for this Purpose was, by contriving a Rupture between the Queen and the next Heir to the Crown; which proving abortive, he was at last constrained to undergo the just Punishment of his traitorous Conspiracies.

James the First succeeded this great Queen; and though he was too weak to tread in her Steps, yet he reaped many happy Benefits from her just Administration; which had created in the Minds of the whole People such an habitual Reverence for the Throne, as all his bad Policy could never quite extinguish. His was, in Truth, the Reign of Prime Ministers. Sir Robert Carr was the first; who, for some Time, was forced to share in Power with the wise Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; and so long Affairs were tolerably well conducted; but, upon Cecil's Death, Sir Robert took full Possessi-

ibid. p. 471, 541.
 ibid. p. 608.
 p. 609.
 p. 626.
 ibid. p. 629.
 630.
 ibid. p. 631.
 1603.
 ibid. p. 691.

on of the King's Favours alone; receiving all Packets, and dispatching Answers, without the Knowledge of the King or Council; or, if the King did know, his Love had hoarded up such a Confidence in him, as he laid out all on that Stock. He graspt at all Employments; not caring whom he disoblige, or what Malice he pulled upon himself; nor would he suffer any Place at Court, or Dignity in State, to be bestowed, which was not sweetned with his Smile, as giving it, or their Bounty that enjoy'd it." So that by his many foul Devices, and by his scandalous Sale of Offices, it was thought he engross'd a Mass of Coin, as if his Soul intended to take her Ease. This and his other Miscarriages procured him such a Number of Underminers, that he stood upon a tottering Foundation, having no Support but the royal Favour; which was at last removed, by laying before the King his crying Guilt." The King consented to his Trial, and many of his Creatures were put to Death for their Share in his Offences; but he himself, to the no small Discredit of his Master, was only confined to a mean obscure Retreat, in which he languish'd out his Days, without that publick Punishment, which he deserved. The next Prime Minister was the Duke of Buckingham, who for many Years was sole Governour of all Affairs, and enrich'd himself and all his Relations with Places, Pensions and Grants from the Crown; for which he soon after rewarded his bountifull Master, in the Manner, which may be expected from all such Favourites. The King had set his Heart upon a Match between his Son and the Infanta of Spain, which was justly odious to the whole Nation; Buckingham therefore, who knew how universally he was detested, resolved to

Hist. of England, Vol. II. p. 697.
 p. 698.
 Hist. of England, Vol. II. p. 698.
 Hist. of England, Vol. II. p. 698.
 p. 699.
 ibid. p. 709.
 p. 728.
 p. 734.
 Vol. III. p. 23.
 Hist. of England, Vol. II. be-p. 739.

become popular at the Expence of his *Master's Honour*, by opposing all his Measures in this Affair. He first proposed to the *Prince* a Journey into *Spain*, which he afterwarde forced the King to consent to; "and this (as Lord Clarendon says) proved the Means, whereby that designed Marriage, which had been so many Years in Treaty, was solely broken; for, upon their Return, the King found that the *Prince* was totally aliened from all Thoughts of, or Inclination to the Marriage; and that He, as well as the Duke, was resolved to break it, without his Approbation or Consent." The Duke therefore, seconded by the Countenance the *Prince* gave him, engaged the Parliament to address the King against the *Spanish Match*, and to enter into a War with *Spain*. He likewise projected the Ruin of the *Earl of Middlesex*, then Lord Treasurer, and one of the King's most favoured Ministers; which he accomplished, by procuring some leading Men in the House of Commons to carry up an Impeachment against that Lord to the House of Peers; and there conducting Matters so, as to get him to be condemned to a large Fine, and long Imprisonment. And now he knew the King would never forgive him; he therefore resolved to keep his Power in spite of him; which he found no other Means of effecting, but by fomenting a Breach between the King and the *Prince*, and engaging the Son to head the Opposition to his Father's Measures. The Vexation this gave the old Monarch, meeting with an Aguish Disposition in his Blood, soon turned that into a violent Fever, in which he died; not without strong Supposition of his being poisoned by a Plaster which *Buckingham* applied to his Side. And this Supposition was the more confirmed, inasmuch as it was well known (as my Lord

Clarendon's
Hist. of
Rebellion
Vol. I.
Book I.
p. 18.
ibid.
p. 19.
ibid.
p. 21,
22.
ibid.
p. 23.
ibid.
p. 23,
24.
Hist. of
England,
Vol. II.
p. 784.
Hist. of
England,
Vol II.
p. 790,
791.

Lord Clarendon says) "That when King James Clarendon was informed what the Duke had so confidently avowed in Parliament, for which he had not Authority, or the least Direction from him, and a great Part wherof himself knew to be false; and that he had advised an utter Breach of the Treaty; and to enter upon a War with *Spain*, He was infinitely offended. So that he wanted only a resolute and brisk Counsellor to assist him in destroying the Duke; and such an one he promis'd himself in the *Earl of Bristol*, whom he expected every Day." No Wonder then if this poor King did not long survive the *Earl of Bristol's Return to England*. Charles the First, as the Lord Clarendon says, came to the Crown with as universal a Joy in the People, as can be imagined. It was expected by Those, who knew the great Jealousy and Indignation, that the *Prince* had heretofore conceived against the *Duke of Buckingham*, for having been once very near striking him, That He would now remember that Insolence, of which He then so often complained. But instead of that, He placed his intire Confidence in him, the most that ever King had shewed to any Subject. All Preferments in the Church and State were given by him; all his Kindred and his Friends were promoted to the Degree in Honour, Riches or Offices, that he thought fit, and all his Enemies and Enviars were discontinued, as he appointed. This soon wrought a visible Change in the Affections of the Nation towards their Sovereign." The fruitless Expeditions abroad, and the oppressive Methods of raising Money at home, joined to the Hatred this Nation bears to PRIME MINISTERS, raised a Discontent against the Govern-

ment, p. 26.
Hist. of
Rebellion,
Vol. I.
Book I.
p. 27.
Hist. of
England,
Vol. I.
p. 24,
25.
ibid. p.
24,
25.
ibid. p.
26.
38.
Hist. of
England,
Vol. III.
p. 9.
ment, p. 26.

ment, which even *this Man's* Death (being by a private Hand) could not appease. Lord Clarendon says himself that "The Venom of his Time encreas'd and got Vigour, till from one Licence to another it proceeded, until the Nation was corrupted to that monstrous Degree, that it grew fatiated and weary of the Government."

Indeed the continuing the same Measures, this *Prime Minister* had set on Foot, till the Liberties of the Nation were thought in Danger, and in the End the listening almost entirely to the Counsel of the Earl of Strafford (who from a busy Stickler for Liberty in one Administration, was become the Instrument of arbitrary Power in another) brought on that dismal Scene of Confusion, in which the King was unhappily deprived of his Crown, Liberty and Life.

Thus I have given a short Account of the Reigns, from the Conquest down to the Restoration, as to that single Article of *Prime Ministers*; which I shall close with one remarkable Sentence of the *Historian*, whose Authority I have chiefly made Use of in the foregoing Pages. "The Favourites of every Prince were always odious to the *English* People. Not only Self Love, Envy, Ambition, Disgust and Revenge do naturally create an Aversion to any ONE Subject, who seems to engross and appropriate to himself the common Father of the People. But the laudable Affections, that prompt to Impartiality, Tenderness to our Prince, and Love to our Country, all conspire to make every indifferent Person an Enemy to the ONE powerful *Fellow Member*, that commands over the Head, and usurps over the whole Body."

It would scarce have been safe, I am sure it would not have been prudent, thus to entertain th

Clarendon
Hist. of
Rebellion,
Vol. I.
Book 1.
p. 41.

Hist. of
England
Vol. III.
p. 47.
p. 48.

Hist. of
England
Vol. III.
p. 48.
p. 63.
p. 65.
p. 71.
p. 93.

ibid. p. 9.

the Publick with the dismal Consequences, that have hitherto followed, upon vesting all Power in One Man, but at a Time like *This*, when it is the Joy of all good Men to see that there is no one *Prime Minister* at the Helm; but that several equally able, equally virtuous and great Men jointly draw on the well-ballanced Machine of State, which therefore cannot, as I pray it may not totter.

I shall conclude this short Abstract of History with the Observation of as wise a Politician, as ever *England* bred. "That there never yet was a *Prime Minister* in *Britain*, but either broke his own Neck, or his Master's, or both, unless He saved his own by sacrificing his Master's."

As the Reader may perhaps be desirous to behold at one View the diverse Casualties of the sundry *Prime Ministers* above-mentioned, I have here subjoined a Table of Them.

PRIME MINISTERS.

DY'D by the Halter	---	---	3
Ditto by the Axe	---	---	10
Ditto by STURDY BEGGARS	---	---	3
Ditto untimely by private Hands	---	---	2
Ditto in Imprisonment	---	---	4
Ditto in Exile	---	---	4
Ditto Penitent	---	---	1
Saved by sacrificing their Master	---	---	4

Sum Total of PRIME MINISTERS --- 31

F I N I S.

