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To the LESSER

Freeholders *and* Electors, &c.

OF

GREAT-BRITAIN.

SIR S,

AT a Time when the public Prints are judiciously fill'd with Admonitions and Instructions, to guard against the Adherents, and Abettors of Tyranny, and the Pretender; and to chuse such Representatives in Parliament, as may suppress the Pride, scourge the Perfidy, and curb the restless Ambition and Tyranny of *France*, our natural and common Enemy *without*; I conceive it is not *mal a propós* to remind you of the *Oligarchia*, or *Aristocratical* Tyranny (if I may be so allow'd to speak) you yourselves labour under *within*.

You, my Countrymen, are justly excited to make Choice of such for Members of the ensuing Parliament, as will hazard their Lives, and are ready to exhaust their Fortunes, in Defence of his Majesty's Person and Government, and in Support of our Liberties, and the fundamental Laws of our Constitution. But, at the same Time, I cannot help observing, that there is little or no Mention made

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made of the Infringement of those Laws, and few Exhortations offer'd to excite you to elect such, as shall enquire into the Grievances and Burdens you lie under; such as shall exert themselves with all their Vigour, in relieving you from the daily Oppressions many of you feel: Oppressions which, perhaps, are not to be equall'd of the Kind under the most grievous Tyrannies, or match'd under the most despotic Governments in *Europe*; and which the very *Meanest* of the People in the Kingdom of *France* are exempted from, even at a Time, when most oppress'd.

A FRENCH Government has been justly represented to you, in many Parts, as odious and tyrannical; and I doubt not but your Indignation rises against its Friends and Abettors, on the bare mentioning of it: But, at the same Time that you justly scorn and disdain, commiserate and bemoan, the Slavery and Oppression your unfortunate Neighbours suffer, What would you say, if it were reply'd to some of you? "Countrymen and Friends, do not let Prejudice and Vanity deceive you; you are under a greater Tyranny in some Respects yourselves: You the very ELECTORS and FREEHOLDERS of *Great-Britain*, even you are in a more deplorable Condition than the very Rabble of this Kingdom, or the Boors and Peasants of the Kingdom of *France* itself."

I FLATTER myself, that you are still *Britons*, and that if you all knew the dangerous Malady, which is creeping through your Veins, and working like a slow Poison on the Vitals of your Liberties and Properties: I say, if you all knew, I doubt not but out of Compassion to your innocent Posterity, out of Tenderneſs to your Little Ones, you would

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rouse up yourselves, and shake off, with Indignation, the galling Yoke of Oppression, which lies on you, that your Ancestors nobly disdain'd to bear. Whilst, therefore, you hear the Relation of some of the Miseries and Oppressions (* artfully exaggerated) of your Neighbours, deplore their Fate, and are inattentive to your own, it may be justly said to you, Weep not for others, but for yourselves

————— *mutato nomine,* —————————— *de te Fabula narratur.* —————

I WOULD, therefore, my Countrymen, most earnestly recommend it to you, to insist on it, as a Condition of your Choice, a *Sine qua non*, that every one of your Candidates shall take a most solemn Oath, before you engage to give your Vote for him, that he will exert himself to the utmost of his Abilities in endeavouring to abolish a tyrannical and arbitrary Power you are now subject to, and which I am going to relate, and revive in your Minds; a Power, the Existence of which is a Reproach to the Name of Liberty, and a *Briton*.

* That this is the Case, I think, the following Narrative will sufficiently evince. A late Author says; "I was lately discoursing with a Gentleman of great Fortune and Abilities, who, after having lived seven Years at *Bordeaux* in *France*, went beyond Sea, and return'd to *Bordeaux* again at the End of 21 Years. This Gentleman, on whose Veracity I can depend, assured me, that never, in all his Life, had he been more astonish'd than at his Return to *Bordeaux*; he could scarce prevail on himself to believe it was the same Place; the Number of Ships in the River was beyond all Expectation; the Town was vastly populous and rich; every Thing had the Appearance of great Plenty and Magnificence; his Friends and Acquaintance, when he left *Bordeaux*, lived in a poor, mean Way; now, he found them in stately Houses nobly furnish'd, possessing a great deal of Plate and Jewels, Numbers of Servants, and all other apparent Effects of Riches." Vide a Letter to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, &c. printed for Jacob Robinson.

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You

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You all know, my Countrymen, that in *Great-Britain* Commissioners are nominated by Parliament to put in Execution the Land-Tax Act: That they are the *Derniere Ressort*, and there is no Appeal from their Determination, which the said Act has made final. But as this is a great and extensive Power, and they act as *Lord Chancellors* in Cases which come before them, it may not be amiss to enquire into the Morals, Behaviour, and Conduct of the Class of Gentlemen qualified by Law to be trusted with this important Authority, that the World may see to what *hopeful Stuff* the Care of our Liberties and Properties is committed.

It would be needless to a *Foreigner* to ask here, whether Gentlemen, before they are invested with such a supream Power, do not first pass such an Examination, as the *Greek Archons* did formerly, before they were admitted into the Court of *Areopagites*. Dr. POTTER says of these, that " All, " that had undergone the Office of an *Archon*, were " not taken into this Senate, but only such of them " as had behaved themselves well in the Discharge of " their Trust; and not they neither, 'till they had " given an Account of their Administration before " the *Logistæ*, and obtain'd their Approbation, after " an Enquiry into their Behaviour; which was not " a mere Formality, and Thing of Course, but ex- " tremely severe, rigorous, and particular. To have " been sitting in a *Tavern*, or *Publick-House*, was " a sufficient Reason to deny an *Archon's* Admission " into it; and tho' their Dignity was, usually, con- " tinued to them as long as they lived; yet, if any " of the Senators was convicted of any Immorality, " he was, without Mercy or Favour, presently ex- " pell'd

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" pell'd. Nor was it enough, that their Lives were " strictly innocent and unblameable, but something " more was required of them; their Countenances, " Words, Actions, and all their Behaviour, must " be composed, serious, and grave to a Degree be- " yond what was expected from other (the most vir- " tuous) Men. To laugh in their Assembly was an " unpardonable Act of Levity; and for any of them " to write Comedy was forbidden by a particular " Precept of the Law. Nay, so great an Awe and " Reverence did this solemn Assembly strike into " those that sat in it, that *Isocrates* tells us, that in " his Days, when they were somewhat degenerated " from their primitive Virtue, however otherwise " Men were irregular and exorbitant, yet, once cho- " sen into this Senate, they presently ceased from " their vicious Inclinations, and chose rather to con- " form to the Laws and Manners of that Court, " than to continue a loose Course of Life."

Now let us consider a little, what are the Morals, and Behaviour of those Men in general, who are qualified by Law, and act as Commissioners of the Land-Tax; how near they come up to the Virtue and Purity of the antient *Greeks*, mere *Ethnicks*; and what may be expected from them, as they are educated in the sublime Morals of Christians, and invested with a more unlimited Power than the venerable Court I have just spoken of.

I SHALL shew, in another Place, that an Estate of about 300 *l. per Ann.* is requisite, on an Average, to qualify a Man to act as a Commissioner of the Land-Tax; which is the same as is necessary to qualify a Member to sit in the H— of C——s. If we may judge, then, of the Morals of a Com-
missioner

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missioner of the Land-Tax, by the Morals of Candidates for M—b—rs of P—t, one of the Sovereign C—ts of this N—t—on, I am sure we shall find, on Comparison, that the lesser Freeholders of this Kingdom must stand but an indifferent Chance to receive Justice from their Decisions, as they will be found to fall far short of *Grecian* Purity in their Behaviour and Conduct.

SUPPOSE we allow that a Commissioner of the Land-Tax has as good a Title to Probity, Integrity, Candour, and Honour, as a Candidate for the H—e of C—ns; pray is not an *English* Freeholder, then, in a miserable Situation, whose Rights are to be settled by such a corrupt Body of Men, when it is their Interest to oppress him?

HONOUR, Conscience, and the Regards arising from Virtue and Religion, seem to be quite lost among those very Men, who ought, in a principal Manner, to discover a strict Regard for them, and be the Bulwarks and Supports of them, as well as shining Examples to others. But, instead of such Behaviour and Conduct, we find Impiety, Profaneness, Corruption, Treachery, Venality, and a Contempt of all Things sacred, have overflow'd our Country like a Deluge. Self-Interest has got the Ascendant of all generous Principles, and social Affections. Many are, in *Catiline's* Case, *alieni appetens, sui profusus*; and others quite corrupted with Avarice, Pride, Ambition, and Luxury: All Regard for the Interest of the Public seems to be lost, public Spirit appears to be the Scorn and Jest of our Great and Rich Men; that Man is laugh'd at, who recommends the Cultivation of it; and *Hobbsm* universally obtains.

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As to the G—ntry of this K—gdom, who stand as Candidates for M—s of P—t, what do you think their Principles must be, who first make Laws against Bribery and Corruption; fence them round with the most solemn Oaths, and sacred Ties of Religion; and, when they have thus done, tempt, by Bribes, the very Persons, whom they have obliged to take those Oaths, to break through them, and perjure themselves? What a shocking Mockery of God, Religion, Virtue, and Justice, is This? What a Disdain and Contempt of every Thing sacred and venerable? And what a Deluge of Impiety, Profaneness, Corruption, and Atheism, must such Conduct introduce into all the Corporations in *England*, and from thence spread itself all over the Nation?

THE *Roman* Senator, *Antius Restio*, when he had made a Law to suppress Luxury, finding his Institution to be of little Force, by reason of the great Head Prodigality and Extravagance had gain'd in the City, never afterwards supp'd abroad, as long as he lived, for fear he should be forced to be a Witness of the Contempt of his own Injunction, without being in a Condition to punish it. Or, as *Macrobius* has it: *Illud tamen memorabile de Restione latore ipsius legis fertur; eum quoad vixit foris postea non cœnasse, ne testis fuerit contemptæ legis, quam ipse bono publico pertulisset.* L. II.

BUT, with Grief, Shame, and Indignation, be it spoken, * our L—g—s—t—rs first make Laws, and then use all manner of Artifices and Tempta-

* There is nothing so indecorous, nor of such ill Example, in a Common-Wealth, as the Infraction of a new Law, by the Legislator himself, says *Machiavel*. *Discourses*, Book I. Chap. 45.

tions

tions to induce the Breach of them; tho' attended with the most shocking Circumstances of Perjury. Good God! how slow is thine Anger? Why has it not wax'd hot e're now, and consumed such a People?

*Nil mortalibus arduum est;
Caelum ipsum petimus stultitia: neque
Per nostrum patimur scelus*

Iracunda Jovem ponere fulmina. HOR.

No Task too arduous for presumptuous Man;
We'd storm the Skies, and, bold, arraign the Fates:
Nor will our Guilt permit the Sire of Gods
To lay the Bolt and wrathful Thunder by.

As our Impiety and Wickedness is risen to such an enormous Pitch, how can we long expect to escape the Fate of *Sodom*, *Catana*, or *Lima*, in *Peru*? And yet these *Giants* in Iniquity, these abandon'd M—scr—nts, are the Guardians of your Lib—ties and Prop—ties, my Countrymen; are invested with absolute Power, the *Derniere Ressort* of the Law, and your Judges in all Affairs of the Land-Tax. Juries of yourselves are excluded, notwithstanding Bishop *Burnet* says, 'tis not the Nobility and Gentry are the most worthy, virtuous, and honest Part of the Kingdom; but the Farmers, Traders, and middling People. 'Tis from such alone, Justice and Impartiality are to be expected; of such are our *Juries*, and by such ought all our disputable Affairs concerning all Parts of the Revenue to be determined; and not by such Wretches as I have above described.

Thus I have given you a pretty exact Picture of a Man qualified to be a Commissioner of the Land-Tax,

ENGLISH LIBERTY

In some Cases worse than

FRENCH SLAVERY:

Exemplified by

ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON THE

Tyrannical and Anti-constitutional POWER of the
*Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Excise,
Customs, and Land-Tax, &c.*

CONTAINING

A particular RELATION of the barbarous and oppressive Methods made Use of in Raising the

LAND-TAX of this KINGDOM,

Compared with

AN HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

OF THE

More mild, and equitable Measures pursued in raising the
TAXES, call'd the
Taille and *Taillon*, the most oppressive in FRANCE.

In a LETTER address'd to

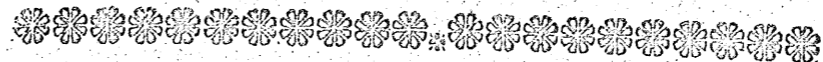
*The serious Consideration of the Lesser Freeholders
and Electors of GREAT-BRITAIN.*

Salus Populi suprema Lex esto.

*Quid aliud quam admonemus cives nos eorum esse, etsi non easdem opes
eandem tamen patriam incolere?*

L O N D O N :

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[Price 1 s.]



ADVERTISEMENT
TO THE
READER.

THE following LETTER was intended to have been publish'd a little after the Dissolution of the last Parliament; but various Impediments and Avocations hinder'd the Author from executing his Purpose. But as the Subject of it is a Matter of great Importance to the Welfare of BRITONS; and as they have an indubitable Right to admonish, direct, and instruct their Representatives, at any Time, with Regard to any Scheme which may tend to promote their Freedom and Happiness; tho' the Election be past, yet the Pertinence and Use of the Sentiments and Observations, which are contain'd in the following Sheets, remain still the same: From whence it is conceived, there is no farther Occasion to apologize for the Form and Manner of Address in the Letter, or its Publication, so long after the Election has been over.



ERRATA

ERRATA

The Author's Distance from the Press has occasioned the following ERRATA, which the Reader may correct.

- PAGE 3. read mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur.
- 4. Line 14, for needles, read natural.
 - 8. 10, for We'd, r. We:
 - 15. 28, r. it was call'd Περυσια.
 - 41. 7, after &c. r. who are chosen annually by a Plurality of the Voices of the People to tax them, and are called Assessors.
 - 43. In the Note, for Elus, r. elus.
 - 65. 21. for do, r. offer.
 - 68. In the Note, for cre, r. creez.
 - 74. 24. r. to take their Estates from them.

Tax, and shall next enter upon a Description of his Office, Power, and Conduct in it.

HOWEVER, notwithstanding they are such a Set of Pr—flig—tes, these Commissioners have an absolute Authority to chuse such Assessors and Collectors, as they please, without being accountable to any Power for their Conduct. I have known this Prerogative carried so far, as that Men of Probity and Estates have been rejected by the Commissioners, and Men of no Worth or Character, and who have paid no Taxes of any Kind, have been elected to those Offices; especially when these Gentlemen have had any *dirty Work* to be done, or any scandalous Drudgery to be gone through, which Men of Reputation and Integrity would scorn to be engaged in. Now these Assessors, tho' they have an extensive Power, when approved of by the Commissioners, are not under so much as the Tye of an Oath to restrain them from Partiality, or the Terror of a Law, that can punish them for Injustice or Oppression, when they act in Concurrence with the Dictates of the Commissioners, tho' their Conduct should be ever so villainous or scandalous. Should any one make any Objection to this, I would ask of him, who is to judge of the Legality of the Proceedings of these Assessors? Why, the Answer is very obvious, *the Commissioners*, the very Persons who elected them to the fordid Office of rating themselves low, and laying the Burthen of the Tax upon their feeble Neighbours.

BESIDES, to add to the Evil these arbitrary and *dictatorial Gentlemen*, the *Commissioners*, who fit, swell'd up with Office, big with Power, insulting you, their poor Neighbours; I say, these Gentle-

men are not so much as * sworn to do you Justice, with regard to your Properties; nor under the Apprehensions of any Punishment, from any superior Power, for the most villainous Conduct: But, on the contrary, they are left at full Liberty to tax each other as they please, and illustrate the old Adage, *Mutuo muli scalpunt*. Thus they connive at each other's Male-Conduct, firmly knit together, by mutual Interest, in the Bands of Injustice, Iniquity, and Oppression.

THIS, my Countrymen, both lesser Clergy and Laity, is your unhappy Condition: You are under the cursed State which, a great Patriot thinks, would be the Ruin of the Nation, *that is*, when Delinquents are to be try'd by themselves, and be their own Judges; or, as he more elegantly expresses it, "† What will become of our so much boasted Liberty; what shall be done, when the Criminal becomes the Judge, and the Malefactors are left to try themselves? We may be sure, then, common Danger will unite them, and they will all stand by each other, and Villany will walk our Streets triumphant."

THRO' such iniquitous and collusive Measures, as I have mentioned above, I have known two or three Commissioners in a Parish, who have not paid

* At Athens, the Judges of the Court call'd Παιρηγοροι, which took Cognizance of only trivial Matters, whose Value was not above the Attic Drachm, or Seven-pence Half-penny Sterling, as some say, were all obliged to take a most solemn Oath, by the Paternal Apollo, Ceres, and Jupiter the King, that they would give Sentence uprightly, and according to Law, if the Law had determined the Point debated; or, where the Law was silent, according to the best of their Judgments. So much Care was taken of Justice by them, and so little is taken by us.

† History of Standing Armies. See the Preface.

above

above 2 s. in the Pound for their large Estates, when at the same Time, in the same Parish, their Neighbours have paid, Some 3 s. 6 d. some 3 s. 10 d. and some have been tax'd 4 s. 6 d. and have sworn off. I have known a Parish, where a worthy Clergyman, of but a moderate Income, hath paid near 4 s. in the Pound Rack-Rent for his Glebe, &c. when, at the same Time, the conscientious and honest Squire of the Parish, being a Commissioner, managed so excellently, that he paid but about 2 s. to the Pound. I have known an Appeal, where a Commissioner has been appeal'd against, when, by the iniquitous Measures above specified, his Estate has not been assess'd at much above 2 s. in the Pound, and, at the same Time, the Appellant's, by his Instigation and Direction, was rated at 3 s. 10 d. per Pound, according to the Rack-Rent; and by this righteous Tribunal, these conscientious Inquisitors, the Appellant was dismiss'd without any Redress, and their Brother Commissioner not rais'd a Farthing; doubtless, influenced by this righteous Consideration, *Hodie tibi, cras mihi*; 'Tis your Turn To-day, and ours To-morrow.

BUT, notwithstanding the Commissioners are invested with such despotic and arbitrary Powers and Authority, inconsistent with the true Nature of Liberty; Men of large Fortunes, great Influence, and those endow'd with the Executive Power of the Law, with a Train of Court-Sycophants; or, in a Word, all those who enjoy the Benefit of the Tyranny, which they have constituted, or participate of its lucrative Effects: I say, all those have the Effrontery to cajole, and tell us of the Excellence of our Constitution and Government; and to exaggerate

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rate the Freedom we enjoy. Nay, Ministerial Advocates cry out, that our Laws indulge us in Licentiousness, when we are so bold, as to complain of Grievances; of the Inroads, that are made upon the Privileges essential to our Constitution; and of the Infringement of those Laws, the Enjoyment of which is absolutely necessary to denominate us a free People.

THE true Nature of Freedom consists in our being governed by equal and standing Laws of our own making; Laws to which we ourselves have consented; Laws by which no Prerogatives or Privileges are given to one Set of Men to domineer and lord it over the Rest; and Laws, by which even the Executors of the Laws shall be made accountable to the People for their Conduct. But let me ask you, my Countrymen, Is this your Case? Or can it be imagin'd, that any People in their Senses would forge such Chains for themselves, as are in the Land-Tax Act; or consent to the enacting such arbitrary and tyrannical Laws as I have above mentioned? No, surely: But those Laws are not the People's Laws; the People groan under them: They are the Laws of an *Oligarchia*, or a Tyranny of the *Richer* over the *Poorer*.

THE PEOPLE elect Rep—s—t—s to protect their Liberties and Privileges; and to guard them against Invasions, and Incroachments upon their Rights and Properties; but these D—puties have often basely betray'd their Constituents, and trapan'd them into that very Slavery, they were elected to defend them from. They have enacted Laws without ever consulting them, by which they have reserved to themselves particular Privileges and Exemptions unknown to their Prede-

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Predecessors, and inconsistent with the Good of the Community; and have deprived their Constituents of many of the innocent Rights of Nature: They have appropriated to themselves a Power of domineering over, oppressing and enslaving those very Persons from whom they derived their Legislative Capacity; and then they have artfully bestow'd Panegyrics upon their own tyrannical Decrees, and extoll'd our Constitution, or rather their own Constitutions, as the best Form of Government in the World.

THO', by such interested Persons, a great many fine *Encomiums* are lavish'd on our Government, and the Freedom we enjoy, as oppos'd to the Tyranny of the *Great* and *Opulent* on one Side, and to the Licentiousness of the Multitude, or Rabble, on the other; yet, I conceive, we are, in many Cases, as much expos'd to the *First* as many of our Neighbours, and not a whit better secured from the *Last*. The Truth of *one* appears from the many Riots we have had of late Years, and Excesses committed in them, which have met with light Punishment; and, to evince the Truth of the *other*, was the Intent of this Letter; and which, in the Course of it, I humbly conceive, will be clearly demonstrated.

IF WE attentively consider the Nature of our Government, nothing appears more manifestly, than that it may easily degenerate into an *Oligarchia*, or a Tyranny of the *Richer* over the *Poorer*. For Instance: Suppose the King, Lords, and Deputies of the Commons, should enact a Law, obliging all the Freeholders in this Kingdom to pay to the Public 40 *per Cent*, of the annual Value of their Estates, according to

to the *Rack-Rent*; that all Goods, Chattles, Monies, *Moveables* and *Immoveables*, should pay the same; and that this Act should continue in Force for Seven Years, but with this particular Exemption of themselves, and all who possess above 300*l. per Ann.* that these should pay only 10 *per Cent.* upon all Possessions specified: Pray, would not such a Law be as much a Law as any now in Being? And would not the Lesser Freeholders, Stockholders, and Populace be as much obliged to conform to it, as they are, now, to the Injunctions of the Land-Tax Act, or Excise Laws? Nothing is more manifest, than *that they would be under such a Necessity by Law.*

Now I presume, that there is no one would be so audacious as to assert, that This would not be a Tyranny of a very bad Nature, nor of the worst Kind; *that is*, a Tyranny establish'd by Law: And yet, is not this, in some Measure, our very Case at this Time; since we have a Law in Being, that, in the Execution of it, gives Opportunity to put the same Thing, virtually, in Practice? A Set of rich and powerful Men are, at this very Time, invested with a greater Power, and exercise and enjoy a Licentiousness not to be parallel'd under the most despotic Tyrannies: For it is a Licentiousness of the worst Kind, to have one Set of Men left to dispose of the Liberties and Properties of their Fellow-Citizens, without any Restriction, any Control, any Incitement to Justice, any Dread of Punishment; and with every Inducement to Fraud, Rapine, and Oppression. And tho' this be the Case, yet some interested Mercenaries boast of the Excellence of our Constitution and Government, and vain-gloriously prefer it to the famous Republics of Greece and

and Rome. Perhaps, at present, it may be found to indulge them with more Power, and therefore they are very liberal in their Commendations of it. But if our Government, with respect to the Lesser Freeholders, and the Bulk of the People of Property, was so excellent primarily, I am sure it has deviated from its *Origin*, wants a Retrospection of its Laws, and to be reduced to its first Principles, and antient Standard. To make this manifest, indulge me in a Digression, and let me take a short View of some Customs in the above-mentioned Republics, and see how much better their Laws, their Courts of Judicature, Decisions of *Meum* and *Tuum*, were conducted, and managed for the Preservation of Liberty, and securing of Property, than the Laws, &c. under our Government.

THE Manner of making a Law among the *Athenians* was thus: When any Man had contrived any Thing, which he thought was for the Good of the Common-Wealth, he first communicated it to the *Prytanes*, who received all Sorts of Informations of Things which concern'd the Public; the *Prytanes* then call'd a Meeting of the Senate, in which the new Project being propos'd, after mature Deliberation it was rejected, if it appear'd hurtful or unserviceable; if not, it was agreed to, and then call'd *Προβουλευμα*. This the *Prytanes* wrote on a Tablet, and thence it was call'd *Περγεμμα*.

No Law was propos'd to the Assembly, except it had been written upon a white Tablet, and fix'd up, some Days before the Assembly, at the Statues of the Heroes call'd *Επάνυμοι*, that so all the Citizens might read what was to be propos'd at their next Meeting, and be able to give a more deliberate

rate Judgment upon it. When the Multitude was come together, the Decree was read, and every Man had Liberty to speak his Mind about the Whole, or any Clause of it; and if, after due Consultation, the Assembly thought it inconvenient, it was rejected; if they approved of it, it pass'd into a *ἔπισημα* or *Νόμος*, a temporary or perpetual Law.

No Man, without a great deal of Caution, and a thorough Understanding of the former Laws and Constitutions, durst presume to propose a new one; the Danger being great, if it suited not with the Customs and Inclinations of the People. *Eudemus*, a *Cydiathenian*, is said to have lost his Life on that Account, being made a Sacrifice to the Rage of the Multitude. Not much unlike this Severity was the Ordinance of *Zaleucus*, the *Locrian* Law-giver; by which it was appointed, that whosoever proposed the enacting a new Law, or the Abrogation of an old one, should come into the Assembly with a Halter about his Neck, and in that Condition give his Reasons for what he proposed; and if these were thought good, and sufficient, his Proposal was embraced; if not, he straitway pour'd out his Soul under the Hangman's Hands.

AND tho' the *Athenians* were not quite so rigid, except upon some extraordinary Occasions, when the giddy Multitude was hurry'd on with unusual Rage and Vehemence, as happen'd in *Eudemus's* Case; yet if any Man establish'd a Law, which was prejudicial to the Common-Wealth, he might be called in Question for it any Time within the Space of one whole Year. In these Cases, a Writ for transgressing the Laws might take hold of him; *First*, If he had not taken Care to publish his Proposal

pos'd in due Time; *Secondly*, If he propos'd it in ambiguous and fallacious Terms; *Thirdly*, If he propos'd any Thing contrary to any of the former received Laws.

SOLON finding the Rich Men proud and haughty, and the Poor groaning under the Burden of their Oppression, to ease their Grievances, divided the People into four Classes, according to their Estates; and tho' he excluded the *ἄστεις*, or Poor, from bearing any Office in the Government, they had the Liberty of giving their Votes in public Assemblies, and, upon an Appeal, might cancel the Decrees of the Magistrates. Thus he wisely continued the Magistracy in the Hands of the *Rich*, and yet neither expos'd the inferior People to their Cruelty and Oppression, nor wholly deprived them of having a Share in the Government; as he himself says.

*What Power was fit I did on all bestow,
Nor rais'd the Poor too high, nor press'd too low:
The Rich that rul'd, and every Office bore,
Confin'd by Laws, they could not press the Poor:
Both Parties I secur'd from lawless Might;
So none prevail'd upon another's Right.*

Mr. CREECH.

AFTERWARDS, by *Aristides's* Means, the Poorer Sort were admitted to a Share in the Government, and every free *Denizon* render'd capable of appearing for the highest Preferments. * *Yet such was*

D the

* The Romans did the same. See *Livy*, who says, *Per hęc consilia eo deducta res est, ut Tribunos militum consulari potestate promiscue ex Patribus ac plebe creari sinerent; de consulibus creandis nihil mutaretur;*

(18)

the Modesty of the Commons, that they left the chief Offices, and such as the Care of the Common-Wealth depended upon, to Persons of superior Quality; aspiring no higher than the Management of petty and trivial Business. But still, in their Assemblies, they retain'd a Power of even reversing the Sentences of the Court of *Areopagites*, the most sacred and venerable Tribunal in all Greece.

AND so careful were the Magistrates, that the People might be acquainted with every Thing which was transacted, and that they might have the Concurrence of the Multitude with all their Institutions, that they had Officers to compel the Commonalty to come to their Assemblies, put a small Fine on Delinquents, and paid a Reward of three *Oboli* out of the *Exchequer* to such as came to the Assembly in due Time, the Expectation of which drew many of the poorer Sort to the Convention early. * And when any new Laws were exhibited, any Private Man might have free Access to the Senate, and give in his Sentiments concerning them.

retur; eoque contenti tribuni, contenta plebs fuit;—tribunos enim omnes patricios creavit populus contentus eo, quod ratio habita plebeiorum esset. Hanc modestiam aequitatemque, et altitudinem animi, ubi nunc in uno invenis, quæ tunc populi universi fuit? L. iv. c. 6. That is: The Result of their Debates was, that the Patricians consented that Military Tribunes should be chosen promiscuously out of the Senators and Commonalty, but nothing should be alter'd in the Elections of Consuls; with which both the Tribunes and the People were well satisfied.—And the People having carried their Point, chose all the Tribunes out of the Patricians, being content with the Regard which was shewn them. Where can we find in our Days such Modesty, Moderation, Good-Nature, and Greatness of Soul, in one single Person, as was then the distinguishing Character of a whole People?

* See Potter, p. 148.

* Dr.

(19)

* Dr. Potter tells us, *Solon* intending to make the *Athenians* a free People, and wisely considering that nothing would more conduce to secure the Commonalty from the Oppression of the Nobility, than to make them final Judges of Right and Wrong, enacted, that the *Archons*, who had been the supreme Judges in most Causes, should have little farther Power than Examinations, but should refer the Determinations of such Causes to Judges chosen out of the Citizens, without Distinction of Quality; the very meanest being, by *Solon*, admitted to give their Voices in the popular Assembly. † By his Constitutions, the whole Power and Management of Affairs were placed in the People; it was their Prerogative to receive Appeals from the Courts of Justice, to abrogate *Old Laws*, and enact *New*; and to make what Alterations in the State they judged convenient in all Matters, whether public or private, foreign or domestic. Any Person, above 30 Years of Age, might deliver his Opinion before the Assembly, concerning the Matter in Debate. They gave their Suffrages by holding up their Hands: But when a great Man was to be accused, they did it by casting Beans, or Pebbles, into Urns, lest the Greatness of the Person should bias them, and, through Fear, a Restraint should be laid on their Inclinations.—So happy were the *Athenians*, so just and equal their Laws.

LET us now take a View of the Proceedings of the *Romans* in their Enaction of Laws.

THE Laws of the *Romans* were first proposed by some Magistrate, and then assented to by the

* See Potter, p. 108.

† p. 97.

D 2

People,

People, in some of their respective *Comitia*, or Assemblies of the whole Body of the People. The only Magistrates, who had Power to propose Laws, were *Consuls*, *Prætors*, the *Dictator*, the *Interrex*, and the *Tribunes of the Commons*. If any of these Magistrates thought fit to prefer a new Law, he first drew it up, wherein he took the Advice of some Lawyer; and some would have the Approbation of the whole Senate, tho' that was often omitted. After this the intended Law was hung up, or exposed, in the Market-Place for the Space of Twenty-seven Days, *tribus Nundinis* by the *Cecilia Didia Lex* *, which was call'd the Promulgation of a Law; it being designed that, in the mean Time, all People might consult of the Expediency of it, and every one have free Liberty to admonish him, who prefer'd it, of any just Reason, either to amend it, or wholly surcease the Proposal. After the third Day, the Magistrate convened the People at that Place, where it was proper to propose the Law: There the Town-Clerk, or Notary, reading the Law, the common Cryer proclaim'd it; which done, he that promulg'd it, made an Oration of the Reasonableness of it, persuading the People to pass it; and others, who dislik'd it, made Speeches to shew its Inconveniencies. After these Harangues were finish'd, an Urn, or Pitcher, was brought to certain Priests there present, into which were cast the Names of the Tribes, Centuries, or *Curia*, (according as it was prefer'd in the respective Assemblies of either of these) and that *Tribe*, *Century*, or *Curia*, whose Name was first drawn, did first give their Votes,

* See *Au. Gell. Lib. xv. cap. 27.* See *Kennet*, p. 132. See *Livy*.

by

by the Majority of which the Law was either pass'd or rejected.

THAT these Votes might be free, and not overawed or influenced by the Greatness or Authority of the Senators, or any Persons in their Interest, the * *Leges Tabellariæ* were instituted; or Voting by *Ballot*: So that no Man could know on which Side any Denizon, or Freeman, gave his Vote. A great Man calls this, "*Vindex Libertatis*, which reprieved the Fate of the Common-Wealth for an Age, and was the only Barrier, which hinder'd the *Aristocracy* from subverting the popular Government, by contriving to conceal the Suffrages of the Commons, and screen them from the Resentments of their Superiors. In such Case, where the People are left to their own Liberty, they will make Choice, not of those whom they fear, but whom they love, and esteem, for their Attachment to the National Interest; not of Laws calculated to ease the Rich, and burden the Poor, but of such as are proportionate, just and equal.

If at any Time the *Tribunes* of the Commons, or any of the Magistrates, proposed Laws, the People, by their Suffrages, could establish them, and make them binding, without the Concurrence of the Senate, or even in Opposition to their Inclinations †. Their Decrees, without the Approbation of the Patricians, were made obligatory

* *Leges Tabellarias Populus oppressus dominatu et potentia Principum flagitavit.* Tull. de Leg. L. iii.

† *Livy*, L. iii. cap. 55.

upon

upon all the *Roman People* * ; so far were they from giving a Power to the Rich to domineer, tyrannize over, and rob the Poor, by Laws enacted without their Consent †.

Now, my Countrymen, give me Leave to ask you, upon a View of this short Abstract of the Privileges of *Greece* and *Rome*, and the Security of their Liberties and Properties, what do you think of your own Constitution and Freedom? Did you ever agree, or consent, to make Three or Four of your Neighbours, because they have a little more Wealth than yourselves, arbitrary Disposers of your Liberties and Properties, and to give them Power to rob and plunder you, without Prospect of Redress, or Room for Appeal? Is a Power of this Kind agreeable to the Nature of our Constitution? If it be not, should we not resume our original Rights, and reduce our Government to its antient Freedom with all possible Speed, lest, by Degrees, we be robb'd of all our Privileges? If small Encroachments are permitted to be made upon the Bounds of Liberty, a Torrent of Misery and Slavery will soon roll in upon us §.

TRIALS by Juries, and Appeals from inferior to superior Tribunals, from inferior Magistrates to superior, were, formerly, considered as the great Fences and Bulwarks of Liberty; but Laws have been enacted, of late Years, giving absolute Power to mean and paltry Fellows to sit as Lord Chancellors,

* Livy, L. viii. cap. 12. *Ut Plebiscita omnes Quirites tenerent.* — *Populus cujus est summa potestas omnium rerum.* — Tull.

† See Polybius, B. vi. *Etenim si quis legem inducat, &c.*

§ *Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur, Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.*

disposing of their Neighbours' Properties, and taking away all Power of appealing by *Certiorari*: And to these *Creatures* is this Power given, without obliging them to be accountable to any superior Court for their corrupt Conduct.

WHEN therefore, my Countrymen, we ruminate on the Freedom of the *Romans* and *Greeks*, and compare the Justice and Equity of their Laws, and judicial Proceedings, with the Conduct of our Commissioners of the Land-Tax, and the Powers they are invested with; may I not justly ask you, whether you are not robb'd and plunder'd, under the Sanction of Law? A great Man * says, *when Judges are permitted to pervert Justice, and wrest the Law*, then is a mix'd Government the greatest Tyranny in the World. Is not this the State that you are in, my Countrymen? And is it not a Shame to you, to the Name of Liberty, and a *Free Briton*, to have permitted this Tyranny to have reign'd so long over you?

FOR God's Sake! my Countrymen, rouse up yourselves, and, at least, attempt to shake off this *Egyptian Slavery*, and curb the Insolence of your insulting Task-masters, who, in Truth, are worse than those who held *Israel* in Bondage, because they are but the Breath of your Nostrils, and Creatures of your own forming. You have reposed Confi-

* His Words are:—When Judges are suffer'd to pervert Justice, then is a mix'd Government the worst Tyranny in the World: It is a Tyranny established by Law; 'tis authorized by Consent; and such a People are bound down with Fetters of their own making. A Tyranny, which governs by the Sword, has few Friends but Men of the Sword; but a legal Tyranny, where the People are call'd to confirm Iniquity with their own Voices, has of its Side the Rich, the Lazy, the Fearful, those that know the Law, and get by it.

dence in them, made them your Delegates, trusted them with the Sword of Power, to draw it for the Defence of your Liberties and Properties; and they have basely thrust it into your own Bowels, given a mortal Stab to your Birthright, and left you the languishing Dupes of your own Credulity and Confidence: But tho' the *British* Lion may doze for a while, I trust he will rouse up himself, and convince these proud *Archons*, that some Sparks of Zeal for the Liberty and Birthright of a *Briton* still remain.

It becomes you, my Countrymen, to apply a Remedy to this growing Evil with all possible Speed, lest the Canker, by Degrees, corrode, eat up, and destroy your Liberties, your Privileges, your Properties, and render you Slaves without Pity.

But I shall wave this Digression, and proceed to a more exact Examination of the judicial Proceedings of these Gentlemen, as also of the *Act* their Authority is grounded on, that their base Conduct may appear in its own proper Light.

WHEN an Appeal is made against such a fraudulent, collusive Assessment, as I have represented above, you may remember, an Oath is tender'd to you, and you are ask'd, "Whether or no you are rated above 4*s.* to the Pound, according to the *Rack-Rent*?" If you are conscientious, and say *No*, you are dismiss'd in a Lordly Manner by the Commissioners, and, instead of Redress, meet with Ribaldry and Insults. - I know this to be your common Case; tho', it's true, I have heard a Commissioner exclaim against the Injustice of such Proceedings, and the slovenly Way these *Animals, these tiny Insects of Power*, have of dispatching Business; but, notwithstanding, he has silently concurr'd in their Rob-

beries, and rested contented to be a Partaker of the Spoil.

INDULGE me, my Countrymen, whilst I continue the Examination of the Nature and Legality of the Procedure of these Gentlemen.

IN the first Place, the *Act* says, Sect. 4. *That all Manours, Messuages, Lands, Tenements, &c. shall be charged with as much Equality as possible, by a Pound Rate.* Sect. 8. *The Commissioners are required to cause the Proportions charged on the respective Divisions to be equally assess'd; and farther on, The Assessors are required to assess the Sum given them in Charge upon all Manours, &c. by an equal Pound-Rate.*

Now if these Commissioners, these despotic *Archons*, virtually of your own Creation, should proceed in the Choice of Assessors, in the collusive Manner mentioned above, and continue the same Scheme of tendering the Oath to Appellants, as before related; I say, if Things should be transacted in this Manner, at long-run, Oppression may come to such a Pass, that no Person, who pays for above 100*l.* a-Year to the King, may pay above 1*d.* in the Pound, according to the *Rack-Rent*, even at a Time when the Lands are tax'd at 4*s.* in the Pound.

IN order to make this a little more manifest and intelligible, I am obliged to have Recourse to *Political Arithmetic* and Calculations.

DR. *Davenant*, and Mr. *King*, make } *l.*
the National Rental per Ann. — } 14,000,000

OTHERS make it about — — 20,000,000

AND, when I reflect on the many and various Improvements made in

Agriculture, within these 50 Years
 past; the great Increase we must
 have had of People in 35 Years
 almost Peace; and notwithstand-
 ing the great Exports we make of
 Grain, the Bounties on which are
 very great, and, as I remember, on
 Wheat only, amounted, in one
 Year, to 100,000 l.; I say, when
 I consider all these Things, I con-
 ceive the National Rental cannot
 be less *per Ann.* than 20,000,000

UPON the Assessment of the
 4th and 5th of *William and Ma-
 ry*, I think, at 4 s. to the Pound,
 the Land-Tax amounted to 1,977,713 17 1/4
 Personal Estates produced about 100,000 0 0
 Consequently, the Lands pay
 about 1,877,713 17 1/4

BUT if the Lands were tax'd
 up to their *Rack-Rent*, I presume,
 they would pay, near *per Ann.* 4,000,000

Now, as the Commissioners are the *Derniere
 Ressort*, and have such full Powers fenced round
 with the flaming Sword of treble Costs, perhaps, in
 Time, this Oppression * may be advanced so far,
 that Custom may be pleaded by all the Commission-
 ers, after this Manner. " That they have always
 " had and enjoy'd an uncontrol'd Power of assessing

* Non enim ibi consistunt exempla, unde ceperunt; sed, quamlibet in
 tenuem recepta tramitem, latissime evagandi sibi viam faciunt: et ubi
 semel recto deerratum est, in praecipis pervenitur; nec quisquam sibi putat
 turpe, quod alii fuit fructuosum. Says PATERCULUS.
 " them-

" themselves AD LIBITUM, and therefore they will
 " pay but one Penny in the Pound, tho' Lands are
 " tax'd at 4 s. because they perceive, that the rest of
 " the Estates in the Parish are sufficient to pay the
 " whole *Cess*, and yet the Tax will not amount to
 " 4 s. on the Pound, according to the *Rack-Rent*;
 " and because it is to be presumed that the Legislature
 " intended them to make Use of the Indulgence that
 " it has given in this Manner; otherwise Provision
 " would have been made to guard against it: As also,
 " because * they spend their Time and Money in the
 " Execution of their Offices, and therefore ought to
 " ease
 E. 2

* When the *Florentines* had been defeated by *Phillip de Vicenti*, Lord
 of *Lombardy*, and they were obliged to raise the Taxes equally,
 whereas, formerly, the Rich and Great Men had been accustom'd to
 be favour'd, the Gentry exclaim'd against the Imposition call'd *Cata-
 stro*, because it restrained their Tyranny, and oblig'd them to pay
 an equal Share, in Proportion to their Possessions; tho' the Tax went
 down chearfully enough with the Commonalty. But when a Retro-
 spection was going to be made of what the Gentry were in Arrear,
 by easing themselves through their Power and Influence formerly;
 and a Proposal was made, that the Money arising from thence should
 be apply'd towards the Reimbursement and Relief of such who had
 been forc'd to sell their Estates to pay the Taxes, and were thereby
 reduced to Poverty, which was but a just and equitable Motion, the
 Gentry were terribly affrighted, exclaim'd against the Tax as unjust
 and unequal; and added, *That it was but reasonable those Persons who
 relinquis'd, or neglected, their own private Affairs for the better Ma-
 nagement of the Public, should be favour'd in their Taxes; for devoting
 their whole Labour to the Benefit of the State, there was no Justice nor
 Equity in the World, that the City should have the Profits of their In-
 dustry and Estate, and from others receive only the Contributions of their
 Estates.*

Those, who were for the *Catastro*, reply'd, " That as for the
 " Pains they took, and their Solitude for their Country, if it were
 " troublesome to them, they might have Liberty to retire; for there
 " was no Doubt but some well-affected Citizens would be found,
 " who would not repine to serve the City both with their Councils
 " and Estates; and that there were so many Honours and Perquisites
 " attending those great Offices, as might suffice any reasonable Per-
 " sons

“ ease each other ; ” — the modest Confession of one of the most honest I know among a Junto of them, which I myself received from his own Mouth.

ACCORDING to Mr. King's Calculations, the Gentlemen, who have an Income of 200 l. per Ann. amount to about 26,000 ; and as then, on an Average, it will be necessary, that the Gentlemen, who are qualified to act as Commissioners of the Land-Tax, should have, at least, such an annual Income ; just so many Despotic Tyrants the Freeholders of this Kingdom have set over themselves, by Laws of their own constituting.

Now, as the Land-Tax, the 4th and 5th of William and Mary, at 4 s. in the Pound, amounted to	_____	l.
		1,977,713
And, as we shall allow for Personal Estates at this Time	_____	150,000

The Lands pay, now, about	_____	1,827,713
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sons, without Abatement of their Taxes. But their great Discontent was from another Cause : The Gentry were offended, that they could not make War, at other People's Charge, as they were used to do formerly ; but were obliged to bear their Share, as well as their Neighbours. Had this Way been found out before, there would have been no War with King Ladislaw then, nor with Duke Phillip now ; both which Wars were undertaken to fill the Coffers of some particular Citizens, more than for any general Necessity.” — Thus far Mr. MACHIAVEL, Hist. of Florence, L. IV.

Here, I cannot help remarking how uniform the Gentry have been, in all Ages, in endeavouring to load and oppress the meaner People with the Burden of Taxes, and ease themselves by their Power and Influence ; and how prompt they have been to use all Manner of Artifices to slip their Necks out of the Collar, and put the galling Yoke on their poor, feeble Neighbours. The Florentine Gentry then, and the British at this Time, are exactly the same in all their selfish Views, and avaricious Intentions ; and, I hope, my Countrymen will shew that they have Souls not more abject than base Italians ; but such as will discover the same Resentment, and be as resolute and sagacious in procuring proper Redress.

BUT

BUT if the same Artifices and Oppressions, the same Cunning and Collusion, be made Use of with regard to Personal Estates, as have been with respect to Real, we may, one Day or other, perhaps, see the Personal Estates of the Manufacturers and Traders of this Kingdom tax'd at 1,000,000 l. instead of 150,000 l. as a false Notion of the Landed Interest too often prevails.

As we shall confine ourselves to l. the National Rental most commonly approv'd, we will set the annual Produce, at 4 s. in the Pound, at _____ 4,000,000

THE present Personal Estates at 150,000 l. from whence the Lands do pay but	_____	_____	1,827,713
---	-------	-------	-----------

AND less than what they would produce, if tax'd up to the Rack-Rent, _____ l. 2,172,287

A large Field for Injustice, Iniquity, and Oppression to range and expatiate in : A Sum which, every one will allow me, is sufficient to support any such fraudulent Scheme as I am going to set forth, and which it is in the Power of the Commissioners of the Land-Tax of this Kingdom to put in Practice.

UPON this Computation, therefore, we shall find the Lands of this Kingdom pay, at this Time, but about 21 d. $\frac{3}{4}$ to the Pound. Now supposing the Oppression, I have mentioned above, should extend itself with Time *, and increase with Years, it might become universal † ; and then, in Truth, my Country=

* Nemo repente fit pessimus, aut fuit turpissimus.
† It seldom happens, that the Liberties of a Country are invaded all at once : The Steps of Power are leisurely and slow ; Ministers, who have it in their Thoughts to change the Nature of a Government,

Countrymen, your Situation would be such, as that you would be obliged to pay all the Land-Tax of this Kingdom; and, at the same Time, these Commissioners would have the Power and Effrontery to command, insult, and laugh at you, for suffering such Authority, to be lodged in their Hands, through your own Indolence and Negligence: At such a Time, you will be but a Sort of *Vassals* to them, who will enjoy all the Fat of your Lands, at your Expence, and riot in the Effects of your Labour and Sweat. O! my Countrymen, "Consider, in this your Day, the Things which belong to your Peace, before they are hid from your Eyes: For, then, these Men will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as a Desolation, and your Destruction as a Whirlwind."

To illustrate what I have advanced and insinuated, and to make it more clear and manifest, pardon me, my Countrymen, if I burden you with another Calculation.

SUPPOSE the Rack-Rent of the Lands in a	l.
City, Town, or Parish, to be, <i>per Ann.</i>	— 5,000
Of these, in the Hands of the Commissioners,	1,000

* There would then remain to be paid for by the Lesser Freeholders, <i>per Ann.</i>	— 4,000
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ment, go to Work by Degrees. At first, they make Use of the most popular Hands they can possibly procure; ordering it so, that the People may not perceive who it is that puts their Fetters on.—
DAVENANT, Vol. III.

MACHIAVEL says, That Things, which are discover'd at a Distance, (which is done only by prudent Men) produce little Mischiefs but what is easily averted: But when, through Ignorance or Inadvertency, they come to that Height, that every one discerns them, there is no more Room for any Remedy, and the Disease is incurable.—
See his PRINCE.

* Mr. KING makes this to be near about the common Proportion.—
—Vide his Calculations.

LET the Sum to be assess'd upon this Parish, or, &c. be 625 l. which amounts to 2s. 6d. *per Pound*, according to the *Rack-Rent*.

Now, suppose the Commissioners act, agreeable to their Power, in the Choice of an Assessor, an Instance of which I have given you above; and this Tool assesses the Lesser Freeholders at 2s. 5d. in the Pound, according to the *Rack-Rent*, and the Commissioners at 1d. in the Pound, according to the *Rack-Rent*.

In this Case, the Lesser Freeholders will	l.	s.	d.
pay for their Estates, at 2s. 5d. in the Pound <i>Rack-Rent</i> , for 4,000 l. <i>per Ann.</i>	620	16	8

THE Commissioners for their Estates, at 1d. in the Pound, according to the <i>Rack-Rent</i> , will pay for 1000 l. <i>per Ann.</i>	4	3	4
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ASSESSED on the City, &c. paid—Total 625 0 0

HERE we may observe, that the small, or *Lesser Freeholders*, are calculated as paying but 2s. 5d. to the Pound, and the *Dons*, the Commissioners, but One Penny in the Pound, and yet the whole Sum assess'd may be raised upon the *Town, Ville, Liberty, &c.* notwithstanding. Now if this should be the Case, if this righteous Scheme should be universally put in Practice, how are you, my Countrymen, to procure Redress? If the Oath should be tendered to you, to make Inquisition, whether or no you pay above, or are assessed above, 4s. in the Pound, you are too conscientious to swear off. To whom are you to appeal then? To what Court can you fly for Relief?

You, perhaps, may say, my Countrymen, that this will never happen; but give me Leave to ask you, why should the Possibility of its *Being* exist?
And

And I must tell you, that this Tyranny is advancing apace, is actually making large Strides towards Universality; it is a Monster in *Embrio*, in *Miniature*, and how soon he may grow up to Maturity, and lay his devouring Claws on the Bulk of your Property, you know not: Many feel his Gripes already to their Cost, and how soon you, who are exempt at this Time, may roar out under the same Distress, is uncertain. Besides, it was scarce ever known, when Incroachments have been made by the Nobility and Gentry upon the common People, that they ever gave them up; or what they establish'd by Custom was ever renounced without terrible Confusion, and a Deluge of Blood. Witness the Seditions and Feuds occasioned by the *Agrarian* Laws, the Fate of the *Gracchi*, and the total Subversion of the *Roman* Commonwealth. Nay, the whole *Roman* Story, after the Expulsion and Death of the *Tarquins* * to the Days of *Sylla*, is but one continued Scene, representing the Pride, Insolence, Tyranny, Oppression, Avarice, and Incroachments of the Gentry upon the Commonalty; and the glorious Stands and Struggles the People made to preserve their Liberties. For a long Time they were successful, and baffled all their Artifices; but the

* *Livy* says, upon *Tarquin's* Death, *Ex nuncio erecti Patres, erecta plebs: sed Patribus nimis luxuriosa ea fuit vestitia: plebi, cui ad eam diem summa ope inservitum erat, injurias a primoribus fieri cepere.*— That is, "Upon this News, both the Gentry and Commonalty were in high Spirits; but the former were quite transported: Hitherto they had been very complaisant to the Middling People; but, from this very Day, they began to oppress, insult, and domineer over them." As soon as they were freed from the Apprehensions of their Tyrant, they commenced Tyrants themselves: So much alike have Mankind been in all Ages.

Gentry

Gentry were never at Rest; tho' *Livy* tells us, at last they made but little Opposition openly; *assueti jam tali certaminis genere vinci.* And tho' the *Tribunitial* Power had clipp'd their Wings so much, that, for near 240 Years, there happen'd no remarkable Seditions; yet the Gentry were never contented with an Equality of Power, nor satisfied with a moderate Share of Property; but at last, through their Avarice, Pride and Tyranny, so involved Affairs, that they hurried both themselves and the Commonalty into Tyranny and Slavery, rather than give up their Point, and live upon an Equality with their Fellow-Citizens.

'Twas this tyrannical and oppressive Disposition of the Gentry, which produced that remarkable Revolution in *Denmark*, and the many Calamities which now attend that Kingdom. My Lord *Molesworth* says. *

AFTER the Peace in 1660, the King conven'd the Estates of the Kingdom, in order to pay off the Arrears due to the Army, and relieve the Distresses of his People. The Gentry in that Kingdom, according to their usual Practice, debated how the Sums of Money requisite might, with the greatest Ease and Conveniency, be levied upon the Commonalty, without the least Intention of bearing any proportionable Share themselves. Several Disputes arose, and many sharp Expressions pass'd between them. On the one Hand, the Nobility, or Gentry, were for maintaining their antient Prerogative of paying Nothing by way of Tax, but only by voluntary Contribution; and shew'd themselves too stiff

* See his Account of *Denmark* p. 45.

used

F

at

at a Time when the Country was exhausted, and most of the remaining Riches were lodged in their Hands: They seem'd to make Use of this Occasion, not only to vindicate, but even to widen and enlarge, their Privileges above the Clergy and Commonalty, by laying Impositions on them at Pleasure; which Weight they themselves would not touch with one of their Fingers, any further than as they thought fitting.

ON the other Hand, the Clergy, for their late Adherence to the Interest of their Country, and the Burghers, for the vigorous Defence of the City, thought they might justly pretend to new Merit, and be considered, at least, as good Subjects in a State which they themselves had so valiantly defended. They remember'd the great Promises made them when dangerous Enterprizes were to be taken in Hand, and how successfully they had executed them; thereby saving, from a foreign Yoke, not only the City of *Copenhagen*, but the whole Kingdom, the Royal Family, nay, those very Great Men who, now, dealt so hardly with them: They judged it, therefore, reasonable, *that the Sums of Money necessary should be levied proportionably*, and that the Gentry, who enjoy'd all the Lands, should, at least, pay their Share of the Taxes, since they had suffer'd less in the common Calamity, and done less to prevent the Progress of it.

THIS Manner of arguing was very displeasing to the Gentry, and begat much Heat, and many bitter Replies, on both Sides. At length a principal Gentleman, named *Otto Craeg*, stood up, and, in great Anger, told the President of the City, That the Commonalty neither understood, nor considered, the Privileges of the Gentry, who at all Times had
been

been exempted from Taxes; nor the true Condition of themselves, who were no other than Slaves; (the Word in *Danish* is *Unfree*) so that their best Way was to keep within their own Bounds, and acquiesce in such Measures as antient Practice had warranted, and which they were resolv'd to maintain. This Word *Slaves* put all the Burghers, and Clergy, in Disorder. *Nanson*, the President of the City, swore an Oath, *that the Commons were no Slaves, nor would, from thenceforward, be call'd so by the Nobility, which they should prove to their Cost*. Upon this the Commonalty, being provok'd to the highest Degree, thought it was necessary to consider speedily of the most effectual Means to suppress the intolerable Pride of the Great Men, and how to mend their Condition; so concluded to make the King absolute, and rather to change many Masters for one, and to bear Hardships from a King, than from inferior Persons: The Great Men, all the while ignorant of their Resolutions, having a long Time been us'd to slight, and tyrannize over them, were not sensible of any impending Danger; and from thence contemn'd their Threats, as well as their Persons. But sad was the Sequel, melancholy the *Catastrophe*; for this Insolence of the Gentry, and rich Men, and their Refusal to pay a proportionate Share of the Taxes, ended in the entire Subversion of the Liberties of the Nation, and involved both Rich and Poor, Noble and Ignoble, Great and Small, in Slavery and Ruin.

HERE we have a flagrant Instance of the Ingratitude, Avarice, Rapine, Inhumanity, and Oppression of the *Rich and Great*; how ready they are to ease themselves of Taxes, and load their poor, indigent
F 2 Neigh-

Neighbours, notwithstanding they wallow in Wealth and Luxury. But let the tragic End of the *Danish Gentry* be a Warning to all such Oppressors. And here we may see how ready Oppressors are to plead Prescription and Custom in Support of their Tyrannies, and how much it is our Duty to watch carefully against all Innovations, and Incroachments upon our Privileges and Liberties.

EXERT yourselves therefore (Countrymen) like true *Britons*; destroy this growing Venom; lay your *Herculean Club* on the Monster; lop off the Head of this *Vulture*, before your Vitals are devour'd, and your Properties become a Prey to merciless Tyrants and *Cannibals*. Power is an intoxicating *Philtre*; Negligence and Connivance, a rich Soil properly adapted to nourish and foster the noxious Weeds of Tyranny and Oppression. Nip Oppression in the Bud; consider little Things often arise to be great; and small Incroachments on Liberty, if not stopp'd, will end in despotic Tyranny. Remember what the *Aristocracy* of the 400 about the Time of *Nicias*, and the 30 Tyrants, did at *Athens*.* Call to Mind the *Decemviri* † at *Rome*, who were all chosen by the People to be the Guardians of Liberty and Property, yet most basely trampled upon every Thing that was just and sacred.

Cardinal Richlieu says, in his *Testament Politique*, p. 2. cap. 4. "That it is more necessary to consider the future, than the present; and that Distempers are like the Enemies of a State, against whom Prudence obliges to march, rather than tarry, till they are come to drive them out again; that those,

* See Dr. *Potter*, G. A. p. 16.
Thucydides, B. 7 & 8.

† See *Livy*.

" who

" who do not follow this Method, will fall into great Confusions, which it will be very difficult to remedy afterwards." And he lays it down farther, " THAT it is a common Thing among weak Men to drive off Time, and to chuse the preserving their Ease for a Month, rather than to deprive themselves of it for a *while*, to avoid the Trouble of it for many Years; which they do not consider; they see only what is present, and do not anticipate Time by a wise Providence."

MACHIAVEL says, " The *Romans* could never relish the Saying, that is so frequent in the Mouths of our *Politicians*, To enjoy the present Benefits of Time. They either provided against, or fronted, a Danger, and seldom let themselves be overtaken by it." He says likewise, That Things, which are discovered at a Distance, (which is done only by prudent Men) produce little Mischief but what is easily averted. But when, through either Ignorance or Inadvertency, they come to that Height, that every one discerns them, there is no Room for any Remedy, and the Disease is incurable.

WE have here cited the Authorities of two very great *Politicians*, well-vers'd both in the *Theory* and *Practice* of State Affairs, to shew you, my *Countrymen*, how dangerous it is to procrastinate, to consult Nothing but present Ease, and to use palliating Remedies to Evils which are in the *Embryo*; when the most speedy *Corrosives* ought to be applied, to stop the Progress of a Gangreen in its Infancy, lest, at last, it should absolutely destroy the Liberty of the Body Politick.

THE *Taille* in *France* was laid on only to support one War, but has, notwithstanding, been levied ever since

since the Reign of their King *John*. And tho' this Tax, and the *Taillon*, are esteem'd cruel and heavy Burdens, by the Inhabitants of that Kingdom; to the Shame of my *Countrymen* be it spoken, I believe that People, however patient of Slavery, and submissive to their Prince, would, long ago, have shaken off the Yoke at the Hazard of their Lives, and at the Expence of their Fortunes, had they been so much exposed, by the Laws and Ordinances of State, to the Tyranny and Rapine of their Equals, without any Place being left for Redress, or any Room for Appeal, as we are here in *England*, by the Laws which direct the Levying the Land-Tax, and the oppressive Measures made Use of in the Execution of the said Act. Witness the Insurrections *, and Tumults, which happen'd at various Times, excited by the inconceivable Aversion and Disgust these People had to Taxes, tho' laid on with more Justice and Equality than the Tax we have been inveighing against. But more of this *bye and bye*.

WHAT makes all Taxes most grievous, is the unequal, and unjust Distribution and Levying of them; as Dr. *Davenant*, Sir *Wm. Temple*, and all other Politicians remark. If I mistake not, † *De Wit* says, a *Dutch* Manufacturer pays 40 l. per Cent. of his Labour on a Piece of Cloth in Taxes; but does it patiently, because he knows he fares as well as his Neighbours, and the Taxes are levied with the greatest Impartiality and Equality imaginable: To which may be added, that he is always satisfied that

* Voyez De l'Etat des affaires de France, par Bernard de Girard, Seigneur du Haillan. P. 263.
 † See De Wit's Memoirs, and Dutch better Friends than the French. P. 22.

the

the Taxes are, at all Times, carefully applied to the Uses for which they were intended; and these Considerations make the People easy under the greatest Burthens.

* My Lord *Molesworth*, to the same Purpose, says, " Before I conclude this Chapter, I think it very pertinent to take Notice, that, in *Denmark*, there are no Seditious, Mutinies, or Libels, against the Government; but all the People either are, or appear to be, Lovers of their King, notwithstanding their ill Treatment, and the Hardships they groan under: And I suppose one principal Reason of this to be the Equality of their Taxes, and the Manner of Taxing.

" It is not to be imagin'd, by those who see it not, what a Comfort it is to the Sufferers to be ill used alike: For Poverty and Riches being only such in Proportion, provided Men be treated like their Neighbours, they grumble not: That, which vexes the Oppressed in most Countries, (especially the common People, who are more than ordinary envious) is to see their County, their Parish, their House tax'd more than their Neighbours: And they have Reason to be discontented at this; for it brings real POVERTY upon those who are overtax'd. It does not diminish the real Stock of the Subjects' Money, which would keep all Commodities and Necessaries at equal Rates; but picks particular Men's Pockets, whilst it leaves others rich, and able to profit by the Necessities of the Poor."

* Account of Denmark, Chap. xv. P. 226, which contains a fine Lesson, with Volumes of Instruction in it, but only to the discerning Politician, who knows how to make a proper Use of it.

BUT

But, to clearly convince my *Countrymen* of the Oppressions they lie under, the arbitrary Power they have unwarily constituted, and the Slavery they are subject to, I shall lay before them a concise *Historical* Narrative of the Methods observed, in *France*, in assessing and levying the Taxes call'd *Taille* and *Taillon*, which are consider'd by the *French* as the most oppressive and cruel of any exacted from them. By *This* the Reader will be capable of judging of the Value of his boasted *English Liberty*, and the Privileges and Advantages an *English* Freeholder enjoys above a *Roturier*, or Boor, of *France*. Sorry I am, that, at such a Conjunction, I should have Cause to make so odious a Comparison. But to the Subject.

As soon as the Sum his Majesty of *France* is pleas'd to demand of his People, is resolv'd upon in his Royal Council, Commissions are sent to the *Treasurers-General* of *France*, established in the Offices of their respective Generalities: Which Commissions enjoin the said *Treasurers-General* to divide the Sum, which they are commanded to levy upon their respective Jurisdictions, into as just and equal Proportions as they possibly can *; which done, they send them to the *Elus*, or Elects, who are something like our Commissioners of Land-Tax, and are Judges of the Elections; with an Order thereunto annex'd,

* Apres que les Elus ont fait leur Departemens ils envoient leur Commissions particulieres aux Consuls, Maires, Jurats, Syndics ou Eschevins de toutes les Villes & Paroisses de leur Election par lesquelles ils leur mandent assavoir, imposer & cottiser sur leur Habitans la Somme y declaree plus justement & egalement qu'il sera possible; le fort portant le foible suivant l'Ordonnance. Ces Consuls pour ce faire, precedent à annuelle election, & sont nommez Assesseurs; Aussi est leur charge de mettre à la Taille tous les habitans, chacun selon ses Rapports, & n'obmettre personne. — GIRARD, p. 343.

by

by which they are commanded to levy just such a Sum, neither more nor less, within the Extent of their Elections. The Elects thereupon assemble, and draw up *Tax-Rolls*, by which they assess the Cities, Boroughs, Villages within their several Elections, and afterwards send those Rolls to the Chief Officers of the said Cities, &c. who assemble the People to elect Assessors, which is done by a Plurality of Voices. These Assessors make out Rolls, and assess every Individual according to his Circumstances and Abilities, and the best of their Judgment. After this is done, the People chuse Collectors to collect the Assessment, by a Majority of their Suffrages; and those are generally elected, who will execute the Office for the least Salary or Discount. The Rolls, or Assessments, are deliver'd to these Collectors, who levy the Sum assess'd, and pay it to the Receivers of the Taxes for every Election, and they again are to return it to the General Receivers of the Generality, who transmit it to the Royal Treasury.

WHEN Contests, or Differences, arise concerning these Taxes and Assessments, there is an Appeal lies from the Assessors to the Judges of the Election; and from their Decision to the Court of *Aides*, whose Determination is final.

Now, the Difference between the Method of assessing and collecting the Taxes in *England* and *France* is worthy of exact Remark and Comparison, as the first is most cruel and oppressive, and as we are so vain as to imagine our Liberties and Properties are much more secure, in every Respect, from the Invasion, Insolence, and Oppression of our Superiors, than they are in *France*.

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IN the Kingdom of *France* the * *Elu's*, or Judges of the Courts of Election, are very few in Number, and are exempt themselves from those Taxes in the common Shape, tho', perhaps, they pay their Share in another Form. From hence, they cannot be under any Bias to do Injustice, in order to ease themselves, which is our unhappy Case in *England*.

AGAIN, in *France*, these Courts are held at some Distance from the greatest Parts of the Towns, Cities, Villages, &c. concern'd; so that the Judges cannot be supposed to be influenced or bias'd by † personal Acquaintance, particular Intimacy, private Friendships, or their *Opposites*; from whence arises the greater Probability of strict Justice and Impartiality in the Execution of their Office.

IN *England*, the Commissioners are in the Neighbourhood, have Favour and Affection to bend them of one Side, Rancour and Animosity to warp them of the other; so that it is ten to one, if Justice be done in any Dispute. Our Forefathers were so apprehensive of, and so cautious in guarding against, the evil Effects of Influence of this Kind, that they made a Law, incapacitating a Judge of *Affize* to sit at the Bar in a County which gave Birth to him: But our more wise Generation has lately repealed this judicious Law, being grown weary of the *obsolete*

* In the Election of *Paris*, containing 440 Parishes, the Court of Election, which determines all Controversies arising about the King's Taxes, is composed of a President, a Lieutenant, one Assessor, 16 Councillors, elect, one Advocate and Proctor for the King, and some inferior Officers, who are all sworn: From whence we may observe, there is about one Commissioner to 50 Parishes.

See the Present State of *France*, in 2 Vols. 12mo.

† *Quia favor aut odium in iudice, plus valet quam optima lex in codice.*

Fences

Fences of Liberty, and Justice, constituted by their *old-fashioned* Predecessors.

BUT how necessary it is to avoid every minute Circumstance, which may tend to bias the Judgment in the Distribution of Justice, nothing can more clearly evince, than the Practice of some of the wisest of the *Grecian* States, who had thoroughly studied human Nature, and form'd their Laws accordingly. From hence we find, that it was the Custom of the Court of *Areopagites* at *Athens* to try Criminals brought before them in the Dark, that they might not be under the Influence even of a Look, which might bias them either for or against the Criminal: And, to be sure, the less Knowledge you have of any Thing but the Merits of the Cause, the more Probability there is of your doing Justice in any Dispute which comes before you.

IN *France* also, the *Taille* and *Tailion*, &c. are assess'd and collected by Persons of their own chusing*, who are on an equal Footing with those who are to be tax'd: Persons who are elected for their known Integrity, Candour, good Sense, Justice, and Impartiality, by the Majority of the Suffrages of those very Persons who are to be tax'd; and this is done with a Design that every one may have Justice impartially administer'd to him. It is impossible, in *France*, that infamous Tools, couchant Sycophants, and Knights of the Post, can be chosen by the *Elu's* to do any avaritious Drudgery, or be the Instruments of Corruption, in executing the Dictates of Favour, or wrecking the pernicious Effects of Revenge, and Animosity. But in this Kingdom, private Piques act

* *Ils sont Elus et nommez par la pluralité de voix, et suffrages des habitans.*—GIRARD, p. 343.

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instead

Instead of Law, and personal Rancour weighs down the Balance of Justice. Unhappy Britons! Suppose, in *France*, the Peasant's Household-Goods should be seized for his Taxes; if he be unequally tax'd, and the Goods be unjustly seized, he may appeal to the *Elu's*, the Judges and Commissioners of the Election, and find Redress. But if they should happen to be such a Sort of legal *Banditti*, as are in this Kingdom, and, through Partiality and Corruption, should refuse him Justice, he may appeal to the *Court of Aides*. Now though, perhaps, the Rich in *France* have no more Regard to Justice in their Decisions with respect to the Poor, than they have in this Kingdom; yet the very Knowledge that there is Room for an Appeal must, in some Measure, induce them to have a more strict Regard to Justice, because if their very Friends, whom they would dishonestly serve, are cast in a superior Court, it must redound to their own Disgrace, and their Friends Injury. But a *Free Briton* is manacled down to the Decisions of an insolent, partial *Elu*, whose Interest often it is to rob him; and what is a strong Temptation so to do, is, *it is the only Way he has to ease himself*; and it is also a Way he may pursue with Impunity.*

In such a Case, to whom shall our *Free Briton* fly for Redress? Why, truly, there is no Way left open for him. He is surrounded by the Arrows of Injustice, without a Law to shield him, or an *Asylum* to fly to. He is damn'd to groan, and couch under, the Tyranny, like a *Turkish* Peasant under the Scourge of an insolent *Bashaw*: Nay, I ques-

* *Oderunt peccare mali formidine pœnce.*

tion

tion whether his Condition is not worse than the *Musselman's* *. This is the Freedom, this is the Picture of a *Free Briton*!

THE noble Lord I mentioned above says, "That tho' *Denmark* is under a worse Tyranny than the Inhabitants of the Dominions of the Grand Signior, yet the Administration of Justice there is preferable to the arbitrary Methods, and odious *Chicanery*, pursued in *England*." THERE-

* My Lord *Molesworth* says,—Much has been spoken, and written by several Authors, of the Rigour of the *Turkish* Government; let us consider some Particulars of it, by way of Comparison.

The *Turks* are the Conquerors of the Christians in the Countries they have over-run, and have a Sort of barbarous Right to use them ill; yet they never persecute them upon the Account of Conscience; they suffer them, for the most Part, to inhabit, and cultivate their own Lands; without Disturbance, paying only a *Caratche* Yearly for Tribute; which, as I have been inform'd by a Minister of his Imperial Majesty, amounted, in *Hungary*, *Sclavonia*, *Serwia*, and *Bosnia*, only to about ten Dollars, 45 s. for an ordinary Family in Time of Peace, and, during a War, Nothing.

It is true, the Propriety of all Lands in *Turky* is in the *Grand Signior*; but, whether it be not better to be only a Farmer at an easy Rent, than to have the Name of a Proprietor without a comfortable Subsistence, and in Effect to be Master of Nothing, I leave the Reader to judge.

The forcing away Children from the poor Christian Parents is accounted a great Hardship, tho' it be for the worldly Profit and Advancement of these Children: Bating the Point of Religion, it is a far less Mischief to deprive Parents of their Sons and Daughters, to maintain them well, than to leave a heavy Charge upon their Hands, after having taken away all Possibility of nourishing and educating them.

The Sun, Soil, Climate, and Situation, with other natural Advantages of the *Grand Signior's* Dominions, as to Profit and Pleasure, are infinitely beyond those of other *Northern* Countries, that we are acquainted with. In *Turky* the Harbours are open, except some few Places on the *Black Sea*; whereas, here, they are frozen up three or four Months in a Year. There the Fruit, Corn, and Herbs, have double the Nourishment they have here. In a Word, in some Christian Countries of *Europe*, there seem to be most of the Mischiefs of a *Turkish Government* in an infinitely worse Climate: Besides, we are to consider

THEREFORE, with all our boasted Liberty, with all our Opiniatrey, Vanity, and Conceit of our Freedom, that we are, notwithstanding, under a *curfed Tyranny* and Oppreffion, in many important Cafes, will appear manifefit to every impartial Reader, when we come to compare our own Condition with one of the moft defpotic and oppreffive Governments in *Europe*, that is worfe than even *Turkifh*, and yet, in fome Refpects, much better than our *own*. And that the Reader may the better judge, let him confider what follows.

IN *Denmark*, in the ordinary Proceedings between Man and Man, there are three Courts, every one of which has Power to give a definitive Sentence, and muft either acquit or condemn. Yet there lies an Appeal from the lower to the higher; and if the inferior Judge has wilfully varied from the pofitive Law, the Party wrong'd has Damages given him, both from the * Judge, and his Adverfary. Here is no Removal of Actions from one Court to another, where the Parties may begin all again; but by way of ordinary Procedure from the lower to the higher.

THE three Courts are thefe: *First*, in the Cities and Towns, the *Byfoghds Court*, to which, in the Country, does anfwer the *Herredsfoughds Court*. *Secondly*, From thence lies an Appeal to the *Landftags Court*, or general Head Court of the Province. *Thirdly*, From thence to the Court, call'd the *Highbright*, in *Copenhagen*, where the King himfelf fometimes fits in Perfon; and it is always compos'd of the

confider, that the *Turks* themfelves, who are Lords and Mafters, live well and pleafantly; and it is their conquer'd Slaves, whom they ufe in the Manner above-mentioned.—See *Account of Denmark*, p. 239.

* Among the *Romans*, the Actions call'd *Judicium Calumnie*, and *Judicium falfi*, were analogous to this Custom.—See *KENNET*, p. 137.

Prime

Prime Nobility of the Kingdom. The Judges in the two former Courts, 'tis true, are conftituted by the King's Letters Patents, *duranté bene placito*; but are punifhable for any Mifdemeanours committed, and condemn'd to make Reparation to the Parties injured, for any Injuftice by them done.

THE Sentences pafs'd in the inferior Courts are, fometimes, bias'd and partial; but not often, for fear of the *highest Court*, where great Regard is had to Juftice; infomuch that, fome Time ago, a Judge very hardly escap'd being fined for a Sentence pafs'd againft an *Englifh Merchant* with regard to the Revenue, which was prefently revers'd.

AND all this is done in a fhort Time, 12 Months at moft; and a Man may be his own Advocate, or hire one at a fmall Expence.

HERE is a Country the moft curfed under the Sun, and yet not fo curs'd in fome Cafes; nay, in Cafes of Confequence, Cafes of Property, which fet all Mankind together by the Ears; I fay, not fo curs'd as this Kingdom; not fo curs'd as *Free Britons*.

AT the *Byfoghds* and *Landftag's* Courts, the Judge inferts the Law, and adds, in Writing, the Reafons upon which his Judgment is founded.

EVERY one may plead his own Caufe, that pleafes; however, it is the King's Order, that the Magiftrates take Care to have one or more Advocates, who are to plead for the Poor, and fuch as cannot plead for themfelves. Upon the Whole, the Charges of the Law are very eafy, fince a Complaint may go through all the Courts for 50 Rixdollars, which is about 12*l.* Sterling.

I SIGH, I blufh, now I am come to the invidious Task of comparing this Account with the judicial Proceed-

Proceedings, and justiciary Processes of my own Country.

IF, in the *first Place*, we turn our Eyes to Law and Justice, Process and Judgment, as carried on at the Quarter-Sessions in every County in *England*, we shall find it to be a Scandal to Magistracy, and a Reproach to Government. The Justices, in their collective Capacity, are a Court of Record, and cognisable to no superior Court. They have Power to determine of Property and Life; tho' they are, too often, mean, senseless, insignificant Animals *, who are unacquainted with the Laws of their Country, and not in the least qualified for the Office they are raised to, or to exercise the Power they have delegated to them; most commonly taken from the Dregs of the People, upon no other Account, but because by Fraud, Avarice and Rapine, they have accumulated such a particular Fortune: So that they are mounted to what ought to be esteem'd an Honour, for what, perhaps, in strict Justice, they ought to be advanced to a Gibbet.

THUS they are nominated by Dint of Estate, or Ministerial Influence, without any Regard to their Knowledge, Virtue, or Integrity; often avaricious in their Dispositions, sordid in their Manners, corrupt in their Principles, base in their Minds, illiterate in their Education, and debauch'd in their Morals. And yet these Gentlemen are deputed to be the Scourges of Vice and Immorality, the Executors of Justice, and the Preservers of the Peace of the Community.

* *Asini ad Lynam.*

WHERE

WHERE in History, either antient or modern, is there an Example, in a free Community, of such * Implements being chosen and employ'd as Magistrates? What recommends them is Estate, or Party-Zeal, not Integrity; what qualifies them is Wealth, not Knowledge in the Laws; what gives them Power of Face to act, is Ignorance and Impudence, not Probity, Judgment and Integrity; what induces them to act is Interest, Pride, and Vanity, not Benevolence, a Regard to Justice, and a Love to their Country. No Wonder, if such Men, invested with arbitrary Power, and constituted a *Court of Record*, should often plunge headlong into the Depths of Iniquity.

AFTER this Manner, in every County we have ignorant petty *Tyrants* constituted to lord it over us, instead of honourable, ingenuous, upright, conscientious, learn'd and judicious Magistrates: Subjection to such Implements is call'd *English Liberty*; and such Authority, the best constituted Government in the World.

I HOPE no one will think, I have been too severe upon this Race of Animals, when I have only follow'd the Example of so great a Man as my Lord COKE †, who observes, "That this Court of Justices was, once, such a Form of subordinate Government for the Quiet of the Realm, that, if duly executed, no Part of the Christian World had the like; but, of late, it has been composed of such an unsuitable Mixture of Men, that it is become a Subject in Plays, and a Jest in Comedies."

* No such among the *Hoientots* of *Madagascar*. See *Drury's Voyages, &c.*

† *Sir Henry Spelman*, and *Lambert*, say the same.

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But what would his Lordship have said, had he lived in our Days to have seen the Extension of their Power sapping our Liberties, and the important Aims these insignificant Animals often give themselves in the Execution of their Office? Certainly, he would have bursted with Disdain and Laughter.

I WOULD not be understood here to mean all indiscriminately; no, there are some of them, who are Men of Birth, Rank, Sense, Education, Knowledge in the Laws, and of strict Integrity, Honour, Impartiality and Justice; but, alas! such are generally borne down by a corrupt Majority of Noses: When Magistrates are elected to Office upon Account of their Wealth, without Regard to their Knowledge or Virtue, this will always be the Case. *Machiavel* says of *Rome*, "Poverty was no Impediment to Preferment: Virtue was the only Thing required in the Election of Magistrates, and the Distribution of Offices; and where it was found, let the Person, or Family, be ever so poor, it was sure to be advanced; which Manner of *Living made Riches contemptible.*" But, in this Kingdom, any Booby is invested with the Ensigns of Magistracy, provided he has as many Acres of Land, as are necessary to qualify him to act; and this Estate constitutes him a Lord Chancellor: More Acres are required to make a Country Justice, than were necessary to qualify a *Roman Dictator* formerly: In those Days, Poverty and Honour were not so inconsistent as they are now; and four Acres of Land were sufficient to qualify *Cincinnatus* for the supreme Command. But, now-a-days, all Dignity and Eminence are affix'd to Wealth, as if Merit and Virtue were the necessary Concomitants of a large Estate,

Estate, and, like the Mansion-House, were to be purchased with it, and thrown into the Bargain.*

AND tho' they are, generally, such contemptible Animals, as I have describ'd; yet they are, in many important Cases of Property, made the *Derniere Ressort*, not accountable to any superior Court, invested with an uncontrolable Power without Appeal; nor are they punishable for any corrupt Practices, Male-Conduct, or tyrannical and unjust Proceedings. From hence the Number of Noses makes that Law in the Afternoon, which was determined by them to be the highest Injustice in the Morning; and, perhaps, they stumbled right.

FROM hence all Causes, which come before them, are determined, just as Favour or Affection, Caprice or Interest, Ignorance or Knavery, shall dictate; all which, it is notorious, most shamefully govern among them. But why Matters of Property should be left to the sole Determination of these Creatures, without a Power of Appeal, or the Verdict of an honest Jury to set Things right; I say, why Causes should be determined after this Manner in this Court, when the Proceeding, both in superior and inferior Courts, is by *Juries*, I cannot so much as imagine.

BUT these Powers are Innovations contrary to the very Nature of our Constitution, and its fundamental Laws; they are an Inroad upon our Li-

* Whereas in all Polities and Societies in the World, there should be but two essential Qualifications necessary to intitle a Man to a Share in the Legislature of his Country, or the Administration of Justice, namely, Integrity and Ability. These are Qualifications, which ought not to be dispensed with; and no one, destitute of them, ought to be entrusted with any Authority, any Influence.

erties, and, in Truth, as they constitute our Gentry Tyrants, so they make the Bulk of the People Slaves.

I CANNOT conceive, for my Part, why, at a Quarter-Sessions, when the Controversy is about, perhaps, a large Sum of Money, a Jury should not be impanel'd to try the Cause, and judge of the Equity or Law of a Dispute, and give a Verdict accordingly; as well as in his Majesty's Courts at *Westminster*, which take Cognisance of all Matters above 40 s. Value, and often do not give above 2 d. Damage in Causes there decided. These Courts are the great Bulwarks, and Fences of our Liberties; and happy it is for us, that we are not totally excluded from them.

BUT at a Quarter-Sessions, instead of a fair Trial *per Pares*, by Men of your own Rank, a Knot of insolent Tyrants are deputed to give Judgment without Appeal, and without Fear of Punishment, tho' that Judgment be never so erroneous, and contrary to Law, Equity, and common Sense. Our Properties and Persons are left the Sport of the Caprice and Humour of tiny Insects of Power, whose Weakness and Wickedness are become the Scorn of Mankind, the Jest of the *Theatre*, the Scandal of Government, and a Reproach to the Name of Liberty; yet this is the *English* Liberty we boast of.

THE Laws, which make the Quarter-Sessions the *Derniere Ressort*, convert our Free Government into an *Aristocratical* Tyranny, as they give an absolute Power to a Few Rich Men, to dispose of the Property of their Fellow-Citizens without a *Jury*, without Appeal, without Fear of Punishment, tho' their Determinations be ever so unjust, cruel, and oppressive.

oppressive. What Reason can be given why an Appeal should not lie to a superior Court, or those Judges be accountable to some superior Power for their Conduct? Without such Awe, and without such Restriction, there are no Hopes of restraining the Executive Powers of Government from degenerating into Oppression and Tyranny.

IN the Courts at *Westminster* Juries, inform'd by the Judge, determine; but here interested Persons often, by Collusion, judge without any Regard to Law or Justice, so that their Decisions are become a Matter of Scorn and Contempt, even among the Populace, and the very Rabble. A Power of this Kind, constituted to judge without Appeal, forms a Tyranny scarce to be equall'd under the most barbarous Governments. If, in this Court, Juries were impanel'd to try Causes, and judge of *Meum* and *Tuum*, in private Affairs, as well as criminal and publick, there might be some Prospect of having Justice done: But, now, all Things are carried by Number of Noses, instead of Law, or Justice. Scandalous Authority!

THE Establishing this Complication of Folly, Stupidity, Oppression and Tyranny, is salv'd over with the specious Pretence of constituting a Power to determine Disputes in a *summary Way*. * Summary Methods of determining Controversies, and short Decisions are best, provided that, instead of establishing Right and Justice, they do not naturally tend to pervert it, and make the Remedy worse than the Disease, which is, here, apparently the Case. There ought to be, in this Court, either

* *Omnia mala exempla bonis initiis orta sunt.* SALLUST.

Trials by Juries, an Appeal to a superior Court, or Punishment for scandalous and corrupt Proceedings; but here is neither; all is transacted without Awe, without Restraint, and is unlimited Iniquity and Oppression, impudent and audacious from a Consciousness of Impunity.

His present Majesty is a Prince of the most extensive Learning, consummate Knowledge, perfect Integrity, gracious Disposition and Humanity, of any Prince in Europe, or the World; and did he know the Tyranny you are expos'd to, and the Oppressions you groan under, I doubt not but his Royal Heart would be touch'd with Grief and Compassion; and he would exert himself to redress your Grievances *: But it is not to be expected that he is acquainted with all the lesser Wheels of Government; 'tis therefore, my Countrymen, from yourselves Redress must issue. It is true, King Alfred was famous for destroying all the Wolves in this Kingdom, and hanging up 40 corrupt Judges in one Year; if his present Majesty would exert the same Authority among the Justices of the P——e, I am inclined to think, next Quarter-Sessions we should have very thin Benches thro'out the Kingdom; and that we should establish a hanging Epocha, as famous as the Hegira or Olympiads. Extraordinary Crimes require extraordinary Methods of Punishment; but that Anti-constitutional Schemes should be introduced in common, private, and civil Affairs, is a Matter of Lamentation and Grief, as well as of Satyr and Reprehension.

* *Rex non facit injuriam*, says BRACTON: The King can do no Wrong. ONE

ONE of the greatest Securities of our Liberties and Properties is the Institution of * Juries sworn to do Justice between King and Subject, Party and Party. Wherever an absolute Power is lodged, and continually acting, whether in one Man, or any Number of Men, who are under strong Temptations to be bias'd, and from whose Determinations, right or wrong, there is no Appeal, from such a Power great Danger is to be apprehended to Justice and Equity.

FROM hence, I cannot but look upon the Power of the Quarter-Sessions, of late, a Determination of Property, by Commissioners of Excise, Customs, and Land-Tax; as well as the great Increase of the Power and Authority of Justices of the Peace, by making them the final Ressort, and prohibiting *Certiorari's*, to be Incroachments upon our Liberties, Innovations in our Constitution, and Breaches of the fundamental Laws of our antient Form of Government, which was always accusom'd to Trials by Juries.

IT is true, we have no Occasion to fear any Invasion of our Rights, and Privileges, from our present most gracious Sovereign; but if ever a little and cunning, or a great and ambitious Tyrant should mount the Throne, such as *Lewis XI.* or *Lewis XIV.* of France were, what may we not dread from such a Crowd of Officers and Magistrates, chosen by the

* 'Tis said, they were in Use among the old Britons.—Upon the Death of Brutus, after the Expulsion of the Tarquins, the first Law, which was made, Livy tells us, was, *Ante omnes de provocatione adversus magistratus ad populum*, A Law concerning Appealing to the People against Magistrates, or to try Magistrates themselves, or revoke their Decrees.

Direc-

Direction, and under the Influence, of the Crown, invested with absolute Power by a Cart-Load of Statutes, and paid an annual Salary to execute the vexatious and revengeful Dictates of a prostitute Court, and tyrannical and cruel Prince?

I FORESEE, it may be objected against what I have said concerning the absolute Power of Magistrates, &c. in Affairs relating to the publick Taxes, " That " if the Magistrates, and Officers of the Revenues, " had not full Powers to determine Disputes and " Controversies, which arise about Taxes, Excises, " and Imposts, and to punish Frauds committed; " and that if such Trials were left to the Verdict " of Juries, the King would be defrauded of his " Right, the Public would be constantly robb'd and " cheated, and Scenes of Fraud and Abuse would " be carried on and perfected with Impudence and " Impunity."

I WOULD beg Leave to answer here: Suppose the worst that can be the Consequence, and that Frauds would be often committed, and pass unpunish'd; in this Case, it is the People must suffer in the End: To transfer the Loss from them, and say, the King must lose by it, is a mere Illusion and Mockery, calculated to amuse and deceive the Unwary and Unthinking. If there are Breaches of the Laws, and Frauds committed with respect to the Revenues, which escape due Punishment; so there are also in criminal Cases: The same Arguments may be brought, with equal Force against Trials by Juries in such Cases.

BUT as it is the People who must suffer, and not the King, from unjust Verdicts; so those very Persons, who pronounce a Delinquent innocent, when an

an Affair is doubtful, or would mitigate a Fine; I say, those very Persons must bear a Share of the Loss, and suffer by a too favourable Verdict, or a too mild Construction of the Law: And, therefore, there is little Probability of *Juries* not doing Justice to their Country.

BUT Servants of the Crown are Parties concern'd; and, further, may fear being discharged, if they should shew Lenity to Delinquents, in the Execution of their Office: Suppose a Fraud was to escape due Severity, whether it were to be by Fine, Imprisonment, or corporal Punishment; is it not more eligible that a Criminal should escape his Demerits, and illude the Force of the Law, than that a whole People should be subject to a grievous Tyranny, or that innocent Men should suffer by the Partiality of bias'd and corrupt Judges? A Loss might be borne by Ten Millions of People with Ease, which would ruin a private Man, tho' he were opulent. If there be any Deficiency in Taxes in one Shape, they must be rais'd in another.

ARBITRARY Decisions are much more grievous to a free People, than heavy Taxes accompanied with the Pride, Arrogance, and Partiality of *Fellow-Citizens*, exerted in the Levying them. A Mulct of the Pocket is not half so afflicting as the Exultations and Triumphs of a revengeful Enemy, who has gratified his Spleen and Animosity, by an unequal and cruel Taxation of the Man whom he hates: And, what adds to the Tyranny, there is no Appeal from such a Judge, nor any Challenge to be made, as in Cases of Trials by Juries.

IF Juries were to be impanel'd out of the Men of Property in every Town, &c. not subject to the Excise,

Excise, &c. Laws, and Justices of Peace were to explain the Laws, and sit as Judges, if capable, every Dispute and Cause might be try'd at a very small Expence, and with much more Impartiality and Justice than now. If you suppose the Justices are, generally, such Dunces, that they are incapable of explaining the Laws, I would ask, how then are they qualified to give arbitrary Judgment on them now? From this Decision an Appeal might lie to the Quarter-Sessions, and from thence to the King's-Bench, with the same Securities, the same Restrictions, and the same Salaries as in *Denmark*.

In this Scheme we have a Method of punishing Delinquents, without running the Hazard of suffering such Innovations in our Constitution, and Incroachments on our Liberties, in order to raise Taxes, &c. as tend to rob us of all our Privileges, and leave us under a worse Tyranny than either the *Turks* or *Danes*. The large Powers given, of late, to Justices of the Peace, and Revenue-Officers, &c. are absolutely anti-constitutional, advance towards a general Tyranny, form an *Oligarchia*, or Tyranny of the Rich over the Poorer, and ought to be abolish'd with all Speed. If a Justice cannot compromise a Dispute of any Kind, let a Jury be impannell'd to try the Cause: It is better that a few Knaves should go unpunish'd, than a whole People should be expos'd to the Danger of losing their Liberties and Properties, and being made absolute Slaves.

Thus, my Countrymen, I have made it appear to you, that your antient Form of Government is trampled upon; that you are under a Tyranny unknown to most Nations in the World; that your Rights and Privileges are invaded; and that your Judges

Judges have Power to oppress you in the Affair of the Land-Tax, as well as in many other Cases; and that, oftentimes, it is their Interest so to do. I have proved to you, that just so much as they lay extraordinary on *your* Shoulders, they may take off from their *own*; and that they may carry their pernicious Injustice and Avarice so far, as to load you with all the Land-Tax of this Kingdom, and pay Nothing themselves. You have no Court of *Aides* to fly to for Relief; no, those insolent Oppressors, those ravenous Wolves, those rapacious Bashaws, are the *Derniere Ressort* of a Free Briton.

FORGIVE me, my dear Countrymen, if I am a little warm*, if my Indignation be a little raised on your Behalf. SOLOMON says, *Oppression will make a wise Man mad*; no Wonder then, if a Man, of but common Humanity, should have his Detestation and Abhorrence roused by such glaring Images of Tyranny. If you appeal, when wrong'd and oppress'd, who is to be your Judge? Why, the very Wretch who is to thrive by your Ruin, and grow opulent by beggaring you, *the poor Appellant*. Monstrous, unparallel'd Oppression! The Tyrannies of the *East* scarce yield any such Examples. Who that hears of these Transactions, that takes a View of these Scenes of Iniquity and Oppression, and has a Spark of Love for his Country, for Liberty, for Justice, for Mankind, can help fetching a deep Sigh?

I KNOW a *Freeholder*, who has been insulted, with the Acknowledgment of a *Commissioner*, to his Face,

* *Cogit enim excedere propositi formam operis erumpens animo et peccare indignatio.* PATERCULUS.

that he did not pay above $\frac{2}{3}$ to the Pound (Land-Tax) of what the Freeholder paid; and yet the very same Commissioner afterwards refused to lower him, when the Freeholder appeal'd against a Commissioner, who did not pay above $\frac{4}{7}$ of what the Freeholder paid. What a Scandal is it to the very Name of Liberty, that such a Power of Oppression should be lodged in the Hands of any Set or Body of Men? What Temptation does such a Power lay a Handful of Men under to grind and oppress vast Multitudes of their Fellow-Citizens, and Freeholders in this Nation? But how, my Countrymen, can you be said to be free, when so many Tyrants have a Power to lord it over you, and rob you of your Patrimony; or of what was purchased by your Toil, and the Sweat of your Brows? I have often heard of, and seen, such Tyrannies, as I have described, exercised towards you, my poor suffering *Countrymen*, which have highly raised my Indignation and Concern.

In *France*, an Appeal lies from an unjust Assessor to the *Elects*, from the *Elects* to the Court of *Aides*. In *Denmark*, as I have told you, at a small Expence you may carry such an Affair to the *High-right*, the supreme Tribunal, composed of all the Nobility of the Kingdom, who pay a most sacred Reverence to Justice: But, in *England*, a Commissioner is Assessor, Collector, *Elu*, Court of *Aides*, Supreme Tribunal, &c. In short, every Thing necessary to constitute an insolent Oppressor, and with every Inducement to form a Thief, and a Robber, from whose Tribunal there is no Appeal. Blessed Government! Righteous Authority truly! He is deeply interested to ease himself, his Tenants, his Creatures, his Dependants; and his uncontrolable Power furnishes him with

with Opportunities of loading his Neighbours with cruel Burdens, and oppressing every one, who disdains to be the Tool of his Spleen, the Instrument of his Revenge, a servile Assentator of his Passions, or a couchant Sycophant truckling to his Humour, and doing Homage to his Pride and Vanity. Has a *Turkish Bashaw* more Power over a Christian Slave?

SUPPOSE, now, such an absolute Power was given to the Nobility of this Kingdom to tax and oppress all the Gentry who have no Right to sit in the House of Lords, and who have an Estate of above 100 *l. per Annum*: Suppose it was in the Power of that august Assembly to lay a Tax of 4 *s.* in the Pound upon all the Estates of the Gentry, in order to raise a particular Sum for his Majesty, which Tax would produce the said Sum at 2 *s.* in the Pound, if the Nobility would pay their *Quota*, or 2 *s.* in the Pound for *their* own Estates likewise; but it being left a Matter of meer Discretion, they use their Authority to advance their own Interest, and pay but 1 *d.* in the Pound, and load the Gentry with a Tax of 3 *s.* 11 *d.* in the Pound; Pray, if this were the Case, what would the Gentry, or rich Commons of this Kingdom, think of such a Law? There would be nothing but Roaring-out, Exclamation, and Bellowing against such a Power, as the most unjust and iniquitous. There would be bitter Complaints immediately, that the Nobility were Tyrants, that Liberty was overwhelm'd; and *to Arms, to Arms*, would ring throughout the Kingdom: Then you, my Countrymen, who are now squeezed and oppress'd, would be apply'd to, to assist them in shaking off the galling Yoke of Oppression and Slavery.

BUT

BUT now, let us reflect a little ; who are the Persons enjoying this Liberty, Justice, and Impartiality we have just spoken of, in *France* and *Denmark*? Why, the Rabble, the very *Canaille*. And who are the Wretches subject to this Oppression, and arbitrary Influence in *England*? Why you, my Countrymen, the *Lesser Freeholders* of *Great-Britain*; you, who possess $\frac{4}{5}$ * of all the Lands of this Kingdom: But it will be but a small Time they will continue with you, for your Oppressors are making Wings for them to fly away into their own Possession, like an Eagle towards Heaven.

Now, I would address myself to you, my Countrymen, who are *Stockholders*, and tax'd for your Personal Estates: What a *Dilemma* are you often in, when you come before these *Egyptian* Taskmasters? If you act conscientiously, and assess equally, either the Commissioners, or a fawning Sy-cophant of theirs, after insolent Reproofs for presuming to meddle with the Estates of Commissioners, those *Noli me tangere's* †, an Appeal is made, and, in a haughty Manner, you are order'd to alter the Assessment. If, from a strict Regard for Justice, you refuse to obey their unreasonable Dictates, and imperious Commands, a Part of your *Cess* shall be taken off by them from a Creature of their own, and the very Sum, so taken off, shall be iniquitously laid upon your own Shoulders; tho', by that unrighteous Addition, you, perhaps, shall be obliged to pay ten Times as much as your Neighbour, or their Creature, of the same Abilities.

* See Mr. King's Calculations.

† A Sort of Botch, or Boil, call'd so, that won't bear touching, being full of foul Humours and Corruption.

'TIS

'TIS true, I believe, that this is not quite so universal an Evil, as the Case of the Landholders; because a cunning *Junto* of Commissioners may consider such an Oppression, as a Provincial Evil in its Consequence; such Conduct naturally tending to disgust People, and prevent Traders from settling in such a *District*. Wherever, therefore, Oppressions of this last Kind are carried on, they must proceed from extreme Ignorance, as the former do always from Injustice and Avarice: For the great Mr. *Locke* has shewn, with admirable Perspicuity, and Judgment, that in whatever Shape Taxes are laid on, they fall, at last, all on the Lands, if in a Country where the great Fund of the Nation is Land, as in this Kingdom; and that 'tis the greatest Folly to cramp, or burden, Trade.

If any one should object here, to what has been said, "That the Tax is commanded to be equally assess'd and rated upon the Lands; so that no Partiality, or Injustice, can be used towards any Man, but the Court of *King's-Bench* may be moved against the Commissioners, or any Officer concern'd; or an Action may be brought, and the injured Party may find Redress; or that he may be relieved in his Majesty's Court of *Exchequer*." I would answer.

THAT, in the 77th Section of the Land-Tax Act, is the following remarkable Clause. *If any Person, assess'd for Lands, shall make it appear, on Oath, that such Assessment doth exceed the equal Pound-Rate, which ought to be charged, he shall be abated, and the Money shall be re-assess'd within the Division, altho' the Pound-Rate of 4 s. in the Pound be exceeded.*

HERE

HERE I beg Leave to remark, that those Words, *the equal Pound-Rate which ought to be charged*, can mean no other than the 4 s. Rate; so that the equal Pound-Rate appears to be the Rate of 4 s. in the Pound, according to this Section. How is it possible, then, to punish the Commissioners, Assessors, &c. by Information, or otherwise, when a Judge of the Court of *King's-Bench*, or a Baron of the *Exchequer*, must decide the Dispute according to the Letter of the Law express'd in the definitive Clause, which is directly against the Plaintiff, with respect to the Cases I have before complained of? But, supposing that my Construction be not the true Intent and Meaning of the Act, what End can a Process in any Court answer, when the Conduct of the Assessors is approved by the Commissioners, and the Act has render'd these last unaccountable, and their Determination final?

ONE Part of an Act of Parliament may justly be deem'd explanatory of another; from whence it appears obvious, that by the Words in Sect. 4. *as much Equality as possible, by a Pound-Rate*; and by the Words in Sect. 8. *to be equally assess'd*; and afterwards, the Assessors are required *to assess by an equal Pound-Rate*, that this equal Pound-Rate is the equal Pound-Rate of 4 s. in the Pound, which is defined in the 77th Section, and which the Act presumes, that all the Lands pay. I won't pretend to vindicate the Propriety of these Expressions, and Clauses; because, perhaps, I may think they militate with each other, are Confusion, contradictory, and Nonsense: But, let this be as it will, the Commissioners, from the 77th Section, having defined the equal Pound-Rate to be the equal Pound-Rate of 4 s. in the Pound,

Pound, upon Appeals, or Complaints of an unequal Taxation, have always presumed to tender the Oath of Inquisition, (as mentioned above) the Purport of which is to enquire, whether or no you pay, or are tax'd, above the equal Pound-Rate of 4 s. in the Pound, which all the Lands are tax'd at by the Act? If this Conduct of the Commissioners be contrary to the true Intent and Meaning of the Act, the vague, doubtful, and uncertain Clauses, on which it is founded, ought to be explained, the cloudy Passages to be clear'd up, and a plain Rule of Decision to be established, that there may be no farther Room for Error, Injustice, and Oppression; and that the Magistrate may be * *Lex loquens*, which, TULLY observes, ought to be his true Character.

BUT, however this be, if to the aforesaid Interrogatory you answer in the Negative, this righteous Tribunal of *Inquisitors* will dismiss your Complaint with Contempt and Insolence, and, perhaps, with more Indecency and Pride than the *Fathers* of the *Holy Office* would presume to do: Such Airs will these insignificant, contemptible Worms give themselves, when in Authority †. This is a glaring Instance of the Excellency of *English Liberty*, which we are excited to exhaust our Treasure, and spill our Blood, in the Defence of, against the Incroachments, and arbitrary Schemes of *France* §.

K

IT

* *Quoad ejus fieri possit, quamplurima legibus ipsis definiantur, quam paucissima vero Judicis Arbitrio relinquuntur.*

Aristotel. Rhetor. ad Theodect.

† *Cogit enim excedere propositi formam operis erumpens animo ac pectore indignatio.* VEL. PATER.

§ When the Nobility of *Rome* tyrannized over the small Freeholders, and they required their Attendance in War, they bravely answer'd

IT is, therefore, in vain, for any one to plead, that the Act directs an equal Assessment; when, if an unequal one be made, you must appeal to the very Persons, who directed the Making it, to know whether it be unequal or no: And the Commissioners, with all other Officers concern'd in levying the Tax, are screen'd from Punishment by the Words and Explanation of the equal Tax, being the Tax of 4 s. in the Pound: So that those Sugar-Words of Equality, in the Beginning of the Act, seem to be thrown in to amuse, cover over, and sweeten, the Gall and Bitterness that were to come after; and to make the nauseous Pill go down glibly with the inattentive Multitude.

IT is oftentimes the Case, that the Commissioners, when they sit to judge of the Equality of an Assessment, have an Interest in, and are to reap Advantage from, declaring an Assessment to be equal, tho' it be never so unequal, unjust, and cruel. What a monstrous Farce, then, is the *Sittings* of the Commissioners of Land-Tax to hear Appeals? They have a Power given them to rob you, my Countrymen, an Advantage to obtain by doing it; and when they have done it, they are left to try themselves for the Fact. Fine Laws, and a fine Tribunal, truly! What Chicanery! and what a Mockery of Justice and common Sense this is! This is a Shew, and a Parade of Justice and Liberty, without any Thing of the real Essence of it. All

swer'd, as *Livy* tells us, *Negare ultra decipi plebem posse, nunquam unum militem habituros, nisi prestaretur fides publica: Libertatem unicuique prius reddendam esse, quam arma danda, ut pro patria civibusque, non pro Dominis, pugnent.* Liv. Lib. II. Cap. 28.—So dear they thought Liberty, tho' the *Equi*, the *Volsci* and *Sabines*, were, at this very Time, in Arms against them.

Things

Things seem to be carried on, as if Impartiality and Justice were to prevail, when Nothing is less intended. And tho' these Commissioners have an absolute Power of disposing of your Property, yet they are not under so much as the Obligation of an Oath to do you, my Countrymen, common Justice; when, even in the arbitrary Kingdom of *France*, the *Elu's*, and Members of the Court of *Aides*, take a solemn Oath to administer Justice impartially.

ANOTHER Hardship and Oppression, that you lie under, is, that tho' the Choice of the Collectors be lodged, virtually, in the Breasts of the Commissioners, yet the Parish is to be answerable for any Deliquitation, or Deficiency of the Monies collected by them*. Is not this a most monstrous Hardship, that an insolent, avaricious Commissioner should, by Influence with his Associates in Iniquity, appoint *insolvent and irreputable Persons, Creatures of his own, to be Collectors*, contrary to the Sentiments of the grave, and judicious Part of a Parish, which returns other Persons; and yet if such Scoundrels become insolvent, and sink, or embezzle, the Money they have collected, a Re-assessment must be made upon the Parish to satisfy the King? An Instance of this I myself have known in every Particular. Did ever any Community establish such an oppressive, ridiculous Law before?

WHAT a fine Field has this Law open'd for Imposition and Fraud? By Collusion between insolvent Tools, and rascally Commissioners, a Parish may be defrauded and robb'd, and the broken Collectors, and Commissioners, go Snacks in the Plunder. This

* See the 15th Section of the Act.

was the Case, for any Thing I know, in the Instance I mentioned above; for, I believe, a certain Commissioner and Collector were base and wicked enough to concert and execute such a Piece of Villany. Now, in *France*, it is impossible any such Scheme should be carried on, or executed. The Inhabitants of every Town there *, as they chuse Assessors and Collectors of the Taxes for their respective Districts, by the Majority of their Suffrages, will always take Care to chuse such as are Men of Integrity, Probity and Worth, and such as are responsible for the Property they are intrusted with.

It is not Taxes, my Countrymen, that we ought to complain of; no Country was ever free from them, or Public supported without them. Our common Security cannot be maintained without Money, which is justly stiled the Sinews of War; and without War it is impossible to curb the Insolence and Ambition of our incroaching Neighbours: But where Injustice and Inequality have been indulged, and connived at, in their Assessment, there they have been justly odious and detestable. The fatal Consequence of this cruel Partiality, and Oppression of the Commonalty by the Gentry in *Denmark*, ought always to be a Warning, how the Rich and Opulent squeeze and oppress the People of Property, of meaner Conditions †. Rigorous Oppression produces Rage and Despair, and these hurry a People into desperate Measures, put them on the *Forlorn*, and induce them to apply to any Alternative for a Relief;

* *Les Affecteurs sont élus et nommez par la pluralité de voix, et suffrages des habitans—Les dits Collecteurs sont cré annuellement par la voix et nomination des Inhabitans des villes et paroisses.*
GIRARD, 343, Present State of *France*.

† See my Lord *Molesworth's* Accounts.

conceiv-

conceiving, that it is impossible their Condition should be worse.

WHEN the Republic of *Florence* was preparing for a War with the Lord of *Lombardy*, their Gentry rais'd Soldiers, and laid new Taxes upon the People, which lying more heavily on the *Commons*, than upon the better Sort of Citizens, fill'd the City with Complaints, all People crying out of the Oppression of the great Men, who, to satiate their Ambition, and enlarge their Authority, had engag'd in an expensive and unnecessary War.—The People were incens'd, and rail'd up and down the Streets, upbraiding them with the great Taxes, and the Impertinence of the War. But however, to carry it on, they chose Twenty Commissioners out of the Lesser Citizens; who finding the chief Citizens low, and depress'd with a late Overthrow, overlaid them with Taxes, and oppress'd them exceedingly, says *Machiavel*. This was but *Lex Talionis*; and, doubtless, they were glad of an Opportunity to be revenged, if it were really so, as he has insinuated. But, I think, 'twas only in their own Opinion that they were exceedingly oppress'd; for he goes on afterwards:

“ These Impositions disgusted the *Gentry* very
 “ much; yet at first, in Point of Honour, they
 “ thought it beneath them to complain of their own
 “ private Usage; only they blamed the Taxes in
 “ general, and press'd to have them abated; being
 “ publickly known, it was publickly oppos'd, and
 “ so far neglected in the Councils, that, to make
 “ them sensible how difficult a Matter they had un-
 “ dertaken, and to render them odious to the People,
 “ Order was given, that the Taxes should be collect-
 “ ed with all Strictness and Severity; and, in case of
 “ Oppo-

“ Opposition, it should be lawful to kill him, who
 “ resisted an Officer ; Whereupon, many sad Acci-
 “ dents ensued among the Citizens ; many being
 “ wounded, and not a few slain ; so that, it was be-
 “ lieved, the Parties would have proceeded to Blood ;
 “ and every sober Man apprehended some Mischief
 “ at hand. *The Grandees, having been accusom'd*
 “ *to be favour'd, could not endure that Strictness ;*
 “ and the others *thought it but just to have all tax'd*
 “ *proportionably.*”

HERE we may observe, how avaricious, unjust, and unreasonable the *Rich* generally are ; and how urgent to oppress, and disgusted if they cannot load, their poor Neighbours with unequal Shares of Taxes, and the Burdens of the State. Such an Aversion these Gentry had to Justice and Equality, and such a Fondness for their old Prerogative of Tyranny and Oppression, that they were ready to proceed to Blood, and cut the Throats of their poor Neighbours, who had sunk *almost all their * Estates in paying Taxes*, rather than submit to an equal Taxation. But this has always been the cursed Spirit of the *Rich*, which, doubtless, occasion'd that Observation of our Saviour's, “ That it is easier for a
 “ Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for
 “ a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Hea-
 “ ven ;” a Place quite unfit for, and where, I am afraid, many Commissioners of the Land-Tax will never appear, unless it be to receive their *cursed Doom*.

WHAT makes Taxes hateful to the Commonalty, is the Inequality of their Assessment, and the wrong Application of them, when raised. The Middling

* See Machiavel's History of Florence.

People

People always chearfully acquiesce in them, provided they are laid on equally, not rais'd without Necessity, and apply'd to the Uses for which they were appropriated. But the avaricious *Rich* are always exclaiming against them, and trying all Shifts, using all Artifices, to wriggle themselves out of the Payment of them, and to load their poor Neighbours, the Middling People, with the whole Weight of the State ; notwithstanding a large Share of the Money, arising from Taxes, reverts again into the Pockets of the Gentry for executing, or presiding in, Posts or Offices, which are mere *Sine-Cures*, where there is little or nothing to be done for their Salaries : And thus the Middling People are constantly drained to fill their Coffers, or supply their Luxuries. And what are all our Party-Struggles among the *Rich*, but Contests about who shall have the Division, and the Dividends of the Prey raised, by Taxes, on the Middling and Common People ?

OUR Sovereign has but Meat, Drink, and Cloaths, which cannot amount to any more than a Trifle, in Comparison of the *Civil List Revenue*. Who is it, then, that consumes 900,000 *l. per Annum*, which arises from it ? Why, the *Harpies* who surround him ; and who are always forming Schemes to prevent their being obliged to disgorge any Part of the Pelf in Taxes, which they filch from the Crown, or any Ways get into their Clutches. This, perhaps, is a Misfortune which has attended almost all Governments at all Times, and a Redress of it is not to be expected.

HOWEVER, upon the Whole, I believe, my Countrymen, that we have a wise and gracious Prince upon the Throne ; and as honest, frugal, and prudent

prudent a Ministry, who manage all the Revenues to as great Advantage, as any we have had in Times past; and to much greater than many of their Predecessors have done: And, therefore, we have Nothing extraordinary to complain of, but the cursed Insolence and Tyranny used by our Fellow-Citizens in Raising the Revenues, and the Laws which have constituted their Power; Power, which ought totally to be abolish'd; Insolence, which calls aloud for a Bridle; and Tyranny and Despotism, which ought to be banish'd out of the Universe; for, where these are, Misery must be, and Slavery must follow.

BUT, thoroughly to discover the Baseness and Meanness of the Gentry of this Kingdom, in breaking through the Constitution, and throwing down the Fences of Liberty, in order to ease themselves, and evade paying their Quota of the Taxes laid on their Country; and to evince how little Reason they have to be uneasy with bearing their Proportion of the National Burden, which is laid on Lands; we will, first, consider how the Case stands with these shifting Oppressors, and then compare it with the Situation of the Dutch, and the Landholders of some of our neighbouring Countries.

As we said before, we have good Reason to believe the Rental of this Kingdom amounts to near 20,000,000 *l. per Annum*; if so, we have made it appear, in Page 29, that the Lands do not pay, on an Average, above 21 *d. 1/3* in the Pound, when the Tax is at 4 *s.* in the Pound. But as the Commissioners manage it, being link'd together sworn Brethren in Iniquity, we may presume, on an Average, that they do not pay above half what their Neigh-

bours

bours do; so that, of Course, they do not pay above 11 *d.* in the Pound, when the Land-Tax is at 4 *s.* in the Pound.

LET us, first then, cast our Eyes on the unhappy Condition of the Dutch Landholders. Mr. Locke says, "The public Charge of the Government is, 'tis said, in the United Provinces, laid upon Trade; I grant it is, the greatest Part of it; but is the Land excused, or eased, by it? By no means, but, on the contrary, so loaded, that in many Places $\frac{1}{2}$, in others $\frac{1}{4}$, in others an $\frac{1}{8}$ of the yearly Value does not come into the Owner's Pocket: And, if I am not misinform'd, the Land will not, in some Places, pay the Taxes; so that we may say, the Charge of the Government came not upon Commodities, 'till the Lands could not bear it."*

† Mr. Burrisb says, in that Quarter of Holland, call'd Rhineland, Land is charg'd near 9 *s. per Acre* Taxes; and that it is still higher in North-Holland, where he has known Proprietors, that would have been glad to make a Surrendry of their Lands, situate in that Part of the Province, to any Person that would take them off their Hands, or abandon them entirely, if the State would permit it.

§ THE noble Lord, I mentioned but just now, says,—“In Procces of Time, Excess of Power made the Danish Gentry grow insolent, which was the Occasion of their Fall, together with the Liberties of the whole Country,” (for, you must note, they refused to pay any greater Share of the Taxes than

* See Mr. Locke's Considerations of lowering of Interest, and raising the Value of Money, p. 96.
 † See Batavia illustrata; p. 252.
 § See Account of Denmark, p. 70.

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they thought proper, and laid the Burden on the Lesser Citizens, Traders, and Lesser Freeholders, if any there were, just like our *swelling Bashaws* of the Land-Tax) “ so that, now, they are sunk to a very low Condition, and diminish daily both in Numbers and Credit, their Estates scarce paying the Taxes imposed on them. Nay, I have been assured by some Gentlemen of good Repute, who formerly, were Masters of great Estates, that they have offer'd to make an absolute Surrender to the King of their large Possessions in the Island of *Zea-land*, rather than pay the Taxes; which Offer, when press'd with Earnestness, would, by no Means, be accepted.

“ UPON farther Enquiry into the Reason of it, I have been inform'd, that Estates, belonging to those *Gentlemen* who made this Offer, lying in other Places, which had the good Fortune to be tax'd less than the full Value of the Income, were liable to pay the Taxes of any other Estate appertaining to the same Person, in case that other Estate was not able; so that some have been seen, with a great deal of Joy, declaring, *That the King had been so gracious as to take Estates from them.*

IT is natural to enquire, what brought these *Gentry* into this wretched Condition? And, here, it must be answered, the very Things, which we have been complaining of in this Letter; their Pride and Insolence; their refusing to bear a proportionable Share of the Taxes; and their Attempt to throw the Weight of the National Burden upon the Lesser Freeholders, Tradesmen, Burghers, and Citizens. How much more happy is the Situation of our *Gentry*, who, upon an equal Footing with the Lesser Landholders,

holders, would not pay above 21 *d.* $\frac{1}{2}$ to the Pound? And yet they cannot be satisfied, without laying the chief Part of the Burden on their weaker Neighbours.

*THE Commonalty, at all Times, have been ready to bear a proportionable Share of the Burdens of the respective Governments they have lived under. 'Tis the Great and Rich, who are always fishing for Schemes to withdraw their Shoulders from the Weight of the State; and are still endeavouring to ease them-

* *Germany* is the Place of the whole World, where the Footsteps of the old *Roman* Virtue are conspicuous; and that Fidelity is the Cause why so many Cities live happily in Liberty; for they are so careful and studious of their Laws, that *That* very one Thing keeps them from Servitude, and being over-run by their Enemies; and if any Instance be desired of this, more than ordinary, Probity in the *Germans*, I shall produce one.

It is the Custom in those States, when they have Occasion of Money upon the Public's Account, for the Councils, or Magistrates in Authority, to lay a Tax of One or Two *per Cent.* upon all the Inhabitants under their Jurisdiction, according to their respective Estates. At the Day and Place appointed for Payment, every Man appears with his Money, and having taken his Oath first, that the Sum he pays is according to the fall of his Estate, he throws it into a Chest provided for that Purpose, and no Notice is taken of what it is that he throws in; from whence we may conclude, that there are still some Sparks left, in that People, of their old Ingenuity and Religion: Nor is it to be doubted but every Man pays his Due; for, otherwise, the Sum would not amount to the Imposition, nor to what they formerly paid; whereby the Fraud would be discovered, and they become liable to a new Tax; which Integrity and Justice is the more admirable in our Days, because it is to be found no where but in *Germany*. One of the Reasons *Machiavel* renders for this, is, because they have scarce any Gentlemen among them; but those few they have are very odious to the People, the Fountain of their Luxury, and the Occasion of their Scandal; and, whenever they fall into the Hands of the People for their Corruptions, they are put to Death without Mercy: *By a Gentleman*, he means, *those who live idly and plentifully upon their Estates, without any Care or Employment.*

MACHIAVEL'S Disc. B. I. c. 54.

Let all the Commissioners of the Land-Tax of this Kingdom read This and blush, if they have any Modesty, any Sense of Virtue, left.

elves, and load their Fellow-Citizens, of meaner Condition, with cruel Burdens, not to be borne.

LET our Ministry take Care of our Commerce; by that procure Employment for our Poor, Trade for our Manufacturers; and provide Security for the Navigation of our Merchants, the only Means to advance the Value of our Lands; and we will cheerfully pay any Taxes requisite to support the Dignity and Grandeur of our Monarch; to secure to his Family the everlasting Possession of the Throne of these Realms; and, to us, the Enjoyment of our Liberties and Properties: Provided, at the same Time, Care be taken to raise them with Justice and Equality.

THAT great Politician, *Machiavel*, says, That the Discords and Enmity between the Senate and People of *Rome* conduced to the Enlargement of their Empire, and the Conservation of their Liberty, by giving an Opportunity for making such Laws as were great Corroborations to their Liberties and Freedom. *For so great was the Ambition of the Nobility, that, had it not been check'd several Ways, it would have usurp'd upon the City, and got the whole Power into its Hands.* And, if we observe, the *Agrarian* Dispute was 300 Years together in *Rome*, before it could subvert it, we may easily imagine, the *Ambition of the Patricians* would have done it much sooner; had it not been balanced and depress'd, by the People, with these *Agrarian* Laws, and some other Inventions. From whence, likewise, we may observe, that *Wealth is more estimable among Men than Honour; for when the Patricii were in Controversy about Titles and Honours, they never went so high as to give them any extraordinary Disgust: But when their Estates and Fortunes were at Stake,*

and

and the *Gracchi* would have introduced the *Agrarian* Laws, they defended them with such Zeal, that they chose rather to put the *Common-wealth* into a Flame, than part with them quickly.

Velleius Paterculus beautifully paints the Calamities which flow'd from this Source, when he describes the Fray which was occasioned by *Tiberius Gracchus's* Attempt to put the *Agrarian* Laws in Force. The *Roman* Gentry being terribly enrag'd, for fear they should lose their Possessions, decently knock'd out *Gracchus's* Brains; upon which *Paterculus* says, *Is fugiens decurrensq; clivo Capitolino fragmine sub-*
sellii ictus vitam, quam gloriosissime degere potuerat
*immatura morte snivit. *Hoc initium in urbe Roma*
civilis sanguinis gladiatorumq; impunitatis fuit. Inde
ius vi obrutum, potentiorq; habitus prior. L. II. c. 8.

This was the Beginning of the Effusion of Blood in civil Contentions, and the first Example of an Assassination which pass'd with Impunity. Hence Force and Violence prevail'd over Justice and Equity; and the most powerful was esteem'd the most deserving.

IF the Nobility of *Rome* could renounce, or, at least, neglect, empty Titles and Honours, run such Risques, and drive Things to such Extremity, rather than part with the Exuberance of their Estates, and Superfluities of their Fortunes, how much more ought you, my *Countrymen*, to rouse up, and exert, yourselves in Defence of your Liberties, Properties, and Privileges; Properties necessary to your *Being*, and Privileges requisite to make that *Being* happy; both which have been so craftily and basely

* *Genutius*, the Tribune, was assassinated privately, at his own House, by the Contrivance of the Senate, long before this.

Vide LIVY, B. II. Cap. 54.

ravish'd from you, by those very Traitors who were chosen, formerly, to be the Bulwarks and Guardians of them?

MACHIAVEL says also, " The Commonwealth of Florence might have continued quiet and happy, had the Great Men been contented to have fram'd themselves to such Modesty of Conversation as is requisite in a civil Government. But their Practices were quite contrary; when they were but private Persons, no Body was good enough to be their Companions, and, being in Office, scarce any too good to be their Subjects; every Day producing Instances of their Arrogance and Pride; infomuch that the People were exceedingly troubled to consider with what Impatience and Fury they had removed one Tyrant, to make Room for a Thousand: In this Manner stood Things." Pray give me Leave, my Countrymen, to ask you, whether these very Consequences are not the blessed Effects of the Revolution, with respect to yourselves? You, bravely expell'd one Tyrant, and to carry on a War, to continue his Expulsion, you suffer'd Laws to be made, and continued, by your Delegates, which have constituted 10,000 petty Tyrants in his Room, who daily devour your Properties, and insult your Persons, with all the Pride and Arrogance that Machiavel complains of in the Great and Rich Men of Florence. But it may be worthy of your Reflection to consider, whether it is not a more glorious Fate, and a less cruel one, to be torn to Pieces by a Lion, than to be, leisurely, gnaw'd to Death by despicable Vermin; tho' it is my Advice to you to shew yourselves Men, Britons, and guard against, and disdain Both; to remove the Apprehensions of either, or nobly perish in the Attempt.

I TRUST, my Countrymen, that you have Souls left, certainly, as great as cowardly Italians; I trust that your Minds are, not yet, grown callous with Slavery, and insensible of the Oppression you lie under thro' Use and Custom. 'Tis true, in most Countries Oppression produces Dejection, cramps, and damps down, all the noble Emotions of the Soul, quenches its Vigour, and restrains its Sallies for Glory, and heroic Atchievements. The Romans, under the Cæsars, were base, abject Sycophants; and my Lord Moleworth tells us, that the present Condition of the Danes, of all Ranks, is most deplorable; at least, it appear'd so to him, who saw it, possibly, more than they who suffer'd it. His Words are, " That Slavery, like a sickly Constitution, grows, in Time, so habitual, that it seems no Burden or Disease; it creates a Kind of Laziness, and idle Despondency, which puts Men beyond Hopes and Fears: It mortifies Ambition, Emulation, and other troublesome, as well as active, Qualities, which Liberty and Freedom beget; and, instead of them, affords only a dull Kind of Pleasure of being careless and insensible."

I HOPE, my Countrymen, that the same political Lethargy has not seiz'd you; that the Disease is not gone so far as to produce a Mortification; but that, still, you are in the Power of the State-Physician. Courage is the peculiar Growth of our own Soil*, as we may see by our Bull-Dogs and Game-Cocks; and,

* Angli bello intrepidi, nec mortis sensu deterrentur, say several of the Antients. Vide Vegetii de re militari.

Autre que cette nation intrepide envisage avec assez d'Indifference, ce plus grand de tous ces maux qui fait l'horreur de la Plupart des autres nation. Tho' Death is the greatest of all Evils, which the People of other Countries stare upon with Horrour, yet the undaunted English

and, I conceive, the middling People are, not yet, sunk below Beasts, whatever *our Gentry may be*. How must, then, the Fire of Liberty, and Disdain of Slavery, flash in your Eyes? How must your Hearts dilate, and your Pulse riot, with the brave Emotions, and Dictates of Freedom, when you are scornfully ask'd by a *Monfieur*, where, now, is the gloried Equality of *English* Laws? where is the Security of your Liberties and Privileges? what is become of your boasted Freedom? Are you not, still, Vassals in Bondage to the *Mighty Lords*, the *Commissioners* of the *Land-Tax*, &c. and fetter'd more closely to Injustice, and dastardly Submission, than we are to our more equitable *Elu's*, the Servants of our great *Monarque*? On a *Frenchman's* reading this sad Case, I expect to hear those scornful Taunts and *Gibes*.*

You ought to consider, my Countrymen, that the Progress of Tyranny is various; sometimes it

English look it in the Face with the utmost Indifference, Says Savary in his *L'Etat de Commerce*.

* It may not be impertinent here, as it will serve to illustrate the Justice of the Apprehension, to mention Part of a Conversation between a *French* Nobleman and Lord Carteret, as told by the latter in the House of Lords.

The Subject was the Excellency of our Constitution beyond theirs, and the Foreigner declaring he saw no Difference, the *British* Peer express'd his Surprise: Why, says the *Frenchman*, What Difference do you make! A great one, reply'd my Lord; Your King raises Money as he pleases, and your Parliament must register his Edicts.—Well, my Lord! and what Difference between this, and a Parliament that constantly grants all the Demands of a Minister, without Enquiry, or Account?—I own, said my Lord, that the Answer struck me, and I could make no Reply.—But if our Methods of laying Taxes on be not so arbitrary and tyrannical as theirs, I am sure, our Methods of levying those Taxes are ten Times more unjust and oppressive; so that, for Shame! we ought to veil our Faces, and no longer either boast of our own Liberties, or reproach them as Slaves.

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creeps and steals upon you by gentle Gradations, and imperceptible Motions, like a poisonous Reptile, and destroys your Liberties; again, at other Times, like a savage Beast, it rushes upon you all at once, and tears it in Pieces. But whether it works by Sap, undermines by Craft, or openly attacks by Force, you ought always to be upon your Guard, and narrowly watch its Motions. The Rich, in all Ages, have been its Abettors*, and the Middling People its severest Scourge. When it would work by Sap, like a Mole under Ground, one of its first Contrivances is, by Driblets, to squeeze and drain the Middling People of their Property.

INCROACHMENTS upon Liberty, and Invasions of Property, seem to go Hand in Hand, and both mutually concur to support each other, and enslave and beggar a People: But whether or no they proceed in *Chorus* does not boot, for either will generate, finish, and compleat the other; for a Loss of Property will produce a Loss of Liberty, and *vice versa*. Slaves may be easily made Beggars, and Beggars may be easily made Slaves. If then you suffer yourselves, Countrymen, to be drain'd and beggar'd by unequal Taxes, the next Step will be, you will be all made Slaves, like the Boors and Peasants in *Poland*, who are the Property of the Rich and Great Men, such as call themselves Gentlemen of *Poland*: You must be their Vassals, and do their Drudgery, just

* See Polybius, B. vi. Livy, B. ii. c. 3.

Machiavel says, that those Common-wealths, who have preserved their Liberties, and kept themselves uncorrupt, do not suffer any of their Citizens to live high, and after the Rate of a Gentleman. I call those Gentlemen, who live idly, and plentifully upon their Estates, without any Care or Employment; and they are very pernicious wherever they are.—Disc. on Livy, Book I. cap. 54.

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as those poor Wretches do.* Struggle therefore, my Countrymen, with all your Might to preserve your Property. Rich Men incline to favour Tyrants, and love Tyranny. Poor Men are unable to oppose them, and 'tis you, the small Freeholders, must be the Guardians of the Goddess LIBERTY at all Times. 'Twas to you, and to you only, she owed her Protection in this Kingdom formerly, and that any of her Altars smoke here now. Keep this Maxim in your Mind, That you may lose all your Liber-

* See *Hautville*, who says, — The Patrimonial Estates of the Gentry in Poland consist in Lands, &c. and Peasants. The Peasants are Slaves, and cannot possess any Thing; all that they heap together belongs to their Lord. — They are all his Property, and he values his Estate, according to the Number of them he has on it. — To settle a Peasant upon a Piece of Land, or in a Village, the Lord causes a Cottage, or Hut, to be erected for him, and gives him two little Horses, one Cow, some Poultry, and Rye to subsist upon for a Year. In the mean Time, he appoints a certain Piece of Ground in the Village, which the Peasant is obliged to till for his Landlord; for all the Goods in the Village belong to the Lord. — The Peasant is obliged to work four Days in a Week for his Master, and to spend the other two in tilling the Ground for himself.

When Harvest comes, all the Peasants in the Village go out together, to cut down, and gather in, the Corn for their Lord, who appoints certain Persons to oversee their Work, and to beat them when they are idle. For their Punishment, there is a Sort of a Pillory in every Village, on which these poor, miserable Wretches are forc'd, sometimes, to stand a whole Day.

One would think, the Peasants in Poland should think themselves the most unhappy Creatures in the World, to see themselves reduced to perpetual Slavery, and obliged to work continually, without the Prospect of one Day of Rest: But they do not so much as know, that there are any Persons of their Condition happier than they; for, when they are young, they see their Fathers treated after the same Manner.

I would now observe to you, my Countrymen, that the present Laws, and Schemes of Taxation, naturally tend to bring you into this same blessed Condition the Polish Peasantry are in; and that, if you permit the Continuation of those iniquitous and tyrannical Injunctions, your innocent Posterity will be chastised with the same Rod of Iron, and gall'd with the same Yoke of Oppression, as the Polish Gentry have laid on the miserable Slaves of that Nation.

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ty, and preserve Part of your Property; but you may be sure, when you have lost all your Property, that all your Liberty will follow.

THE great Contests, Insurrections, Tumults and Seditions, which have infested Governments and Commonwealths, in all Ages, have arisen, not so much about Authority, Magistracy and Dominion, as about Property.

No one is uneasy with a Person who aims at, or enjoys, Power, provided they are convinced and satisfied, that he does not grasp at Authority to amass Wealth, execute Revenge, or satiate any Passion besides the Lust of Eminence, and the Ambition of serving his Country.

BUT, alas! it is Avarice at Bottom, I'm afraid, that influences and poisons all. * If a People see a Magistrate disdain Riches, and exhausting his own Treasures to serve the Public, they will obey him cheerfully, and his Power and Influence among them must be great: His Disinterestedness causes them to resign their Understandings implicitly to his Dictates, and Admonitions.

No good Man envied *Quintius Cincinnatus* his Authority and Command, who possess'd but four Acres of Land, plough'd them with his own Hands, and, when he had serv'd the Public as *Dictator*, without Fee or Reward, and beat the Enemies of his Country, laid down his Dignity, and return'd again to his Plough, and his Farm. *Menenius Agrippa*, in his high Commands, did not acquire enough to pay the Charges of his Funeral, but was buried at the public

* *Tum pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem Conspexere, silent, arrectisque auribus adstant.* VIR.

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Expence;

Expence; as was, likewise, * *P. Valerius*, and many of the *Grecian* Worthies. These were *Comets* of Virtue, that blazed now and then, appear'd here and there once in an Age, travell'd in a different Orbit, or went retrograde to the Millions of *minor* *Luminaries*, which furrounded them.

OF this Species was *Camillus*, of whom *Livy* says, that his Colleagues trusted him with the supreme Command; *Nec quicquam de majestate sua detractum credebant; quod majestati ejus concessissent.* Nor did they think any Thing subtracted from their own Authority and Honour, which was added to his; for he acted, in all his Administrations, more for the Publick Good than his own, and having given many Testimonies of his Capacity and Integrity, his Colleagues were not at all scrupulous of transferring their Authority, nor the People at all apprehensive of his Greatness, nor any, how great soever, ashamed to be inferior to him: And so excellent were the *Tribunes* in those Times, that they were equally disposed, either to command, or obey; says *Machiavel*, But, *alas!* where is such a Magistrate, with such Contenance, Resignation, Modesty, and Disinterestedness, to be found in our Days?

BUT tho', now and then, a *Brutus*, a *P. Valerius*, a *Menenius Agrippa* appear'd, who could renounce the Ties of Blood and Interest for the public Weal; yet the *Romans* had, after the Expulsion of the *Tarquins*, their † *Appius Claudius's*, † *C. Marcus Coriolanus's*, † *A. Virginius's*, and a Senate of Gentry

* The Citizens clubb'd *Three-pence* a-piece to bury him.
† He had many Villages of his own. Vide *PLUTARCH.*
‡ A Consul so proud and insolent, that they permitted themselves to be slain by their Enemies, rather than conquer under such an odious Wretch.

Gentry as avaricious, proud, and tyrannical, as our Gentry are now. † *Livy* gives a moving Relation of the Barbarity of the Rich and Great Men, in their Usage of a Soldier, *Genutius*, who had been ruin'd in the *Sabine* War. He introduces him as giving this Account of himself to the People, "That being a Soldier in the *Sabine* War, the Country was so pillaged, that he lost his Crops, his House was burnt, his Cattle driven away, and his Goods plunder'd; yet, in the Midst of these severe Calamities, a grievous Tax was imposed upon him, which obliged him to borrow Money, that, with the Use of it, had accumulated a vast Debt, and eat up his Father's and Grandfather's Estates, devour'd his other Fortunes, till at last, like a Consumption, it seized his very Body, and he was haul'd, by his Creditor, not only into Slavery, but into a severe Work-house, and a Gaol." The Behaviour of *C. Marcus*, in a Time of Dearth, to me discovers but little of that Greatness of Soul which has been attributed to the old *Romans* as a general Quality by some who seem fond of exaggerating their Virtues, and extolling them to the Skies, as if the Rich and Great had not been, at all Times, pretty much the same. This *Senator*, from his Pride and Inhumanity, propos'd to withhold the Corn brought out of *Sicily* from the People, and starve them into a Renunciation of the *Tribunitial* Power, which they had just obtain'd to secure them from the Pride, Insolence, and Oppression of their *Senatorial Dons*. Upon which the People, enraged, exclaim'd, "Fa-

Wretch. *Nunquam ante tam invisus Plebi, reus, ad judicium vocatus populi est, plenus, suarum plenus paternarum irarum.* Says *LIVY.*
† See *LIVY, Lib. II. cap. 23.*
" me

“ me jam se sicut hostes peti, cibo victuq; fraudari :
 “ peregrinum frumentum, quæ sola alimenta ex in-
 “ sperato fortuna dederit ab ore rapi, nisi C. Mar-
 “ cio victi dedantur Tribuni, nisi de tergo Plebis
 “ Romanæ satis fiat ; eum sibi carnificem novam ex-
 “ ortum, qui aut mori aut servire jubeat.*—That
 is, “ That the great Men oppress'd them with Fa-
 “ mine as if they were Enemies, and robb'd them
 “ of their daily Bread ; and that the Corn, which
 “ came from Abroad, by meer Fortune, to be their
 “ Support, must, now, be snatch'd from their
 “ Mouths, unless the Tribunes were delivered up
 “ Hand-cuff'd to C. Marcius ; unless he wreck'd his
 “ Revenge upon the Bodies of the Roman People,
 “ That he was risen up to be a new Executioner
 “ to them, and force them to be either Slaves, or
 “ die.” It is manifest from hence, that Pride, Am-
 bition, and Avarice influenced the old Romans, and
 produced the same evil Effects they did after, as far
 as Property would admit ; but by the Agrarian †
 Laws, &c. the Great Men being restrained from
 becoming Elephants in Wealth, they could not dis-
 fuse their Venom and Tyranny so widely as in After-
 Times, when they grew enormously rich by Con-
 quest, and a Neglect of the Laws ; and brib'd a
 mercenary Soldiery to execute their savage and cruel
 Dictates.

ALL their Disputes arose from, and were founded
 in, Avarice ; or, at least, we shall find, that they
 were Disputes about Property, if we trace them to
 their Fountain-Head. Property was considered as

* LIVY, L. II. c. 35.
 † LIVY, L. VII. c. 16. L. X. c. 13.

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the Instrument of procuring Power, and Power was
 employ'd to accumulate and increase Property.

AUTHORITY considered abstractedly, and meerly
 as Authority, is in general disregarded, and esteem'd,
 as Milton has it, but Painful Prebeminence ! But
 Riches and Rewards, and a Power of procuring
 Wealth, being, either directly or indirectly, annex'd
 to Honours, Dignities and Offices ; they are, there-
 fore, desirable to all, coveted by most, and struggled
 for by many with great Earnestness and Contention.

WHO courts unprofitable Dignity ? Power and
 Office would, in general, be slighted, if it were
 not for the concomitant Profits. But few Gene-
 ralissimo's lay down their Command, handle the
 Plough, and live by cultivating four Acres of Land
 with their own Hands. * The perpetual Struggles
 between the Patricii and Plebeians at Rome arose
 from the Oppression and Avarice (attended with Pride
 and Insolence) of the Former, rather than from any
 Licentiousness, or Wantonness, in the Latter. The
 People would have been easy, if they could have en-
 joy'd a Share of the Lands purchased by their Blood,
 and Toil in War ; and would have contentedly
 borne their Share of the Taxes and Burdens of the
 Common-wealth, if the Gentry had not aim'd to
 carry all Things beforethem, without Regard to Jus-
 tice or Equity : But, when this was the Case, they
 were justly irritated to curb their Power, by the
 Terrors of Violence in their Secessions, and thereby
 to reduce their Constitution to its pristine Principles,
 and Form design'd.

* See LIVY.

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THE Dissentions in the Times of the *Gracchi*, who endeavour'd to restore the Constitution to its first intended Plan, by putting the *Agrarian* Laws in Execution, were Convulsions arising from a Contention about Property; and were carried to such a Height, by the Factions under *Marius* and *Sylla*, * that, in the End, the antient Constitution of the Republick was thereby overturn'd: Confusion and Tyranny, Civil Discord and Anarchy, War and the Effusion of human Blood, were introduced with Impunity, became triumphant, and from thence the Destruction of the Common-wealth ensued.

Now, if we examine into the Source of these Calamities, we shall find they were all owing to the † Avarice, Pride, and Ambition of the Gentry of that

* *Nam urbem ut hostilem invaserant; ac cædes continuæ nefariæque cum obviis agitabantur, aliorum proscriptiones funestæ fugæque et onera assidua occurrebant, plurimorum tormenta ex odio indicta: nullum sceleratum opus aberat.* "They seized the City in a hostile Manner; all Places were filled with Assassinations, Proscriptions, Banishments, Executions and Tortures; in fine, there was no Cruelty left uncommitted."—APP. L. I. de Civil. Rom. Bell.

† *Appian* says, *Nam divites telluris indivisæ portionem sibi magnam vendicantes, et a nemine ob diuturnitatem auferri posse confisi, quæcumque ipsis finitima, in quibus permultæ tenuiorum portiones inerant, partim suadendo pretio ad se adsciscentes, partim per vim auferentes, immensa camporum spatia obsederant, agricolis in his emptis, et pecoribus utentes, &c.* APP. L. I. c. 2.—The rich Romans undertaking at first the waste Lands, and by Prescription of Time, and immemorial Possession, not only securing to themselves the Propriety of them, but likewise joining to them the Dividend of their poor Neighbours, either by Violence, or Purchase, became possess'd of whole Countries, which their Slaves manured for them.—Whereas there remained few *Italians*, and those oppress'd with Poverty, by reason of their being continually in Arms, and paying heavy Taxes: And if, at any Time, they had some Respite from their Sufferings, they were obliged to live in Idleness, having no Land of their own to manure, nor finding any Work from others, by reason of the Multitude of Slaves.—The Tribunes sought for a Remedy, which was the *Agrarian Law*, for which the *Gracchi* lost their Lives. By this Law a Man had 500 Acres of Land allow'd him,

that *Republic*; who could not brook Equality, nor be satisfied without domineering over the Lesser Citizens; who exercised illegal Power and Authority, always striving for Dominion and Superiority; who held unlawful Acquisitions, and possessed illegal Wealth and Riches, firing, and running even to Madness, when any Laws were proposed to restrain their Extravagancies. From whence we may lay it down as a Maxim, that the Avarice of the Gentry was the Spring of all those Contentions which ended in the Subversion of the Common-wealth, and, at last, in the total Destruction and Ruin of their Empire, by those Swarms of *Barbarians* which poured from the *North*: And these *Northern Banditti* destroy'd those *Vermin*, who had been the Scourge of God, and Pest of Mankind, for above One Thousand Years before.

WHENEVER the *Roman* People demanded a Share of the Lands they conquered, which the Gentry of that Republic engross'd all into their own Hands; whenever the Commonalty turn'd their Reflections upon their Power and Tyranny, these Gentry, in order to secure their Possessions, and preserve their Dominion, excited them constantly to Wars with their Neighbours, to divert their Attention; and thus, from a Lust of Power to preserve their Wealth, and acquire enormous Riches, they prompted their Fellow-Citizens to be the Butchers, and Destroyers of Mankind, and the Pest of all the Cities round them. This is a true Picture, a just Character of

him, and Half as much for every Child, and was allow'd to keep 500 Head of Cattle. But this did not satisfy the Avarice of the *Roman* Gentry, who would neither assign the Poor Lands, nor employ them, nor maintain them, but made them Slaves.

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the Great Men and Gentry of the *Roman Republic* in the most virtuous Times, even when *Cincinnatus* was made Dictator.

THE Gentry of this Kingdom know well enough, that by easing themselves, and squeezing the People with unjust and unequal Shares of the Taxes, they shall impoverish them, and increase their own Property; that with that Property Power must ensue, and from that Power Tyranny, which will end in the Slavery of the Lesser Freeholders of this Kingdom; from whence will arise another Set of *Barons*, and antient *Vassalage*. This, I say, is the fine Scheme, *my Countrymen*, that many of the Gentry of this Kingdom seem to be in Pursuit of; and this Tyranny, in some Degree, now exists, as I have largely shewn you above.

WOULD the *Roman Gentry* have been satisfied with a Thousand *per Ann. viz.* 500 Acres of Land, and 500 Head of Cattle, without grasping at all, impoverishing their Fellow-Citizens, leaving them without Lands or Employment, *in a worse Condition than foreign Slaves**, they might have enjoy'd the Executive Power of the Law, and the Administration of Justice: But their insatiable Avarice would not admit of these reasonable Conditions; which occasioned such Convulsions, as ended in Tyranny, brought on their own and the People's Bondage, under the *Cæsars*, and, at last, the total Subversion of their Empire, by which they all became Slaves to *Goths* and *Vandals*, &c. Such were the fatal Consequences of the Avarice and Tyranny of the Gentry of the *Roman Common-wealth* formerly, as well as of the *Danish State* lately.

* APPIAN.

WEALTH begets Power in a State, and Power gives Opportunity of increasing that Wealth; so that these Two Faculties seem to be mutual Assistants of each other: Which of these Two is the *Primum Mobile*, is a Question not self-evident; but, I conceive, with a little Reflection, may be easily determined.

IF we consider the general Disposition, and *Genius* of Mankind, with their mental Powers and Faculties, we shall find there are but few Souls capable of acquiring, or relishing, the Pleasures of a great Mind; few Persons capable of tasting the Glory that flows from those Actions, which, by Philosophers, are stiled great and noble. The Abilities of procuring Esteem and Applause, from an extensive Knowledge in Law, War, Politicks, the *Belles Lettres*, or any of the Polite Arts, is but the Portion of a Few; and those Few will not engage in, either, without a Prospect of some suitable Rewards, or pecuniary Stipends and Gratifications. If Civil Power do not produce Opportunities of Lucration, you scarce ever see any one fond of it; the more is the Pity: Or, at least, no one appears to be desirous of it, abstractly considered from the Consideration of the Gratification of some private Passions, and purely from a Regard to the public Good. I have, with close Attention, look'd for the disinterested Character among Mankind; but am, generally in the same Condition *Diogenes* was, when he sought the Town with a *Lantern*, and, being disappointed, had Recourse to the *Tombs*.

THIS Lust of Wealth, this *Auri sacra Fames*, runs through all Ranks of Men, and has existed, at all Times, from the Prince to the Peasant: Tho', I think,

think, it may be justly observ'd, that this Distemper does not rage with so much Fury among the lower Class of Mankind, as it does among the Gentry.

If a Love to Order, Sobriety and Justice; if a Regard to the Peace and Happiness of the Community, were the Motives of Action in a Justice of the Peace, should we ever see him exacting 3 s. 6 d. from a poor Wretch, plunder'd of his All, when he applies to him, in order to procure due Punishment of the Criminal? If any Spark of a noble and generous Spirit existed in those we call Noblemen, should we ever see Men of 30, 40, nay, 60,000 l. per Ann. condescending to take 1000 l. a-Year from the Publick, for presiding in an Office, which is a meer *Sine-Cure*? Should we not rather see those State-Cormorants renouncing their Prey, and dedicating it to *Chelsea, Greenwich, the Merchants, or Foundling Hospitals*, where those, who have worn out their Lives, wasted their Blood, and lavish'd their very Limbs, in the Service of their Country, might meet with a soft *Asylum*, and a calm Repose, when they are on the Verge of Life, or robb'd of Abilities to support it by their Industry; and where unfortunate Innocence might meet with Refuge and Protection?

If a truly great and generous Spirit existed among our Gentry, should we ever see such Troops of Candidates fawning to, and flubbering over, old Women; or cringing to, and courting, the Meanest of the Populace, and the Dregs of the Mob, for a Seat in Parliament? Certainly, such Conduct can be justifiable in no one, but such as has no Virtue or Merit to recommend him besides. But Avarice has so corrupted our Rich Men, that they will condescend to any

any *Meannesses*, in order to procure a Seat in the Senate, and sell the Wretches they have truckled to, and bought with the ensnaring Wages of Corruption.

FROM what has been said, I would only draw this Inference, that the Love of Riches is the most universal, powerful, and the predominant Passion among Mankind; *that Power always attends Wealth; and that the Lesser Freeholders of Great-Britain, if they do not insist on just and equal Laws of Taxation, in Process of Time, will be the Dupes and Vassals of the Gentry, who are now draining, and impoverishing † them by the Powers they have reserved to themselves in the Execution of the Laws relating to the Land-Tax, Window-Tax, and other Branches of the Revenues of this Kingdom: That the Middling People of this Kingdom must be stupid to the last Degree, to rest easy under the Burden of an unequal Taxation, and be contented to be insulted in their Persons, and robb'd of their Properties, the Two Things Government was invented to secure; when the History of Mankind, both antient and modern, plainly evinces, that the Possession and Security of Property is necessary to the Possession and Security of Power, and, consequently, of Liberty; and from hence, that all Persons, in all Ages, have been struggling most earnestly for, and tenacious of, Wealth and Riches. If, my Countrymen, you rest contented with being robb'd of your Property, you ought to reflect, that your Posterity will, of Course, become Vassals, and Slaves, to those very Persons, and their Descendants, who have plunder'd you, and been the Instruments of impoverishing of

* Vide Polybius, L. VI.

† Lord Malesworth.

you

you : When you reflect, that this is the blessed Legacy you are going to leave your little Ones, your innocent Progeny, ought not Indignation and Rage to spur you on to a Remedy? Or do you think that Mankind will grow better, and that the Sons will restore what the Fathers plunder'd you of? If you hope this will be the Case, *Horace* is out in his *Politics*, when he says :

*Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?
Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosorem.*

What mortal Work, what human Power,
Will not corroding Time devour?
Our Fathers, viler than their Sires,
Bore us a more flagitious Race:
When our, more impious, Brood retires,
Sons, still much worse, shall fill their Place.

'Tis for Wealth Mercenaries fight; Provisions and Munitions of War are to be obtained only by Money; so that Money is every Thing, and answers all Things. 'Tis this View of Things, and these Considerations, with the unhappy Condition of Mankind, which have made People more eagerly grasp after Riches, than after Virtue and Wisdom; for Wealth may frustrate the Attempts of Wisdom, and disappoint, or render abortive, the Intentions of Virtue. Such is the miserable Situation, Man is in, that Wealth procures Friends, and produces, at least, external Regard from even the Wife, and real internal Reverence and Esteem from the *great Vulgar*, as well as from the Populace; and these two Sorts make up the Bulk of Mankind. For these Reasons, wise Men have, sometimes, thought it necessary, where a
People

People are corrupt, to endeavour after a competent Share of Riches, in order to secure themselves: They contemn the Regard it procures, but use it as a Sort of *Armour*, which, tho' burdensome and contemptible in itself, yields Security, when prudently managed.

If this be the Case then, how much does it behove you, my Countrymen; how much does it concern your present Interest, and that of your Posterity, to take Care, and be upon the Watch, that you do not pay more than your Share of the Taxes of this Kingdom, lest you be, at last, impoverish'd, and brought to Beggary and Slavery? This Canker of unequal Taxes works by Degrees, is a Consumption preying on your Fortunes, and diminishing your Substance and Power by imperceptible Dribblets; and tho' it be a slow Poison, it will, at last, as surely destroy your Wealth, Influence and Liberty, as a *Cancer*, or an *Italian Potion*, would your natural Body.

Rouse up yourselves then, my Countrymen; throw off this Lethargy you have so long dozed in; break the Bands asunder, which have so long held you in Slavery, the worst of Slavery, Slavery to your own Delegates, Insects of *Power* of your own Creation, Bubbles of your own blowing, which a stronger Blast would shake to Atoms. Throw off this Yoke, which, if some of your Forefathers were tame enough to bear, you ought to scorn to continue; a Yoke, which you ought, by a vigorous Struggle, to disentangle yourselves from, and thereby merit the grateful *Eulogiums* of Posterity. Consider your Numbers, your Strength, your Wealth and Property, your Bondage; and that the Road to Liberty is safe, easy, and honourable; your Slavery base, mean,
and

and infamous ; and let all these inflame you to pursue Redress vigorously. The Romans, when oppress'd by their Rich Men, retired to the Sacred Mount, refused to engage with their Enemies, and chose rather to die by their Hands, than preserve Life to be the Property of their Gentry, and groan it out under an Aristocratical Tyranny.

Thus, my Countrymen, I have enter'd into the Penetralia of your Favourite Goddess LIBERTY, unveil'd her Face, wiped off her Paint, turn'd up her Skirts, discovered her Nakedness, and convinced you, that she is nothing but an Idol, a Pageant, filthy Rags, and no Divinity ; tho' the State-Flamens and Augurs, for the Space of Half a Century past, have cried out, with one Voice, Great is this DIANA of the BRITONS.

BUT let not the sad Tale of your Deception and Wretchedness be told in Gaib, nor published in the Streets of Ascalon, lest the Philistines triumph over you, lest they mock and hiss you to Scorn ; lest they wag their Heads, and cry, How is the Mighty fallen ! lest, with Contempt and Disdain, they point and say, There goes Monsieur Freeman, as formerly they did, There goes Monsieur Ballance : Lest, taunting, they ask you, " Where, now, is your boasted Liberty ? " and bid you, for Shame, throw off your Vanity, " acknowledge their superior Freedom, and prepare " to receive their Grand Monarque as your Sovereign, who will, at the same Time he enlarges his own Empire, extend your Liberty. " These Jeers, this Mockery, Britons must expect in the End, if they do not speedily pursue the Dictates of,

Their Countryman, and Well-Wisher,

PHILALETHES.