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L E T T E R S

CONCERNING THE

P R E S E N T S T A T E

O F

E N G L A N D .

PARTICULARLY RESPECTING THE

P O L I T I C S , A R T S , M A N N E R S ,

A N D

L I T E R A T U R E O F T H E T I M E S .

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LETTERS
CONCERNING THE
PRESENT STATE
OF
ENGLAND.

LETTER I.

Of the Influence of the Crown in the British Constitution.

NOTHING, my worthy Friend, can ever give me more pleasure than fulfilling your requests, an object truly agreeable to me for two reasons ; first, because I am at present partly able to satisfy

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you ;

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you; and secondly, because I am clear you will pardon all my mistakes, and attribute them not to carelessness, but want of knowledge; I shall be very faulty if I wander so much from the point, as to become guilty of the latter; retirement has given me time, which some busy scenes would not allow for reflecting on the past events, and venturing from thence to give you my idea of the future. You desire that I would begin the political part of the correspondence, with giving my opinion, of the *tendency in our constitution to fall into an absolute monarchy.*

This is a very delicate affair, and requires a superior degree of penetration fully to scan it; but as you cannot have the finished performance of a master, you must be satisfied with the slight sketch of an humbler politician.

But here let me guard you against an error, too common in those who do not mix a good deal in real political life; that of drawing ideas of constitutions now living, if I may so express myself, from books; the

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the writers of those works that have either doomed the British constitution to certain ruin; or, on the contrary, pronounced it immortal, are equally dependant for their knowledge on books; but the true understanding the world is not to be had in books, and those who examine the constitution of this country by the criterion of acts of parliament, will find no traces of the causes of great and important effects, which are every day to be seen.

The soul of our government at present, I will not say of the constitution, is *influence*; the Crown visibly absorbs the power of the whole legislature by influence; she possesses the executive, in right; and every man who attends parliamentary business must be sensible, that the votes of both Houses are ever at command: is this owing to chance, to disinterestedness, to opinion, or to influence? The *real* government of this country is therefore different from the *apparent*: The king's ministers are sure of carrying

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every point they desire, the king's will is the law: this is a fact, and thousands of proofs might be brought of it, were they not certain of striking your recollection in particular, on the general mention of the subject.

Foreigners ask, where is the difference of your constitution and ours? Your king does what he likes through the parliament; ours does the same without the parliament; where *to the people* is the difference? The reply is *true; but you know not how many points the king wants to carry, but his friends will not support him in them, and consequently they never come before parliament.*

This idea gives one no bad account of our constitution; the king's power is absolute in all matters, which will not shock too greatly the prejudices and inclinations of the people—as to the power of the purse, which so many writers tell us includes all other power, he is as absolute as the king of *France*; and that, because the people of *England* are constitutionally accus-

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accustomed to see all the demands of the Crown granted in parliament.

In *general* acts the regal power seems uncontrouled; in *particular* ones, it is as limited as in any country in Europe. What I mean is, the laws that bind the whole people on an equality, are ever in the power of the Crown; if but the king departs from the general idea, by ordering, injuring, or killing an individual, he immediately finds his power circumscribed; thus it would be easier to him to demolish the liberty of the press at one stroke, or to oppress the whole kingdom by an enormous tax, than to wrest a cottage from its just owner. The king can raise twenty millions of money; but he cannot cut off the head of John Wilkes: this distinction should ever be made in discourses on our government; because in reality it is now become the essence of our constitution; all *general laws* are at the power of the Crown; *particular actions* must carry the stamp of freedom.

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The freedom of the press has justly been called the bulwark of freedom; does any one doubt, but a minister could carry a vote to subject it to a licencer to-morrow?

Those who hesitate to subscribe to the opinion, that the Crown is in reality all powerful in general laws, should consider the present state of influence. We have been told, that the public is poor, but individuals rich; which seems to be the strangest mistake that could possibly have been made; for the fact is directly contrary; nothing can exceed the poverty of individuals; even those who possess the largest and noblest estates: from whence the universal influence of the Crown; if not from the poverty of the people? It is a luxurious age; every man longing earnestly for the means of rivalling his neighbours; straining every nerve to rise in shew, elegance, &c. fine houses, superb furniture, rich equipages; expensive dress; luxurious feasting; unbounded gaming; and all the methods of lavishing

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ing money, which were ever practised in the most luxurious ages and countries, now are found among persons of large fortunes; they are closely imitated by their inferiors, until some parts of their profusion descend even to the lowest classes; in such a state of things, how should any body be rich! Wants on every hand exceed the power of gratification. All live beyond their fortunes; all are, and in such a train must be, poor. To whom should they look for money, which their own industry could never gain, nor their œconomy save? To him who has three millions annually at his disposal.

While such is the great outline of the nation, how can any one doubt the power of influence?

This universal expence, which so infallibly brings on universal poverty, enriches the publick, that is, the king. The alienation so rapid in profusion, is in every stage taxed pretty heavily, from whence a revenue is raised great in itself, but greater in its consequences; for on the credit of

what is, and what may be, unbounded wealth is raised at will, and a little kingdom spends more in a single year, than supported the greatest empires during many. Nor has this been the unnatural exertion of imprudent enterprize; the efforts of folly, sinking to debility; it has been genuine strength often repeated, and yet unexhausted. In a word, it is publick wealth founded on private profusion.

When I mention the poverty of individuals, I do not mean, that they are unpossessed of estates and money: no; they live in unbounded plenty of both; but the luxurious profusion of the age is so great, that the master of forty thousand a year is almost a beggar. Relative to the constitution, he is *poor*; but as an object by whom the public grows wealthy he is *rich*. The wants, and dependance, which surely may in that sense be called poverty, are in exact proportion to the quantity of money, and consequent degree of luxury in the nation.

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This general poverty and dependance gives the decisive turn to the constitution, and produces the effect, noticed above, the king's power in all matters enacted by *general laws*: I speak of the real essence of the government; not the letter of law laid down in books now grown musty on the shelf. Those who will yet draw their reasonings from books, should attend the debates in parliament; St. Stephen's chapel is the book he should consult.

Adieu my worthy Friend, I have here expressed myself in a stile rather bold; but he whose life has been active, will be decisive in his speech; unguarded, perhaps, I have been in this letter, but I give you my real sentiments with the freedom of a friend.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

Of the ENGLISH NOBILITY.

THE nobility of England have been called the guardians of the throne, and with reason. They buried themselves under the ruins of that of Charles I. and would, in a similar convulsion, act in these days in the same manner.

The liberty of this country was fixed by the Commons: it will never be preserved by the Nobles: the House of Lords never venture to shew that spirit of freedom which leads to liberty; oppositions of consequence, and some of that rough violence which accompanies a free people, break out in the House of Commons; ministers are there sometimes hard pushed; but *never* in the House of Lords; it would be a monster of a fact to see that House pretend to a freedom which they never asserted, and will never defend; that branch of the legislature is and always will be devoted to the Crown.

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In the day of trouble and dispute this is not to be wondered at; for nothing is so horrible to nobility as democratic power; the obedience they pay to an absolute monarch is perfect freedom, compared with the superiority of the Commons.

While the prejudice in favour of the Crown is so strong amongst the English nobility, that in any future day of dispute we may be certain, that all their power would be exerted in its favour, what ere we think of the immense, lavish and prodigal manner in which the peerage is bestowed? What are the consequences relative to the safety of the constitution? The balance of property in the kingdom, from the number of new creations, is inclining strongly to the Lords. This shews a depth of politicks in the Crown of late years, which one would have been far enough from looking for, considering the characters of certain persons: all men who gain great riches are advanced to the peerage; — inasmuch, that there are not more than five capital estates in the kingdom

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at this day among the Commons. The thin House of Lords in Charles's days fell from a want of property and number; some estates among them were very large, but the number so small, that the total bore no comparison with the Commons. Yet these few Lords, by means of their retainers and followers, rendered the king victorious in the beginning of the quarrel: but how different is the case now! Where is the power to be found at present, that is to break the united force of King and Lords? Never was a case more totally changed. And this is ventured, with an eye to a dissolution of that harmony, which has for so long a time existed between the orders of the state; but if a change was to happen, the dependants in the House of Commons on the Crown and Peers, would thin every bench in St. Stephens.

From hence we may venture to conclude, that all additions to the House of Lords, are so many weights thrown into the scale of the Crown; a scale which has

has proved so loaded during many years last past, that there can be no doubt of its outweighing all that can be thrown into its opposite.

It is true, the choice that has been made of men to fill the peerage, has of late years been remarkably unfortunate, and brought a ridicule on the order, which has counteracted some of the ill effects which might possibly have already happened, had the abilities been equal to the wealth of the body. What a number of upstarts have been advanced to a rank, which has only served to expose the persons, whose ascent was utterly unmerited, and drew on them reflections, which they would otherwise have escaped.

Family, it is true, has in the latter ages been strangely neglected; and it must be confessed, with no slight reason, merit and money are the only just pleas that can be brought to urge an advancement; the latter is the plea of politicks, the former that of reason; but as to family, what are

are the descents now boasted throughout the kingdoms of Europe? Only several removes back into the barbarous ages—mere pretending to be descended from Barbarians, Goths, Vandals, and Tartars, the founders of the great houses in Europe were all miserable plunderers, devoid of learning, taste or wealth; men whose names are scarcely known, and whose actions were contemptible. It should humble the pride of our families, that boast of their long line of ancestors, to ask them, which are descended from Plato, Socrates, Epaminondas, Alexander, or the other Greeks, whose names fill the noblest annals of human story? Where are the descendants of Tully, Cato, Cæsar, Pompey or Augustus? Produce the Peer, who ranges such names in his pedigree, and I will admit a noble, brave and generous motive for lordly pride; but as to the descents from the miserable marauders of the dark ages of wretchedness and barbarism, such a boast should fill us with contempt. One is descended from some

custard-

custard-eating lord-mayor — another from a sheriff—a third from a captain of a banditti, under the bastard *William*; and if a name has any similarity to that of some ruined hovel in Normandy, it is by the despicable tribe of pedigree-makers, produced as an unerring proof of the great man's descent from the savages of the North, who over-ran France. Go into every country in Europe, you see the same despicable original of families; all are sprung from the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarous invaders of the Roman empire; or else from originals equally despicable in the East. Not one can prove a lineal descent from any of the heroes of antiquity; all, all are the grandsons of nations which but a few ages ago were savages.

This is the pride of family: but few of our nobles can carry their descent so high as the conquest; not many so far back as three hundred years, and in general they pretend only to spring from the rabble of yesterday:—were they all clear

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in the line from the slaves of Rollo and William, where is the honour? Who were the founders of their family? Were they men whose names stand forward in the lists of fame? If we look forward for many ages, how few of their families will be venerated from the *heroes of antiquity* from whom they sprung!

For these reasons, which I must own make me regard with great contempt the pretences *to family*, so common in this country, I think merit is the only rational founder of a family: the first of a noble line should be a man whose fame renders his name immortal, without any addition in the power of princes to bestow: from such men, all should be, and are proud of descending, whether they flourished last year, or ten centuries ago.

The immortality which great merit, or great genius bestows, is superior to all nobility: the names of Bacon, Shakespeare, Milton, and Newton, will increase in lustre when the whole House of Lords, their ancestors and descendants, are gone
and

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and buried in oblivion.—Long after, barbarous ages intervene, and obliterate all the traces of family, issues, descents, and all the rubbish of heraldry; will their names go down to more distant and refined periods, and be pronounced with rapture by every tongue?

These are notions very incongruous with the modern spirit of nobility; but will you contradict me, when you considered the means that carried B—— and H—— to the peerage? Adieu, we shall not be far asunder in our ideas.

C L E T-

L E T T E R III.

Of PATRIOTISM.

WHAT is the spirit of modern patriotism? I can form no idea of such a virtue exerting itself in the British constitution; all the explanations, harangues, and flights of imagination, which have been jumbled together to form that imaginary monster of perfection called a Patriot, are but an unintelligible jargon. They are Grecian and Roman ideas in an English dress: patriots rise up like mushrooms; we have always the patriot of the day, like the favourite player; first to clap for a fool, and then to hiss for a knave. It is the nature of our government to produce these heroes of politics; the occasion produces the character; a pretence to the famed virtue is the road to corruption; and marks a man, as one who wants only a bidder that will rise to his price.

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If we reflect on the history of the men, who in this country have made a figure in the character of Patriots, we shall be convinced, that they made the pretence of the virtue a mere ladder to mount high in office and wealth: a mere mask to their ambition.

The patriotism of the antients had even a military, a savage fierceness in it; which seemed essential to its being: Indeed it is a virtue which required a wild and daring cast of thought; generally measuring the welfare of the state, not against a cold, temperate, resistance of temptation; a moderation of sentiment; or the dictates of philosophic reflections; but against life itself; friends, kindred, family all were to be sacrificed at the shrine of their country: patriotism and death were ever hand in hand: it was a ferocity in the mind near allied to a degree of fury; nothing calm, or temperate. The man was hurried away by the impulse of a violent passion; rather than

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urged by the calls of reason; hence arose an enthusiasm, which sometimes broke into the noblest actions, and the most exalted sentiments; but as to modern times, and our own country in particular, the constitution of the government destroys the very idea of a patriot. The regularity of all the movements of the state, the nature of the modern art of war, and the universal power of *law*, has brought every thing to such a standard, that we can have no idea of patriotism: What are to be the rules to judge it? What are the signs by which to know it? The mob will ever have their patriot; but sure the better part of mankind should understand their constitution better, than to suppose every man who opposes the court a patriot! The true patriot, if the term is allowed to express an uncertain idea, must in such a government as ours often be in power—sometimes with the court—sometimes against it—but our patriots always lose their cha-

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characters when in office, whatever the motive, and can never regain it but by violent opposition.

In short, there is so much nonsense and contradiction in the character of patriots in this kingdom, that the moment any one makes pretences to the virtue, he should on all hands be treated either as a visionary fool, or a designing knave.

The men amongst us who have at different times flourished in this harlequin's frock, have ever been railers at men rather than measures. If you will fix an idea to the word patriot, and adapt it to this country, you ought to describe a man in parliament who looks at measures alone, totally forgetting who are the conductors; and who in all his conduct, both in and out of place, adheres steadily to certain plans, which he thinks favourable to the happiness and liberty of the people. In an age wherein the influence of the Crown is too great, and threatens to overturn the constitution, he will not enter into any

measures that can add to that influence by the same means that created it. Debts and taxes laid the foundation; throwing into the scale of the Crown a weight unthought of at the Revolution; adding to the debt is increasing taxes, and all the train of their consequences, which are already grown too formidable to liberty. If such a man therefore could exist as a modern patriot in cold blood, he would see the necessity of adhering to a plan of preventing a further acquisition of riches in the Crown, by raising fresh taxes to pay the interest of new debts.

A patriot must surely think liberty of much more consequence than military success—great trade—naval power—or any such possession, and would consequently never agree to measures, which, in order to gain the latter, could in any degree endanger the former.

Now we have never found that any of our patriots have conducted themselves on these

these ideas; they have railed at small expences when out of power, and run into large ones the moment they are in place.

But what encouragement real in the goods of fortune, or imaginary in the opinions of the world, can any man have for turning patriot; if he really means well, he will possess neither: certainly not the first; and he will lose the latter, the moment he acts beyond the ideas of the mob? What glimpse of hope can he have of success? In parliament the Crown is so strong, that an orator may waste a dozen pair of very well toned lungs, before he out talks the power of ministerial gold: he has not an Athenian or a Roman mob to harangue, but men whose education just gives them the plea of a systematic defence, and apology for the most glaring venality: how is he to make an impression on the needy sons of extravagance, who have learning enough to be sophists? Can he expect, that the flowers of rheto-

LETTERS concerning the

ric and flights of fancy shall be weightier than posts and pensions? A place at the board of Customs or Excise; paymastership; or a contract; are not these powers beyond the eloquence of a Tully or Demosthenes?

I am, dear Sir,

Yours very truly.

LET-

LETTER IV.

General View of the Present State of the European Potentates.

THE power of a kingdom is absolutely relative; you ask for my idea of that of England in the present age; but this question is not even to be debated, much less clearly ascertained, without first taking a general view of Europe; which shall be the subject of this letter, reserving for a future one, a nearer examination of the real power of England.

From the death of Charlemain to the accession of Charles V. the power of the European Potentates was tolerable equal; but that monarch, coming to the most extensive and powerful dominions in Europe, and gaining a view of boundless American treasures, certainly formed the idea of a new universal monarchy; but divided kingdoms lose half their power; had all Charles's provinces joined Spain, instead of the territories of Francis I. in all

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all probability he would have succeeded in his attempt, unless some of those unforeseen accidents, which baffle all human schemes, had saved his neighbours from his power.

His retirement and death divided his dominions, but the flower of his troops falling to the share of Philip, and the American treasures pouring in upon him in full tide, he carried on the father's plan, and vainly hoped for greater success. Philip has been reckoned the greatest politician in Europe; but never was character more miserably mistaken; when he should have sacrificed every thing to power, bigotry induced him to cut the sinews of his strength by depopulating Spain; and driving the Flemings into rebellion and despair, by his cruelties and religion. These were his two grand errors, which alone would have overturned a better laid plan. Another was aiming at the conquest of England, before he had achieved that of France, which he certainly thought of through the means of the league: the troubles in that

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that kingdom gave him an opportunity, which had he duly improved, stuck to that alone for a time, and been at peace with his Flemish subjects, there can be no doubt but the French factions would have enabled him to master the kingdom; an acquisition of so much importance, ought to have engaged all his attention, instead of being at the same time deep in driving millions of industrious inhabitants from Spain.—Wasting immense wealth and whole armies in Flanders, and fitting out Armada's to conquer England.

So many undertakings ruined all; had he exerted all his wealth and strength against France, that great kingdom would have fallen; then he might have cast the ambitious eye on England; making throughout his plan, one step a preparation for another. But the contrary conduct debilitated his power, and ended in the acquisition of Portugal, instead of universal empire; weakening himself so much in all his enterprizes, that this conquest was not of long duration, and Spain fell into that

that debility from which she has never risen.

After the death of Philip, no kingdom made large strides in power but France; and the steps by which she arose, though great, were silent, and rather the effect of internal settlement, than foreign acquisition. Henry the Great; the duke of Sully; and Cardinal Richlieu; paved the way for the greatness of Lewis XIV. The compact nature, and noble situation of the kingdom, full of people and industry, with no foreign provinces detached, and rebellions; no insecure dependence on American mines; an army superior to any in Europe; the successors of the Spaniards in reputation; an ambitious king, with great abilities, admirably seconded by able ministers and successful generals, all united to raise Lewis to a degree of power far superior to that of Spain. It was a power clear of almost all the mischiefs which attended Philip's; but the aim of general influence in Europe failed from partly the same cause; embracing

bracing too many undertakings at once, and making too free with a power, which, properly husbanded, must have proved superior to all.

Lewis XIV. seeing his armies victorious, and so numerous, that nothing but an alliance of half Europe could oppose him, made no scruple to seize province after province, and town after town, and finding himself left in quiet possession, through the dread of his neighbours at his power, he carried the game too far; and in the wars which followed the peace of Nimeguen lost all sight of good politicks, and seemed bent on irritating and provoking all Europe, to form such an alliance as would crush his power.

He acted precisely with relation to Spain, as Philip had before done with France: his great aim ought to have been the Spanish monarchy, and he would undoubtedly have taken possession of it in his own name, had he escaped the war which terminated at Ryswick. It was that war that proved the ruin of France; she then was broken,

broken, it produced the victories of her enemies the beginning of the following century, and paved the way for the triumphs of Marlborough.

In 1678 the treaty of Nimeguen was concluded, when Lewis was at the height of his power; from thence, to the death of the king of Spain, was near thirty years. This was the valuable period, which might have fixed his power on the firmest foundations; had it been employed in carrying on all those great works and designs which increased the wealth of, and ornamented the kingdom; had he kept up a great and well disciplined army; increased his fleet; encouraged manufactures; improved the soil; protected trade; had he, in a word, expended this time in the manner he passed the beginning of his reign, he would have gained so great a power, that nothing in Europe could have resisted him; the Spanish monarchy would have been added to France, and his power then would have been irresistible. But on the contrary, he wasted his strength

strength in the intervening war, without any view of politicks, or grandeur; and drove a million of Protestants from his kingdom.

Thus did Europe a second time escape the fears of universal monarchy; from the day of the battle of Blenheim, the power of France was not only really fallen, but there scarcely remained the appearance of it to frighten those, it once had been so terrible to.

In the wars that have happened since the death of Lewis XIV. power has been pretty equally divided, until all the world attended to the conquests of England in the last war, which is a period of no slight importance in the history of Europe; for a proper idea of the present state of the Potentates in this part of the world, we must take into the same account the last war, and also that of 1741. The house of Bourbon was victorious in the latter; Britain in the former.

While France, Spain, Prussia, and other important allies were closely united

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in the war of 1741, while the affairs of England were miserably conducted, and other circumstances happened that added to the scale of the Bourbons, yet victorious as they often were, the advantages of the war were not comparable to the misery it brought upon them. The exertions those allies made are not to be named with the efforts of Lewis XIV; and in the year 1748 and 9, France was almost as harassed, oppressed and exhausted, as she was in 1714. Her navy was ruined, and her trade utterly destroyed: this was the case even with a quarrel, in which she might upon the whole be said to be conqueror; and shewed perhaps as strongly the sinking state of that kingdom, as the worse situation of her affairs in 1763.

With Spain the case was yet more mortifying: the great successes of England have been attributed to the ignorance and blindness of the French and Spanish ministers; and to the influence of favourites and mistresses; but this is a most false idea. The real cause of it was, a greater expence

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expence and attention being bestowed on her navy than ever was known in any former war;—the French and Spanish settlements were attacked in every part of the world, with ten times the force that ever was before exerted against them.

The general turn of the war proved in the clearest manner, that the real weight of the nations governed by the house of Bourbon, was inferior to the reputation of their power in Europe. Extravagant, fruitless, and ill-conducted wars, which impoverished them equally whether victors or vanquished, had sunk the kingdom of France into a debility, almost as apparent as that of Spain; insomuch, that the famous compact, to bind together the whole family in a league against England, only proved to Europe, the amazing change in the affairs of the two nations: in the last age, the grand business of England was forming alliances, to resist the overgrown power of France; but in the present one, all the branches of the Bourbons are seeking alliances to withstand the force of
D England;

England; who, on the contrary, is single in the world, and dreaded by it all.

France is unflourishing in her situation, view it in what light you please: her troops are much declined in reputation ever since the last century; her navy is the mushroom of an hour; always reviving, ever destroyed: the king of France builds ships for the king of England to navigate; her population less by a fourth, than in the prosperous times of Lewis XIV. while the boundary of the kingdom is enlarged; which only makes two evils instead of one. Her finances in the most miserable order of any country, without exception, in Europe: the peace of the kingdom much disturbed by intestine quarrels, between the crown and the remnants of the old constitution: in war she is weak, even with the assistance of great allies. Such a situation is no match for the power of Britain in the full vigour of her strength.

But here I may suppose myself interrupted, by the exclamation of those who will measure the power of kingdoms with the

the line and compass: France is larger than ever; has at least half as many people again as England, Scotland, and Ireland; how therefore can she be inferior? But in reply to this, may we not observe, that the power of states depend neither on population, nor extent; but on innumerable circumstances, which combine to give a turn to human affairs, very contrary to the spirit of calculation. France is of greater extent than at the peace of Nimeguen; and she has lost but a fourth of her people; hence therefore she ought not to be less powerful by a fourth; but who will dare to assert, that Lewis XV. wants but a fourth of his great grandfather's power. Nay, in a victorious war, that of 1741, could such a position have been admitted? — Let the extent and population of Spain be measured with Britain, will the balance of their power be shewn by the proportion of their numbers?

The truth is, kingdoms have their rise and fall, and when once they are passed

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the meridian of their power, they keep declining, beyond the proportion of their apparent strength; numerous circumstances unite to make the world believe, that the force lately so dreaded cannot be quite sunk; but the fatality of declension is come on, and all such signs are but mere appearances.

France has played exactly the part of Spain; insulted, attacked, and resisted all Europe; then declined, and shares the same fate in her fall, that of being dreaded when her power is sunk.

From which reflections I venture to deduce the consequence, that Europe has nothing more to fear from the ambition of the house of Bourbon; neither of the branches of that family can any longer take the lead in that superior manner, which marked the latter part of the preceding century.

Germany is split into so many sovereignties, that her power, except in union, has never, nor ever will be formidable to neighbours

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neighbours that keep their good faith with her.

The power which most attracts the attention of Europe at present is that of Russia; and it must be confessed, that empire has risen in a manner very surprising, and hitherto has shewn none but marks of rising; the day of her meridian most assuredly is not yet come.

There is a Russian influence spreading through the northern kingdoms, which looks much like an increase of power; and the affairs of Poland are just such, as an ambitious sovereign of Russia would wish for: a concatenation of events, which joined with their late great successes against the Turks, that may have consequences much beyond the ideas commonly embraced at present. It is not a power well knit together in its limbs for threatening universal empire; but its growth, without any such magnitude, may be the cause of much trouble to the rest of Europe.

Well situated, and very populous provinces, filled with industry, cultivation

and riches, have ever been the source of the power of the great empires; and of these kingdoms that have justly alarmed the world with ideas of such. But when a nation by conquests adds dominions, whose consequence is greater than the original, there can never be a good union of the parts; but on the contrary, a dissonance and division in manners, language, temper, &c. that must shake the whole to the foundations, on the least failure of success. If the progress of great power be traced, from the beginning of the world to the present day, I do not think there can be any reason to dread the utmost that ever can be accomplished by the Russians.

Having thus taken a cursory view of the powers of Europe, I shall, in my next, trouble you with my idea of the present state of the power of England.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R V.

Of the POWER of ENGLAND.

IT is an aggregate of a vast number of particulars that forms the power of a country. Wealth, trade, manufactures, agriculture, population, much engagement in war, climate, government, situation, &c. all have a strong effect in rendering kingdoms weak or powerful. Sometimes two or three so strongly combine, as to make up the want of many others. This general aggregate of fortunate circumstances is upon the whole greatly in favour of Britain. She has arose to a state of great prosperity by silent, slow degrees; her power is fixed in that prosperity, and the nature of it is such, as to bid fair to be of much longer duration, than that either of France or Spain. But let it not be thought, that I am hinting any thing at a probability of universal empire, her situation alone, were every other circumstance in her favour,

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would prevent the execution of such an idea; and this incapacity must have the best effects, in securing to her that degree of power to which she may naturally attain.

The union of the two kingdoms of England and Scotland under one king, and the total reduction of Ireland, were the two events that laid the foundation of the British power. When arts and commerce animated the northern parts of Europe in general, it was scarcely possible, from the situation of this island, but that it must become a great trading kingdom: this was a natural event almost dependant on situation. The fall of the Spanish monarchy laid the foundations of our naval power, which has never ceased to rise, from the days of Elizabeth to the present hour. The maritime power of England is not the wayward child of an absolute monarch, who determines to be potent on every element, it is the slow natural growth of more than two hundred

dred years, which has stood many a fierce attack, and weathered many a storm.

Another circumstance which has continued and encreased every other advantage, is the peculiar felicity of our constitution: all the great kingdoms of Europe have lost their liberty, except England; liberty has carried her trade, agriculture, manufactures, wealth and navy to a pitch, to which they would never otherwise have attained.

Another point of vast importance is, the uncommon union of trade and agriculture: the amazing commerce of England is equal to that of the most famous states who have been great by commerce alone; and this vast trade has been carried on, not by a knot of unhappy men, like the Dutch, who were forced to be traders, or nothing; but by a great landed nation, among whom trade enlivened agriculture; and agriculture yielded immense products for trade.

Lastly, the period of these various circumstances coming in full play, was at

at a time when the rival nation had passed the meridian of her grandeur, so that England was the rising, France the setting sun. No other power arose to dispute the palm of equality; she had not then a France succeeding Spain in great power, to draw her off, and waste her strength with fresh contests.

All these are reasons for conjecturing, that this country will in her turn be the first power of the Christian world; she cannot aim at universal monarchy, from reasons which I have already mentioned, and that moderation will save her from efforts beyond her strength, and from alliances among the rest of Europe to pull down her power. It will therefore be more stable, and far more prosperous, than that either of France or Spain.

You observe, that this view of the affairs of Britain, does not take notice of her internal state, particularly her debts, and some other circumstances, which the politicians of our news-papers are always telling us are our ruin. All countries have

have had these internal evils, which wanted nothing but liberty of the press, to prove ruinous long before any ill effect was felt.

The progress of the power of any kingdom in Europe, must be examined and ascertained by a general view of its principal transactions among the other powers, whose history is consulted; not by examining the opinions and factions within it, that either exalt it beyond the truth, or depress it far below the real fact; if these various and transitory assertions are taken as a guide, we should find Frenchmen pronouncing their country ruined at the peace of Nimeguen; and Spaniards proving that Philip II. at the beginning of his reign, was less powerful than the kings of Castile or Arragon; in England, where the liberty of the press is so great, these impertinences are met with every day, in so much that the papers published here, to prove the nation undone from the revolution to the present time, that is, in the most prosperous time of the kingdom, would

would alone fill a large library; the national debts of this country are certainly very considerable, but it seems preposterous to predict ruin to the state, because the right hand owes to the left; and as to the debt due to foreigners, it is comparatively inconsiderable: but where are the politicians, that will venture to assure us of the impossibility of this kingdom applying the sponge, and yet presently after borrowing again: much more surprizing turns have happened in the history of human affairs.

Such a circumstance, as an internal debt, can never have force enough to overturn an hundred others of great effect; besides, it would be reasoning against all experience to admit that as so fatal an evil, which has hitherto proved so undoubted a good.

I therefore conclude, Sir, that the power of England is much too great to have any thing to fear from the united force of all her enemies: I consider her as the rising power, that is at present acting the supe-

superior part upon the great theatre of Europe; and I must be allowed to think those very shallow politicians, who are deceived, by trifling minutiae, into an opinion, that she is in any danger of falling under the power of France.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

Of UNIVERSAL EMPIRE.

HAVING mentioned in my last letter some particulars concerning the rise of several of the great powers, which have at different times either possessed or aimed at universal monarchy, I think there are a few circumstances in the subject which have entirely escaped former writers, that may yield you some amusement in considering; and may give us a tolerable idea of the signs by which we are to judge, whether any nation at present bids fair for attaining that degree of power, which has been usually, though improperly called Universal Monarchy. The nations which have attained general sway have arisen by slow degrees; if by great and sudden conquests, it was over people of similar manners and language.

There is one exception to this rule, which is that of the Macedonian empire; Alexander's conquest of Asia was a sudden inroad

inroad of a handful of men into a vast empire; but the growth of his conquests, being so speedy and so little proportioned to the increase of his real power, that his empire ended with himself; so as scarcely to deserve the name that has been given it.

The other great monarchies will be found to coincide pretty exactly with this idea.

The Assyrian empire was formed by the united power of three great nations, whose manners, laws, languages, and customs, had a strong similarity; and it lasted above seven hundred years. The Persian empire was one of conquest, but it was a conquest of one people over another, among whom was the like similarity, inasmuch that it rather resembled the revolutions of the divisions of a great empire, like those of the East and West in the Roman history, than the rule by force of foreigners.

The Roman empire is more to the purpose, because its duration was the longest, its

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its magnitude the greatest, its power the most formidable, and its history the best known; this was the domination of a people originally of no account, who from the smallest beginning arose to universal monarchy. The Romans added to their dominions by degrees, as slow as can well be conceived, for from the time of Romulus to that of Julius Cæsar are about seven hundred years, which may be called the period which this empire took in founding; and after that epocha, it lasted above four hundred years more, under the rule of emperors. The stability of the Roman people was owing to this gradual and silent increase.

As fast as the Romans conquered, they incorporated the vanquished nations with their own, so that language, manners, arts and arms, were all the same; in an age the union was so intimate, that the people really became as one, so that when they passed the bounds of Italy, that country was most intimately blended with themselves; a very strong proof of which was

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was seen in Hannibal's expedition; all Italy was almost equally hostile to him.

This slow progress of their power so interwove their conquests with the Romans, that in each war they found themselves stronger than before; a circumstance that united with the justice of their government, to render their acquisitions so amazingly permanent. Thus the progress of their arms was but another word for the progress of their language and their manners, which ended in the whole empire forming nearly one uniform whole.

The modern powers, whose figure is the greatest in history since the destruction of the Roman empire, have been successful in proportion to their resemblance of it in this particular. Charlemaign was the greatest, and had he not divided his dominions, according to the taste of his age, he might have left a very formidable power, much superior to any that has been seen since; but here we should remember, that Gaul, Germany, Italy, and Spain, were in no respect such opposites as at

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present; the antient inhabitants were alike in all; that is Roman provincials; and their modern matters the same; all Northern Barbarians; so that Charlemaign's dominions were to be considered as similar in manners, and nearly so in language.

The policy of the Turks was peculiar, and well suited to empire; it chiefly consisted in extirpating such of the human race as did not embrace their manners and religion; wherever they obtained dominion, they moulded every thing to be Turkish; add to this, that the great foundation of Mahomet's power was by conquering countries extremely similar in manners, religion and language, and most of whom had been united more than once under the former empires.

The kingdoms neither of Spain nor France enjoyed any of these advantages; and accordingly, neither of them made an equal progress in power with any of the preceding. It is true, Philip the Second had an opportunity, which good politicks might have improved into the acquisition

quisition of France. And Lewis XIV. afterwards lost the Spanish monarchy, by weakening himself by useless wars; these are ideas which politicians may venture to form; but it is impossible to affirm, that the possession of either kingdom to the other would have been permanent; the great difficulty of preserving conquests of this sort, from the distinction of manners, customs, religion and language, may be seen in the loss of Portugal. It is a matter of infinite difficulty to blend and unite two nations almost equally numerous at once together: if a prince, after such an acquisition attempts further conquests, it is many to one but he loses what he has already gained, from having too many objects and undertakings at once on his hands. It was not by such conquests that the Roman empire arose; small states were one after another subdued, until the commonwealth grew considerable; no acquisition of great kingdoms, until the empire was far superior to any one singly taken.

Suppose Lewis XIV. and XV. instead of the events that have happened, had governed themselves by the soundest rules of good politicks; suppose Flanders, acquired in one war; Swabia in another; Savoy in another; Switzerland in a third; and tracts on the Rhine in a fourth; suppose that such or similar acquisitions had took an hundred years to make, and the original kingdom increasing all the time in wealth and power: single provinces gained in this manner slowly would, by degrees, have formed an empire too strong to be resisted; until kingdoms would at last have fell to it; each acquisition would have been intimately blended, and become quite French.

It is for these reasons, that there is at present no power in Europe, whose force and dominions increase so much, as to give just cause of fear to the rest. The events of war sometimes produce strange events, but not such as those we have been speaking of. Besides, the art military is now become almost a science of calculation;

tion; skill and bravery have less to do in the campaign than figures; he who can hold out longest commands the peace; but all parties set down nearly in equal ruins: ten victories, such as in antient times, would singly decide the empire of the world, are now gained without the acquisition of a foot of land: the difference between victories and defeats, lies only in the latter being more expensive than the former. In such a situation of affairs, what work has a prince to go through, who aims by victories at universal empire? It is a game which, for the happiness of mankind, grows every day more difficult to be played.

But difficult and utterly improbable, as another great monarchy is, to be founded by arms and conquest—still I must be allowed to hint, that this nation has the fairest probability of founding an empire far more durable than that even of Rome itself. I mean the empire of America.

All the advantages which ever attended any of the monarchies which have yet appeared in the world center there; with many others they never enjoyed.

The four universal empires—and the dominions of Charlemaign and the Turks, arose by conquests; none by the arts of peace. On the contrary, the territory of North America has been founded and reared up by a union of liberty, good conduct, and all the arts of domestic welfare; at the same time that the inhabitants have constantly preserved a martial spirit, from engaging in all the wars of the mother country.

All the great monarchies were formed sooner or later by the conquest and addition of kingdoms and nations different in arts, manners, language, temper or religion from the conquerors, so that the union, though in some cases very strong, was never the real and intimate connection of the *same people*; and this circumstance

stance proved very effective in the ruin of all; absolutely so in that of some. This will be very different in the Americans; they will in their greatest extent and population be one and the same people; the same in language, religion, manners, temper and pursuits; for the small variations in some districts, owing to the settlement of bodies of Germans, are now exceptions very slight, but in a few ages will be unknown.

The Assyrian and Roman empires were of very slow growth, and therefore lasted the longest; but still their increase was by conquest, and the union of dissonant parts. The Persian and Macedonian monarchies were soon founded, and presently overturned; the former not lasting a third so long as the Assyrian, nor more than a sixth of the duration of the Roman; and as to the Macedonian, it lasted but six years.—This advantage of a slow growth, is strong in favour of the North Americans; their only rule of increase is

the natural effect of plenty of land, and a good climate.—Scarcely any violence; no revolutions; some centuries are already past from their first settlement, and more may possibly pass before their power appears in its full splendor; but the quickness of a growth that is entirely natural, would carry with it no marks of decay, being entirely different from monarchies founded by force of arms.

The Roman empire perished by the hands of Northern Barbarians, whom the masters of the world disdained to conquer: it will not be so with the Americans, they spread gradually over the whole continent, infomuch that two hundred years hence, there probably will be nobody but themselves in the whole Northern Continent; from whence therefore should *their* Goths and Vandals come? Nor can they ever have any thing to fear from the South; first, because that country will never be populous, owing to the possession of mines; secondly, there are several nations and
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languages planted and remaining in it; thirdly, the politicks of the nations that have planted it have been totally different from those of Britain, attending only to gold, and not to the rearing an industrious people; fourthly, the most considerable part of it lies in the Torrid Zone, a region that never yet sent forth nations of conquerors.

In extent, the habitable parts of North America exceed that of any of the four empires; and consequently can feed and maintain a people much more numerous than the Assyrians or the Romans.

The situation of the region is so advantageous, that it leaves nothing to be wished for; it can have no neighbours from whom there is a possibility of being either attacked or molested; it will possess all the solid advantages of the Chinese empire, without the fatal neighbourhood of the Tartars.

It will further have the singular felicity of all the advantages of an island, that is, a free-

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a freedom from the attacks of others; and too many difficulties with too great a distance to engage in enterprizes, that heretofore proved the ruin of other monarchies.

Respecting the soil, climate, productions, and face of the continent, it is formed by nature for independancy; fill it with people, who will of themselves of course possess all sorts of manufactures, and you will find it yielding every necessary and convenience of life.

Such a vast tract of country, possessing such singular advantages, gradually becoming inhabited by one people, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, and having the same manners, attaining a population equal to that of the greatest empires; sprung from an active and industrious nation, who have transfused into them their own industry and spirit, and seen them worthy of their original; inhabiting a soil not dangerously fertile, nor a clime conducive to effeminacy;

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nacy; unpossessed of any mines but those of iron, and equally accustomed to war and commerce; such a people must found an empire as indissoluble as humanity will allow; but as far as our foresight can possibly extend, its duration will be infinitely superior to that of any former monarchy.

You doubtless observe, that I take no notice of their subjection to Britain; in truth, it is at best but a preposterous idea to suppose, that this kingdom will ever have it in her power to hold in subjection a people more powerful than the Romans, on the other side the Atlantic; as well might she now go in quest of the conquest of China.

Suffice it for England, that she will be the origin of a monarchy greater and more durable than that of *Augustus*; that her language and her manners will flourish among a people one day, to make so great a figure in the world; this flattering idea of immortality no other nation can hope
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to attain; Spain and France have had their grandeur, and are in their declension, without the possibility of such a renewal; no other nation in Europe, however it may figure in future ages, can hope for such a perpetuity of national power.

And here let me make a reflection, which should animate the authors in the English language, with an ardour, that can be possessed by those of no other nation: it is the pleasing idea of living among so great a people; through almost a perpetuity of fame; and under almost an impossibility, (as far as we may judge of the future by the past) of becoming like the Greek, Latin, and other tongues, dead; known only by the learned. Increasing time will bring increasing readers, until their names become repeated with pleasure by above an hundred millions of people.

As to the future government of that vast country, whether it begins in a union of republicks; or in a great one; it will proba-

probably end in monarchy. But, my friend, where must be the kings of Britain in understanding and idea, if they remain princes of these little territories, which, whenever they decline, must fall lower than Spain or France have done; instead of shipping off themselves, and abundance of their followers to reign in America, leaving a son, a brother, or a nephew to be the king of Britain; a step by which they will have it in their power to become by far the greatest Potentates in the world.

Perhaps the true politicks of the time would be to dispeople Britain at one stroke, and send them over to America, with their arts, manufactures, agriculture, implements, riches, spirit, manners, and government; this is but a reverse; and points out rather an effect, than the means of executing the cause; however, that the thing is possible cannot be doubted. Suppose the Americans become ten millions; the migration of ten millions more in the term

term of twenty years; half a million a year, might, in a country where there is ten times more land than all could want, with a united people of twenty millions for employing arts, manufactures and commerce, would in that country at once form an empire, very different from one consisting of ten on one side the ocean, and ten on the other.

But if this bold and violent stroke was impracticable, as is certainly not improbable; the next method of gaining part of its advantages, would be by the reigning king residing much in America, leaving a regency in England, and thereby draw over as many people as possible; if he laid his plan with forecast, and executed it politically, he would be able to thin the mother country in an uncommon manner.

But whatever were the means of executing the idea, it remains equally just to consider it as a stroke of good politicks; and the omission of it as a mark of a mean

mean spirit; since, from the beginning of the world to the present time, no monarch ever possessed such an opportunity of legally acquiring for his posterity, a dominion equal to power, and superior in duration to those monarchies which have been dignified with the title of Universal.

Excuse these ideas, which you may perhaps think wild, and believe me to be,

&c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VII.

Of the National Debt of England.

WHEN the national debt of England is mentioned in conversation, it is usual to hear of its bankruptcy next; of a sponge, and of total national ruin. A great rapidity of events and ideas are run through with too little connection; and many people form such desultory fallies of conversation, from a permanent notion of these affairs, which influence them throughout their lives; and numbers take all the common notions on the subject for granted, without ever examining their propriety.

But I do not mean in this, or any other subject, to adopt an opinion, or to adhere to one, because other people have done so before me; you must therefore excuse me, if I sometimes venture ideas of my own, though you find occasion to condemn me as absurd; not however that this is a subject which will admit of clear originality of

of idea; for publications concerning it have been so numerous and various, that many notions doubtless are started in them, of which I am perfectly ignorant.

The debts of a state to its own subjects are the debts of the right hand to the left; this has been often said, but it is not less true; and it has been as often contradicted. But what are the consequences of running in debt to foreigners? May not wars be commenced for the payment of debts; and kingdoms carried off in mortgage?

The ne plus ultra of national disputes is war; whether that war be commenced to gain the payment of an hundred millions of money; to preserve the balance of power; to resent an injury; or to prevent an evil; whatever may be the occasion, the moment it is begun, all causes are equal, the only business of one nation is to destroy the other; and we accordingly find them generally very hearty in the meritorious design, whether a barren rock be the subject of dispute, or the liberties

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berties of Europe; an elbow chair; or the security of kingdoms; the intrigues of a chamber-maid, or the welfare of nations.

For these reasons, it is very great folly to suppose, that the payment of national debts can be enforced by war; the fact seems rather the contrary; for the moment a nation declared war against England on that account, surely her first step would be to confiscate all the property; and give a sanction of right, and the law of nations, to an action quite unjustifiable during the peace. But in the name of common sense, do neighbours want this fresh inducement for going to war? They want none; for the only rule of conduct in this respect is running each other in expences as quick as possible; so that a real enemy will always break with you the moment he thinks himself strong enough, and never want pretences on which to ground the quarrel.

But the principal part of the debt of England is due to the Dutch; are they

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to wage war upon us for payment? Are they to carry off the kingdom as an hostage for their millions? Rely upon it, that those sagacious people are too good calculators for that; they know the amount of the whole British debt, they know the probability, and even the certainty, of a bankruptcy coming some time or other: they calculate it at 60, 70, 80, or 100 years, and lend their money under that chance, rather than keep it at home to do nothing.—What a material difference is there between a perpetuity and 99 years; and yet in Change Alley they are the same and of equal value. Does not this shew, that this species of trading calculate upon the idea of bankruptcy, and uncertainty.

The only mischief in these debts is, the payment of interest while you fulfil the engagements: the sending away large annual sums is in some cases of bad consequence, but not in many; and Britain never yet felt any inconvenience from it.

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Foreigners cannot enforce the payment, either of their interest or principal; fears on this head are therefore entirely ideal. The king of Prussia once bought up the bonds of Saxony at a great discount, with a view to enforce payment by terror of arms; but this was a case peculiar to itself; Saxony vastly inferior in strength, and open to every attack; many of which she severely felt without having debts for the pretence.

But much the most considerable part of the national debt of Britain is due to natives, and deserves a more minute examination. It seems to have escaped the generality of writers on this subject, that although taxes are mortgaged to the public creditors for payment of their interest, yet all the taxes that ever were, or can be in being, are by no means mortgaged. It is idle to imagine, that England *absolutely* engages to pay the interest of the debt, by no means; she only gives the creditor the chance of such and such funds being sufficient for the purpose.

When

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When large sums are borrowed, it is usually on the credit of new duties, with the collateral security of the Sinking Fund; but if such duties, and product of that fund are insufficient to pay the specified interest, the creditors have no other demand than to share the product among them; and the government makes good her engagement punctually.

Thus the supposition of a very acute Essayist, who speaks of the Land Tax at 19s. all the Customs, Excises, Malt Tax, &c. &c. being mortgaged and insufficient, talks contrary to every principle of public credit; for the moment that government cannot offer a security clearly superior to the demand, *borrowing* will immediately stop of itself, because no one will *lend*; and if old taxes produce not a sufficiency to pay the interest of the debts already contracted, it is a very great mistake to suppose, that new ones are to be laid to make up the deficiency; no such matter is even hinted at in any act for borrowing money.—From which circum-

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stance, there results an evident impossibility of new taxes to pay interest ever becoming dangerously burthenfome.

All sums of money that have been raised in the two last wars, of any considerable amount, have been on the credit of new taxes, several of which have fallen far short of expectation; but the Sinking Fund being a collateral, was in reality the grand security. Mr. Townsend raised a subscription on a duty upon chip hats, which both he and the subscribers well knew would not pay the expence of collecting; hence it results, that as long as that fund has a great surplus, so long money may be borrowed; but the moment you get to the end of that security, you no longer will be able to borrow a shilling; and for this reason; no subscribers will venture their money on the credit of new taxes *alone*, however promising they may be; because it is impossible previously to calculate the amount of any tax, from the circumstance which Dr. Swift mentions, that two and two in
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the arithmetic of the customs do not always make four, nor sometimes even one: a heavy tax has raised a large sum on malt, but does it therefore follow, that it can be doubled? A tax must be laid on for a year or two, that its product may be clearly known, before any one will lend money on it, when the collateral security is gone: and it is very plain, that such borrowing will never do for sudden emergencies.

How long the affairs of Britain can be administered before they come to such a crisis is impossible to be conjectured, and much depends on the return of wars, on the vigour with which her enemies prosecute them, and on the abilities of her ministers; but the state of France and Spain considered, there is great reason to think, that this event will not happen of several years; for those kingdoms are not in a condition to make it necessary for Britain to be at such enormous expences as in the last war, which added four millions a year to her taxes; if wars came often, and all were to be so burthenfome,

a few would be sufficient to ruin any nation.

But let us however suppose the case—that no more money could be borrowed, and that taxes would not produce sufficient for the war without. What would then be to be done? We may suppose the moment critical; that the turn of the war depended on its getting money; this country has been ever so profuse in gold, that the day of want would be a heavy one indeed; every department of the state, army, navy, offices, statesmen, &c. &c. all depend on ready money, and would make a poorer figure without, than any nation in Europe: in such a situation, what, I say, is to be done? Why a bankruptcy must be voluntarily embraced, the product of those taxes, applied to the payment of interest, must be applied to the wants of the state; this, it is true, would be a great evil, but it would be less, than the nation's throwing down their arms, and giving up the cause to the enemy: it would be ridiculous indeed to suppose,

pose, that the safety and absolute preservation of the whole kingdom, should give way to the small body of public creditors, without at the same time even securing them. The event must therefore be as I have traced; the interest of *the few* give way to that of *the many*.

As to such an action destroying credit in future, it would be of no consequence, because that effect would have already taken place, in the manner I have stated above; no ill consequence of that sort, supposing it one, could arise, more than the nation would experience, were she to preserve her faith to the ruin of all parties.

But here arises another objection; suppose you free yourselves in this manner from the public debt, and for once command two, three or four millions of money ready for half a year's interest, it can be but a temporary supply; for taxes, after such an event, would produce nothing; the industry of the kingdom—the Bank—the whole body of merchants,

&c.

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&c. would have received a blow, that would reduce the public revenue to nothing; this is the picture drawn by Sir James Stewart, who deduces ruin from failing in credit.

I beg leave utterly to differ in opinion from this Gentleman. To assert, that no ill consequences would flow from the ruin of a great number of persons would be madness; but I shall venture to hint, that such evils would in no respect amount to an equality with the mischiefs of a war to carry on without money to conduct it; or to any thing like the exaggeration of this author.

There are about six and twenty thousand native stockholders, who would at one stroke be much injured, but not many of them reduced to utter ruin; common observation will convince us, that the number of those who literally have *their all* in the public funds are extremely few. The mischiefs brought on a body of people so very trivial, in comparison of the whole people, could by no means occasion

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occasion consequences such as this author deduces.

The interest of our debts paid to natives amounts to a little more than two millions three hundred thousand pounds; now the total income of Great Britain amounts, on the most moderate computation, to one hundred and fifty millions annually; how is the destruction of two, three, or four millions, to bring on the ruin of classes so infinitely superior?

Go into the country, and see how many miles you must ride among landlords, before you will come to one that has any property in the Stocks: Who can be so infatuated as to suppose, that the circulation of all these people is to be stopped, because one in forty has lost some money in the sponge!

What have the whole body of English farmers and labourers to do with stockholders? Did they consume the products of the earth; foreigners, in one year of moderate exportation, take more corn of us than all the stockholders will eat in ten.

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ten. Are manufactures to go to ruin, because the funds are done with? This question is much the same, as asking if labourers, farmers, artists, merchants, gentlemen and peers, &c. will wear shoes, cloaths, hats, &c. because stock-jobbing is at an end?

How is trade to be ruined, granting the utmost to the anger of the Dutch; let us ask, Whether North America and West Indies will take the less cloth and tools, because twenty or thirty thousand people out of ten millions are ruined? Will the Nabobs in the East Indies neglect to trade with us on the same account?

But taxes won't be paid—That is very strange, indeed; taxes depend on property and circulation; therefore, before you venture this assertion, you must prove to us that all property will sink with the stocks, and that people will starve, and go naked, because they now and then see a formerly rich stockholder in low circumstances. Agriculture, trade and manufactures

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nufactures will all go on, it is very strange, indeed, if taxes should not.

The giving such an unnatural consequence, not to public credit, for that is supposed to be at an end, but to the stockholders already in being, is a most ridiculous chimera. These politicians must blind us before they can make one believe, that the existence of this great empire, the joint property of which is every day worth above a thousand millions sterling, must sink to nothing, because a set of people lose an hundred? Not an annihilation of income, but one set ruined, in order to enrich others for the good of the state. The interest of the debt, it is true, would not be paid, but that sum would by no means be taken out of circulation, it would be applied to other more necessary uses, circulating equally as before.—Raising ten millions a year in taxes is a much greater amount; and is taking it equally from one party and giving it to another; but the nation is not therefore ruined.

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The South Sea scheme ruined as many people, and made as great a transfer of property, as a sponge would do if applied to the national debt. It was certainly a very fatal and unhappy event, but it would be very ridiculous to say that it ruined the kingdom.

But further, say these Gentlemen, the Bank is destroyed, and its paper circulates no longer; this would give a languor to all transactions. I admit, that some inconvenience of this sort would be found; but I cannot allow, that the circulation of the kingdom would suffer in proportion to the present amount of Bank notes; in order to comprehend which, we must recur to the reasoning of Mr. Hume, who very justly remarks, that every country must and will possess, in spite of all accidents, a quantity of circulating coins, proportioned to its industry and its people; that if such kingdom circulates paper, the direct effect is to send away the precious metals, and depend on the paper for home circulation; that the whole amount of such

such paper shews the quantity of coin which is proportioned to industry; for as much paper as is required for all transactions in which it circulates, so much money would be at home were not its place so supplied. If Britain has twenty millions in money, and eighty millions in paper, this shews that her industry is proportioned to the circulation of one hundred millions of wealth; and if paper is not had, coin must come home to that amount. I have not the volume by me, but this, if I recollect right, is the general turn of his reasoning; and that it is just cannot be doubted.

Now the destruction of Bank paper makes at once such a vacuity in our circulation, that coin would at once pour in upon the nation from all parts of the world wherewith we have any transactions, until the void was filled; that money which is now dispersed under the knowledge that Bank notes will do for home use, would at once return; circulation would presently be the same as ever, only

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only cash would make it not so convenient and compendious as paper. There is a great circulation in France, and great real riches, without any paper.

Here I have supposed Bank paper totally at an end, and endeavoured to shew, that the nation would not therefore be ruined; but this is granting more than is necessary; For cannot there be Bank paper without national debts? The present Bank is a great public creditor, but that is no circumstance essentially annexed to Banks in general. In case of the events of which I am speaking at present, the Old Bank would be ruined, but government could erect a new one in six weeks, whose paper would circulate without having publick stocks for its foundation. And those who saw clearly into things of this sort would be sensible, that the New Bank would have just as good a security as possible with the old one, creditor to a public unable to pay. We have been long used to Banks of circulation; but this custom does not make them the more eligible:

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gible; the best political writers prefer the Banks of deposit; and the practice of the Dutch, so sagacious in matters of trade and credit, gives a sanction to the opinion.

But I shall now venture further into this idea; and suppose, that after the publick bankruptcy the government was to open a new subscription; that is, begin again to borrow; I am clearly of opinion, that a new credit very stable would be established, and that after a sponge had eased her of old debts, she would find a facility in contracting new ones. The supposition states, that she had kept her faith as long as self-preservation would allow; under such circumstances is it not plain, that there would be more safety in trusting her than before the bankruptcy: after it, she would have good security to give; whereas before it, she had none. However, the history of the finances in France shews plainly, that old bankruptcies are no bars to new debts; and the present subscriptions in England, while the 4 per

Cents. are not 88, that is, while the danger of a bankruptcy is just as 12 to 100, are proofs sufficient of this.

The falling our stocks on every piece of bad news, and the general discount on their value, shew that a bankruptcy is a matter of calculation, and its probability stated. Those who assure us, that the publick stocks of England are as good security as land, advance the most barefaced imposition that I remember to have heard. If you would purchase land, the real and nominal value of which is 32 years purchase, where will you go to get it at 26? Yet this is the case with stocks: why are stocks, whose value is 100, to be had for 88? Unless the badness of the security occasions it? If I have a thousand pound stock, I can sell it for no more than 850; but if I have an estate to sell, or a mortgage to transfer, I get the full value without any difficulty. Is not this proof enough that the one is sound, the other rotten? It is false to say, that this is owing to borrowing vast sums every year; for it has

has been the same since the war, while but small sums are borrowed.

All this shews evidently, that those who now lend government, do it under the plain knowledge, that the security is uncertain; they calculate this uncertainty, and the result is a certain premium or douceur.

The first exertion of publick credit has been raising the power of Britain, by means of from 140 to 200 millions, to a height that astonishes all Europe: it has, more than all other causes put together, broken and laid in the dust the power of France; when the house of Bourbon are so declined, as to leave little reason for Britain's fear, then she will no longer have occasion for credit. Her debts will have answered all the ends expected of them, and will have it at her option to embrace whatever system the emergencies of the times may render most necessary. This effect of funding, will then form an astonishing epocha in the political history of the world.

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But whether or not effects are found of this magnitude, yet the result of our enquiries teaches us to look much further than the ruin of the kingdom from credit; whatever may be the event, it is evident, that debts in themselves form no necessity of ruin; if greater mischiefs arise than those I have traced, they must flow from the worst conduct imaginable.

I am, &c.

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LETTER VIII.

Of the Publick Revenues of England.

I Cannot by any means subscribe to your opinion, that the publick revenues of England are carried to the utmost height of which they are capable; on the contrary, I apprehend there are several reasons for supposing them capable of great increase, without burthening the people so much as to destroy industry.

There is an uncertainty in every thing that concerns taxation, which is too dark for the acutest geniuses to clear up; in every country we find it mathematically proved, that if another million is raised, the people must be clearly undone; two or three are then levied, and the same prophecy repeated. The idea that one tax creates an ability in the people to pay another is very absurd; but it is difficult to say how far they may be carried; because in no country of Europe, where they are laid on equally and with judgment, do

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they oppress the people; nor is there an instance to be produced of a people ruined by taxes; other more powerful circumstances must unite, for this is not weighty enough to effect it. The heaviest taxed countries are the most flourishing in Europe; I do not here mistake the cause for the effect, and assert them therefore to be the most flourishing, but I quote the instance to shew, that taxes, which in their extreme are perfectly consistent with wealth, happiness and power, cannot have those dreadful effects which some attribute to them.

The three great branches of taxes in Britain are;

1. Those on property, such as the Land-tax and Window duties.
2. Customs.
3. Excises.

Much fault has been found with taxes on property by a late very ingenious writer, who

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who urges, that every man should pay not for what *he has*, but for what *he consumes*. Possession, it is true, does not in all cases imply an ability to pay a tax, but consumption ever does; this reasoning is however applicable alone to these taxes in excess—to the revenues of a state being principally raised by such; but not at all to those of Britain, for the Land-tax, instead of being greatly burthensome, would certainly admit of increase, without any oppression, not by making a changeable tax, varying with circumstances, for that would be fatal to agriculture, but an equal tax fixed for a century to come, and on no account changing the rates. Much more than at present might thus be raised by four shillings in the pound, really and truly paid on all lands and houses: the rental of these in Great Britain is not less than twenty-five millions, a fifth of which would be five millions, instead of two now raised.

The customs are a vast source of revenue, raised in so happy a manner, that

nobody feels their weight; but while smuggling remains in practice, much caution is requisite not to load any article of import or export with such heavy duties as to encourage smuggling, as that will ever be carried on in proportion to the profit made by it; this is the reason that several imports, which would bear much higher customs, are yet under moderate ones. The only method rationally to increase this revenue is to destroy smuggling, which might be effected in a much greater degree than is at present: troops, instead of being quartered in the inland countries, where they are of little or no use, should be thickly stationed on those coasts where smuggling is most carried on, particularly those of Suffex, Kent and Essex; much severity should be used with all taken; but above all other points, their sloops and boats should be seized and burnt, which would be wounding them in the most sensible manner. When once smuggling was much reduced, customs might

might be increased on various articles without any injury to trade.

In a rich luxurious nation, consumption often increases with duties; fashion has a vast influence, superior to the weight even of high duties. The great consumption in England of wines and brandies offer an object, which demands much higher customs than are at present laid on them; particularly those of Portugal. Many sorts of East India goods the same; smuggling once stopt, tea alone would yield an immense revenue. The consumption of this import is immense, and become so universal, that it would bear almost any burthens; the use of it among the poor is so great an evil, that if they persist in drinking it, a great revenue ought certainly to be raised on the excess; and if customs could not lay sufficient hold of it, excises ought, from which nothing can escape.

Excises are another method of raising money without the burthen being felt by the people: this is the favourite mode of

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taxation in Holland ; a country so famous for thoroughly understanding all domestic interests. The amount of the excise being blended with the value of the commodity, the consumer who buys cannot discern the one from the other, nor ever thinks of the profit government draws from the commodity he is going to purchase. They are also like customs perfectly equal, because all ranks of people pay them in proportion to their incomes, that is, to their consumption. These taxes will bear a very considerable increase ; even to a much greater amount than is commonly imagined ; the excise upon cyder was a judicious one, and nothing but the height of ignorance and folly could ever have submitted to reverse it.

There are a few taxes which in future may be of consequence to have recourse to ; and among others I shall name the following.

1. An

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1. An equal Land-tax, but fixed for at least a century.
2. The excise on cyder.
3. A duty of twenty shillings per annum on horses.
4. Ditto of five shillings per annum on dogs.
5. An excise on all houses in which tea is sold.

The tax on horses and dogs would be in no respect oppressive, because it would be proportioned to every one's voluntary consumption ; by laying no tax on oxen, the husbandmen would have the option of using a beast, whose profit to the nation is very considerable, instead of another, from whom great loss constantly arises. We already pay for the use of wheels, why not for that of horses also? The cases

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cafes are fimilar. These two duties would raife a million and a half yearly.

The above five propositions would in-crease the revenue of this country near five millions per annum.

There are many other methods, by which a large revenue might be raifed; but these are striking ones.

Had Britain in the laft peace, or rather by continuing the war a naval one, had a clearer conception of the value of that moment, which placed her in poffeffion of the French and Spanifh colonies, fhe would never afterwards have been diftreffed at the idea of raifing money. The houfe of Bourbon had been then fo effectually crushed, that future wars would have been almoft excluded from probability; and if they did come, they would have found her fo ftrong, that any competition would have been advantageous to her, ruinous to them.

By reftoring Martinico and Guardalupe, we give to the French an equal Land-tax, the fifhery was equal in value to two or three

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three excifes, and the Philippine Iflands were of more worth than many customs: we were in poffeffion of what would render new taxes unnecessary, both in the addition to our own power, and the proportionate destruction of that of France and Spain; but we returned them with a complaifance that has no equal in the records of history, we gave up without return what had coft us above fourfcore millions to gain. We gave back power into hands, who we well know would use it as foon as poffible for our destruction, and voluntarily embraced the future profpect of raifing money for wars by heavy taxes on ourfelves, inftead of fecuring that which would render them unnecessary.

The wretched plea that facrifices muft ever be made for peace, fould be addreffed not to this nation but ambitious ones; what facrifices did France and Spain make for peace, when in the height of their power they made conquelts from all their neighbours; every war from the acceffion of Lewis XIV. to the peace of 1748, was attended

attended by some acquisition or other to France; those who treated with her might talk of sacrifices for peace, and such sacrifices were ever made, but most assuredly by the losing power. Perhaps we shall be told, that Canada, and Florida, are our acquisitions, that they were the sacrifices for peace; this argument much becomes those who in general defend the peace of Paris.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Of a NAVAL WAR.

BRITAIN since the peace of Paris has in one respect been unusually fortunate; I mean in the exemption from the curse of continental connections and subsidies: I can find many faults with several of the administrations which have since that period been in power, but this is a subject of genuine praise, which should never be forgotten; for never was there such a system of absurdity as we constantly saw, until that period of subsidizing in peace those powers that were sure to fight against us in war.

But the great enquiry here which arises from this subject is the case of a naval war; for such only is to be looked for on a quarrel, while continental treaties and connections are so much slighted as at present. Here opens a great and disputed point in the politicks of Britain; how far can we rest a war in our navy alone? Is such

such a conduct probable, or adviseable? Is it what we may look for in future?

The arguments upon this head, that have on all sides the question been advanced by a great man, whose memory will ever be revered in this country, must on no account be taken as our guide: as many arguments *for* as *against* it may be found in his speeches; and no wonder, when it is considered, that his general conduct was always to say not what truth demanded, but what would most distress his antagonists. Such expressions therefore must necessarily be thrown out of the question.

Let me remark, that according to the present state of affairs, there is no slight probability of the next war being a naval one, independant of land operations on the continent, that is, of armies in Germany or Flanders

If our enemies the French had it in their power to chuse the war, on what element would they fix? Most undoubtedly on land; Is not this reason sufficient to determine us in a contrary idea?

France

France is much more powerful than England in a land war, England much more powerful than France in a naval one; can any thing therefore but folly instigate the French to prefer a naval quarrel? Can any thing but madness throw us into the choice of a land one?

The power of Britain at sea is certainly superior to that of all the world, why therefore should she not throw her full weight into that vast exertion of her force, her navy, instead of being at a boundless expence in order to fight the French with their own weapons; in a manner wherein defeats must be ruinous, and victories of no avail.

If it is said, that the operations of a great war cannot be confined to naval armaments, but that you must go to meet your enemy wherever he goes, in hopes of meeting you; it may be replied, that such a conduct is giving the choice at once to the enemy: a maritime power at once gives up all her natural advantages; a landed one the same. In France, who

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could with a better event, than a British determination of resting a quarrel in the decision of a land war in Flanders or Germany? Who in Britain could desire better than a mere naval war with France? But the latter kingdom has always yet been able to turn aside this nation from the element on which her power is irresistible; she has always *first* marched by land, in order to force us to follow her; well knowing, that a naval quarrel would end in nothing but her defeat.

An argument has been used in favour of continental wars that is weakness itself. It would be dangerous, say some, to let the French exert all their wealth and power to their navy; lest they should acquire a degree of strength on the sea, that might prove truly formidable. But this objection is absolutely begging the question; for it presupposes, that the degree of their power by sea resembled that by land, dependant totally on money; if they can raise and bring into the field an hundred regiments, can they with as much
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ease fit out an hundred sail of the line? Money, on a moderate computation, will in a twelvemonth send forth a well disciplined and well provided army into the field; but how different the navy; the mines of twenty such countries as Peru will not at once create a powerful navy; ships must be had, vast stores of all sorts ready, and of due age; and above all, hardy veteran seamen must be procured, which no discipline can form, but trade alone nourish and increase.

What if the French invade us? say some: this is a very paltry argument, and shews an utter want of knowledge in the whole matter. It should never be advanced, unless it was at the same time proved, that our continental wars prevented it. The French have never yet been powerful enough at sea to think of this game as one of conquest, but merely as a method of distressing us; in all their attempts it has reached no further, than aiming at running over a small fleet.—Slipping out of their own ports in the dark—but never

boldly in the face of the English fleets, forcing their way thro' the Channel, and landing an army in Suffex or Hampshire. This has never been their ideas, it has never been their conversation: they once seemed much in earnest for the conquest of all their colonies, having united several squadrons at Brest with no other business than invasion; they did think of landing in Ireland, but they dared only to attempt it when Sir Edward Hawke was blown from before Brest.

Now let me observe, that all such invasion schemes as these are by no means set aside by any continental wars, they may be engaged in with us; nor would any plan of this nature, as far as their marine would allow, be delayed on such account. Past experience tells us this; that crown has always had a small army at command for an invasion, notwithstanding any German or Flanders wars, but a superior fleet has been wanting. Had they millions of men in arms on the other side the water, it would be just the same; ar-

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mies in this case are not the point, but fleets.

But there is another reason, which if any was wanting ought to be decisive; granting more than there is any necessity to suppose, that money could add to a navy, in proportion to the sums expended on it; still I reply, that the expenditure in Britain has the same effect as that in France; if by being free from a land war, that nation is able to make the greater figure at sea, by a parity of reasoning, we also, by being freed from the same expence, are enabled to add in the same proportion to our fleet; so that if we possessed the superiority at setting out, we must also possess it in the addition. In this respect, however, the two nations are not upon a par; for a continental war with France is at their own doors; whereas it costs Britain almost as much to go and fight her enemy, as the expence of the campaign after she takes the field: so that if the absence of a land war enabled France to

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spend four millions on her navy, it would enable Britain to lay out six at least.

Consult the history of ancient time; the experience of later days; the dictates; turn on whatever side you will, the plain evidence of facts will prove the expediency of a mere naval war to Britain — the inexpediency of it to France: and however the statesman of the day may act in obedience to events, of which the vulgar are not in the secret, still we may lay it down as a rule, that that British minister who *voluntarily* embraces a continental war, must be either a knave or fool.

The navy royal of England is of so great power and capacity, that an immense land war might be carried on subordinately to it; by such a war I mean, every operation in which the navy bears a considerable share; all for instance in the last war, except the army in Germany. All the American and Indian expeditions — the attacks upon the coast of France, &c. &c. An hundred thousand land forces

forces might act in subordination to only a part of the navy of England — The operations of the war might be of amazing extent and importance, tho' the war was truly naval.

But it is urged on another hand, that the naval operations in the last war were carried on with as much spirit as if no war had been in Germany; which is a proof, say they, that the sphere of the marine was not extensive enough for all the operations of the war.

In reply to this, I first deny the fact; and secondly assert, that granting the truth of it, yet the conclusion drawn from it is false. — Throughout the war, all the conquests made under the influence of the fleet, were achieved by the extraordinary valour of our men, aided by much great conduct and good fortune; witness, Quebec, Louisbourg, Martinico, the Havannah, in all of which we were undoubtedly too weak, and certainly weaker than we should have been had no army been in Germany. And to assert, that more land

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forces could not have been employed in subordination to the navy is an utter mistake: Ask my Lord Albemarle, if he could not have employed ten thousand men more at the Havannah. Ask the British admirals, if they could not have convoyed the transports. Name any expedition, which would not have been surer in success, and earlier in the conquest, if the force employed had been greater: Why was Canada so long in conquering? Why was Martinico so late taken? I am not arraigning the particular conduct of that glorious war; but only shewing, that a greater land force might certainly have been employed in subordination to the navy.

However, let us in the second place grant the fact, that as many troops were so employed as could have been with propriety; yet does there result from thence any necessity of spending forty millions sterling in Germany? The peace was patched up in 1763, under the pretence that more money could not be found to
carry

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carry on the war; and had the same ministers continued in power, they would certainly have found the abundant advantage of treating with France while they had borrowed forty millions less. That sum, if the naval war continued, would have enabled them to have pushed their advantages to the furthest point, and utterly ruined France, by keeping possession of her colonies and fishery, and regularly destroying her little trade as fast as it arose: or had the war been of no longer duration, the peace would have been concluded with a less debt by forty millions, which was surely a matter of ten times the importance, of all the advantages gained by the breach of the convention of Closter Severn.

You observe, that I take no notice of the flower of speech, that *America was conquered in Germany*; or that the German war was a war to divert the French forces; such strokes pass well enough in the House of Commons; but when they come to be coolly examined, vanish into
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that empty declamation, which amuses the people's ears, but gives no satisfaction to their understanding.

Let me, Sir, from these reasons deduce these plain positions, that a naval war is most advantageous to Britain—and most pernicious to France:—that the English navy will admit the most extensive operations by land in subordination to it—and that a continental war can never so far divert the French forces, as to prevent invasions, if their fleet is strong enough.

It is therefore much to be wished, that our ministers in future may well consider this point, before they involve the nation in continental connections, which end in continental wars, and bring on a weight of expence for a useless purpose, which otherwise applied would secure triumphant success.

L E T T E R

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L E T T E R X.

Of the Motives of going to War.

THERE is no point in politicks more important, than having clear ideas of the just and proper motives for entering on a war. It is not a debate, whether a nation resolutely and plainly attacked is to hesitate at defending itself. The great lines in a point of discussion are always understood well enough, but when they are passed by, and the more delicate traits are on the carpet, then a difference of opinion is perceived that is surprizing.

War and its consequences are among the greatest evils, and the most savage destroyers of the human race; it ought not therefore wantonly to be engaged in; every endeavour should in all cases certainly be used to prevent its breaking out; negociation and treaties are not so brilliant, as campaigns and conquests; but they save the effusion of human blood,
and

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and thousands of dreadful ills, which attend on war. From which reflection may be deduced the necessity of always avoiding as much as possible national quarrels.

But here arises the dispute: In what manner are they to be avoided? And this question in England is ever answered, with an eye to the private interest of ministers; scarcely ever with one to the true interest of the kingdom. Ministers in this country have generally a strong opposition to deal with in parliament; the ministers in time of peace are generally changed on a war; such an event therefore they dread as the worst that can happen; they are extremely right in the general fact; but miserably mistaken in the means.

Had Sir Robert Walpole acted with tolerable spirit in dispute with Spain on the right of searching our ships, the war of 1741 would have been probably avoided: but negotiation was not only called in to settle that infamous demand; but all sorts of injuries

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injuries and insults submitted to, rather than take arms. This pusillanimity encouraged the Spaniards to go greater lengths, until at last they had gone too far to recede, and both parties found themselves in a war, which might easily have been avoided by due spirit at first.

But this train was still more apparent in 1754 and 5 with France, in the disputes in North America; that nation had really no design of going to war, they had but just recovered from severe losses by a war, and from a state of famine; but they make slight encroachments, perhaps without much attention to their consequence; no notice is taken of it; they then advance further; complaints are made; a negotiation is entered into; the encroachments then increase ten fold; the negotiation continues; our back-settlers are driven from their lands, and warned to quit a tract, which is pretended to belong to France; still the English ministry treat, negotiate, and dispatch couriers by thousands to Paris; a want of spirit, and encouragement

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courage France to attack, conquer, build forts on, and claim a right to tracts, which they would otherwise not have thought of; but the conduct of the ministry in England was so confused and pusillanimous, that they thought to the last no war would happen; but the debates in parliament brought on a little more activity, but so late, that no good could arise except by a war; whereas had the spirit been exerted at the beginning, it would undoubtedly have been prevented.

These two cases which are exactly in point, shew that the government, who thinks only of avoiding a war, will be first that is plunged in it. Whereas the prince who is well prepared, and cares not about the matter, will ever avoid it as long as he pleases. All the neighbours of the first think only of incroachment and imposition; those of the second know, that the least insult will not be passed over, and therefore take good care to be just in their dealings.

And

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And here the observation of two excellent politicians is worth remembering, one flourished in the last century, when he saw the truth of it strongly; the other in the present, and draws his remark equally from experience. Sir William Temple says, " Thus the Archduke, having by the fondness for peace, newly made a truce upon conditions imposed by the Dutch; now by the resolution of making war, obtains a peace upon the very terms proposed by himself and by Spain. An event of great instruction and example, how dangerous it ever proves for weak princes to call in greater to their aid, which makes them a prey to their friend instead of their enemy: how the only time of making an advantageous peace, is when your enemy desires it, and when you are in the best condition of pursuing a war: and *how vain a counsel, it is to avoid a war, by yielding any point of interest or honour, which does but invite new injuries.*"

“ries, encourage enemies, and dishearten friends.”

A later writer says, “A third rule is to resent wrongs done us vigorously and without delay, more especially where it is in our power to do it by employing our maritime force, since in this case it answers a double end; first it redresses the mischief, whatever it is for the present; and next, it raises our reputation for the future.”

No ideas can be juster than these; they are the result of what is to be drawn from the history of all ages and all countries. The way to preserve peace is not to fear or shun a war; for the moment a government shews marks of pusillanimity, the first unresented injury will bring on a second; the second a third; and so on till a war decides the affair.

It is under the influence of these ideas that we should enquire into the propriety of motives for going to war; the value of the place, town, village, island, or rock, is never the enquiry; thus wars are begun for

for objects of equal value with the expence of the contest. If you sit tamely and forgive insults, until an object is invaded equal in value to the consequences of the war, you will lose what is of more consequence than many wars, credit, reputation, and activity. That minister whose first business is to avoid a war, must overlook so many insults—must weigh the value of so many losses, before they amount to the expence and evil of a war—that the enemy will have no other bounds to their hostile insults than their own moderation erects.

Nothing sure therefore can be such political ipecacuana, as harranging on the trivial value of a loss, or seizure of a place by an enemy, compared with the mischiefs of a war: it is reasoning not the least to the purpose to urge such arguments, which if they proved any thing, would prove that England should allow Spain, for instance, to seize St. Kits, or Antego, rather than engage in war; for most assuredly, neither of those islands are worth thirty

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or forty millions sterling, besides the spilling so much blood; and it would be but a moderate war that costs so little as that sum. Away then with such visionary nonsense, which, while it aims at nothing but peace, is sure to bring on those insults that must end in war.

Every thing therefore that can arise in the variations of human affairs, may in certain circumstances be prudent motives for engaging in war: all possessions should be kept untouched; all rights inviolate; no injuries forgiven; no insults overlooked: a quick and spirited resentment should be swift on the aggressor: the stronger the desire of peace; the greater the readiness of war.

I am, &c.

LETTER

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LETTER XI.

Of the Stability of TRADE.

IF we consult the annals of past ages, we shall find, that those states, territories or kingdoms, whose power or splendor depended on trade, have universally been of short duration; they have grown speedily to great wealth and power; but been in possession of it a short time; and then speedily declined, and either became a prey to neighbours, or sunk into insignificance. There are many men in this kingdom who see nothing but the riches of trade; they want us to be a mere trading power, holding all other foundations of greatness in contempt; this very mistaken desire has led me into the subject of the present letter.

Carthage in antient history makes a great figure, but it is worthy of note, that she was utterly destroyed by a people who knew not what trade was: Tyre, Rhodes, &c. were rich states, but the

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grandeur of none was permanent. That state, which in all ancient history was of the longest duration, proportioned to the degree of its power, was Sparta, a Republic, in which all trade and even money was proscribed. Venice, Genoa, the Hanse-towns, Antwerp and Portugal, successively became very great by trade; all of them instances strongly to the purpose: the Venetians and the Genoise lost all their commerce, and fell into contempt; the triumph of the Hanse-towns was very short, and their fall equally low. A transitory gust of adverse wind blew away the commerce of Antwerp; and the kingdom of Portugal was conquered notwithstanding all her trade. Then arose the most remarkable of them all, Holland; a state that in less than seventy years from their being declared a free people (and after carrying on great wars with formidable potentates) were on the brink of ruin; and staid in the very land of their fathers, merely because shipping could not be found to waft the High and
Mighty

Mighty States to another hemisphere:— and although they at last weathered that storm, yet this power has ever since declined; and at this, while they yet continue free states, they are sunk into such a sloth and weakness, that the motion of a few battallions of French troops, and the threats of a French ambassador, are now sufficient to over-awe all their resolutions; being in reality with all their trade a very despicable power.

Thus we find, that trade has ever been infinitely precarious; the duration of the power built upon it extremely short; and in some instances so very crazy, as to be swept at once from the world by the attacks of landed enemies; witness Carthage and Portugal; and Holland within a hair's breadth of the same fate. With what reason therefore can various writers urge the example of other trading powers for our emulation; like Sir William Petty, that counting-house politician, who wanted all the people of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland to be crouded into England, to
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make it resemble Holland the nearer; that is, to make all the important interests of the state have a local dependance; so as to be totally overfet, and destroyed by a single unfortunate stroke; we owe an overgrown capital to our trade, which, in case of one day of adverse fortune, might bring on the greatest evils.

But further, most of the states that have risen high by trade have been little Republicks, or nests of men in some barren hole or neglected corner; or else single cities. Carthage, though she had great dominions, is not an exception, because she, like ourselves, made the capital of so great importance, that the loss of that was death to the very nation. Trade cannot be regularly spread over all the cities, towns and provinces of a country, it will collect in one spot, and give a mischievous importance to it. Tyre, Rhodes, Venice, Genoa, the Hanse league, Antwerp; these were all mere towns. Holland a bog, where one would scarce look for men, much less a great state. All these states
and

and cities had no other dependance than trade; surely therefore the motives on which they acted cannot be applicable to great kingdoms.

Trade has been highly beneficial to England, France, Sweden and Muscovy, but it is a very different sort of trade from what has formed the grandeur of these states, which all arose by *buying in one place to sell in another*; but the trade of great kingdoms should lie in the export of their products; manufacturing as many of them as they can; this is the only trade that is consistent with their nature: but single towns and small states have no products, and must therefore subsist by the *buying and selling* commerce.

Products are a permanent foundation of greatness, and quite independant of that swift destruction which so often overtakes mere trade. France would often have been in utter ruin had her power depended on trade; but long after her trade has been destroyed in every war, she has been rich and formidable. — No

great empire was ever founded in trade; all the four which have by turns domineered over the world, owed their inward greatness to arms, and their riches to products. The Roman empire was founded on and supported by agriculture.

For these reasons, the British nation should principally attend to products, under which head I class the productions of manufactures, as well as those of the soil; and to such a portion of naval power, as can be built on this foundation; such a share of trade will unite with, and improve her vast territory, and make her power as formidable as it is capable of attaining to. This is the great object of her politicks, which demands the utmost attention; not the trade, which Sir William Petty, and writers of that cast are ever recommending; their ideas are occupied alone with the example of Holland; and they want this great landed empire to take her lessons of policy from a people who have no land to live on.

It is not unworthy of observation, that the

the only part of the general œconomy of the British empire, in which much want of stability appears, is the system of debts and funding; this system was borrowed from our trading neighbours the Dutch; and the amazing growth of it has been principally owing to an eagerness in the protection and extent of trade.

In a word, whatever these writers may take upon themselves to assure us, still the fact remains, that nothing is more precarious than trade: there is an insecurity in every thing that depends on it, which should make all wise nations, that have an extended territory, look much higher in the commercial world, than to be the buyers and sellers, and carriers for other people. If there was an instance in history of such an employment proving the foundation of real greatness, I would not hesitate to change my opinion; and yet this is the part of trade which Sir William Petty and his followers hold up to the attention of the great kingdoms of Europe, as the only thing worth aiming at.

Respect

Respect the prosperity of the Dutch, such as it has been, I shall beg leave to remark, that the great pillars of that state are not mere trade, and carrying; but vast *possessions*, landed territories, &c. in the East Indies; and another species of product, fishing; which have done more for the Dutch by far than all their mere trading. The latter has been long in low state of decline in every nation of Europe; for they have all of late years given so much attention to the better branches of commerce, that little business is left to your mere buyers, sellers, and carriers. Sir William Temple in King Charles the Second's reign observed, that there was scarcely any trade left in Amsterdam, that paid interest enough for money to make it answer to a merchant to engage in; but the more solid business of the East, and fishing, have held them in greater account.

The most important object of Britain's attention is the increase of her land products,

ducts, her fisheries, and her manufactures; and of the last, those are most worthy protection and encouragement, which are wrought from her own products; others, such as silk, &c. depend too much on foreigners, and have rivals in countries more naturally carried to them, for her ever to make them a capital article, further than her own consumption. These articles of commerce are and ever will be of very great importance; they are by no means liable to those miserable revolutions, which overturn the mere trading states from their very foundations; and will, as far as human affairs can admit, prove firm supports of her wealth and her greatness; that both may be as lasting as the world, is the wish of,

Dear S I R,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XII.
Of POPULATION.

YOU must allow me totally to differ from you on the subject of population: your general declaration, that the power and wealth of all states are in direct proportion to the number of their people, is a position which I think cannot be admitted. But of all the divisions of politicks, none I think has been less understood than this of population. Because several countries that have been and are very powerful, and at the same time populous; and some other countries thinly peopled and weak, it is too hastily concluded, that power and population are the same thing.

The power of a kingdom or state is not in proportion to the number of people. This maxim may be illustrated by comparing various countries together. Russia had more people than France in the time of Lewis XIV. and yet what comparison
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is there between their power. Great Britain and Ireland with ten millions have all the signs of being more powerful than France with near twenty. Spain and Portugal have as many people as Great Britain and Ireland, but there is no comparison between their power. Holland has proved at certain periods a match for the greatest kingdoms. China is the most populous territory in the world, and yet was too weak for that desert Tartary; and it is much to be questioned, if England, were she a neighbour of the Chinese, would not be an over-match for the power of that vast empire; history is full of instances of unpopulous states over-running and destroying others full of people. Irruptions of barbarous nations, from desert woods and marshes, have more than once over-run the most populous kingdoms.

Neither does wealth depend on population, for if it did, nations would be rich in proportion to their numbers. The Empress of Russia has more than double the subjects of the king of Great Britain,
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and ten times as many as the States General; yet Holland is richer than that vast empire; the wealth of Britain is certainly much superior to that of France, without near equalling her in people. Poland contains as many inhabitants as England, yet what comparison is there between their wealth?

If it is said, that power depends on that degree of population which is proportioned to the extent of the country, so that there may be few acres per head of the whole people: I reply, that then Russia possesses, on comparison with several other countries, no power at all; and Holland is the most powerful country in the world; both which are equally contrary to fact. China ought to be infinite in power, and Tartary weakness itself: instead of which, the latter conquered the former. In this measure of population, Britain and France are pretty equal, but the power of the countries never; one infinitely superior in one century, the other in another.

But

But to shew how little power depends on population; examine the same country at different periods. Look at France now, and at the peace of Nimeguen, her population has diminished a sixth, but her power more than half. Holland is now as populous as in 1665, but what comparison between the force of that Republick at the two periods. Politicians tell us, that England has declined in population a seventh since the revolution, but how amazingly has she increased in power; Spain, at the death of Charles II. was less populous than in Philip II's reign by a seventh, but her power was sunk three fourths. Sweden is now more populous than under Charles the Twelfth, but is she more powerful? It would be endless to attempt to produce half the instances that prove this point.

The false idea, that nations are powerful in proportion to the numbers of their people, or as they are equally spread over the soil, has given rise to a thousand errors in politicks, and domestic œconomy.

Popu-

Population is said to be all in all, increase your people, and you need take no account of any other matter, population being the political thermometer; but such notions, when they walk from the desk of the visionary to the cabinet of the statesman, are productive of infinite mischief. In numerous countries and cases, increasing the people is a political evil.

Those who are so ready to assert, that power and wealth depend on population, should reflect how small a portion of the people in most countries contribute to either; mere population, singly considered, appears only of value in raising and recruiting armies; but I shall observe, that men for such purposes are always to be had all the world over; the number and power of armies never depending on the number of men in a country, but the degree of wealth to pay them; all history tells us this; so that the population of a country is in this view of very little consequence; since its prince, whether it is well or ill peopled; idle or industrious; will

will certainly find as many men as he can pay. The only light therefore in which it is to be viewed is WEALTH.

And here we are to remember, that the inhabitants of all countries have been ingeniously divided by political arithmeticians into two classes; one *increasing* the national stock; the other *decreasing* it. Now all additions to wealth and power; all strength results from the former; and if the population of a country lies principally in the latter, it will be poor and weak whatever the total numbers. Hence it is, that increasing population may be an evil; for all increase in this body is a great one.

But in the mere raising men, even from an industrious population, there must in different countries be a great difference; a nation may be very populous without a great ease of raising men, compared with others that are less so: manners, the state of industry, the nature of the government, the spirit of the times, and an hundred

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other circumstances, operate so strongly, that five millions of souls in one country are equal to twenty in another. From all which we may reasonably conclude, that the doctrine so often set forth, indiscriminately, that population is in all countries the grand object, is very wild and vague; wanting much examination, and many exceptions before it can reasonably be admitted.

The idea of wealth and power depending on a people being rather cramped for want of land than possessing it in plenty, is another very great error; when a country is so populous, that but few acres per head are reckoned, that country must be very small in extent; and if it is burthened by unindustrious poor, can admit of no improvement; whereas large territories are alone a matter of importance, giving much security, and being never open to such sudden overthrows, as that of Holland in 1672; and not being in want of land, have perpetual opportunities of improvement

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provement in very many instances. A small state full of people must depend on trade, for their wealth and power; this alone is a most pernicious evil; it is accepting a precarious existence; and living on the most rotten of all national dependencies.

I am, dear SIR,

Yours, very sincerely,

K 2 L E T-

LETTER XIII.

Of the BALANCE of TRADE.

THE balance of trade has for this last century been the subject of an ardent enquiry among the politicians of Britain: some of them eagerly asserting, that the nation regularly gains immense wealth by her commerce; and others averring, that the balance has been and is against us. This variety of opinions occasioned some alteration on the signs by which to judge of the balance of trade; every writer on commerce naming some sign, some mark of national wealth, which he thought the clearest proof of increase; until in time there became so many of these marks, that the consideration of them led to nothing but confusion.

After the kingdom had been for some time amused with these debates, another party arose, who discovered that the balance was affected by other matters than trade, such as payment of armies, subsidies,

dies, and the interest of debts due to foreigners; and under the influence of this idea offered new signs for judging of the national prosperity.

It may be worth while to examine into some of these marks, which have been thought of by various writers of character.

1. The quantity of shipping.
2. The rental of lands and houses.
3. The quantity of precious metals.
4. The coinage.
5. The balance of the customs.
6. The circulation of foreign coin.
7. The increase or decrease of houses.
8. The course of exchange.

All these have been named as sure signs, singly to judge of the balance of trade. This balance is not however of so much importance,

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importance, as that of the nation's transactions of whatever kind with all the world; an idea indeed which gave occasion to the course of exchange being thought of as a sign.

The quantity of shipping can merely tell the amount of navigation, but never the profit that is made by the cargoes; nor does it take into the account the payments to foreigners in other ways than those of trade.

The rental of lands and houses is an admirable sign to judge of the progress of part of the national stock, but it can never tell to what it is owing; because many improvements in agriculture are quite independent on the influx of wealth, or of the application of that money which is gained by them: suppose a man raises his rental, all to be remitted to him at Rome; rents rise, but the balance is against the kingdom in the same proportion.

The quantity of the precious metals can never shew the kingdom's wealth, because they

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they are lessened as paper credit is increased; the latter banishes the former.

The foregoing observation is equally applicable to the coinage, for this depends on the quantity of paper; and it also depends on the comparison between a free or a taxed coinage among the neighbouring nations.

The Custom-house entries are acknowledged to be unfair, nor do they take to account illicit trade, they cannot therefore give the balance even of trade; much less of all other payments.

The circulation of foreign coin can only prove an advantageous commerce with that nation from whom we receive it; but does it tell us the guineas that go abroad on the other hand.

The increase or decrease of houses depend on twenty other reasons than national increase of wealth; they depend on the mode and fashion of building; they may increase, and yet the kingdom grow poorer: or decrease from the very reason of its growing richer; houses being built

large and commodious, and in general by more among the wealthy, and fewer among the poor. But the fact in this point shews plainly, that this rule is false, because all the world knows that the wealth of England has increased greatly while the number of houses has decreased.

The course of exchange is as incomplete as any of the rest; it takes no notice of all the most profitable branches of commerce carried on by the kingdom; and money sent over to be invested in our funds affects it as much as the like sum gained by the nation in commerce, tho' most assuredly the one is poverty, the other riches.

We therefore see, that the fixing any permanent sign whereby to judge of the nation's general balance is a vain idea; no one mark will explain it; I do not think the wisdom of the acutest politician will ever arrive at the point of gaining it. We must look therefore for other foundations whereon to raise a general idea; not for any single mark which can be reduced to whole numbers, to represent
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the prosperity of the kingdom as 20, or a 100, but for an aggregate of signs, which when combined are strong indications of it.

To ascertain the fact of a kingdom being prosperous, and a gainer by her dealings with all the world, we must take a view of the three great supports of every nation, agriculture, manufacture and commerce; if the culture of the earth is in general on the improving hand; if manufactures are not at a stand, or few or no artizans starving for want of work; if trade is well upon the whole; these are three signs of great importance; none of them to be exactly laid down on paper, but while they have such a measure of success, that a decline can no where be *clearly* seen, they may safely be held as strong marks of national health.

The general ease and happiness of the ranks of society demand the next view; if general wealth abounds — if expences increase — if a more comfortable way of living is diffused — if riches and elegance
are

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are seen in buildings, furniture, equipages, dress, diet and amusements — if, in a word, the body of the people seem wealthy and at their ease, there can be little doubt left, but that the nation gains by the whole account of her transactions with all the world.

Publick works come next, — If those undertakings which are executed at the expence of the publick are carried on with spirit, such as navigations, great roads, bridges, causeways, hospitals, magazines, fortifications, and ships and artillery may be added; if an active spirit is shewn in these things, surely they are in a free country strong marks of national vigour: and if the publick transactions in money, taxes, credit, &c. are all sound and productive, there can be little doubt of the publick wealth.

All these are signs of a favourable GENERAL BALANCE which can scarcely be mistaken, and are an hundred times more important than Custom-house entries, exchange, shipping, houses, or coinage;
for

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for if every one of these spoke a declining state, I should give them little credit, while the above great aggregate of prosperous signs spoke a different language.

And here it may not be improper to observe, that the state of England has many times been declared in a miserable sinking condition, from the direct evidence of the course of exchange, the mint, and the quantity of money, at the very time that she has in the eyes of all Europe been the object of envy, for that unfulfilled and undoubted prosperity which she clearly enjoyed.

If I was to venture to name any mark of a favourable balance stronger than all others, I should fix on the GENERAL RISE OF PRICES: not of any possession or commodity separately taken, but the aggregate of all. Land, houses, furniture, manufactures, the works of artificians, labour, provisions, &c. I think, if this circumstance is considered, it will nearly include most others. It is affected by the balance of receipts and

and payments of whatever kind, as that balance regulates the quantity of money, and also by the amount of paper credit, which has the same consequence, and is alike the child of *real* wealth:—whatever adds to the national stock in wealth sinks the value of money, and raises prices. All that general ease, happiness and wealth diffused thro' a kingdom, which gives it the marks of being flourishing and formidable; all these are strongly shewn in a rise of prices. Thus nothing can be so ridiculous, as the complaints which ignorant writers have of late years been making on the *dearths* of *every thing*; that circumstance being of all others the most striking proof of great prosperity.

On the contrary, take a view of those countries where all commodities are cheap, where land is of little value, labour low, and provisions to be had for a trifle; such countries are throughout the whole world in the lowest predicament of wealth,
down

down even to such as are composed of mere barbarians.

Upon the same principles we may determine the mark of decline in a state to be; when from a general dearth, all prices sink, and a country, which was once very expensive to live in, becomes cheap, from the low price of all commodities: such a fall would to me be the clearest proof in the world, that a country was sinking apace; and yet it is the precise situation which so many writers so much want to see in England: but therein they shew their utter ignorance.

LETTER

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L E T T E R XIV.

Of AGRICULTURE.

THERE are few instances more striking, of the extremes into which mankind eternally run, than the sentiments at various times entertained of agriculture: in one age it is quite in neglect; totally left to the most ignoble hands, unthought of and unattended to by gentlemen and the great. In another highly honoured, practised by all ranks, the subject of numerous writings, and esteemed the principal support of the power of nations.

The present age seems peculiarly that of agriculture; for many nations of Europe, having found their attempts to become great by trade ill founded and imaginary, have set about the culture of their lands with unabated ardor, in hopes of finding all wealth and greatness springing up from the plough.

Agri-

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Agriculture must be considered in two lights; first, as the plain means of feeding the people; and secondly, as a means of enriching them, by furnishing productions for trade. — In the first, most nations seem pretty much on a par; authors who write on the several practices of the art, use a stile as if they believed the fate of kingdoms depended on improvements in husbandry; and as if nations who produced no books, had not cultivation enough to keep them from starving. But this is giving an importance to the art which it never possessed, nor will all such writings ever be powerful enough to render this art a science. The very existence of a people proves that they have agriculture; there are many very populous countries, in whom we may be certain the people are well fed, although we know nothing of their husbandry. Do we, with all our books on that art, any more than such nations? We are fed, and so are they; and this is the essential point
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ted every thing but agriculture, which cannot well be changed in essentials in any country.

All nations have depended on the soil for their support in food — all have succeeded — nations must be fed, or they would no longer be nations — hence therefore we may determine, that agriculture has always been nearly the same, that is, sufficient to feed the inhabitants of a country; and we know that wheat, barley, rice, &c. were antiently used as they are at present, and that a cow or a horse four thousand years ago eat hay as well as now; and if we consider the system of watering their lands among the antient Persians, we shall have no reason to suppose them worse farmers than those now living on the banks of the Thames.

To those who are fond of husbandry as an employment, or an amusement, it certainly would be curious and entertaining to meet with accounts of all the particulars of the practices in former ages; but these are not what I am considering; but
only

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only the great distinctions of management, which I conceive to have been very few; being in the main, climate considered, the same in all ages, and in all countries.

I have gone into this slight disquisition to shew, that the writers who make the practices in husbandry of so much importance, seem to take but a narrow view of human affairs; for if we consider, that the end with all nations is being fed, and that all succeed in it pretty much alike, we shall not be so eager to busy ourselves (further than in the way of amusement) with cabbages and carrots; lucerne and clover; drilling or broadcast; all ending in the same effect, and with much less consequence than is imagined.

In that part of agriculture which is made the grounds of trade, there are indeed greater variations, though not so considerable as its authors would have us believe: where mines do not abound this is throughout the world the sole means of commerce; the only method

of gaining money, or foreign commodities; it is the principal article even in manufactures, and one without which they could not exist. This part of husbandry yields, of all other exertions of industry, the greatest products and riches. The most famous articles of culture in the world, which have not the necessary part of food for their object, are sugar—tea—coffee — spices — cocoa — cochineal — pear-tree — indigo — mulberry-trees — cotton — fruits — hemp — flax — roots for dyeing — timber, &c. The most considerable part of the commerce of the world is carried on in these commodities; wool and leather are not included, though of vast importance, because the principal use of the cattle that produce them is food.

Here opens the view of the most important part of agriculture; the first object, which however always comes of course, is to occupy a part of the lands of the territory in raising food for the inhabitants; and then to be as assiduous as possible,

possible, in richly cultivating all the remainder for the production of such commodities as will prove most advantageous in commerce; which cultivation should be the grand dependance of the nation for riches and foreign commodities; she should manufacture as many, and as much as she can, but never make it a matter of equal importance with the original production; and as to trade, the great views of a nation should never be those of dependance on it; but on the contrary, to use it subordinately to this point of cultivation; that is, as it is used by England, France, and the kingdoms of the North, but not the buying and selling traffic of the Dutch. A great national dependance on such mere trade, and on mere manufacturing, I have already proved to be extremely dangerous in respect of stability; that sort of industry is for ever taking strange flights from one country to another; and has a strong tendency to ruin, even from success itself, for the riches thus gained being enormous for the short time in which they

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they are produced, like all hasty growths, have a quick decline; that moderation and frugality which reared the edifice, changing to luxury at once destroys it. But on the contrary, no such quick transitions are found in those countries that make trade and manufacture subordinate to agriculture: the greatest, wisest, richest, and most durable empire now in the world, or that ever was in it, possesses immense trade and manufactures, but all subservient to agriculture; insomuch that with all their commerce, the Chinese, comparatively speaking, have hardly a ship.

The laws and policy of a kingdom should therefore be strongly directed to the highest possible improvement of all lands not occupied for food: and to the application of them to the production of such commodities as best answer in their value: the climate of this kingdom will not do for tea, sugar, spices, coffee, &c. she therefore wisely takes from her colonies all they can produce, but it would yield

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yield hemp, flax, timber, and dyeing roots, for which we pay foreigners immense sums; they are almost as necessary to us as bread; we must have them at whatever expence; and if we multiply them ever so much, there is no danger of our labour being lost, as they are marketable commodities throughout the world.

With this idea let us consider, if the soil of these three kingdoms is advanced to the value; and applied to the uses it might be. England, Scotland and Ireland, contain ninety millions of acres, of which thirty-five millions are uncultivated, or in a waste state, tho' a few sheep or rabbits may pasture on some of it. The writers of husbandry (with a view to national importance) have strangely mistaken their end in turning their discourse to farmers, who never will give sixpennyworth of attention to them, and instructing them in matters whereof they are themselves much better judges. On the contrary, their endeavours should have been used to bring on an improvement of the soils

reputed waste; *there* the effect of writings and numerous publications might prove advantageous to the national interests, and by strong and urgent repetitions, might bring on a change of conduct, either in landlords or the legislature, highly beneficial to the kingdom.

There cannot be a greater disgrace to the policy of a nation, than to give such unremitting attention, exert so much vigilance, and expend great sums, in promoting manufactures for foreign commerce; and at the same time not spend one shilling, pass one law, or give the least attention to the improvement of thirty-five millions of acres, which might almost double her wealth and power. This is a degree of neglect only to be ascribed to her councils listening to nobody but merchants, who will never advise any thing that does not make money flow into their own pockets.

A very small part of these waste soils would produce all the hemp, flax and timber, which Britain annually imports from
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the Baltic: all the madder and other dyes bought of the Dutch; besides various other commodities, which, if produced in quantities greater than the home consumption, might be sold to vast profit; of these hemp and flax are striking instances.

Corn, I am sensible, on so large a scale of improvement, must be introduced, as well as the grass, roots, &c. which are usual in common husbandry; for the products which we buy of foreigners, or could sell to them, would occupy but a small part of our wastes. But then these crops should be included with a mere view to exportation; and no otherwise with design of population, than would naturally increase in the undertaking and be maintained by it. Such a population would be an independant one, and not burthensome to the kingdom; but if the rage of manufacturing spread so much, as to make all these improvements subservient to that, and *mere* trading; to raise corn with a view to consume it at home, and make bread cheap to manufacturers, and to plant new
fabricks

fabricks on the new lands, it would only have the effect which already threatens the welfare of Britain—that of increasing your population to such a degree, that they must depend on the foreign sale of manufactures or starve; and this foreign sale is so uncertain and precarious, that a nation totters when such is its principal support.

The increase of agriculture therefore, of which I speak here, should be with a mere view to gain wealth that is permanent, by supplying our own consumption, an object ever of the highest importance; and to increase the trade of exported raw commodities, which is ever more certain than that of manufactures.

The grand object of a country, in such a situation, should be the keeping off a *decline* as long as possible, and avoiding those means of wealth and power, which, from the rapidity of their effects, are suspicious in durability; such is the greatness which has ever resulted from *foreign* commerce, and the sale of manufactures
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to foreigners; if the waste lands of a country were made only a means of setting up fresh fabricks for foreign trade, the consequence would be filling those provinces with people for a time, and leaving them all in poverty, burthened with a numerous miserable poor, and the nation in a worse condition, than if they had never been set up: England has not felt this effect in her present fabricks, because the demand from America *increased* as that in Europe fell; but had not her colonies supplied the place of her old demand, she would at this day have had reason to curse her manufactures. But as the American demand, tho' not sunk, is at a stand, from the great rise of manufactures among themselves, it would be infinitely impolitic to give any encouragement to new additions, which must inevitably be but transitory flights, just sufficient to breed a race of people, and then leave them starving.

For all which reasons, I am for introducing
to

ducing agriculture alone into the waste lands, and to employ it as much as possible for exportation alone, without any view to population; which is never an object, unless you have the clearest prospect of maintaining the people you breed: now that increase, which must attend an increase of cultivation, will be under a *certainty* of support from their industry; and will consequently add to the wealth and power of their country, without dangerously burthening it.

All the products gained from these lands that are articles of food, saving the mere amount consumed by the people who raise them, should be exported; this is a material point; the legislature, while corn was then on the increase, should take especial care to have it all sent away; by which means the kingdom gains wealth; whereas if it was kept at home, it could only have the effect of increasing that miserable population, which would prove pernicious to the kingdom; but which so many

many ignorant writers are ever assuring the world is the greatest riches a nation can possess.

But what an accession of wealth and power would accrue from the culture of thirty-five millions of acres in hemp, flax, timber, madder, woad, &c. and corn for exportation, from the industrious, active, hardy, and vigorous people bred by such cultivation; not the momentary progeny of manufactures, rich this age, and beggars the next, but permanently industrious, never wealthy, but always independant of the kingdom's charity; giving her far more than they can ever receive; the products of whose industry will for ever sell and prove a sure dependance. Such an increase would carry the power of Britain to the highest pitch, and also that wealth, of which she would never fear the losing.

Much has been written to very little purpose, on the bounty given by Britain for the exportation of corn—I apprehend this

this matter has been much mistaken; if the effect has been merely sinking the price of wheat, as its injudicious defenders alledge, I should readily condemn it, for lowering the prices of provisions is one of the most pernicious events that can happen: on the contrary, it is abused for having raised those prices, which is an effect for which it ought highly to be praised: but the truth is, that both parties, through prejudice, write as if they knew nothing at all of the matter. The bounty, like all bounties on exportation, has the effect of making the commodity dearer at home; but that effect is more than counteracted by the prevention of those years of very low prices, which formerly came almost periodically on every good crop; and which were attended with infinite mischief to the whole nation. It has therefore been a very sensible measure, and one that has contributed not a little to raise the agriculture of England, without any prejudice to either manufactures or commerce.

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I shall forbear enlarging further on these points, as in my next I propose examining into what constitutes the harmony of them all; that is, of agriculture, arts, manufactures, commerce and population. Being in the mean time,

&c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XV.

Of harmonizing Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, and Population.

THE great business of the Statesman, is to *harmonize agriculture, manufactures, and commerce*; an assertion very easily hazarded, and which nobody will contradict; but what is harmonizing them? Is it to give them minutely the same degree of attention? Is it to give them an attention proportioned to their respective importance? Is it to conduct them with a view to improvements in wealth or population? Lastly, if one must at any time be preferred, which is it, consistent with this harmony? The treatises of the politicians are far enough from answering these queries, indeed they involve almost all the causes and consequences of national conduct; scarcely any thing can be planned or executed without in some way or other affecting these great interests. I shall by

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no means pretend, in the compass of a letter, fully to examine subjects of so great consequence; but a few great strokes in domestick policy require little further elucidation than former writers seem to have entered into; who in general seem to have been so strongly prejudiced in favour of one or other of the great pillars of the state, that they can see no advantages in the others, and will allow nothing in their favour.

I shall begin with advancing an axiom, which will I apprehend be found true; *that whatever tends most powerfully to keep a country rather on the improving hand, tho' slowly, and is the best adapted to prevent a decline in general, prosperity is the most important object of domestic œconomy.* The acquisition of great riches, or power, or population, is not an essential point, for a nation may be perfectly happy without either; but the being ever slowly improving is of infinite consequence, because private happiness declines, when the general prosperity is retrograde in its motion.

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Mankind have in all ages been so dazzled with the glare of great wealth, that they have ever set a much higher value on it than sound politicks will admit: the sudden influx of great riches observed in all states that have experienced it, whether from mines, trade, manufactures, or monopolies, has ever brought with it an improvement of short duration; it is the nature of riches to be in every thing transitory.

But what are the advantages of wealth and great power, or, I will add, of great populousness? Were not the Romans as happy a people in the time of Cincinnatus as in that of Lucullus? And surely the English in Elizabeth's reign were as happy as in George III.? Neither nation in the former age possessed those various enjoyments conferred by luxury, nor had any idea of all that elegance and splendor which shone forth in the latter; but were they therefore the happier? The people that feasted on an apple, without having ever tasted or heard of a nectarine, enjoy-

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ed it as much as another could the superior fruit. Those who in former ages made their visits on foot or in a cart, were just as satisfied as the moderns in their coaches. Luxury therefore, that is modern refinement, and enjoyment, if you please to call it so, has not conferred any more real pleasure or happiness than our ancestors enjoyed without it. Nature has wisely ordained, that the greatest pleasures, of which the senses are capable (and it is the senses to which luxury in general speaks) should be independant of wealth and refinement. This holds universally; a gentleman in Edward the Third's time enjoyed a fine woman upon a bed of the coarsest wool, with as much zest, as the pamper'd modern could on the softest linen. A draught of cyder or perry might be full as inviting as a bottle of Champaign, and the fatted calf was fed on with all the goût now bestowed on the ree or the ortolan. Every age has its enjoyments, but the momentum of the whole is just as great in one as in the other. It is precise-

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ly the same with intellectual pleasures, they are all comparative; an age might be as happy in enjoying the nonsense of Bunjan; as another in tasting the strains of Milton. It may be said the number of our enjoyments is increased; but let it not be forgotten, that they were unknown to our ancestors, the *absence* of them therefore was no *want*: but with our enjoyments we have also had wants that can never be satisfied; together with that unhappy balance which luxury ever leaves on the side of desire, but never on that of possession.

Every age therefore is full of people, whose happiness does not at all depend on publick wealth; and as to power in general, the less an *independant* nation has of it the better; for it scarcely ever fails, if considerable, of hurrying them into great mischiefs. They may be perfectly at their ease, contented and happy (at least as much so as their constitution of government will allow, which is a matter quite foreign to the present subject) whatever the result of the aggregate of agriculture, manufactures,

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factures, commerce and population. The private happiness of individuals by no means depends on what a statesman calls success in these great pillars of wealth and power.

Of what consequence to individuals, (provided the kingdom is not on a decline, of which more hereafter) whether agriculture yields a profit of ten or twenty millions; whether manufactures work up twenty or fifty millions for foreign sale; whether the profit of commerce be five or fifteen millions; whether the king has ten or twenty millions of subjects: in all these points the comparative happiness of different ages is precisely the same.

But if a decline comes the case is altered, and, whatever the previous degree of prosperity, individuals will feel the effects. If the agriculture of the kingdom does not cultivate to as great an amount as formerly; if manufactures once sold to a greater value; if the profit of commerce was greater in these cases, numbers of people, formerly industrious, must be idle,

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which is ten thousand times worse than if they had never been born; a general languor will sensibly spread itself, enjoyments will decrease, and become more difficult, which is laying the axe to the very root of publick happiness: not experiencing an enjoyment which a people never heard of can be no want; but once possessing and then losing, is a very different affair.

From this we may venture to determine, that the great ends of agriculture, arts, manufactures, commerce and population, is the *stability* of that degree of prosperity enjoyed by a people: this *stability*, is of far more consequence than an *increase*: and yet the latter is what all the hot-headed politicks of modern times are busied most about: it is this system that has been so lavishly executed in the case of our own country, to carry our manufactures, commerce, wealth, and population to the highest pitch, and by such means, and with such celerity, that it is absolutely and physically impossible to be permanent — and which has laid us open to a decline,

cline, which different conduct might have been kept off for many ages: I am not predicting the fall of Britain in this or that year; I think her prosperity may grow for these hundred years; but let the day come when it will, it will have been accelerated at least five centuries, from a violent eagerness to be rich.

How are we so to harmonize agriculture, manufactures, commerce and population, as to make them most beneficial to the collective interests of the state? This I think is the question, and it appears clearly enough from these disquisitions, that the national good requires that conduct which will bring, not the greatest and quickest degree of what is commonly called prosperity, but the greatest durability of the present advantages enjoyed by a people: but remember that I keep clear in this enquiry of the revolutions of the constitution, because good government is a blessing, greater than that of all others; but we very well know, that great riches are better

formed to destroy than improve a constitution.

Here then the just conduct is explained ; give whatever encouragement you please to agriculture, you will never thereby make the kingdom too rich ; nor occasion too quick a rise ; and all the population you create is independant on the changes of trade or foreign affairs, and can in no respect prove burthensome to the community. Confine manufactures to the satisfying that consumption which is certain, which is your own ; but the moment you become manufacturers of foreign commodities, and for foreign markets, you lay the foundations of that quick rise and wealth, which is sure soon to come tumbling down. Trade should grow out of agriculture and manufactures, and be regulated by them ; it will then never become so great and insecure as that of Holland has proved. Population depends on the three preceding ; the people bred by such regulated interests, will be in proportion to their *certain* employment ; industry

dustry can never decline, nor population be burthensome.—No schemes or plans of conduct should be adopted for increasing the people, which are always pernicious ; that increase should grow out of their employment naturally and regularly : nothing but the height of folly could produce the idea of forcing these matters by naturalization bills ; no country should have more people than is found in it : because more not being found, is proof sufficient that the number is proportioned to the food, wealth, industry, and other circumstances. When the population of a country declines, it ought to decline, and bringing over from foreigners only accelerates the evil ; nothing can possibly increase it but an increase of industry ; but while that is *falling*, to think of making population *rise*, is to fight against nature.

The true *harmony* is to make agriculture flourishing enough to support your own people : to make manufactures subservient to the demand of your own people :

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ple: and commerce proportioned to agriculture and manufactures: these, so provided, population to be left to itself.

A conduct very contrary to this has been the fashion of late years throughout all Europe; and the quick progress of the power of England has been chiefly owing to a different system: this forms no sound reason against the preceding ideas; for I have admitted, that the plan here laid down is not formed for a quick progress in power, but for a durability of prosperity. As the practice of the age is so very different, it will not be improper to enquire into the probable consequences on the affairs of Great Britain.

We have attained to an amazing height of wealth and power, and with it have burthened the kingdom with a population much greater than we should know what to do with, in case of a reverse of fortune; and we have not only run in debt to an amazing degree, but also set an example of profusion to all future administrations, which will in all probability have most speedy

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speedy and wonderful effects in increasing such incumbrances; which, however rich the kingdom is, must undoubtedly end in Bankruptcy: I have in a former letter shewed, that the kingdom may support this debt vastly increased, and even rise like a phoenix out of the ruins of it: no one can say that this is not possible, but at the same time it depends on a fortunate conjuncture, and various advantages centering in one point. So that there is no reason to wish for the experiment.

Whatever may be the event, the plain fact is, that the great system of trade and manufacture have carried the kingdom to a height, in which they cannot probably support it; or, in one word, have rendered our state *great*, but extremely *precarious*. And this is so strongly the case, that the nation has perhaps, of all others in the universe, the least reason to congratulate herself on her sudden rise to such boundless power.

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For it is not the possession of great riches and formidable power that constitute the *real* prosperity of this kingdom; but on the contrary, the mere durability of her prosperity; and it would not be a difficult task to prove, that this durability lessens almost in proportion to the magnitude of the wealth and power. We have had great success in arms, but unfortunately, our most brilliant wars (to reason for a moment on the principles of those whose doctrines I am at present opposing) are merely the means of exhausting us, but never those of repairing or adding to our strength.

If trade and manufacture are made our grand supports, we are inconsistent, if we do not push our advantages by enlarging both; or at least of making such acquisitions, as shall repay us some of that immense waste of wealth which achieved the conquest. On the contrary, we conquer at the expence of hundreds of millions, only to shew our generosity in giving back to our enemies. I need not ob-

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serve, that this has ever been the fatality of this country, and is a strong proof, of how little avail our riches and our power are, if they only enable us to make conquests, which we are necessitated to restore. I say necessitated; it is our constitution, that a pack of rascals, who have been idle thro' a war, should riggle themselves into power, and to preserve it patch up our peace; this has been the case ever since king William's reign; and I shall venture to prophecy, that it ever will be the case, till we have a king on the throne, who enters as much into the spirit of a war as that prince did.

For what should we be so eager to gain immense wealth and power, which, from their quick rise and magnitude, cannot be permanent? All that Britain can fairly assert to have gained by them, has been the entertainment during the period of a war, of half a score extraordinary Gazettees: this is the real fact; and every Gazettee, at a moderate computation, adding five millions sterling to her national debt.

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debt. If these effects of her greatness are more desirable than that more modest state, but durability of national advantages, which I have mentioned as the effect of a very different conduct — of harmonizing agriculture, manufactures, commerce and population; I must confess myself utterly mistaken.

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LETTER XVI.

Of the present War between the RUSSIANS and the TURKS, and its Consequences relative to the Interests of ENGLAND.

IN a former letter, I gave you my opinion on the idea entertained by some modern politicians, that the Russian empire bid fair for attaining universal monarchy; and expressed myself of different sentiments, from the immensity and great difference of the countries she would probably first master; since I wrote that letter, I have seen a manuscript relation, of a plan for improving the vast dominions of the Russians, which it is affirmed, I know not how truly, has been debated in the councils of her imperial majesty; and some edicts since issued, that shew an approbation of it; and give some reasons to suppose when a peace happens, that it will be more considered.

The principal proposition is, to draw all the inhabitants from the northern and eastern parts of the empire, and plant them

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them in the southern provinces, which extend from Poland to the Euxine and Caspian seas; to people fully the tract to the south-west of Petersburg and Moscow, particularly the Ukraine, Little and Crim Tartary, and all the provinces on the two seas, to unite them with such conquests as may be made from the Turks. Leaving all Siberia, the Tartarian and northern tracts, so many absolute deserts.

It is asserted, that the empress has twenty millions of subjects, but is unable to draw from them a force proportioned, by reason of their being scattered over such immense countries.

The idea is as bold a one as could be conceived, for the southern tracts of the empire are well known to consist of as fertile tracts of land as any in Europe; all the productions of agriculture that are exported from Russia, particularly hemp and flax, being the produce of the Ukraine; the southern tracts of the Don and the Wolga, are a moist, rich soil; those on the Euxine and Caspian seas, some

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some of them dryer and more hilly, but wonderfully adapted to cultivation; and the provinces now conquered from the Turks, and which it is not doubted but the empress will retain, having caused the oaths of allegiance to be administered to all the inhabitants, as fast as she conquered them. All these provinces are some of the richest and most fruitful in Europe; and if they were peopled on this, or any plan, would form an empire much more powerful than the Russian is at present.

But the situation of this tract of country is, if any thing, more important than the richness of the soil. It preserves the communication with the Baltic, including the province of Livonia, &c. and the city of St. Petersburg, with all the tract between them and the Euxine, which borders on Poland, Lithuania, and Turkey. Thus the great strength of the empire would be concentrated in that part, where attacks could alone be apprehended, where it might be used with the greatest probability of making acquisitions of importance,

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with the vast advantage of being ready for such wars, without desarts, of a thousand miles to penetrate, which has always hitherto been the case.

But relative to future operations against the Turks, the importance of these southern tracts being filled with people, and cultivated is immense; the greatest acquisitions which the Russians can look to, even in their boldest successes, are the European provinces of the Turkish empire. This acquisition indeed might move the jealousy of the German potentates to so great a degree, as to render it next to impossible to be made; but nevertheless, the views towards it may remain the same, and the consequences of it debated.

Such an acquisition, while the southern provinces of the Russian empire remain desarts, would be comparatively of small consequence; for while the immense tracts between Mosco and the Niefter are wastes, the more southern conquests would be as it were cut off from the main body of the empire, and at such a distance, that all idea of anti-
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quity and compactness would be destroyed: whereas if the vast desarts of Siberia, and the northern tracts of the empire were neglected, and these more valuable provinces peopled, the whole weight and force of the empire would bear immediately upon Turkey, and readily unite the conquests with the original.

The great object would be to extend the empire undivided to the Mediterranean sea; so as to possess in one continued tract of cultivated country, all the provinces that bordered on that sea, and extended to the Euxine, Caspian, and Baltic, which would certainly comprehend a tract situated in the most advantageous manner for wealth and power, that can possibly be imagined.

These it must be confessed are vast plans of greatness; but they do not seem to be impossible, or even improbable. There is in the Turkish provinces in Europe, a principle of insecurity that has never been changed; it is the bulk of the inhabitants being Greeks, the remains of the antient

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Greek empire of the East, which was overthrown by the Turks under Mahomet the Second; a governing people that do not mix and become one with the people governed, must ever be insecure. Montesquieu has illustrated this maxim by many instances much to the purpose.

The Greeks throughout the Turkish European provinces are very numerous, miserably oppressed by the Turks, different from them in language, manners and religion; of the Greek church, whereof the sovereigns of Russia are the head; and to whom, since Peter the Great's time, they have constantly turned their eyes for support. A specimen of this has been seen in the quick and active submission of the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia to the Russians, and their flocking in crowds with the greatest haste, to swear allegiance to the empress as their sovereign. The Greeks of the Morea were likewise the same, and shewed the same eagerness to take arms, the moment they

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they were countenanced by a foreign power.

This is a circumstance incredibly favourable to the Russians, they have the advantages of fighting in a country where every peasant is a friend; and whatever acquisitions they make, will be of a people who wish to be their subjects: such acquisitions are in their nature secure, and not liable to those revolutions, which are pretty sure to happen, when all the power that is used is founded in force alone. Acquisitions under such circumstances are infinitely desirable to Russia, as their situation brings them nearer to the Mediterranean, and gives them the full command of the Black Sea.

Relative to future and greater acquisitions, which it is highly probable the present war will bring them, they will doubtless push for Constantinople; the fate of that capital, while two victorious Russian armies press them hard, and gain the point, which they never were able to gain before in any of their former wars,

that of wintering in Turkey, every one must allow is extremely precarious.

Here it is exclaimed by some, that vast empires are not so easily overturned — that a successful campaign or two may make a great noise in the world, without its following that a nation is to be overturned — that the events of war are at best uncertain — and altho' the Russians are masters to the Danube, yet they have much to do before they can get to Constantinople.

This argument is very plausible, but it does not therefore include all the circumstances perfectly peculiar to the present conjuncture, and which make it literally an exception to all others. For it should be considered, that the Russians, by a train of uncommon success, and many victories, have not only depressed the spirits of the Turk beyond all example, but have absolutely conquered Moldavia, Wallachia, Bessarabia, all Little Tartary, and the Crimea, most of the tract between the Euxine and Caspian seas, comprehend-

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ing the Georgia's, and have wintered in Ifflis, the capital of the kingdom. They have further been long employed at Azoff, in fitting out a very formidable fleet for the attack of Constantinople—their navy in the Archipelago is clearly master of that sea, and will attack the Dardanelles at the same time: while these expeditions are in motion, the grand Russian army will march to Adrianople, and that in Georgia attack the Turkish provinces on that side; and at the same time that these various plans are in action, the Turk has upon his hands the rebellions of the Greeks, and that of Egypt; if all these circumstances are considered, it will not appear at all romantic to suppose, that greater success in this war must attend the Russians than in any former; and that the Turks, from the time of Bajazet to the present, never had so severe a storm to weather.

The probable event is clearly the destruction of the Turkish power in Europe, as far at least as the circumstances hither-

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to mentioned prognosticate; but if the German powers unite, in order to prevent such a vast accession to the Russians, then the turn of affairs cannot be conjectured, but they would probably terminate very differently. European Turkey would be a vast addition to the Muscovite power; but I do not think it would pave the way by any means to universal empire. The grand seignior driven into Asia, and probably at peace, or more likely a truce with Russia, would be at leisure to destroy the rebels of Egypt, and unite all the power of his Asiatic territories. When he was somewhat recovered, the war would again break out with Russia; for we may be certain, that the Turks would never leave Europe without infinite contention to return, and endless wars; nor could the Russians well think of pushing their conquests far upon the Turks in Asia, from the distance and vast extent of those provinces, which would involve them in greater mischiefs than the power of their enemies. Thus the acquisition of European

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pean Turkey would bring with it the attendance of a perpetual war, in which great success would rouse all Persia and Arabia to arms, and certainly excite such a jealousy in the European potentates, as to lay the foundation of a storm too general for the power of the Russians to adventure.

The acquisition therefore with a view to universal monarchy would undoubtedly fail of its end; but if undertaken and pursued upon more moderate principles, with a view to enlarge the wealth and trade of the empire, rather than making it a mere step to further conquests, it would then prove of infinite importance, and be the means of diffusing commerce, manufactures, riches, and population over all those southern provinces; the consequence of which I have already explained. All the products of these fertile tracts would be conveyed by water directly to Constantinople with the utmost facility; all the hemp and flax, which now take such a vast circuit to get to Petersburg, would have

have a ready water carriage to the Mediterranean; add to this, that European Turkey produces numerous very valuable commodities, which, with such industry as the Ruffians have exhibited since the time of the great Peter, would alone open a trade in their ports, which they have been far enough from possessing since the dominion of the Turks. The connection of the three seas, the Mediterranean, the Euxine, and the Caspian, with the possession of the rich provinces adjacent, would open a trade in those regions, which would probably draw all the riches of Persia to it.

These circumstances could not fail enlarging in a very great degree the commerce of the Ruffian empire; and they would probably increase their naval power in proportion. Here comes the question; Where lies the interest of England in such revolutions?

In whatever light we view these supposed conquests, I do not see any reason to dread the power of Ruffia by sea, from thence
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equalling that of England. They might gain immense wealth by their sale of products, and add much to their shipping; without such a degree of naval power being the consequence. The maritime strength of Holland and England did not arise from the sale of products, but the one from being for an age the carriers of the whole world; and the other from carrying on great commerce in every quarter of the globe, and having the sole supply of the most advantageous colonies the world ever knew. The greatest empires upon earth, whose riches and products are immense, do not therefore possess naval power, which depends on a union of circumstances very different from, and almost incompatible with great power by land. To whatever pitch of greatness the Ruffians may arise, it will undoubtedly be by land, not sea. And considering our alliance, I may say natural alliance with that empire, we have great reason to expect advantages, rather than evils, from their succeeding the Turks in Europe,
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who have so long, in the way of commerce, been such fast friends to the French, and, occasionally so, in arms.

What may happen in a distant period is very difficult to conjecture, and is very little to the purpose. The naval power of England will fall into the lowest decay of itself, without the superior power of any nation being able to hasten it, when a train of miserable politicks has driven the Americans before their time to independency, the trade of this country will sink, and with it that naval power which was created by it. When such a period arrives, it will matter very little to this nation, whether the Russians have an hundred or a thousand sail of the line; but as to their being formidable to us while we preserve the power we possess at present, it is a vain idea.

It should be remembered, that when the Russian empire has enlarged her dominions by the acquisition of Turkey in Europe, she will then have no neighbour from whom to conquer, but such as differ from

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from her in every particular, and that can keep nations distinct: the Persians are too powerful to fear her. Germany is the bulwark of Europe, and united is beyond comparison more powerful than ever Russia will be; Poland is a vast country, inhabited by a people who abhor the Russians; and who, by long wars, will acquire an artificial strength denied by her constitution; besides, a difference of manners, language and religion forbids the idea. That empire has therefore, in her present war against the Turks, far more numerous advantages than she could ever hope for, in a future attempt at becoming still greater. Besides, such an attempt would draw on her an alliance of foes, sufficient to overturn the power of so extensive a territory from its foundations.

LETTER

L E T T E R XVII.
Of PARTIES in ENGLAND.

OF all the governments in Europe, none has been marked by such a variety of parties as that of England. I shall not attempt a regular delineation of all that have by turns honoured and disgraced our country, or enter into an enquiry after their respective conduct, their views, merits and success. These in general are pretty well known; but I shall offer you a few remarks on that very remarkable change in our constitution, for such I esteem it, which took place on the extinction of all our regular parties.

From the time of the civil wars, which gave rise to innumerable political sects, we may date the existence of those two grand parties, which were at different times distinguished by different appellations, but most commonly known under those of *Whig* and *Tory*: the most material doctrine of one was, to exalt the Crown to the
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possession of all those prerogatives at which Charles the First aimed: that of the other, to limit the power of the Crown as much as possible, until prerogative was so much reduced, that the nation should be in fact the not in form a Republick. The Tories were above all other things fast friends to the House of Stewart: the Whigs fast friends to Liberty alone; which, on the Revolution, naturally threw them eagerly into the arms of the House of Hanover.

From hence it is very easy to see, that the Whigs were the true friends of their country, and deserved far better of their country than the Tories, whose principal end was ever to enslave it. Now the use of parties clearly appears in this, the existence of the tenets of the Tories did not depend on that sect; for all the friends, followers, and dependants of the Court were such in office and inclination, and regal authority in this kingdom has ever had a constant tendency towards absolute power; first from open force, and then from secret influence. The use even of
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the Tory party, therefore, was the giving rise to the Whigs; were it only for occasioning the being of the latter party, the use of parties in general would be clearly decided.

One set of men in the kingdom, being known to set their hearts on measures mischievous to liberty, gives rise to a counter-set, who prevents and counteracts their evil intentions, and thereby do their country signal service. The constant tenour of our history shews us, that the Whigs have on more than one occasion been true and steady friends to their country, and its constitution; and in nothing more than in their regular opposition to the Tories, who were seldom free from machinating mischief.

A long series of events, particularly the continued success of the Whigs, in retaining the power of administration in their hands, brought the Tories into great discredit, and at last so much reduced them, that their decline of course brought down the lustre of the Whigs, and ended in the extinc-

extinction of both parties; or rather in a change of names; for instead of Whig and Tory, they were distinguished by those of Court and Country. And as either party came into power, the other regularly went into opposition; the principal men of each were known by the whole nation; and there was a great point of honour among them, to adhere strictly to their engagements with their friends.

In such a situation of domestic affairs, it was hardly possible for successful attempts to be made on the liberty of the subject; for those who were not influenced by honest and truly patriotic motives, had the incentive of mere party to animate them; which, with the strength of union ever powerful among them, formed a barrier, against which the Court, however successful in slihter matters, could not carry many acts unfavourable to liberty.

But what spectacle have we had before our eyes since these parties have been abolished? In one period, we found the Court without the appearance of an opposition
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in parliament, tho' that period was the most expensive one to the kingdom that had ever been known. — And at other times, when designs extremely dangerous to the constitution have been hatching, and even executing, nothing has appeared like that firm opposition, that band of men of mutual ideas, which has so often saved this government: little miserable divisions, whose arrangements have been as various as the chances on the dice, have by turns distracted the country, but never made three efforts in any great or manly cause, that shewed firmness or principle. No regular party existing; the breath of the day has formed, dissolved and changed oppositions: no tie or connection being found among any set of men, they have fallen by turns into the most unnatural unions imaginable one week, and betrayed them the next, until at last it is come to such a pass, that the Crown has no party to fear, or that can controul its operations, however fatal they may be in future times: no body is against the Court,

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but those out of power, or rather that are not influenced; so that (a few persons excepted) the measure of the Crown's adherents is the measure of its ability to influence. Every set of men, nay almost every man, has been in and out, with, and without every other set of men; so that nothing like the principle of a party is left in the nation. This revolution must in the end have great consequences; the present miserable disconnection among all the great men, and their dependants in the kingdom, has thrown a greater power into the hands of the Crown, than an augmentation in the army of ten thousand men.

Nothing can be so shallow, as the congratulations which have been made to the people in many publications, on the extinction of *party* among us: it has been represented, as the greatest blessing that could happen to this country, to have no more party broils disturb it; but I will venture to assert, that all the uninteresting debates that ever happened between

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Whig and Tory, had better have continued and increased, than the spirit of the present times have arisen among us, which, instead of a union among certain men, that might in a day of need stand forth, and in Parliament rescue the constitution from the evils that threaten it, has given birth to a system of repulsion, which sets every man at variance with his neighbour, except the league kept together under one banner, by the influence of the Crown.

At present we have in the nation only one set of men, that can pretend to the appearance of a party, which are those who adhere to the Court on every question, in every business, and in every affair; these men, who are strictly united, and under the ministerial banner, having a principle of union wanted by every other set, are an overmatch for all.

There has been in modern times, since our grand parties disappeared, a notion strongly inculcated by various persons, that *measures* form the only object worthy the attention of Englishmen, but that

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men are below their notice; if the measure is good, what matters by whom it is enacted?

This reasoning is of a piece with that which makes the kingdom flourishing, because there are no parties in it. But surely we need only reflect on the events of our own history to be convinced, that this is a most false and pernicious idea: the whole tenor and event of it prove, that there are in all periods men who are to be trusted, and others in whom no confidence can be placed. The people of this country have not in a single instance formed a general idea of men that was false or mistaken; patriots have deserted their cause, and men have changed their principles; but the people have been seldom mistaken in praising or condemning improperly; they judge rightly of a man's actions, tho' they cannot see his heart; but from long observance they deduce the general idea, that such and such men are more to be trusted than others.

If there are men (and every period abounds with them) no good friends to the constitution; who care not what becomes of the publick good, so they take care of their fortunes; who at bottom had rather live under an absolute monarch, fully able to gratify their desires, than under a limited one, who is sometimes tied down by the constitution: if such men there are, who will be so preposterous as to assert, that *measures* are alone to be considered, and that *men* are of little consequence? Will the publick forgive those that have deeply injured them, and trust them, because they execute some measures of general good? Will it not rather and justly think, that the apparent good is but a cover to future evil? They must be shallow reasoners indeed, who can argue, that a man is safe to be trusted, because he has measures unexceptionable. Cromwell's measures were in some instances as public spirited as those of the Long Parliament, was he an object therefore to be trusted?

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In whatever the liberty of the country is or can be concerned, there it is of great national consequence to be disregarded of measures, and most attentive to men; because the publick should always suppose, that those who have been once active against liberty, will never be in any but a masked defence of it.

It is beyond the power of humanity to know who will and who will not deceive; the people, while they conduct themselves on this rule, may be deceived and mistaken; but this does not render the conduct inferior to a different one; if they change their ideas according to measures, they are sure to be deceived.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Of the State of PROPERTY in ENGLAND.

SOME politicians have asserted, that the balance of power in a state depends on the balance of property; but that the idea is erroneous, there have been repeated proofs in our own history: it is, however, worth an enquiry into the present state of the property of the kingdom, to see on what side the balance probably lies; and to consider what other circumstances at present are likely to have an influence in breaking the balance of constitutional power.

The property of the Crown may be estimated at the amount of all that is within its power to spend, give, or to name to: this amounts to about the sum of three millions per annum.

I have heard it calculated, that the property of the Peers, Spiritual and Temporal, is on an average eight thousand pounds a year,

a year, the number is 211, their income therefore is 1,688,000 l.

Suppose we calculate the average of the House of Commons at 4000 l. the total of 558, will give 2,232,000 l.

The King	—	£.	3,000,000
The Lords	—		1,688,000
The Commons	—		2,232,000
			<hr/>
		Total	6,920,000
			<hr/>

The only estimate of the annual income of the nation that is calculated upon grounds probably true, is that of Mr. Young, in his *Tour through the north*, who makes the income of England to be 122,000,000 l. According to this proportion, we may fairly venture to call the whole of Great Britain and Ireland 150,000,000 l. The governing part of the kingdom therefore is 7, and the governed 143.

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I do not think the power of the King, Lords and Commons, badly represented by the proportion of the above three sums, the first much exceeds either of the other two: united with the Lords, he is doubly superior to the Commons; but a union of them and the Lords turns the scale against him. But other circumstances change the appearance of the account, and give three millions a greater power than 3,800,000 l.

Suppose ever such an union among either Lords or Commons, such a body of men can never gain an influence from the weight of their own wealth, equal to that which attends a much smaller degree of riches in possession, and under the direction of one person.—This we actually see; for what comparison is there between the dependants on the Lords and Commons with those on the Crown.

If the extent of this superiority is considered with ever so little attention, the power of the Crown, *merely* from this great influence, will appear beyond all comparison

rison more weighty, than ever it was found under the Stewarts. But besides this source of power, there are all the prerogatives of the Crown, which, tho' not extensive and undefined as formerly, are yet by no means of small or inconsiderable value in the scale of power.

There is furthermore the great and important strength of the standing army, which is more considerable, and far better provided, than that with which Cromwell kept the realm in subjection: the military power in England from the regiments actually embodied, and the disbanded veterans, which our frequent wars make very numerous, and are all at the call of the Crown; these, upon the whole, give a power to the Crown, exclusive of the dependance occasioned by it, that is equal to some millions.

When all these points are well reflected on, it will surely appear, that the power of the Crown at present in England, by influence in parliament, or by open force,
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is infinitely greater than ever it was in any former periods. So great, that there does not remain any probability of this nation preserving its liberty, in case she comes to be governed by a prince who seeks arbitrary power.

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LETTER

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LETTER XIX.

Of the Importance of NATIONAL WEALTH; an interesting Passage from a French Author translated.

I Have met with a passage in a French author, which I shall make the subject of this letter. It contains many admirable observations; and very few that are exceptionable. "I had looked upon "populoufness," says the Frenchman, "as a source of income. An abler man "contradicted me. It was my happiness "to listen to him, and he has taught me, "that, on the contrary, income is a source "of populoufness.

"I greatly doubt, if Tullius Hostilius, "king of a country, in which we are "told every family had an acre of ground "to supply it with turneps and cabbages, "whenever they could not make war, and "procure better subsistence by plundering their neighbours; I doubt much, I "say, if such a prince excelled in dignity

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“ an overseer of negroes, who, exclusive
“ of their own wretched pittance, raise
“ for their owner a valuable kind of com-
“ modity.

“ It appears, that nothing can move
“ without income; that it is this which
“ constitutes the life and soul of all cir-
“ culation. But no income is to be ex-
“ pected without great advances; and the
“ advances themselves are not to be ex-
“ pected, unless the produce reaches to
“ the creation of income.

“ In fact, the multiplicity and diversity
“ of the different professions of man-
“ kind, is not only an advantage relative
“ to the conveniencies of life, in pro-
“ curing which, each of these professions
“ is separately employed, but likewise in-
“ asmuch as it confers the effects of
“ riches upon products, useles to one
“ man, at the same time that they are
“ useful to another in a different station.
“ Without ships we should have no oc-
“ casion for ship-timber, nor without
“ paint and soap for strong oils.

“ We

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“ We must recollect, that the usual use
“ of things gives them the quality of
“ merchandize; but it is their price alone
“ which gives them that of riches. Wa-
“ ter, wood, game, the fruits of the
“ earth, &c. are goods; but the surplus
“ of what the owner of them can con-
“ sume is no riches, unless a demand for
“ such surplus gives it a price.

“ It is this price which forms the re-
“ lative state of riches between different
“ kingdoms, and even different provinces
“ of the same kingdom; between all the
“ branches of foreign and domestic com-
“ merce. Without a relative proportion
“ between the prices of different produc-
“ tions, there is no order of riches that
“ can counterbalance the effects of a re-
“ ciprocal commerce, decide the regula-
“ tive power of nations, and regulate
“ both the produce of real estates, and the
“ quantity of it due to the sovereign.
“ For this reason, the price of the imme-
“ diate fruits of the earth should be the
“ principal object of every landed govern-
“ ment's

“ ment’s attention. Such governments
 “ are not to consider the usual value of
 “ these fruits, for their usual value never
 “ fails in rich nations; whereas, for want
 “ of a price, the advances upon which
 “ the productions depend, fall to decay;
 “ the productions cease; indigence puts a
 “ stop to all the lucrative professions of
 “ people living in towns and cities; and
 “ reduces the inhabitants of the country
 “ to the ungrateful labours of a petty
 “ culture, whose pitiful produce is scarce
 “ sufficient for their own subsistence.

“ It is income that gives motion to
 “ every profession; it is therefore in-
 “ come that creates and excites the de-
 “ mands for every thing, and bestows the
 “ quality of riches on every kind of pro-
 “ duce. It is riches that restore the ad-
 “ vances necessary to procure a new pro-
 “ duct.

“ An author, who in the beginning of
 “ this century published some observations
 “ on the agriculture of a great kingdom,
 “ takes notice, that the expenditure did not

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“ produce, on an average, above 20 per
 “ cent. for the king, the church, and
 “ the land-owner, exclusive of the
 “ husbandman’s annual reimbursements
 “ as usual. Here then is a deficiency of
 “ four-fifths in the net produce, not to
 “ speak of the impoverishment of the
 “ lands, obliged to bear themselves all
 “ the expences of such wretched culti-
 “ vation, and lie alternately fallow for
 “ several years together, to be again able
 “ to yield a pitiful crop. At this period,
 “ almost all the inhabitants lived in a
 “ most abject state of poverty, and were
 “ utterly lost to the state; for the net
 “ produce of the labour of men em-
 “ ployed in agriculture, will be as the net
 “ produce of the advances above their
 “ expences, and the net produce for the
 “ king, church, and land-owner, and all
 “ the other classes of men in a nation,
 “ will be as the net produce of the real
 “ estates. Thus the more insufficient the
 “ advances, the less profitable will both
 “ men and lands be to the state. The

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“ most that can be expected from poor
“ cottagers, who draw a wretched sub-
“ sistence from an ungrateful cultivation,
“ is to keep up in the country to no pur-
“ pose a populousness destitute of life and
“ spirit.

“ As man does not grow to the earth ;
“ to dig and plough is his pittance, and
“ not his employment, he is always look-
“ ing out for some other to live by. In-
“ terest however will engage him to cul-
“ tivate the earth, as long as he may do
“ it by means of the animals created to
“ serve him : but you who would have
“ a numerous people, offer them other
“ employments, and take care to procure
“ yourself, by judicious and stout culti-
“ vation, an income sufficient to reward
“ their industry.

“ The ruling idea of war makes na-
“ tions fancy, that strength consists
“ entirely in populousness ; but the mi-
“ litary part of a nation cannot act, or
“ even subsist, without the assistance of
“ the labouring part. As little is it to
“ be

“ be supposed, that the riches of a state
“ depends on the number of its subjects.
“ No, it is only by means of riches that
“ men can acquire and perpetuate riches,
“ and that only as far as there is a just
“ proportion between men and riches.

“ Nations are too apt never to think
“ themselves populous enough ; they
“ never so much as dream that they want
“ work or wages to support a greater po-
“ pulation ; and that men of no fortune
“ are useless in a country, where they
“ cannot find such certain wages as may
“ enable them to live by their labour.

“ It is true indeed, that the common
“ people in the country, when not em-
“ ployed by others, may make a shift to
“ raise for their subsistence some few
“ things of little value, which require
“ neither great expences, nor a labour
“ of any continuance ; and besides, take
“ up but little time to arrive at matu-
“ rity ; but these men, these produc-
“ tions, and the land that yields
“ them,

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“ them, are of no account in regard to
“ the state.

“ For the earth to yield any income,
“ it is requisite that the labour of the
“ husbandman should give a net produce
“ that supports the other classes of men
“ necessary in a state. Now there is no
“ expecting this from poor peasants, who
“ till the earth with their hands, or in
“ any other insufficient manner. They
“ have enough to do to procure a pitiful
“ subsistence for themselves alone, with-
“ out ever attempting wheat, which re-
“ quires too much time, too much
“ labour, and too great an expence to be
“ raised by men, who have nothing but
“ the labour of their hands to raise it
“ with. It is not therefore to a set of
“ wretched peasants, that you should
“ leave the cultivation of your lands.
“ Beasts alone should till and fertilize your
“ fields. Nothing but a plentiful con-
“ sumption, a ready vent, and a free
“ and easy commerce, both foreign and
“ „ domestic,

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“ domestic, can secure that price which
“ constitutes your income.

“ It is upon rich men alone that you
“ ought to depend for the establishing
“ a cultivation, and rural commerce ca-
“ pable of enriching you, of enriching
“ the state, and of opening a never-failing
“ source of riches, by means of which
“ you may secure to yourself a full en-
“ joyment of all the fruits of both in-
“ dustry and handicraft labour, fortify
“ your frontiers, and have always strong
“ armies and formidable fleets at your
“ disposal; carry on in a grand manner
“ the publick works necessary for use and
“ ornament; and afford such wages and
“ profits, as may tempt industrious foreign-
“ ers to settle in the kingdom.

“ Thus on the police of agriculture,
“ and the commerce of its productions,
“ depends the management of the fi-
“ nances, and of all the other branches
“ of administration in a landed state.

“ Numerous armies are not alone suf-
“ ficient to form a strong defence.

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“ Without good pay you are not to expect
“ good soldiers.

“ A war by sea or by land employs
“ other means besides the strength of
“ men, and requires other and more
“ considerable expences besides that of
“ subsisting them; so that war is to be
“ supported much less by dint of men
“ than that of riches; for as long as you
“ have riches to pay men well, you will
“ never want men to recruit your armies.

“ The more riches a nation can employ
“ in the annual reproduction of riches,
“ the fewer men in proportion will such
“ annual reproduction require; and the
“ greater the net produce of agricul-
“ ture, the more men will be at the dis-
“ posal of the government for publick
“ works, and every other publick service;
“ the higher wages are the more useful
“ will these men be to the state by their
“ labour, and by their expences, which
“ carry these wages back into circula-
“ tion.

“ Victories

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“ Victories in which you do your ene-
“ my no other mischief than kill his
“ men, can weaken him but little, as
“ long as he has wherewith to invite
“ others into his service. An army of
“ 100,000 men may be as good as an army
“ of a million: for no army, where pay
“ never fails, can ever be destroyed. It
“ then, too, becomes the interest of the
“ soldiers to stick to their colours, since
“ they cannot expect better pay in any
“ other service. It is therefore riches
“ that supports the honour of arms,
“ and recruit armies; and with how
“ much more reason must riches be al-
“ lowed to support and extend every other
“ kind of population.”

P 4 LETTER

LETTER XX.

Of the MANNERS of the AGE.

WE seldom speak impartially on the *manners of the age*; too apt either to form an idea of general excellence beyond all bounds of truth; or else to regret the happy days of antiquity, and throw back all great and genuine merit to periods obscured, by the misty medium thro' which we view them.

In the ideas that have been the most current on the difference of manners, there are two great distinctions, which in their excess may be found distant somewhat from truth. That pure and virtuous manners are found only in obscure ages, and such as polite ones call barbarous. The other, that virtuous manners are created by riches and luxury; or at least never found but in polished, civilized and refined states and ages.

Volumes have been written on these opinions, but the authors have given into
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an error not uncommon, of affixing the same ideas to different terms; and different ideas to the same terms. If one class mean by *virtuous* manners, polished ones, amenity, politeness and refinement, they are certainly right, in assigning it to ages of wealth and luxury; and their opponents when they speak of virtue, meaning the fierce independancy, and harsher feelings of barbarians, are equally judicious in their instances.

But these ideas are both seemingly extravagant; nor are purity and virtue, I apprehend, proper terms for characterising the manners of an age. What manners, the rough or the mild, are best friends to human nature? With the one come fierceness, cruelty, bloodshed in torrents, violence, endless and cruel wars, property for ever insecure, ignorance, and superstition. With the other, we see the mean vices, sickly constitutions, the spleen, the mischiefs of law, poverty in the extreme, &c.

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In individuals the latter evils are worse. In a whole people, the former.

The manners of the present age in England are those of a wealthy, luxurious, refined and learned people. Riches have polished every part of these islands, and wherever they have spread their influence, they have carried in their train civility, ease and pleasure: they have given rise to new ideas, new enjoyments, and made the luxuries of the rich administer employment to the poor. There is an air of polishing and elegance to be seen in every thing; down to the minutest objects, which is never to be found in poorer countries, or poorer ages.

What can be more universal, than the effects of riches on manners in England? We see it every where, and in every thing; all ranks of the people increasing in expence, and endeavouring to vie with their superiors in the extent of it, and at the same time necessarily imitating their manners; hence we see a more refined civility, more attentive manners; some awkward

awkward imitations, it is true, but in general a strong desire to signalize themselves in dress, equipage, houses, furniture, amusements, &c.

Every one of these articles shews the general effects of riches spreading thro' the people, and with them more polished manners. Examine the fashions of dress changing in a little country town, with almost as much rapidity as in the capital: and stile of expence in every article, much higher than thirty or forty years ago. And this difference of expence is observable even among the lowest classes, every twenty years bring an addition of some little affair in dress, which shews the distant effects of increasing luxury.

But among the classes rather higher this truth is more apparent. I do not confine myself to the capital, but if you take a view of the ranks in country towns, what a wonderful improvement within these thirty or forty years. To see how well in point of diet, &c. all that rank of people, which may be classed as inferior trades-

tradesmen and shop-keepers, live: their tables are served as well as those of rich merchants were an hundred years ago: their houses good and ornamented; what formerly was a downfall gable end, covered with thatch, is now brick and tile, and a sashed front, with white pales before it; and the furniture strangely improved from the last age; in dress, see the sons and daughters tricked out in all the little ornaments which make a country church gay, grogram changed for silk, and thousands of ribbons where packthread once sufficed. See the amusements of these people; they resort to their theatres, and are busy in visits, and tea-drinkings and cards; as much ceremony is found in the assembly of a country grocer's wife, as in that of a countess; all this is mere wealth; the natural effect of riches, and must inevitably bring on a change of manners; that is a decrease of rusticity, more polish, mildness; a softer humanity.

In superior ranks, what efforts of expence are every day made! Until these seem

seem to be no class, in which the man of small private fortune can be arranged. An income of two or three hundred pounds a year in the last age, was reckoned a decent hereditary patrimony; or a good establishment for life; but now, no such beings exist. All country gentlemen give into so many local expences, and reckon themselves so much on a par, that a small estate is now but another word for starving; of course few are to be found, but they are bought up by greater neighbours, or become mere farms.

The way of living and manners in such a system of expence, must necessarily be improved in every circumstance that regards appearance, shew, elegance, &c. all that softening, to which we give the term politeness, must gain ground, and the rougher parts of that old and famous English plainness and honesty, give way for refinement, and a regular imitation of the higher ranks.

Look into a family in these days, that possess an income of a thousand pounds a year;

a year; you will find every article of expence almost that can be named, have some place in their accounts. You will find not only equipages, but a shew of fashion and change in them; you will see improvements in the house—rich furniture—a regular table—company, entertainments, &c. You will find journies of amusement, expeditions to the capital, or some spaw—you will find the publications of the day—probably music, perhaps billiards, and other marks, which, would have been far enough from the case an hundred years ago; every thing shews luxury in excess; that is a system of expence, the foundation for which is hardly to be conceived; and this will be the remark, take what class you please for the object of your view.

The real state of the case is, that manners are but another word for degrees of wealth: are you a nation poor as rats, I am clear that your manners are fierce as brutes. Are you a people in possession of immense wealth, it is equally evident, that you are polished, refined, and so forth.

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Nor is this mistaking the cause for the effect; as manners will never gain wealth; on the contrary, it is ever wealth that forms the manners. Of these truths need we greater proofs, than the plainness and simplicity of the manners of all the nations recorded in story, while they were poor; and on the contrary, the luxurious refinement of the same people when they became rich.

But the instances hitherto given, are those which most concern the great body of the people; if you rise to those who possess or acquire great riches, it is no longer expence, but profusion and manners are not elegant, but fashionably capricious; you then come into the excesses of customs and ideas that change with the day; the mere creature of *taste*. People in this country that gain wealth, gain every thing: this is political in a commercial view, but it has very bad consequences: merchants, manufacturers, even farmers in some counties, landlords who have raised their rents, placemen, in a word,

word, all whose incomes are great, no wonder from what source; all are boundless in their expences, they imitate in every particular the life of the richest grandees in the nation. Sumptuous edifices, the most costly furniture, the highest decorated grounds, lakes, temples, and plantations, the choicest wines, the richest tables, the most luxurious and expensive amusements, these are what we every day meet with in the houses of no body knows who.—Manners are in some natural and easy; in others they are the effects of imitation; but in the aggregate of both, name me the proportionate wealth of the country, and I will declare the proportionate civility and refinement of it.

We have writers, it is true, who condemn all this refinement at present in England; and declare, that we are so much the more unhappy a people; making their own country an instance of that general idea I mentioned at the beginning of this letter; but it is the spirit of idle declamation, that can alone give assistance to so

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ideal an argument. The present refinement of our manners, which is the child of wealth, is advantageous to every rank of life; because it corrects the asperities of our tempers, inclines the people to humanity and benevolence, makes charity liberal and extensive, gives us generous ideas of mankind in general, softens the more rugged virtues, and renders all amiable. To condemn without discrimination the cause which works such effects, is to shut ones eyes to the clearest day.

But while I allow, and sufficiently value these undoubted effects, let me acknowledge, that there is a deduction to be made in the general account, from the influence of great wealth, which should never be overlooked: this is the vice of *venality*: riches and luxury bring on such a system of expence in all ranks of the people, that all are to be bought. Every man living to the utmost extent of his fortune, and many beyond it, are all eager for every sort of post, office, job, place, pension, and bribe; in a free constitution like

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ours,

ours, this, it must be allowed, may prove a miserable evil; in arbitrary governments, like that of France, it is none. But this evil, after all, is rather an abuse of riches than a quality in them; for, however difficult the task, yet most certainly there is no impossibility in escaping this influence.

You must excuse the cursorily manner in which I have ventured these remarks; the subject is delicate, but your candor is great.

Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

The present State of ARCHITECTURE in ENGLAND.

I Cannot by any means subscribe to your opinion, although you quote examples that I revere in the same way of thinking, that the state of the fine arts in England is at present low, or at least moderate, compared with other ages.—Your instancing the reign of Charles the First is surely unjust, for the munificence of the prince in entertaining several foreign artists in England, how great their abilities and fame, must not be too quickly quoted as a character of the age in this country. I shall confine myself at present to Architecture, and reserve the other arts, termed *the fine*, for the subject of future Letters.

From the death of Sir Christopher Wren to the present reign, this art was certainly at a very low pitch in Britain. This was not owing to a want of expensive erections,

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tions, for there were many; several in the capital, and many in various parts of the kingdom; but the architects were men of miserable talents, and worse taste. In that period Westminster Bridge is an exception, but it was executed from the design of a foreigner. What miserable piles are the Mansion House, and the Horse Guards! Of the houses of individuals at London, not one of singular merit.

But in the present age a new soul has animated our architects; a taste unknown, since the days of Inigo; the number of edifices raised of late years, in which magnificence is rivaled only by genuine beauty, is immense; and form a greater and richer system of improvement, than is to be met with in an equal number of years in any country in Europe. I shall name a few instances, which will set this matter in a light tolerably clear.

HOLKHAM. This palace, raised by that truly great architect the Earl of Leicester, may not be improperly mentioned,

as the strongest mark of the revival of taste among us; since this was built, we have had numerous instances; but *Holkham* seemed to lead the way. The reproach of our edifices had long been *beautifullness*: *Vanbrugh's* genius seemed that of the Isle; but this house started at once to the perfection of the opposite.

SPENCER HOUSE in the Green Park is a beautiful building: the front is uncommonly elegant; light; and richly ornamented; but not in profusion: it is a building that does honour to the age.

The CIRCUS at Bath, would alone go far in giving one a good idea of the taste of an age. It is magnificent, elegant, and light. It does honour to the abilities of the architect, and to the character of the nation.

KEDDLESTON is light and magnificent, and as original in the contrivance as any house in Britain; it certainly ranks among those

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those efforts of taste and genius that do honour to the present age.

The buildings at DURHAM YARD have infinite merit: the idea was great, the execution bold, and the complete effect gives one an example of what that noble river the Thames is capable of, were we attentive to decorate her as she deserves.

BLACK FRIARS Bridge is another work, that will do lasting honour to the kingdom and the age; it is remarkable, that London should so long possess the first bridge in the world, and at last be exceeded only by herself. The two bridges are spectacles that draw the attention and applause of all Europe; many are the foreigners that have come from distant parts of Europe principally to view such buildings in this capital, as are to be met with in no other part of the world.

Numerous other edifices, both publick and private, have been erected in this age, that

that contribute greatly to support the character of it, and revive that of the nation, which had sunk so low in architecture after the raising St. Paul's. But what I have now mentioned are striking proofs, that England is very far from being backward in the national improvement of architecture: they much exceed any thing erected during the same period in any other part of Europe.

It has been too much the fashion to ridicule every thing at home, and praise only what is found abroad; this was remarkably the taste during the reigns of the two First George's; every traveller to France and Italy came home full of the praise of all he had seen, and with sovereign contempt of all he found at home; to a degree utterly ridiculous, while we possessed several buildings, superior to any thing most other countries could shew;—but we may now observe, that this silly admiration of every thing abroad wears out; the character of the nation revives, foreigners in greater numbers are found in

Q 4 London;

London; and where one Englishman travelled in those reigns, ten now go the grand tour: indeed to such a pitch is the spirit of travelling come, in the kingdom, that there is scarce a citizen of large fortune, but what takes a flying view of France, Italy, and Germany in a summer's excursion; this general spirit of travelling, makes so many persons acquainted with the productions of the fine arts abroad, that travellers, inclined to the marvellous, dare not exert their talent, for fear of being detected: and I doubt not but this is one reason, why we see at present more to praise at home, and less to admire abroad.

But although much has been done to ornament the capital of these kingdoms, yet it must be confessed, that London yet remains in many respects a very inelegant city; there are now many buildings in it of striking merit, but there wants more decency and neatness in the secondary parts. The approaches to it are generally bad; the streets themselves want regularity;

regularity; and what is unpardonable, even the new built ones are almost as irregular as those of Charles the Second's reign. The materials for all common edifices, viz. bricks, are most insufferably bad, to a degree that destroys the beauty of half the buildings about town, making them seem of dirt and mud, rather than brick; this is remarkable, even in that noble pile Durham-yard, of which some parts of the principal front are so disguised, that a spectator cannot but feel the injury in the strongest manner.

A law might surely be enacted against using or making such detestable materials, by having all bricks undergo a survey or examination before sale, that are made near London; which would put a stop to many of the kilns, which are a nuisance to so many neighbourhoods. Good bricks would be brought from the country by the Thames, and from other parts by sea; and if the expence of building arose 3 or 4 per cent by this, it would be no evil, but perhaps a benefit.

It

It is a remark that has been often repeated, that our kings are lodged like beggars; which is the more wonderful, as no man can doubt, but any minister could get a vote annually for any moderate sum of money for that purpose, without a twentieth part of the clamour which attends half the votes that do pass. Fifty thousand pounds a year, for ten years, would effect the purpose magnificently; but if it was granted for twenty years, I know not where the evil would be, as the expenditure of the money would be at home, encourage our own industry, and do honour, I hope, to the taste of the kingdom. Very different effects from the pay of armies in Germany, or subsidizing German princes. If it is said, that such a scheme belongs more properly to the civil list, I reply, that we have long seen what sort of a palace that will raise, and if we wait till the savings in that do the business, it will be much worse than not done at all; of which we every day see marks, by little additions, alterations,

tions, &c. and buying other houses, the whole system that of spending five pounds a year without effect, instead of proceeding on a regular plan from the foundation of a new edifice.

Theatres, Opera Houses, Academies, Societies rooms, &c. are all public works, and should be erected in such a manner, as to ornament the capital, and do honour to the nation; unfortunately all these in London are miserable hovels, or stuck into holes and corners. Magnificence in all such edifices is of great national use, it attracts strangers, who come over and spend their money with the same views, that the English have so long hurried to Italy. Hence the idea of the French, that Versailles has brought more money into the kingdom than it cost in erecting.

The taste of this nation in architecture has been astonishingly improved since the numerous publications of antient ruins in Greece, Italy, and Turkish Asia; which have been executed in a most noble manner,

ner, by several of our countrymen; these works absolutely drove out that rage for Chinese barbarity, which was so much the fashion twenty years ago; and have spread just ideas of true symmetry, and beautiful proportion; the turn for overcharged ornament has given way to the elegant simplicity of the Greeks; inasmuch, that no country in Europe can boast a juster taste in architecture, than is at present exerted in England.

Dawkins, Wood, Stuart, Chambers, Adams, Car and Paine, are, among other instances of genius, employed in this noble art to decorate their country.

There is now a purity and Grecian elegance diffused through every part of the edifices erected in the present age; the ornaments of the ceilings, walls, and chimney-pieces, are in a style unknown to the last age; instead of the heavy, clumsy exertions of blundering artists, whose utmost efforts of finery reached no higher than much gilding, we now see the choicest remnants of the finest ages of antiquity

quity made the standard of our taste. The rooms fitted up from the designs of Mr. Stuart, have an elegance unrivaled in all the places of Europe.

While the architecture of England is thus supported, that art will live among us, and restore the character of the age, which many heavy buildings had sunk low in the last.

I am, dear SIR,

LETTER

L E T T E R XXII.

The Present State of PAINTING.

PAINTING is an art, that was for some ages thought peculiar to the warmer climates, and to certain ages, in which great men of all professions were found in uncommon plenty; this observation is not without so many exceptions, as much to weaken its truth. Certain however it is, that England never produced, till the present age, any painters that could be ranked even in the third class: France has had a school of painting, and Flanders another, but Britain has been unable to boast any such degree of excellency; foreign artists have been always well received here, and made considerable sums of money by their residence, but natives have been very scarce.

I shall venture, in the mistaken manner of some late authors, to assert, that the present English school equals that of some foreign ones, in their greatest splendour; but

but I shall readily declare, that I think our present artists in this branch are much superior to those of any other set this country has produced; and have a merit which reflects great honour on the kingdom.

It is highly worthy of note, that painting arose in England the moment it was encouraged: our exhibitions spread an emulation which was never known before. This was the work of the *Society of Arts*, whose exhibition was the first of that numerous family we have had since. These have kindled among our artists a desire of excelling, at the same time made known their talents to those who employ them, and offer a ready opportunity of selling their works to advantage; these are all high advantages, which could scarce fail of being attended with beneficial effects. At the same time that this institution flourished greatly, a king ascended the throne, who was a patron of the fine arts, and gave them an encouragement they had never known before: these causes

we

we find have not been unattended with good effects; for in ten years they have brought forth more good painters than the fifty preceding; which should be a lesson to sovereigns, to convince them, that they have nothing to do but determine with spirit, to make the arts flourish.

It is mere nonsense in the Abbè de Bos to attempt to prove in so elaborate a manner, that painting receives its highest acquisitions from the climate; and that certain changes in the air are the occasion of some ages being so much more fertile in great artists than others: that great painters are never found under the line, nor Nova Zembla. I will readily agree, but cannot allow, that the reason why the arts now flourish in Italy, and are in ruins in Turkey, is the difference of the air or climate. Encouragement is the soul of all arts, of all literature; whether that encouragement comes from the generosity and attention of a monarch, from the expences of the people, from those of religion,

religion, or from whatever source, is of little consequence, provided it is considerable enough for the artist to earn a reward at all proportioned to the degree of his merit.

The following catalogue will shew, that the present race of painters in England are of merit sufficient to entitle the nation to more reputation in this branch of the exertions of human genius, than she has yet enjoyed.

C O T E S.

The works of this painter are full of the most pleasing strokes; and have such a liveliness and elegance diffused through them, that no body can view many of them without being struck by their uncommon merit. Every thing in his works are riant; and display a mild and agreeable imagination: I have seen many of his pieces, in which the attitudes are peculiarly happy, and the draperies in a pleasing stile.

R DANCE.

D A N C E.

His portraits have merit, particularly those in which a minute expression is principally attended to; such as the portraits of bishops, lawyers in their robes, &c. or any formal, stiff postures that require not a bold freedom of pencil, which he does not possess.

Z U C C A R E L L I,

Has a stile of his own, which is that of a master. If I was to characterise his works by one word, I should use *cheerfulness*; all nature laughs with him; every thing is gay; old age is full of gambols, all his personages either dance or sing: but the freedom of his manner, with the spirit of his touch, produce effects that render his pictures much valued. I never saw a work of gravity by this master that was worth six-pence; so strong is the bias of nature.

W E S T,

W E S T,

Much the greatest painter this country has produced; most of our great artists have confined themselves to portraits, but this great man has had the courage to venture into the boldest histories, and the disinterestedness to follow the bent of his genius, without being called aside by the more profitable employment of portraits. Two hundred years hence, his works will be as much sought after, as those of Dominicino are at present. The general composition of his pieces is poetic: and display a fine mixture of correctness and imagination. His groups leave us nothing to wish; the persons fulfil every requisite; no passion essential to the actions of his pieces is wanting, and the variations would do honour to the greatest geniuses. His ideas are pure, simple, and picturesque. Nothing can be more chaste than his colouring, or more pleasing than his clear obscure. The expression in his figures is

R 2 happy,

happy, and characteristical. And I should also remark, that in his pieces which display but a single figure, or the most simple action, he is elegantly pleasing; I have seen the figure of a Venus and Cupid; of a Venus and Adonis by him, that would have been viewed with rapture in the age of Titian. His Regulus I take to be the greatest work he ever executed; it is one of the noblest pictures that has been produced in the present age; and not to be exceeded by any thing that the artists now alive in Italy, Germany, France or Spain, can produce to rival it. Two of his pieces of Venus exhibit a softness, delicacy, and tenderness of colours, that cannot fail of pleasing every eye.

S E R-

S E R R E S.

The sea-pieces of this master have real merit; some of them are full of variety, strength, and expression: the colours good; and the general effect pleasing.

R E Y N O L D S,

Is original in his manner, and as bold and free in his stile as any painter that Italy ever produced. Freedom is indeed his principal characteristic; to this he seems to sacrifice every other consideration. He has however two manners; in one he checks the extreme freedom of his dashing pencil; *works* his figures more into an expression that may, in comparison with his other pieces, be called *minute*; in these the colouring is natural and good. But in his bolder better works the colours are graceful rather than chaste; they have the ease of drawings, and mark how little attention was given by the artist to make them durable.

R 3

In

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In his attitudes he is generally full of grace, ease and variety; he can throw his figures at will into the boldest variations, and ventures at some postures, by which inferior painters would inevitably damn their works.

His learning in his art in great, and this has made him slight colours too much on comparison with drawing; the latter alone is certainly superior to the former alone; but the true beauty of fine colouring is an essential, and should never be neglected.

In a word, this painter is more a man of genius than an agreeable artist: there is more fire than nature in his works; more energy than softness; more ease than beauty; such as will rather awaken knowledge than kindle pleasure.

ANGELICA

Has merit; particularly in the choice of subjects, and in the profiles of several figures; but the expression peculiar to the action

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action of a piece is too often tame, or wanting.

H O N E,

In many of his pieces truly delicate and pleasing; there is an ease in his figures, which renders pictures agreeable companions; grace and beauty attract; you insensibly sit down to converse with a Venus, but give only a look of surprise at the best drawn Polypheme, or gladiator.

H A Y M A N.

Sometimes we meet with pleasing figures in this artist's works, but very seldom expression enough; in colouring he is a mannerist.

G A I N S B O R O U G H,

Was first known as a landscape painter, in which walk he executed some pieces in a peculiar and not unpleasing stile, but never strictly natural; but as a portrait

R 4 painter

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painter his merit is uncommonly great; for taking striking likenesses, and at the same time throwing other merit into his pieces, he is almost unrivaled. But it must however be owned, that his figures are too much in common life; he does not dress them to advantage; and they are never thrown into action.

B E N W E L L.

The pieces which this lady has executed in crayons, are extremely delicate and pleasing; nothing can be more natural than her draperies; in her flesh she throws however too general a tinge of red. In miniature she has also great delicacy of expression.

H U M P H R Y.

Never were any pieces more highly or more delicately executed than the best miniatures of this master; his colours are mellow and chaste; his attitudes generally
easy,

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easy, his expression fine, and his ornaments always display taste.

M A R L O W,

One of the greatest landscape painters of the age. His pieces are always full of fire and expression; inasmuch, that some of them command attention, though not free from faults; but in others he leaves nothing to wish. I have seen a view of Mount Vesuvius in the midst of an irruption by this artist, which would have alone immortalized him: never was greater force seen in a picture.

R E A D:

This lady's crayons are filled with grace and elegance; her expression of mildness; youthful cheerfulness; smiles and natural ease; is uncommonly beautiful; and renders her works truly pleasing. Her attitudes have great merit; and the general effect of all her pieces agreeable.

S T U B B S.

S T U B B S.

One of the greatest artists of the present age: his works are full of life and fire, without the minute expression being inferior: his wild beasts are nobly executed in the stile of Reubens: and his portraits of old men have a truth to nature, not often found — but in some of his pieces he is rather too gaudy in his colouring.

Z O F F A N I I,

Paints in many different stiles, and shews the hand of a master in all; the minute expression of some of his pictures is incomparable; every thing is natural with him; and breathes a spirit of life and vivacity, that renders them peculiarly pleasing.

W R I G H T.

W R I G H T.

His candle-lights were never exceeded; they have a strength, and a force of expression, that shew the genius of the artist: his figures are generally in life; and the attitudes bold.

B R U Y N.

His imitations of marble have great merit.

C A S A L I,

Incorrect in his drawings, and sometimes has too much sameness in his colouring; but his ideas are chearful and pleasing; and his works in general agreeable.

E L M E R,

Too hasty and inaccurate in his performances; but the merit of his works never-

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nevertheless very great. His minute expression of still life, or an old man's head, is incomparable; I have seen a few pieces out of many by this master that had uncommon merit.

S M I T H.

There is a keeping and a chastity in his landscapes that do credit to their author: his colours are pleasing; and his imagination warm, tho' correct.

P I N E.

His groups have merit, and the airs of his old mens heads well varied; but his colours want chastity, and his women elegance.

H A M I L T O N,

Bold in his ideas, and spirited in his expression; but he has, if any thing, studied the antique rather too much, to the injury

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injury of warmth, and mellowness of colours. He studied long at Rome.

H U D S O N.

His portraits have great merit.

B A R T O L O Z Z I.

His crayons and his drawings are truly elegant; but he is most noted as an engraver.

C I P R I A N I.

This artist's works display the hand of a master; but he is unequal.

H O G A R T H.

A great original genius, whose works are perhaps fuller of thought and invention than those of any other satirist the world ever produced. His fame will live for ever; but his historic paintings are below mediocrity.

By

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By the ingenious exertions of these and other painters, the character of the present age is very well supported; and if we may judge of the future by the rise we have seen in the last ten years, we may look for increasing merit. Encouragement and attention are now given, a royal academy is founded, and royal munificence is exerted to rear the plant at home, which has hitherto been exotic; much is to be hoped from these circumstances; and especially as we find so many of our artists attend to other subjects besides portraits.

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LETTER XXIII.

The Present State of ENGRAVING.

THE engravers, like the painters of this country, were below mediocrity before the present age; but for the honour of the fine arts in Britain, this also has taken a flight that will render us more known than heretofore: it is in this art, more than in any other, that the French have excelled; their engravers are extremely great, and at the same time very numerous. They have worked with assiduity to give the best representations of the works of all the great Italian and other painters; which has spread their fame wide throughout Europe.

The following present artists of this country will shew, that we have several of real and genuine merit.

STRANGE.

S T R A N G E.

In some of his works equal to any that have gone before him — and had he been as fortunate in the choice of his subjects, as some other engravers have been, would have surpassed most. He has more softness than force; excelling far more in the representation of the naked in women, than strong expressions in men. His Venus and Danae from Titian; his Venus from Suido, and his St. Agnes from Dominicino, are very capital; also his Belifarius in another stile. Some other of his late pieces are likewise admirably executed.

B A R T O L O Z Z I.

Nothing can excel the softness and agreeableness of this artist's works; there is what one may venture to call a clear obscure in his engravings; a mild and pleasing expression; with much grace and harmony.

R A-

R A V E N E T,

Has executed several pieces with great force, and truth; and although in some we find a want of freedom, yet he has generally the touch of a master.

T A Y L O R.

An artist of merit; in minute expression he has good abilities; and his slighter compositions are pleasing. He has thrown an elegance into title page, and head and tail-pieces, which they were much wanting in, tho' so ornamental to the books published in France. The same remark is applicable to

G R I G N I O N,

Whose works of this sort are of the greatest merit: many of them are very elegant.

S C A N O T,

C A N O T,

His itchings are bold and spirited.

F R Y.

Painted portaits, but his metzotinto's have much greater merit than his paintings.

H O G A R T H,

Engraved his own humorous paintings, with a vivacity and spirit that were never exceeded.

Engraving would rise to greater perfection in England, if the artists in it met with greater encouragement to leave views of profit for a time, and attach themselves to those of fame: a vast number of engravers are constantly employed in working for books, taking heads of considerable persons, and engraving all new pictures with greater haste than care. This makes

makes more elaborate works a fecondary employment; they depend on the first for income and support, and consequently give it that time which the second only ought to possess: numbers of these artists, that are at present quite unknown, would presently break forth in a blaze of merit; were they but supported for a few years. This is more or less the case in all the arts, but we feel the effects of it more in this than any other. The exhibitions, offering an opportunity for displaying their abilities on whatever subjects they please, have remedied a part of this evil, by firing them with some emulation, whereas, before, they had none, and without emulation there can be no active merit.

I am, dear S I R,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

The Present State of SCULPTURE.

THE superiority of the antients is in nothing more superior than in sculpture; how near we have arrived to them in painting, can only be judged from analogy with this art, in which they exceed us so entirely; but as such a way of judging is by no means decisive, we have more reason to submit in the one than in the other.

Italy in this art, as in that of painting, carries a great superiority over all the other nations of Europe; the French have produced some good artists, but none that can be compared with the Italians. England has been very backward, for of a few of real genius, not all were born or educated in this island.

It is an art that can never arrive at any perfection, without much encouragement and expence: for who of individuals in this country will be at a very considerable expence

expence for works not excellent: a painter's materials, comparatively speaking, cost him nothing; if he performs a bad work, which nobody buys, he loses nothing but his labour; but this is not the case with the Statuary; his block of marble is a considerable expence to him; so that some artists would be ruined with two or three failures; this precludes much useful exercise; the painter tries many experiments on colours at a trifling cost; the sculptor can try none; for as to working in plaister, by way of studying, it will never make an artist, for want of exercising the chissel; drawing with black lead will never produce a Titian, a Guido, or a Correggio.

In order to produce good sculptors, there should be an academy for that purpose alone; in which all artists, that had discovered genius enough to raise strong hope of future excellence, should be allowed to study in marble at the expence of the fund: this would raise great artists; but at present none can ever be

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employed in works that will admit of a display of genius, but those whose reputation is fixed; as they alone will run away with all the employment of the kingdom.

Monuments are almost the only instance of much employment that will admit of genius; chimney-pieces, if executed on a different stile from the mere orders of architecture, might do the same; but by admitting tablets, you have basso relievos, which are something. The former are generally executed by artists of great note, and whose fame is fixt; the latter are under the direction of mechanics, mere marble cutters. As to private employment, there are very few instances; the nobility, and men of large fortunes, seek eagerly for antiques, but seldom employ the moderns, unless of very great note. — Upon the whole, I think these are reasons which account for our inferiority to the French and Italians in the art of sculpture, in both which nations it has been much more encouraged. The

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The following are the principal artists, whose works do us honour.

W I L T O N,

Aims in all his works at grace and beauty; he has in very few, if any, attempted the fierce stile of manly or painful expression. That his genius is more turned to the beautiful than the sublime, will appear very evidently from contemplating his principal works. He never exceeded the copies he took for lord Pembroke, of the Venus de Medicis, and the Apollo of Belvidere, in which the delicacy is so great, as to do no slight honour to the abilities of the artist; the attitudes are also preserved with much grace and elegance.

R Y S B R A C K.

An artist of great abilities; his expressions are not only strong but varied; with a boldness in the manner that never

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fails of striking the spectator: at the same time, in the representation of grace and female beauty he is not deficient.

N O L L I K E N S,

Very striking in his attitudes, and bold in his expression, but his works too often want correctness.

S C H E E M A K E R,

Executed many works of a merit inferior to his genius; but his best pieces are proofs of his abilities. His expression is animated and various.

These artists support the character of the English school; and from the attention which has been given by his present Majesty, to encourage this art with that of painting and architecture, by founding a royal academy; we may hope for a more numerous list with more British names in it. In this article, as well as painting, the Society for the encourage-

ment

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ment of arts, manufactures and commerce, led the way by their premiums, and exhibitions; *they* awakened the attention of the publick to the fine arts; and kindled an emulation, which has since been attended with such excellent effects; but as patronage and encouragement are now in the hands that can best support them, we have reason to hope, that the arts will be carried in this age to as high a degree of perfection, as they will ever attain in this country.

LET-

L E T T E R XXV.

The Present State of Musick.

IN musick the Italians have surpassed the rest of Europe more than in any other art: France and Germany have produced a few painters that may be classed among the Italian masters; but the musicians of the first are despised every where but at home, and those of the second adopt principally the Italian manner. All Europe except France is supplied by Italian musicians. And among the rest, England enters so fully into that stile that we have no musick but Italian; Handell indeed struck out a manner of his own, but it was a graft upon the Italian.

That composer was a real and an original genius; some of his works have been admired with the sincerest applause in Italy: and in the bold, sublime exertions of his arts, particularly in his chorus's, he is as great as imagination can conceive; but it is wholly in a stile peculiar to his
own

own school. As a performer on the organ, his merit was undoubted.

Since the death of that great man, we have been a mere colony from Italy; all the great fingers that have figured on our theatres have been Italians, except a few good voices, prostituted to the bawling of ballads to entertain the mob. By borrowing so freely from the Italians, by using no other music, and forming ourselves entirely upon that system, we have carried music to as great a height as it is capable of reaching. We have numerous composers of our own, and other parts of the world, that make London their constant residence; and we have many of the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, that Italy and Germany have produced.

But there is a very considerable party in this country who strenuously assert, that music died with Handell; the grave, and forcible stile of his Oratorios was that of nature, that the *manner* we have at present among us is the mere tricks of execution, that music being most preferred,

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red, that is most difficult to execute; the performers reputation for this trivial work, being more attended to, than making strong impressions on the minds of the audience by the force of melody. There is some truth in these assertions, but that truth is carried to absolute extravagance. Some pieces of music have certainly been published (too many) in which the masters have attended principally to the execution of the performers; and I readily allow, that a difficult and rapid execution is too much studied in most of our performers; but I can never agree, that the present music does nothing more than raise these quirks of execution. On the contrary, I think, that we have much new music, in which the composer addresses himself immediately to the passions, and with the utmost success. And that this effect, which is the result of a real simplicity in the music, is not confined to the works of a few masters; I mention numerous airs in favourite Operas, by masters now living in Italy, which meet with the greatest

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est applause at the Haymarket, in which nothing reigns but the most perfect ease, and the most native simplicity. This shews, that the taste of the audience is by no means corrupt.

But the truth is, the present stile of composing is in many instances that of elegant nature; in which ease and simplicity are most happily mixed with more elaborate ideas.

What are the Operas which have met of late years with the greatest applause? *La Buona, Viginola, and La Schiava.* And it is worthy of remark, that these are both works of incomparable merit; of such native and genuine excellence, as to derive not their fame from the *execution* of the performers, or from any vitiated taste in the audience; let the admirers of the older stile in music assert, that the compositions which they cry up, have more simplicity and more nature in them than we find in the airs of these Operas; the publick admiration of which in Italy, as well as in England, shews, that the present

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sent taste is pure, and by no means that child of frivolousness, which some writers would have us imagine.

These Operas are not only standard favourites, but what are the airs in them the most applauded? Why those that possess every kind of merit: pieces so adapted to please and delight the human mind, that they make the way immediately to the soul; seizing the attention not of the connoisseur only, but of the unlearned ear; and forcing admiration as much from those who understand, as from others who do not understand music. *Caro Amor*, is in my humble opinion the greatest effort of musical genius, that ever issued from mortal man. Every note of this divine song, sinks into the very soul: nothing is sacrificed to execution; all is plainness and simplicity, but it is the simplicity of the graces, and the plainness of the most luxuriant imagination. This air alone is sufficient to retrieve the character of the age, from the aspersions which frivolous writers have cast on it; and the reception it meets with

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with shews, that the audience have the taste to discern genuine merit, and the feeling to applaud it.

Ab quegli occhi, is another instance of amazing abilities in composition. Piccini was certainly inspired when he set this air. If ever the true comic powers of music were exerted in union with the most astonishing grace and elegance it is here; such amazing expression in this stile was never known before. The music which accompanies

Ab quegli occhi,

And

Non mi fate più parlar;

But above all,

Non mi fate vergognar,

is in the very highest stile of exquisite expression: and sung either in the comic or pathetic has charms inexpressible.

The

The air

E pur bella la Cecchina

Is incomparable.

The duet *Non scriveſte*, &c. has likewiſe uncommon merit: particularly

E un ſegno è quello:

What amazing delicacy and elegance is found in

Alla larga, &c.

In which all the comic humour that can be infuſed in a compoſition is united with ſuch a maſterly ſtrain of expreſſion, as can no where be equalled.

Theſe inſtances are ſufficient to ſhew, that the applauſe which theſe Operas meet with, and I dare aver will ever meet with in London, is owing to merit of the moſt undoubted ſtamp: not the modern tricks of thoſe muſicians, who ſacrifice every thing to execution, as we are told by ſome perſons, but founded on the nobleſt

bleſt appeals to the moſt enlightened and feeling nature.

But let it not be imagined, that I confine the merit of muſic in England to the works of a compoſer at Naples: *Piccini* is an immortal genius, who I prefer readily to moſt other muſicians; but let us not forget, that we poſſeſs a *Giardini*, a *Bach*, an *Abel*; three compoſers, whoſe merit is equally acknowledged in Italy as in England; have publiſhed many works of the greateſt and rareſt beauty; full of genuine taſte, and native elegance; their pieces are exertions of genius, that attack with powerful notes the heart of all that feel: but ſetting aſide the more laboured compoſitions, let me mention too ſlight efforts of *Giardini's* muſic, *Voi Amante*, and *Fido Spoſa*, which are ſlight ſtrokes that diſplay the amazing elegance of his imagination. — It is unneceſſary to mention the performance of this artiſt on the violin; all Europe allows him to be her firſt player on that inſtrument; and is one inſtance, out of ſeveral, of the great height

T to

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to which this elegant art has attained in England.

Pugnani is a composer of genuine merit; there is more originality in his works, than in those of many performers that have pleased more.

Guglielmi has published many works in England uncommonly pleasing; there is a grace and ease in his compositions that are striking.

Vento is the author of some pieces that do him infinite honour: throughout all his works there reigns a taste and elegance which never were exceeded. His being the author of *Caro Amor* (though inserted in an Opera of Piccini's) would alone have immortalized his name.

Dr. Burney has published several works of genuine excellence:—He is original and learned.

Dr.

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Dr. Arne has in several of his pieces displayed a pleasing elegance of taste, which has rendered him a favourite composer with the publick: but I must not, in justice to the others I have named, omit remarking, that this composer too often borrows in a manner not wholly justifiable.

There are many other musicians whose works tend to prove, that the reflections cast on the present age by several writers are illiberal and unjust; musick in England is richly cultivated by men of taste and genius; they address themselves to the passions; they make their way to the heart; and though some are too much inclined to shew off in a brilliancy of execution, yet are they, in other respects, equally proficient in the expression of a noble and genuine simplicity. Where can be found a greater fire of execution than in Giardini, but in his compositions are passages of the purest taste.

You must excuse, Sir, these criticisms, they are the expressions of my own feelings,

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ings, not the dictates of a judge. I always consider musick, as an art that addresses itself to the passions; if it does not, I think it worthless; and as such, we have all a right to our criticisms, as well as the most learned judge.

I am, &c.

LETTER

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LETTER XXVI.

The Present State of GARDENING.

HITHERTO, Sir, I have treated of those only among the fine arts, in which foreigners either rival or excel us; but in gardening (which in the noble stile we see it practised in England, ought certainly to be ranked in the number of those arts) this country far exceeds all Europe.

The wonders of art which so surpris'd the last century in the desarts of Versailles, are now viewed by Englishmen with the utmost indifference: their taste is grown so correct, and has taken its bias so immediately from beautiful nature, that they can see no aim or end in strait lines, and compass work. Walks, lawn, woods, water, hedges and trees all squared, and cut into mathematical figures; or distorted into every form but that of nature.

This was the taste in England in juster ideas, confessedly however in imitation of the Chinese, arose among us, and we had

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the courage to lay aside a taste which was absurd, though the child of many ages, and take hints from nature in the freest, to adopt them in the boldest manner.

By a correct and masterly imitation of that great original of all the arts; we have undoubtedly carried gardening to such an amazing pitch of excellence, that it would be preposterous to deny it the title of a *fine art*. It has been made susceptible of all the graces, pleasure and instruction, that can arise from the happiest exertions of a creative imagination: its power is greater than those of poetry or painting: it has both pain and pleasure at command; and brings every object in nature into subordination, in producing the greatest effects. A well invented garden has been compared, not unaptly, to an epic poem; and it is certainly the original, of which painting pretends but to be the copy. Throughout its operations, it admits a variety that is astonishing, and in which none of the other fine arts are comparable to it.

In

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In this new walk of Genius Britain is unrivaled; the other nations of Europe have not dared to imitate her. She has carried the improvement into the remotest parts of her territories, almost into every village, before any other nation in Europe has thought of emulating her in so great a career. They all yet form even new gardens by the line and compass, as if their peripatetic amusements were only to teach their children mathematicks.

The celerity with which this new taste has spread through these kingdoms, does infinite honour to the sense and feeling of the nation. No sooner were a few gardens executed upon the plan of nature, than the whole, with one voice, proclaimed the propriety of the idea, and the spirit of the imitation; all the old remnants of those barbarisms that had so long disgraced the island; all ponds in the shape of bricks, custards, and basons, all grass plats, struck with the compass; all trees drawn up in battalia like chessmen; or clipt into monsters; all these monsters of

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grimace,

grimace, which had kept possession of the world from the time of the first Romans ; and probably from the Assyrians themselves ; all were at once discarded ; the reign of nature began ; and man discovered, that to imitate her in their gardens, was as necessary as in their poems, their pictures, their statues, and their music.

It has had some appearance of the rage of fashion ; and doubtless many persons fell into the new taste, that had not sense enough to condemn the old, because their neighbours did ; but it is a fashion that will be as durable as the character of the nation ; we had a rage for Chinese architecture, to the disgrace of half the kingdom, but that monster was the favourite but of a day, though followed at much expence ; true taste regained her empire ; and we were presently ready to laugh at, what we had lately so much admired ; but the new mode of gardening has held some years, increases every

every day, and seems to have laid fast hold on all, whose taste and ideas can be respected by the multitude.

Persfield, Hagley, the Leffowes, Stow, Painshill ! What exertions of genius are these. Persfield is the Illiad, Hagley the Ænead, Stow the Gerusalemma Liberata of gardening.

The extent of this noble system of imitating nature, through the gardens of these kingdoms, has been immense ; there is scarcely an inclosure in them, that has ever carried the name of *garden*, but what has undergone a thorough reform ; every man is now sensible, that he has but one object to pursue ; to copy nature as exactly as the nature of his ground will allow ; or, in other words, to conceal art as much as possible.

But this imitation of nature is not a wild, vague idea of perfection which does not exist ; or imitating that nature which we see in every field ; it consists in giving the ground as strong an appearance of a pleasing

pleasing landscape as it will admit; ornamenting it, but ever in subordination to the natural beauties: much is effected by mere lawning, instead of the disagreeable boundaries of strait hedges, meeting you every five minutes; when a tract of land is uninterfected by lines, you command all the natural swells and falls, which being kept in a fine verdure, are of themselves alone among the greatest beauties of water.

To this principal object of lawn, the accompaniments are wood, water and buildings; the two former necessary; in the wood is but one rule, banish strait lines; whether the trees or in thick knots, or open straggling ones, or whether they are filled up with thickets of underwood, they are in every way agreeable. With water it is the same; it must be an irregular lake or a river. With these three requisites lawn, wood, and water, you cannot fail of having an agreeable scene; but to render it striking and

and expressive, much art is necessary in the disposition of the parts. Buildings here come first in; they are the rock on which most artists in this walk split. The great point is to adapt them to the scene; to make them seem a part of it, and necessary to finish its beauty.

Rocks, are in those scenes that are designed to produce the sublime; of admirable use; but we have no instance in England of their being used with advantage: the expence of them in a magnitude sufficient to impress terror, or at least awe, would I suppose be too great.

The variety to be thrown into gardening, by using wood, water, lawn, and buildings with true taste, we see in the exertions of many gentlemen in England; every expression of which, painting, sculpture, or poetry, are capable, are in their greater traits found in this art. You raise at your command the most gay and cheerful ideas; you strike him with wonder at the magnificence of your objects; you over-

overwhelm his faculties by the terror raised by your sublime scenes. You sink his soul in melancholy at your desire. What can poetry or painting pretend to more? Those who talk of the instruction, the morality, and so forth, conveyed by the fine arts, speak with the taste only of mathematicians: the end of the arts is to please — their means delusion. They address the passions; they speak to the heart, and all their exertions ought to tend, by whatever means, whether the sublime or the beautiful, at last

To take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium.

But what have morals, religion, knowledge or instruction to do in this plan? What do they produce, but such monsters as Didactic poems — pictures and statues of crucifixes and last suppers. — And in this idea, gardening, when in the hands of a master, enters with great force.

But

But here I must remark, that unfortunately for the character of this art, it is made in numerous situations very different to speak the same language: this is the result of employing publick gardeners in forming ornamented grounds: the variety we find in the other arts, is owing to the exertions of numerous geniuses, each of whom strikes out a stile and manner of his own. But these publick improvers, most of them of the same school, carry their own ideas into every man's ground that employ them: the result of which is what we see throughout the kingdom, a sameness that is intolerable. Here and there you see these artists execute a garden with incomparable skill; that is, their genius was peculiarly adapted to work upon such ground. But when they come to what is essentially different, then a sameness must inevitably be found.

A strong confirmation of this reasoning is, that the finest, most natural, and most expressive

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preffive gardens in this kingdom, are those which have been executed by the owners themselves; who living constantly on the spot, and having affimulated their ideas to the place, considered all the parts with attention, and studied in every spot the character of the ground, go to work with a taste and spirit unrivalled. The Lef-fowes, Hagley, Painshill, and Persfield are all strong instances of this.

The great importance in this art of imitating nature closely, according to the genius of the place, may well be conceived, from considering the astonishing beauty and sublimity of many spots that are now found as nature left them: some of them exquisitely beautiful, but others more remarkable for the grandeur and sublimity they contain. Many of these places, generally from the advantage of water, hill and rock in the utmost perfection, exceed the most studied productions of art. These places are the schools for a gardener to study in; there he should form

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form his imagination with the view of the great expression: the inferior parts of the canvass he will easily fill up.

I am, dear SIR,

Truly yours.

LET-

L E T T E R XXVII.

SOCIETIES, ACADEMIES, &c.

THE Royal Society was for near a century the only one in England, which made any figure in the learned or the useful world. Paris has long boasted her academies, for all the fine arts, the sciences, and for polite literature; but London was confined to science alone. In the present age, which has so generally been the period of improvement in this kingdom, new foundations have arisen, the principal of which are, the *Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce*; supported by private subscriptions; and the *Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture*, founded by his present Majesty; I shall confine myself to making a few observations on the former.

There is no instance in Europe of any private society, supported only by its own contributions (Dublin, the father of them all,

all, receives an annual grant from Parliament) promoting, encouraging and rewarding all the arts, both useful and ornamental, with such spirit, as we have seen in this. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, the colonies, mechanics, arts of all sorts, &c. &c. all have tasted the effects of their bounty. Their premiums and bounties have been extremely numerous, very liberally dispensed, and in general with judgment—Some instances there are to the contrary, particularly the Land-carriage fish scheme; but the number is not great, and those who look for a constant unfailing propriety of conduct, in any body of men, look for what never did, nor ever will exist.

The annual subscription of the members amounting to two guineas each, has enabled this society, since the year 1755, when they first gave premiums, to execute many publick services of the most eminent kind, by munificent donations, to the amount of more than *threescore thousand pounds*.

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The fine arts they have patronized with unremitting attention from the beginning of their institution; and with the greatest judgment possible; by ranking all claimants in classes according to their age, sex and rank; and offering premiums for every sort of drawing, and all the exertions that can be made in *design*; from the most simple single figures in the plainest stile, to the composition of historic paintings and landscapes. There is scarcely a young artist in Britain, that has not received some benefit or other by this general encouragement. The same attention has been given to statuary, and every branch of the art of sculpture; this has formed a correct taste, and kindled a spirited emulation among a vast number of young artists, who would otherwise have remained without encouragement, and unknown.

The impartiality with which the society has ever distributed their premiums, is the foundation of that effect, their endeavours to be useful has been crowned with: all performances are sent in, and their merits decided

decided without the artists being known; nothing but a mark being fixed to each picture, drawing or statue, with a corresponding one sealed up in a letter with the name; and the letters are not opened till the decision is past. This decisive impartiality is ever attended with the strongest effect that can result from any encouragement.

In manufactures their measures have been equally sensible, and attended with great success; numerous improvements have, under their patronage, been made in all sorts of machines, that facilitate the various operations of weaving, knitting, spinning, &c. &c. and many new ones invented, which have been introduced in large into whole manufactories. Of these machines there is a large collection in the Repository of the Society. Drawing patterns for various manufactures; and new discoveries in those sciences, on which various fabriks depend, such as chymistry, mineralogy, &c. come into their

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 their plan, and have been much accelera-
 ted by their bounties.

In their attention to commerce and the colonies, they have acted with a truly munificent spirit, offering very considerable premiums and bounties for the encouragement of staple commodities; among other instances, let me produce the raising vines in America, for raisins and wine: cinnamon; iron from black sand; pot ash; pearl ash; cochineal; sturgeon; raw silk; scammony; opium; silk grass; safflower; logwood; olive trees; aloes; barilla; hemp, silk cocoons; raw silk, half a crown a pound; sarsaparilla; nitre; cobalt; provincial gardens; these and other instances, in which they have offered considerable premiums, shew an extent and understanding in their views, which do them no slight honour.

This was a field that had been strangely neglected by the legislature and the government; for except some very insufficient bounties on the importation of timber, hemp, pitch and tar, no measures had

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had been taken to render the above-mentioned articles, staples in the colonies, which was an inexcusable neglect, while the colonies were running into manufactures for want of better employment. In such a season, to give their attention to this very important object of national policy, and with such effect, was an high strain of real patriotism.

In agriculture also, there is the greatest reason to congratulate this country, on the attention which the society has given to almost all its operations: it has particularly been solicitous to promote the culture of madder, a dyeing root, for which we pay to Holland annually near two hundred thousand pounds: five hundred pounds per annum have for some years been appropriated to this use, which is such a princely encouragement, that I question whether the annals of all the societies in Europe can, united, produce so noble a testimony of munificence. No other object, in which information is received of expected advantage from similar

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 encouragement, is neglected: wherever
 the society apprehend they can, with any
 prospect of success, interfere their endea-
 vours to render any object, any mode of
 culture, any new plant, general, they em-
 brace the occasion with eagerness, and pur-
 sue it with unremitting ardor. A new
 grass, called Burnet, was discovered un-
 der their auspices, and it has been propa-
 gated in consequence through all Europe:
 very many English farmers, of all classes,
 if we may believe Mr. Young's excellent
 work, his Tour through England, have
 adopted the culture, and found infinite use
 in it. — Two sorts of cabbages, which
 resemble turneps, have been found out
 by the same means, and been spread to
 great advantage through this kingdom.
 These and similar pursuits shew, that the
 attention of the society has not only me-
 rit in the design, but also in the effect:
 nor are these the only instances to be pro-
 duced; new food, and cheaper methods
 of fattening swine, have been discovered;
 and many very ingenious trials published,
 to

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to decide the distinct merits of the broad-
 cast and drill husbandry.

But the object, in which they have been
 of most service to agriculture, is the in-
 vention and perfecting several machines
 subservient to it, which have proved of
 universal use: the society have constantly
 offered very considerable premiums for the
 invention of numerous implements of all
 kinds, and they have been attended with
 success, much greater than could reasonably
 have been expected. Among other instan-
 ces, let me name a windmill for threshing
 corn, which with two men does the work
 of five and twenty; a plough that turns
 three furrows at once, with only the draft
 of four horses; and upon so simple a con-
 struction, and at the same time so strong,
 as to be proper for the use of common
 farmers; a draining plough for grass lands,
 which turns a furrow as clean as any spade
 12 inches deep, and as many wide, in the
 most neat and masterly manner. A ma-
 chine for slicing turneps, in order to feed
 neat cattle, which does many tons in a few

U 4 hours

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hours. A machine for cutting chaff, by means of which, those counties where chaff cutting is not common, may have the advantage of the practice, without their labourers being accustomed to the work. A double trenching plough, which turns land a foot deep, burying the turf. Several drill ploughs, which perform all the works of ploughing, sowing and harrowing, at one and the same time: some of these ploughs are complex and expensive, but others are strong, simple, and cheap; and several horse hoes of a peculiar construction adapted to hoeing, between the rows of corn and turneps. A variety of hand mills for grinding corn, &c. &c.

Now, Sir, you may easily conceive, that such a repository of most original and useful machines, open to the inspection of all the world that comes to London, cannot fail of being of most important use to the agriculture of this kingdom. That they have really been attended with such effects, we know by the great number
made

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made from them, and sent to all parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Plantations.

But these are not the only efforts made by the society for advancing their country in general improvement. In mechanics they have offered considerable premiums; among other objects, for an engine for polishing plate glass, &c. and had a model sent of one, which for simplicity and ingenuity of invention is equal to any thing of the kind ever discovered. A madder mill; a machine for extracting water out of ships; fire engines; mills, &c. &c. and in most of these articles they have met with great success.

They also contributed considerably towards several surveys of counties; and thro' their patronage some maps were published, that do no slight honour to their cause.

Other societies, in different cities of Europe, have been employed in similar undertakings, though none in such extensive ones as these; but what is peculiar
to

to that of London, is the spirit with which they prosecute whatever they adopt. Their subscription amounts to between three and four thousand pounds a year, which enables them to be extremely liberal in their rewards, and to throw out premiums with a munificence that is truly noble.

But before I conclude, allow me, Sir, to remark, that the great reputation gained by this body of patriots throughout all Europe and America; the numerous benefits they have done their country; and the liberality with which they have prosecuted so many undertakings,—all this effected with so small a sum as three or four thousand pounds a year; what a satire is this upon so many monarchs in possession of the revenues of kingdoms, and yet do nothing of this; or at least make contemptible efforts. What likewise are we to say to our parliaments, who in threescore years have granted above five hundred millions of money, and yet forgotten the objects now in the society's view! Who at this day, after seeing such great exertions

ons in that respectable body of individuals, have never granted a shilling to promote their publick spirited views!

As I have said thus much in praise of the society, I shall mention one circumstance, in which they have been strangely deficient; I mean, the not publishing their transactions, without this essential attendant of such an institution, all the good they do is partial: if they discover a new machine useful in manufactures or agriculture; if they are informed of methods of accelerating the work in our fabrics, or in the cultivation of the earth; whatever knowledge they gain, or acquisition they make—in order to its being attended with general utility, it should be made publick; the very mention of this requisite is sufficient; the propriety of it must strike every one, and the known practice of all other societies shews the universal opinion and practice. But instead of acting in this manner, the society publishes nothing regularly; first in one newspaper, then in another; now in a magazine,

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zine, then in a pamphlet; one year in one book, then in another; and in none with regularity; in a word, no publication includes their transactions, none contains plates and descriptions of all their machines: the publick in all parts of the British dominions, London only excepted, are in ignorance of their transactions. This is the greatest blemish in the institution; and a fatal one it is; much is it to be wished, that they would go back to the year 1755, and in regular order publish a short narrative of each year's proceedings; with all the memoirs at large, as they have honoured; and plates with descriptions of all the machines they have acquired, in consequence of bounties or premiums. Such a work, hereafter continued according to materials, would be an ample and lasting testimony of the utility of the institution, and render the effects of it far more beneficial than at present.

I am, SIR,

&c.

LET-

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LETTER XXVIII.

The Present State of the THEATRE.

IT has been more than once said, *if you would study the taste of a people resort to their theatres*; and there is some justness in the idea; for a polished refined people, will be so in their theatric entertainments, and barbarism will also be seen on the stage, in a nation backward in general improvements.

The theatres in London contain as faithful copies of the manners of our people, as can any where be found in the world. This merit must be kept distinct from that of being supported by the productions of great original genius. Our stage has been represented unfairly at a low ebb, because we have not writers equal to Shakespeare, Johnson, Congreve, &c. but the great merit possessed at present of so many plays, being true and real transcripts of the present manners, ought to exempt it from this general reproach.

I readily

I readily agree, that the age has produced very few theatrical writers of great and genuine merit; few of those original genius's that exhibit worlds of their own; but this is not peculiar to the stage, we feel the same want in every branch of poetry.

That the distinction above made is just, we may see by the superior merit of our comic to our tragic writers; the latter is a walk of composition, which requires the true original, poetic fire; but the former meet with great success, by the mere painting of common characters, provided it be executed with wit or humour. We have in this age good writers of comedy, yet make not the least pretension to poetry. A quick and penetrating eye in discerning the distinctions of character—a talent at catching the ridiculous side of every one; with some humour to dress them up in the comic taste, and a little invention for the detail of incidents and plot; these qualities are not difficult to be found; and we accordingly see comedies brought

brought on the stage, almost every winter, that have a good share of merit in them, describing the humours and complexion of the times.

The stage in this age can fail thro' the mere want of genius, never of encouragement; for no branch of writing, nor the practice of any of the arts, is near so profitable as exertions in this way. Great merit is sure of a most ample reward: for a play that takes tolerably, will pay the author six or seven hundred pounds, sometimes more; and we have seen a fertile muse entertain the town with two or three in a winter: hence the stage is the Peru of the English, as well as of the French poets. And as the publick decide, the poet is sure of having his reward proportioned to his merit. This is very different in other branches of literature, and the arts. While such a system of reward is in being, the publick ought never to find fault with managers, on account of a paucity of excellent original plays; since nothing but a want

a want of genius in the writers can occasion it.

The theatrical entertainments of this age in general have much merit, in painting the manners of the time; in a general urbanity of composition, in decency, and in elegance. In a word, the national character is supported on the theatres with honour: they yield an entertainment that would not disgrace the politest times, or the most select audience. The vices and follies of the age are laughed at in an easy liberal manner; and subjects improper for the stage are banished from it, tho' they yet continue to disgrace some of the European theatres. The music is pleasing, some of it good. The performers have merit. The scenery of numerous pieces magnificent; the dresses admirable; and the drawing, tho' by no means equal to that of the opera, is seldom offensive, but has sometimes much merit. All these circumstances conspire to render the theatres of London an entertainment superior to most similar ones in Europe:—and the

managers

managers are enabled to make greater exertions than any where else to be met with, from the prices of the seats being double, treble, and quadruple what they are in other countries.

In respect of performers, this age has been infinitely more fertile than any one known in Britain. Garrick is a great and a truly original genius, having arrived at that amazing degree of excellence, that would consecrate him to immortality in any art or profession: for, on duly considering the characters that have been left of the performers famous in other periods of dramatic history, we may venture to assert, that none have equalled him by many, very many degrees. His universality of imitation, grasping alike both comedy and tragedy, and being equally excellent in both, is an instance no other actor ever yielded. His original performance of the characters in Shakespeare, threw a lustre on the works of that amazing genius, which they would otherwise never have been seen in.

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Mr.

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Mr. Quin, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Yates, Mr. King, and various other performers, have contributed to support the character of theatric merit. Upon the whole, the stage has been trod by actors and actresses of undeniable abilities; and such as have merit superior to those of any other period.

I shall conclude this letter with a few remarks on the theatrical writers, that have made the greatest figure in this age.

C O L M A N.

The great merit of this writer's pieces, is the resemblance which we constantly find between his characters and those of common life. In his plots he is seldom original, but has much merit in his way of treating them. His greatest success was with *the Jealous Wife*; in which there are numerous diverting incidents, some character, and a sprinkling of wit. *Polly Honeycomb* has merit; and the *Musical Lady* ridiculed with a good deal of humour, a foible

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foible that gained daily ground among the pretended admirers of music.

G A R R I C K.

Has infinite merit in all his theatric pieces: there is a vein of genuine humour, of easy wit; a quick conception of character, a most happy expression of it, and as much invention as is necessary to set all off to the best advantage. *Lethe, the Lying Valet, Miss in her Teens, Doll Snip, The Male Coquette*, and the *Clandestine Marriage*, with several slighter efforts of his muse, all prove the justness of this character. Never did any writer catch a more lively idea of the characters of mankind, than this most entertaining writer. Nor are these pieces the only ones in which he has greatly excelled; besides various miscellaneous poems, he is the author of numerous epilogues and prologues, so amazingly full of wit and humour, that nothing have ever pleased an audience more; nor did ever greater applause attend the more professed works of greater attention

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and care, than these slighter efforts of ge-
nuine wit.

H O A D L E Y.

The *Suspicious Husband* is the best co-
medy that has been produced in this age ;
pity that the author should have confined
his talents to the composition of a single
work. It displays in the strongest man-
ner the true laughable comic stile ; the
lively spirited original character ; fertility
incident ; and animated conduct, which
keeps the attention of the audience on the
wing, and commands never-failing ap-
plause. The only fault in the play is, the
resemblance of the character of Strickland
to that of Kiteley.

M U R P H Y.

Some of the pieces of this writer have
undoubted merit : his greatest excellence
is in the conduct of a plot : his comedies
are full of what the French call le jeux de
theatre ; this has a fine effect in quicken-
ing

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ing the attention of the audience : nor is
Mr. Murphy at all wanting in character ;
he introduces the fashionable follies in well
delineated characters, and some of them
original. The *Way to keep him*, and *All
in the wrong*, are his most capital perfor-
mances.

B I C K E R S T A F F.

Has had the honour of introducing a
new species of theatric entertainment on
our stage, of which the idea is taken from
the French Ballats : music is introduced
in the most agreeable manner possible ;
and in the *Maid of the Mill*, it is excel-
lent music ; the success that piece has met
with, shews, that the mere English audi-
ence can relish other compositions than a
Scotch ballad, if it is laid before them ;
but the popularity of those in a vulgar
stile, arises from continued efforts to please
the gallery.

CUMBERLAND.

There is a bold freedom, and a strength of painting in the characters of this gentleman's comedies, that make them much more entertaining on the stage than in the closet. His originality is an undoubted merit.

F O O T E.

Is perhaps the truest portrait painter which our country has produced; his pieces are all just transcripts from the manners of the age, caught with infinite quickness, and expressed in the happiest warmth of nature and truth. That he is an admirable master of ridicule can never be denied; and the vein of wit that runs through his pieces, is rich and luxuriant.

There are other theatric writers of merit, but these support very well the reputation of the age, and generally entertain us every season with some new piece, to laugh fashionable follies out of countenance.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXIX.

The Present State of Patronage among the Great; Men of LETTERS, ARTISTS, &c. their REWARDS.

THE present state of patronage and literary reward in this country is a subject so delicate, that I did not intend to touch on it in the present correspondence; but you request it with so much earnestness, that I shall not defer it longer.

In all ages of the world, those princes who have gained the greatest reputation, are such as most patronized authors, and the arts. This is not to be wondered at, for the gates of the temple of fame being in their custody, it is not surprising, that they should most readily admit such as were most favourable to their cause. This patronizing quality among princes, has even had the effect of charity, to cover a multitude of sins: no white-washer equals a patronized poet or historian.

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Indeed,

Indeed, the Abbè du Bos has taken great pains to shew, that patronage and encouragement have never done any thing more than reward abilities already confessed, but never was able to create new ones, or even be the cause of their appearing. The history of the learned ages, both among writers and artists, it must be confessed, is oddly circumstanced; for it must be admitted, that the men whose fame for writing or practising the fine arts, has been carried the highest, lived and even published some of those great works, which have handed down their names with such eclat. But then it must on the contrary be admitted, that the rewards they met with for their first works, proved the greatest incentive to them in the production of succeeding ones; and the example brought forth many others, that would without it probably never have existed. It is therefore by no means just to assert, that patronage and encouragement have done little for learning and arts, since we may naturally attribute much to their influence;

influence; and probably more than has been apparent, for profit may have been the instigation to performances which have ended in fame.

We have three patrons in England, the king, the nobility, and the publick in general the booksellers; the two first to insure themselves fame; the last to gain profit. It is some ages since the Crown has been the patronizer of literature. Charles the First, munificently protected the arts; and Cromwell gave pensions to several useful writers. From his days to the present, we have not had a sovereign that cared two-pence, whether his subjects abounded with such writers as Pope, Swift, and Addison, or such as Oldmixon, Ralf, and Settle. I should however except his present majesty, who has given more rewards to merit than half a score of his predecessors; but I must remark, that the system of patronage requires more than a few pensions to a select party; they should continue to be given, however sparingly,

to

to keep up the emulation of the whole body of writers.

Since his present majesty's accession, there have been several writers of merit rewarded. It may not be improper to mention on this occasion Mr. *Hume*, the historian; who, from a very private fortune, has been thrown to affluence by several very lucrative posts. Dr. *Cambell*, the best politician of the age, and one of our most useful writers, has obtained a post in the American department. The Rev. Mr. *Horne*, on the credit of his three tragedies, and a little politics, has obtained a pension. Lastly, Dr. *Johnson*, has been raised by the same hand, from a state by no means equal to his merit.

These are instances which in general do honour to the royal bounty, especially as it is among a people, who have not seen such in the memory of the oldest man, to speak in the stile of a vulgar proverb. But let me remark, that this patronage proceeds not on the plan of Lewis XIV. who gave handsome pensions it is true to
a few

a few great writers, but he also extended his bounty to others tho' in a smaller degree; many authors were on his establishment of literature, at 40, 50, 80, and 100 l. a year; by which there was a gradation allowed to merit, that could not but encourage it.

In England, the writers that are in want of such inconsiderable pensions, are too apt to dip into very dirty work, and render themselves in politicks obnoxious, not to the court alone, but to all moderate and discerning men; this conduct would lessen the number of those, to whom a royal bounty would be given with general approbation; and reduce the writers, who really should be patronized by a monarch, who has shewn himself a friend to literature and the arts, to a number inconsiderable; so that great fame of patronage might be gained at a small expence.

But here I cannot omit remarking, that many very ingenious men, who through necessity are driven to the press for a subsistence,

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 fistence, and who fall in consequence into
 a prostitution of their abilities; are very
 often rather to be pitied than condemned.
 The fault is more in their fortune than
 themselves; for the man who lives by his
 pen, and perhaps but sparingly, must ap-
 ply it to the most profitable purpose: here
 should come in royal patronage, to offer
 examples of reward to those, who, in that
 situation, instead of falling into the lowest
 views of booksellers, have published with
 an eye to reputation as well as profit; or
 at least kept free from the dirty ex-
 ertion of literature. Men whose ne-
 cessities bring them to write for bread,
 should on their first publications that dis-
 play real talents, be sought out, and by
 means of small annuities, kept from an
 entire dependance on booksellers; their
 talents would ever after be dedicated to sub-
 jects and exertions that would probably
 increase their reputation, instead of falling
 into the contraries; and genius's might be
 thus saved, and given with lustre to the
 world, who, but for such assistance, would
 never

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never have been known, nor ever deserved
 to be regarded.

Whatever the occasion is, that brings a
 man to depend on his literary talents for
 subsistence, it is much but, on the entering
 his career, he produces some work the
 effect of thought and leisure, which has
 a merit superior to his following produc-
 tions, the efforts of hunger and haste:
 it surely would be doing society in general
 no slight favour to step in, and turn such
 a man's talents into the production of
 useful works, instead of letting them fall
 the prey of a bookseller, to be prostituted
 to the lowest purposes. And if none were
 in this manner patronized but such as dis-
 covered real abilities, the expence would
 be very trifling.

It is impossible, that any person can
 bring up their children with views of esta-
 blishing them in the trade of an author:
 accident or caprice fill that whole corps.
 Young fellows of some education, but no
 profession, and less fortune: country school-
 masters, that are ambitious of shining in
 the

the capital instead of their schools, and various accidents, bring these men to know, that profit is made by writing; and when poverty impels them to exert an industry in something to preserve them from low employments, or from servitude, they commence authors; much to be pitied; and hardly to be condemned, even for successive meanness, which too often springs from necessity.

Many in the herd deserve encouragement; a support to keep them from such a dependence on their pen, as to take time and choice in their compositions. The honour of English literature require this attention; we should see the effects in the publication of many good books, instead of numerous bad ones. That there is real genius in this class cannot be doubted, for most of the works of this age, which will be read in the next with pleasure, and probably live as long as the English language, are the productions of authors who wrote, I will not say for bread, though several instances

would

would allow it, but certainly for an income.

It is no slight reproach to the patronage of this time, that Mr. *Smart* should be in prison for a small debt.

Some of the nobility have exerted themselves in favour of needy genius, with an attention and spirit that do them honour. Several of our peers are possessed of such great estates, and the presentation to so many livings, that they, independantly of any publick offices, have it much in their power, now and then, to do a generous action in this walk. The money is surely better spent than at Newmarket, or the Gaming-table. But those of the number that are in great posts have easier and larger means of being patrons; and some of them make a laudable use of such opportunities.

The public in general may be called the patron, when authors, make their appeal, either in printing by subscription, or publishing on their own account; and all things considered, this is much the most liberal manner

manner of making a man's literary abilities the means of maintaining him; for in this way the author remains perfectly independant, and is pretty sure of being encouraged proportionably to his fair merit. This was the method that Pope took to raise an income; Churchill practiced it with great success; but a great lawyer, now alive, carried it before his promotion to an amazing degree of profit.

The idea, that books printed for authors seldom have fair play through combinations of booksellers, I do not apprehend to be just, except with works of small value; such a combination to throw cold water on these books, would be able to prevent the sale of an indifferent work, but could never damp that of one whose merit was really great. The publick will have good books in spite of twenty trades.

It is much to be regretted that authors are not thus supported, for then the world would be plagued with few bad books, which are carried off at present by the arts of the trade; and they would be sure when they

they composed books of great merit, to be much better paid for their trouble than they are at present. But this system could never be completely executed, unless there was a publick institution or office, where books could be printed on the account of the authors, and fairly sold.

As to subscriptions, they have fallen into a discredit, because use has been made of them for books that have no merit — mere jobs to raise contributions without a pretence at merit; but when an author, who has been for some time known successfully to the publick, proposes a subscription, he generally in this country meets with a beneficial one.

As to booksellers, they must be considered in two lights; first treating with authors of considerable reputation, who have other means of support besides the pen; and secondly, with those whose absolute dependance is on their writings. With the former, I shall readily assert them to be the most munificent patrons by far, that the learned meet with in this
Y country.

country. It is true, the publick *buying* is the foundation of this ; but still the spirit and activity with which they prosecute their trade, pushes a much greater sale than otherwise would happen, and enables them consequently to give the author more considerable emoluments for his manuscripts. What considerable sums have been received by a Littleton ; a Robertson ; a Hume ; a Campbell ; a Burn ; a Young ; a Sterne ; &c ! Sums which have amounted in value, at least, to a moderate pension from the crown ; and this is a species and degree of encouragement, not to be found in many other countries where literature is much cultivated.

This patronage of the booksellers, or, more properly speaking, this trade between them and the authors, leaves the latter perfectly independant on the former ; as the sale is of a commodity, which if one does not buy another will ; he also enjoys a considerable advantage, without being indebted either to the Crown or the Great ; in a word, depending merely on his

his merit and the publick : this is a situation full of charms to an high spirited genius, who wishes to rely on himself, not others : and it must inspirit him to exert all his talents in producing works, that shall at the same time increase his fame, and add to his profit. — Of all other methods of authors being recompenced, this is the most honourable, and to him the most safe, easy, and independant. Such a writer (and yet I have heard them classed with authors who scribble for bread) I must esteem in a more creditable post, than one who receives a pension from the crown.

The advantages however which literature reaps from authors of merit, being able to support themselves in more affluence than their private fortune will allow, by means of selling their works to booksellers, is beyond all comparison more important than any thing attending the patronage of the great. A few of our nobility have, it is true, promoted some writers of merit, especially clergymen, by

Y 2 giving

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giving them livings; but the whole amount either of the value, or the benefit received by literature in general is trivial, in comparison with the noble effects that have flowed from the *patronage* of book-sellers; I use that term, purposely to shew that I think it merits it, as well as the trifling and sometimes invidious conduct which gives it to kings and the nobility.

In the reign of queen Anne, we had several noblemen whose merit as patrons was undeniably great; at the head of these was lord Somers, who never neglected any opportunity of promoting and rewarding writers of merit: he had great discernment, and no less benevolence and humanity: he found out authors of genius, however obscured by narrow circumstances, and never failed using every means to enrich and encourage them. The succeeding ministry of lords Oxford and Bolingbroke made, in this respect of countenancing men of letters, some amends for the political mischiefs they brought upon their country. To their honour we must
allow,

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allow, that the learned, both Whigs and Tories were countenanced, and many rewarded very genteely for their abilities in the republick of letters. Was an author, of twice the wit and parts of Swift, now to give himself half the airs of that famous poet, with the ministers of state of these days, he would be turned out of doors; but the Oxford ministry, with all their faults, paid an attention to literature, which would be sufficient to cover a multitude of sins.

But kings and princes are inexcusable, when they do not protect and reward men of genius: let them reflect on the characters of *August.* and *Lewis XIV.* Could any thing but the encouragement of all ingenuity, of all genius, of all application; could any thing else have gained them such maturity of fame? Their political actions were not only faulty; they were detestable; yet notwithstanding the blackest traits of character, do we find them handed down to us as the greatest of monarchs. This is the result of well re-

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warding those who can alone confer immortality. Surely therefore monarchs should through self-interest, if from no other motive, give a liberal encouragement to the arts, sciences, and literature; as a true road to that fame which is so flattering even to them.

LETTER

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LETTER XXX.

A Catalogue of the most celebrated WRITERS of the present Age, with Remarks on their WORKS.

THAT literature in general may be said to flourish in England in this age, I believe you will not deny; but I have not met with any accurate idea of this part of its merit drawn from such a review, as is necessary to be given of the authors, on whose works the national reputation most depends. It is for this reason I shall here lay before you a catalogue of the principal ones, with a few remarks on their works.

A K E N S I D E.

Besides several physical works of reputation, he published some poems that do him great honour. In his *Pleasures of Imagination* are some noble and true strokes of poetry; and his Odes are read with general pleasure.

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A N S T Y.

A N S T Y.

I shall not hesitate to assert, *The New Bath Guide* to be the work of the most humour that this age has produced: the vehicle of the wit is original; his characters admirably touched; the measure of the verse excellently adapted to the subject, and the incidents and descriptions worked up to a pitch of the ridiculous, that cannot fail of raising continued risibility. The other poems he has published are of much inferior merit.

A R M S T R O N G.

A writer of some reputation, but has too much affectation of peculiarity to lay the foundations of mature fame.

B A K E R.

His philosophical works are read with general approbation throughout Europe, particularly the following;

1. The

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- 1. *The microscope made easy*, 1742, 8vo.
- 2. *An attempt towards a natural history of the Polype*.
- 3. *Employment for the microscope*, 8vo. 1753.

B A R E T T I.

Has written a variety of works on Italian literature, which are well known; besides his travels, which have not the merit expected from them: there is no entertainment to the reader to know, whether signior Baretto thought a cook-wench at an inn was ugly or cross; whether his company in a stage coach were men or women, fat or lean, furlly or agreeable; whether the sailors on ship board cut coarse jokes with him; or, in fine, all the minutiae of a long journey among Spanish mule drivers, or walking pilgrims, which seem to have been the best company he kept in Spain. It is astonishing, that travellers should think the world so extremely

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tremely interested in every thing foreign, as to read travels with avidity, that let us into scarce any valuable circumstance of the countries travelled.—His works on the Italian literature and language are however of different merit, for they have been, and will continue to be of great use to this country, by bringing many into a knowledge of, and taste for Italian poetry.

The French language is so generally understood in this country, that Corneille, Racine, Boileau, &c. are read almost to the exclusion of Tasso, Ariosto, Dantè, Metastasio, and many other Italian poets, which is a most vile usurpation: our taste in good poetry would have been better, and more general, had the Italian poetry been as much read as the French; this was the case from Henry the Eighth's time to the end of James the First, and part of Charles's reign, during which period the fine accomplishment was Italian literature; but when the arms of the French, and the figure their monarch made as a patron of literature, called the attention of

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of all Europe, their language and writers usurped the rights of the Italian. Mr. Baretti's endeavours therefore to raise a new taste for this literature among us, was a meritorious attempt, and he has had success in it.

B E N T L E Y.

It is rather a reproach to the learning of the age, that this critic should be known more by a satirical expression of Pope's, than by the merit of his writings: his *Desperate Hook* did *slash* away some times at an undefensible rate, but he has in some remarks uncommon acuteness.

B E R K E L Y.

Bishop of Cloyne. Applied great parts to the strangest purposes; although he penetrated far into the regions of philosophy, and produced some works that have been admired all over Europe, *tar water* took possession of his mind, and engrossed that attention;

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attention, which should have been given to much more important purposes. But men of real genius must have their oddities, their strong peculiarities; it is only the mean line of parts, that sleeps on in a regular course and motion. As this writer's works have never been collected, it will amuse the reader to give him a list of them; as he may then examine the productions of so various a pen.

- 1. A Treatise of human understanding, 8vo.
- 2. On vision, 8vo.
- 3. Philosophical reflections and enquiries concerning the virtues of tar water, 8vo. 1744.
- 4. A discourse addressed to magistrates, &c. 1736.
- 5. A word to the wife; or an exhortation to the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland, 1749.
- 6. A Letter to the Roman Catholics of the diocese of Cloyne, 1745.
- 7. Maxims concerning patriotism, 1752.
- 8. The Querist, 1735.

9. Verses

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- 9. Verses on the prospect of planting arts and learning in America.
- 10. A proposal for the better supplying of churches in our foreign plantations, 1725.
- 11. A Sermon, 1732.
- 12. De Motu; five de motus principio & natura & de causa communicationis motuum, 1721.
- 13. An Essay towards preventing the ruin of Great Britain, 1721.
- 14. Farther thoughts on tar water, 1757.

B I R C H.

Was the author of very numerous works, and some of them useful; but had not the happy talents of rendering his writings generally pleasing; many of them are now little known, except in the libraries of the curious. He should have lived and wrote in Germany.

BLACK-

BLACKWELL.

One of the most pleasing writers which this or any age has produced; besides several other works of merit, he wrote the *Memoirs of the court of Augustus*, which will be read as long as the English language lasts. The narrative of events is so admirably intermixed with characters, and touches of painting, with so many striking reflections, and with such a general view of deducing profit to the present times, from the detail of what happened among the antients, that every one must find the work equally instructive and entertaining. By entitling his work *Memoirs*, and not a *History*, the author took the pleasing liberty of digressing as often as his fancy or his judgment led him; and of rendering his manner, and his diction, far the more lively; insomuch, that he produced a work, which in entertainment vied with the most fashionable romances.

BLACK-

BLACKSTONE.

His Commentaries on the laws of England are a work that will render his name immortal in this country. Perhaps the great merit, or at least the great reputation of this book, is much owing to the success with which the author has brought the former abstruseness of his subject down to common ideas; and a very great merit it is.

BLAIR.

His chronological works have great merit.

BORLACE.

A very useful writer and natural historian. He has confined himself chiefly to the natural history and antiquities of the county in which he lives, Cornwall, which enabled him to produce works far more useful and complete, than if he had more

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more extended the sphere of his enquiries; much is it to be regretted, that other writers do not follow his example, and give us complete descriptions of their respective counties as in their power to gain.

B R O W N E.

A writer of abilities, and in some of his works entertaining; but in all is a sacrificer at the shrine of party, and has in every page too much of the coxcomb in him; had he written nothing but the *Essays on the Characteristics*, and that on *Satire*, his reputation would have been much greater than it is, but he was so unfortunate, as to write himself out of reputation in pursuit of a bishoprick, which however he did not obtain.

B R O O K E.

This lady has written some Novels that vie with the best in our language. Her most

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most capital performance is *Lady Julia Mandeville*.

B R O O K E.

Equally original in merit and absurdity: his works shew him to possess both feeling and expression; but never was the same stream at once so clear and muddy; had he kept free of the cant of methodism, he would have succeeded in his *Fool of Quality*, and made it not only an original, but an agreeable work.

B U R K.

The most beautiful writer of the present age; an elegant but chaste imagination; an expression clear and animated; a knowledge boundless as science; with all the splendor of learning, and all the grace of cultivated fancy. These are accomplishments that shine in every page of his works, that catch the attention of

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all sorts of readers, and please with the same force that they instruct. His *Philosophical Enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, is by far the finest criticism that the present age has produced; it is full of the most original observations, that perhaps were ever thrown together in any work our language has produced; the author being one of those rare genius's that in every line thinks only for himself. And he has not only the felicity of being perfectly original in his ideas; but also the singular circumstance of demonstrating at the same time their propriety.—This will clearly appear, if we turn to the chapters, *The physical cause of love.—Why smoothness is beautiful.—Sweetness its nature.—Sweetness relaxing*;—and indeed the whole fifth part, which treats of the *efficient cause of the sublime and beautiful*.

His *Vindication of Natural Society*, written in the manner of the late lord Bolingbroke, is a most happy imitation of another's

ther's stile; and the arguments are not only lively but specious.

The political pamphlets attributed to him, are the best this age has produced; and every one, not blinded by party prejudice, must allow that they carry conviction in every page.

B U R T O N.

Profoundly learned, and equally ingenious.

B U R N.

A very able lawyer; his *Justice of the Peace* has met with the greatest success of any book published in this age; making the fortune not only of the author, but of the bookseller.

C A M P B E L L.

Equally famous for his candour, intelligence and precision: he may be

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ranked among the greatest politicians of this age ; and no one can hesitate to allow, that his writings in that class have enlightened the whole kingdom. The share he had in the Universal History alone made that work succeed, for the part he composed in it shines like a diamond in a dunghill. But in nothing is he more useful or original, than in ascertaining dubious points in maritime history ; of which his Lives of the Admirals are an inferior instance to the observations he has given on various voyages in Harris's collection ; and in the Modern Universal History, in the part which treats of the East Indies. This writer has also the uncommon felicity of being able to speak with candor of political personages now alive ; which is perhaps the most difficult task of all others in a free government.

C A R T E R.

This lady is not only a learned translator, but also a good poet : her little collection of

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of poems do her no less honour, than her valuable translations from the Greek, the French, and the Italian.

C A R T E.

Best known by his history of England, which is a laborious performance, and gains the writer more reputation at present, than it did at the time it first came out. The more histories we have, the more valuable the old ones that exceed the merit of the new.

C A M B R I D G E.

Ranks among the writers that do honour to the present age ; his poems are lively and ingenious. The *Scribleriad* original.

C H E S T E R F I E L D.

Writes poetry with the ease and freedom of a man of quality ; his lordship's sketches

350 LETTERS concerning the sketches that have been published in Doddsley's collection, are full of wit, and a most happy delicacy.

C H U R C H I L L.

Possessed of genius sufficient to gain a considerable poetic reputation, but unfortunately in circumstances too low to allow him to cultivate his talents in the manner a poet ought: he became a party writer for profit, and made all his poems, except his first, subservient to that design. He has been much abused on this account, but unjustly; for if a poet is poor, he must do that for an income which ought to be done for reputation: critics do not sufficiently consider, that starving is of much worse consequence than producing bad poems.

C L A Y T O N.

Bishop of Clogher. His writings have made a noise all over Europe; but they would

Present State of ENGLAND. 351 would have more merit was there less subtilty in them.

C O R K E,

Earl of, is an agreeable and entertaining writer, but too many passages of his works are full of a certain degree of self-sufficiency, which is inexcusable; and his intermixing party politicks in literary pieces is not altogether defensible.

C O L L I N S.

One of the best poets which we have had in this age; he has written very few pieces, but those few of sterling merit. His oriental eclogues have greater merit than any pieces of pastoral poetry in our language. The following passages in them deserve more notice than they have met with.

In silent honor o'er the boundless waste,
The driver Haffan with his camels pass'd:

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One

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One cruse of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contain'd a scanty store;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The fultry sun had gain'd the middle sky,
And not a tree, and not an herd was nigh;
The beasts with pain their dusky way pursue,
Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view.
With desp'rate sorrow wild, th' affrighted man
Thrice sigh'd, thrice struck his breast; and
thus began:

Sad was the hour and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way.

The following description is animated.

Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss grown fountains mitigate the day,
In vain the hope the green delights to know,
Which plains more blest, or verdant vales
bestow:

Here rocks alone and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.

In the following passage also there is a
great force of expression, and of com-
position.

At

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At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If ought of rest I find upon my sleep;
Or some swollen serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor,
From lust of wealth, and dread of death secure!
They tempt no desarts, and no griefs they find;
Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.

C O O P E R.

An elegant writer, and an ingenious
critic. His *Life of Socrates* was com-
posed with too great a display of learning;
his *Letters concerning Taste* have many
lively and judicious observations; the fol-
lowing passage on modern English poetry,
tho' not entirely defensible, merits quoting.
"For my own part I am of opinion, that
there is now living a poet of the most
genuine genius this kingdom ever pro-
duced, Shakespear alone excepted. By
poetical genius, I do not mean the mere
talent of making verses, but that glorious
enthusiasm of soul, that *fine Frenzy*, as
Shakef-

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Shakespear calls it, *rolling from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven*, which, like an able magician, can bring every object of the creation in any shape whatever before the reader's eyes. This alone is poetry, ought else is a mechanical art of putting syllables harmoniously together. The gentleman I mean is Dr. Akenfide, the worthy author of the Pleasures of the Imagination, the most beautiful dramatic poem that ever adorned the English, or any other language. A work, in which the great author has united Virgil's taste, Milton's colouring, and Shakespear's incidental expression, with a warmth peculiar to himself, to paint the finest features of the human mind, and the most lovely forms of true religion and morality—I should not hesitate a moment, to prefer the Elegy in a country church-yard, written by Mr. Gray, of Peter-house in Cambridge, to the best performance of that kind in Ovid, Tibullus or Propertius. Has Horace any moral Ode equal
to

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to Mr. Nugent's Ode to mankind; or any descriptive one to Mr. Colin's Ode to the Evening. I should pay Mr. Mason no compliment, to compare all the excellencies in Seneca together to his elegant Elfrida; nor do I think I should at all degrade the Athenian stage, to say, that the palm of tragic glory hangs wavering betwixt the conjoined merit of Sophocles, Philoctetes, and the Oedipus Coloneus, and this modern tragedy, did not, Shakespear-like, a champion of old, inspired by all the gods, step majestically in, to bear it away by supernatural powers from the utmost force of human abilities. I dare say, his Monody on the death of Mr. Pope, wherein he has imitated the stile of four of our English poets, has given you and every man of true taste more pleasure, than the joined efforts of all the wits in the celebrated court of Leo X. There is another little piece, written by the same author, which has no rival in the court of Augustus, intitled, An Ode to a water nymph."

C O-

C O V E N T R Y.

His *Pompey the Little* is one of the few romances that continue to be read: it will outlive some hundred thousands.

D E S A G U L I E R S.

His course of experimental philosophy is a work that gained him great reputation: the article mechanics is the most valuable: he was a very great mathematician.

D O D S L E Y.

Best known by being a very eminent bookseller: but he wrote some poems that have merit; the work however that will live the longest is a compilation. The collection of poems.

D Y E R.

Several of his poems have undoubted merit. The imagery in *Grongar Hill* is strong and expressive.

E D W A R D S.

E D W A R D S.

A natural historian, whose works are well known all over Europe; equally famous for the accuracy of his investigations, and the elegance of his colouring and designs.

F E R G U S O N.

His mathematical works have gained him a great and deserved reputation: his *Lectures on select subjects*, and his *Astronomy*, are works not often exceeded.

F I E L D I N G.

Perhaps of all men none ever saw deeper into the human mind than Shakespear and Fielding; that the former was the greater genius will not bear the shadow of a dispute; but that immortal poet is not greater in the superior walks of tragedy and comedy, than this inimitable writer is in comic romance. His characters are not only true to nature, they are nature itself; portrayed in colours, whose brilliancy almost

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almost dazzles the eye without ever offending the most scrupulous judge. His humour is incomparable; his plots excellent, and his incidents superior to those of any writer the world ever produced; every little accident of his drama develops character in a manner that can never be sufficiently admired. Never lived a man that saw in a quicker manner the foibles, vices, and wrong side of a character with such keenness. Which however did not arise from a misanthropy in his disposition, for he could paint the best, but from a strength of ridicule that exhibited in a moment all he saw.

FRANKLIN.

His works on the subject of electricity have uncommon merit; and his little paper on the increase of mankind is a most sensible performance.

GLOVER.

Well known for his Leonidas, which is certainly a poem that has merit; though
the

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the author dared to tread the path of Homer, Virgil and Milton, there are many passages in that poem of great merit; and some characters well preserved: his other works have merit, as will be seen by the following list,

- 1. Leonidas, 1737.
- 2. London; or the progress of commerce, a poem, 1739.
- 3. Barbarossa, a tragedy.
- 4. Athelstan, do.
- 5. Boadicea, do.

The plot of Barbarossa is excellent, and the conduct of it, in keeping the souls of the audience quivering in suspense, is striking.

GOLDSMITH.

A writer of various merit, in some of his works lively and spirited; in others tame and little more than a compiler; but he is capable of any exertions. His poems are better than his prose works.

GRAY.

G R A Y.

The strongest instance in the world of what little avail learning is of to a poet; and yet more so, that plainness and simplicity are more sure of pleasing than the most laboured exertions. I do not mean, that this writer is of genuine simplicity in any of his works, but the Country church-yard is a beautiful poem; and, compared with his Pindaric Odes, simplicity itself. It will be read and admired when the latter are forgotten; an affected obscurity, and a broken composition of fits and starts, did well in the Greek, but are vile in English.

G R A I N G E R.

His translations have more merit than his original poems: Tibullus was never so well translated.

G U T H R I E.

One of the laborious compilers, who would have made a good historian, had fortune

fortune allowed him leisure; but the immensity of his works, which amount in quantity almost to half a hundred folios, shews, that his merit was too much neglected by those who could have enabled him to write less, and better.

H A R R I S.

One of the best critics of the present age; his Hermes is an admirable work; and his three Treatises, exhibit a greater subtilty and closeness of argument, than most of the works we possess on similar subjects.

H A L E S.

The invention of Ventilators, and the Vegetable Statics, have rendered the name of this writer immortal: never was a man's life more uniformly passed in the service of mankind than this most worthy clergyman's.

H A N W A Y.

Ranks among the few travellers who have published relations that are both useful,

ful, interesting and entertaining : for one journey, the particulars of which are worth laying before the publick, twenty, nay, an hundred, are not only taken but published, that are utterly useles. Mr. Hanway proved himself a good historian in his account of Persian affairs. The other works he has published are generally on subjects of great national importance, and he has treated them in a method that does honour to his abilities. The following extract from his *Letters on the Importance of the Rising generation among the poor*, will shew his manner, at the same time that it is a good specimen of his abilities in an interesting subject.

“ If our distress increases, and no kind of provision is to be obtained within the ability of many purchasers, in one part of the dominion, we must carry it to them from another part. And if we consider,

- 1. The great fertility of this kingdom ;
- 2. The abundance of fish, which some of the coasts of this island produces at certain seasons ;

3. The

- 3. The plentiful productions of Ireland;
- 4. The cheapness of rice in Carolina, being less than two-pence a pound landed in England ;
- 5. The facility of getting any quantity of dried fish from Newfoundland, at three half-pence a pound.

From such-like advantages, it is, humanly speaking, hardly possible for this nation to be in distress for any length of time ; unless our national prejudices, with regard to the use of particular kinds of food, are reached to such a height, as not to be subdued even by the force of hunger.

It is a part of our policy to confine ourselves to the produce of our lands at home ; but it is our duty, at all events, to see that the people be fed at a price they can pay.

There seems to be a vulgar error concerning the price of labour in this, compared with other countries. We are now paying a great price for manufactory and agriculture, but our people generally do more work in a day, than the subjects of

A a 2 any

any other nation that I have seen ; and if it were not so, we should have lost our markets long since. For the same reason, if they would stick to their work, such a scarcity as the present would not be much felt by working people in health, as a half-penny a day in bread is a considerable addition, and a penny a day in work is easily earned.

It hath been often remarked in manufacturing towns, that when provisions are dear, then the most work is done, because fewer persons are idle, fewer lose so many days, or hours in a day, than when they can gain their support for a week by the labour of three or four days only.

In time of war, when we can command our markets, these arguments are not bad ones ; but they are not of equal weight when there is a less demand for the labour of the working part of the nation. If we consider how many old men, women and children can gain but little ; if that little is not adequate to the price of the support of life, they must be in distress.

And

And the greater the plenty they have been accustomed to, the greater will their distress be. And this entails another evil ; the more liberally they are relieved, the less vigilant they will be to help themselves ; so that where there is ability for work, it is far better they should be employed in offices of no use than sit still.

In regard to manufacturers, it would be difficult for us to obtain provisions for them always at a certain price, as I am told is practiced at Lyons, for the rich manufactures of that city. If these enjoy such a privilege in an arbitrary country, they are also confined within narrow bounds in the price of their labour ; they are not relieved by any parish rate in case of distress ; and the very advantage they enjoy is a proof of their abject state. Private men may establish rules of this kind by private contracts, and something of the same nature is already done in parts of this kingdom : but it is difficult to comprehend how it can be performed on any other principle than a total freedom.

A a 3 Time

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Time and chance happen to all men. Next to our own growth, we usually apply to our sister island as nearest at hand; in the next place to our colonies, happily abounding in the necessaries of life, though at some distance; and next our fisheries: and, according to the measure of our wants, we may call for a portion from all these parts, and of every kind, either on private, or, if the case was very urgent, on publick account. But surely we should change our usual mode of living, and eat bread of potatoes rather than part with our gold and silver for provisions bought of strangers, which turns the tables and the balances of trade upon ourselves."

The following quotation also wants no apology; "the grandeur of equipages, amongst other expences, cuts deep against plenty, marriage and population. Every fine chariot I see, I think of the national debt, and it seems as so many fractions of a penny taken out of the dinner of the poor person, who is walking by, and can hardly

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hardly earn bread to support himself, or feed his hungry children.

If a young gentlewoman, or the daughter of a tradesman in good circumstances, in the height of her youth and health, thinks she has lost the use of her limbs, and must have two horses to draw her about, a man to drive them, and another to attend behind, they will now cost her husband the interest of five thousand pounds, which is a handsome portion for the daughter of an earl. Some earls could not give more fifty years ago, and some can hardly give so much at this day. Thus, by the tyranny of custom, many a young lady and gentlewoman in the spring time of their youth, and the blossom of their charms, are shunned, as if men were afraid of being poisoned if they come within their atmosphere."

H A R T E.

His history of Gustavus Adolphus is a capital work; and, all circumstances considered,
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sidered, not inferior to the best that have appeared in this age; yet the success it has met with is not equal to that of some other histories published lately in England; this has been owing to more entertaining subjects, a more pleasing manner, or to national prejudice. His *Essays on Husbandry* are not so well known as they deserve; the title implies a book upon a very confined subject, but he has very artfully interwove numerous strokes of general politics; and national œconomy; with well written anecdotes of the authors that have written on husbandry. His poetry is inferior to his prose writings.

H A W K S W O R T H.

A good translator: his original works are agreeable; but there is a want of force in them, which prevents their being universally read.

H A Y.

His *Essay on Deformity* is a most lively and ingenious sketch. The *Religio Philosophi*

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osophi a strange performance, tho' very sensible in numerous passages. His translation of Martial is as full of merit, as translated epigrams can be.

H I L L.

One of the most noted *general writers* that has appeared in England; and was possessed of perhaps the most fluent pen of any man that ever lived. He has been often ridiculed and abused for writing for hire, and on so many subjects: nothing could be more unjust; the profession to which he was educated failed him; the world would not see him for his prescriptions, but they bought his books; who can blame him for bringing those wares to market which were marketable? The reproach lies all on those who could, but would not patronize him; especially as he had convinced all mankind, that *in Botany* he deserved it: accordingly we have seen him since protected by that great patron the Earl of Bute; drop all other characters, and stick to that in which he is a
real

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real proficient. His botanical works will for ever do him honour.

H I L L,

(Aron) Made a considerable figure as a theatrical writer, and in many other branches of literature. He possessed a considerable fortune; but impaired it by very expensive projects; particularly that of bringing timber from inaccessible parts of the highlands of Scotland; and making oil from beech mast; the latter was practicable, and deserved a greater encouragement than in the power of an individual to bestow.

H O O K E.

His Roman History is an acute performance, but it is prejudiced, and not so entertaining as that brilliant period should make a narrative.

H O R N E,

(Lord Kaimes) Famous for his *Elements of Criticism*, which is a work fraught with
erudition,

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erudition, taste, and critical acumen. He investigates the art of criticism by investigating human nature, of which a striking instance is his chapters on *emotions* and *passions*; the following distinction is a material foundation in all critical enquiries. "If an emotion be sometimes productive of desire, sometimes not, it comes to be a material enquiry, in what respect a passion differs from an emotion. Is passion in its nature or feeling distinguishable from emotion? I have been apt to think, that there must be a distinction, when the emotion seems in all cases to precede the passion, and to be the cause or occasion of it. But after the strictest examination, I cannot perceive any such distinction, betwixt emotion and passion. What is love to a mistress, for example, but a pleasing emotion raised by a sight or idea of the person beloved, joined with desire of enjoyment? In what else consists the passion of resentment, but in a painful emotion, occasioned by the injury, accompanied with desire to chastise
the

the author of the injury? In general, as to every sort of passion, we find no more in the composition, but the particulars now mentioned, an emotion pleasant or painful accompanied with desire. What then shall we say upon this subject? Are passion and emotion synonymous terms? This cannot be averred. No feeling nor agitation of the mind void of desire is termed a passion; and we have discovered, that there are many emotions which pass away without raising desire of any kind. How is the difficulty to be solved? There appears to me but one solution, which I relish the more, as it renders the doctrine of the passions and emotions simple and perspicuous. *The solution follows.* An internal motion or agitation of the mind, when it passeth away without raising desire, is denominated an *emotion*: when desire is raised, the motion or agitation is denominated a *passion*. A fine face, for example, raiseth in me a pleasant feeling. If this feeling vanish without producing any effect, it is in proper language an emotion. But if such feeling,

feeling, by reiterated views of the object, becomes sufficiently strong to raise desire, it is no longer termed an emotion, but a passion. The same holds in all the other passions. The painful feeling raised in a spectator, by a slight injury done to a stranger, being accompanied by no desire of revenge, is termed an emotion. But this injury raiseth in the stranger a stronger emotion, which being accompanied with desire of revenge, is a passion. Again, external expressions of distress, produce in the spectator a painful feeling. This feeling is sometimes so slight, as to pass away without any effect, in which case it is an emotion. But if the feeling be so strong, as to prompt desire of affording relief, it is a passion, and is termed pity. Envy is emulation in excess. If the exaltation of a competitor be barely disagreeable, the painful feeling is reckoned an emotion. If it produce desire to depress him, it is reckoned a passion."

These ideas are certainly just, and the distinctions are drawn with philosophical precision;

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precision; this merit runs almost throughout the work; but one singular passage, very difficult to characterise, I shall further desire leave to quote.

“ In explaining the effects of novelty, the place a being occupies in the scale of existence, is a circumstance that must not be omitted. Novelty in the individuals of a low class is perceived with indifference, or with a very slight emotion. Thus a pebble, however singular its appearance, scarce moves our wonder. The emotion rises with the rank of the object; and, other circumstances being equal, is strongest in the highest order of existence. A strange animal affects us more than a strange vegetable; and were we admitted to view superior beings, our wonder would rise proportionably; *and accompanying nature in her AMAZING WORKS, be completed in the contemplation of the Deity.*”— Does not this make the Deity a monster of nature's *creation*? Surely this passage is very inadequate to the idea which every
ready

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ready of Lord Kaime's must be clear that he entertains.

If there is any marked inferiority in this excellent work, it is the chapters on the sublime and on wit. In the former, he is far exceeded by Mr. Burke; and in the latter his instances are so few, and so irregularly arranged, that one cannot form from them any clear and distinct idea.

H O O L E.

His Tasso is one of the best translations in the English language; and abounds in general with a harmony of verification, scarcely exceeded by Pope himself. Take the following instance.

There sat Armida on a flowery bed;
Her wanton lap sustain'd the hero's head;
Her opening veil her iv'ry bosom show'd,
Loose to the fanning breeze her tresses flow'd:
A languor seem'd diffus'd o'er all her frame,
And ev'ry feature glow'd with amorous flame.
The pearly moisture on her beauteous face,
Improv'd the blush, and heighten'd every grace.
Her wand'ring eyes confess'd a pleasing fire,
And shot the trembling beams of soft desire.

Now

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Now fondly hanging o'er with head declin'd,
Close to his cheek, her lovely cheek she join'd.
While o'er her charms he taught his looks to
rove,
And drank with eager thirst new draughts of
love.

Now bending down enraptur'd as he lies,
She kifs'd his vermil lips and swimming eyes:
'Till from his inmost heart he heav'd a sigh,
As if to her's his parting soul would fly.

Besides Tasso, he began Metastasio, but has not finished the works of that poet. Mr. Hoole is however lately better known by two tragedies of very great merit, than by these translations, Cyrus and Timanthes; the former is one of the best theatric pieces which has of late years been brought upon the stage; the latter also has much merit.

H U M E.

Penetrating and ingenious: all his works abound with the true critical acumen, and are full of taste and spirit: the greatest fault is the *affectation of philosophy*: the world should give a writer the
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character of a philosopher, not himself. Much the best of his works are the Essays on money, credit, commerce, &c. which are equally original, elegant, and profound. His History of England, from the beginning to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, is a work of great abilities, tho' with some passages that mark a prejudice; but after that period it is rather a party pamphlet, full of most ingenious and useful observations. Perhaps the most valuable parts of all his histories are the deductions of manners, arts, and literature, which are drawn up with great ingenuity and justness.

H U T C H E S O N.

His moral philosophy is irreproachable; displaying equally the finest imagination, and the greatest propriety of ideas on the conduct of life.

H U X H A M.

His physical works are studied by the faculty throughout Europe, and have gained their author a general reputation.

B b H U N T E R.

H U N T E R.

His medical Commentaries is a work of great merit, among the faculty.

J A M E S.

Better known as the inventor of a Nostrum than as an author; however, in the latter sphere he ranks among our physical writers with reputation. Besides some original works, he compiled the *Medicinal Dictionary*.

J A G O.

His poetry is pleasing; preserving him a genteel character among the minor poets of this age.

J E N N I N G S.

Wit is the character of his writings. If he publishes a political pamphlet, it is eagerly read not for the politicks, the party, or the argument, but in expectation of some good *strokes* to shine among much rubbish. The *Country Visit* will be read

read and admired as long as the English language endures; his philosophy bears no comparison with his poetry.

J O H N S O N.

One of the writers who was raised from the unfortunate situation of supporting himself by his pen, by the patronage of his present majesty. His writings have in general been equally praised and condemned; and I shall venture to remark, that the difference of opinion concerning him is so great, that this age can do no fair justice to his merit or the want of it; a circumstance not weakened by his having lately been the author of some party pamphlets. Fifty or an hundred years hence his works will either be in every ones hands, or find their way thro' neglect into the dust of libraries.

J O R T I N.

His life of Erasmus is a work that gained him reputation; and his critical pieces are sensible performances.

K E N R I C K.

His poems are written with ease and spirit, and his translations from the French the best that has been published in our language: as to the perpetual motion, I doubt it stands still.

L A N G H O R N.

Some of his poems are pleasing exertions of a cultivated taste; but many of them have a mediocrity of composition, which neither offends nor pleases. His prose works are entertaining, except those on religion, which are very inferior to numerous others of cotemporary writers.

L E L A N D.

His life of Philip of Macedon is a work of great merit: and his translations from the Greek excellently executed.

L E N O X.

This lady was for some time well known as the author of some works that were well

well received by the publick; but of late years, she has not published any thing. Her best pieces are *Shakespear Illustrated*. *The Female Quixot*.—*Henrietta*.

L E W I S.

His medical, chymical, and philosophical works are well known; and much esteemed, particularly, *An Experimental History of the Materia Medica and Commercium, Philosophico Vecbnicum*.

L I T T L E T O N.

This nobleman is famous for his *History of King Henry the Second*, in the composition of which he employed many years and great attention, and has executed it in a most able manner. His Dialogues of the dead are spirited and entertaining; and his poems elegant and pleasing. His Monody on the death of lady Littleton is one of the finest elegies in our language; and as pathetic as can well be conceived.

L O W T H.

One of the most learned writers and the best critics of this age. His first work, and which gained him great reputation, was the *De Sacâ Poesi Hebræorum*, 1753. He was advanced to the mitre by the present king, and ranks therein among the men whose merit has been rewarded in this age.

M A S O N.

A correct and pleasing poet, who has gained much reputation in this age, and would have deserved some in any age. His *Elfrida* and *Musæus* are his best works. He has been promoted advantageously in the church by his patron lord Holderness, a nobleman, whose taste and liberality would in the same station have rivalled *Mecænas*.

M A L L E T.

A writer of abilities, but a poet who has gained as much reputation as he deserved, and more than will last.

M A C K-

M A C K L A U R I N.

One of the greatest mathematicians which this country has produced. A genius worthy of pursuing the ideas thrown out by the immortal Newton.

M A C P H E R S O N.

The translator or author of *Fingall*; for the controversial criticism of the times decides not which: but I shall venture to assert, that if he is the latter, we ought to rank him among the most extraordinary geniuses the world has ever produced; but such fiction is impossible, a man cannot so totally drop all the ideas of the age he lives in, and write in the character of three thousand years ago.

M A C A U L E Y.

This most ingenious lady, in whose works we find so much more force than is common in the writings of her sex, has fixed her reputation by an *History of Eng-*

B b 4

land,

land, composed rather to obviate the mischief which other histories, and one in particular, are supposed to have diffused in some constitutional points of great importance to the liberty of Britain. It has been by some writers, particularly by Mr. Hume, laboured hard to prove, that the Stewarts gave into no arbitrary measures that had not been executed by the Tudors; and also, that these arbitrary measures flowed from the just prerogatives of the crown, to which the kings had as good a right as the people to their liberties: the mere matter of fact is of little consequence; but to what purpose is it quoted, and so elaborately proved? Unless it is to shew, that the Stewarts were *in right* absolute monarchs, and their subjects rebels for resisting them. Which position leads to another, that acts of parliament to limit the prerogative are in themselves void: this is the pernicious doctrine that naturally follows the arguments of those historians. But that our kings, even in more antient times, were limited by the assemblies

assemblies of the people, has been ably proved by lord Littleton; and in order to reply to all the mistakes made in the reigns of the Stewarts, Mrs. Macauley entered the lists, and has made the defence of the cause of liberty the grand foundation of her work; inasmuch, that it scarcely merits the name of a general history, but rather that of a *parliamentary* or *constitutional* one. She has executed it with ability, but there is too strong a prejudice in certain passages. Her style and manner are nervous, clear, and spirited.

M E A D.

Made a greater figure as a physical writer, a physician, and a general encourager of every useful undertaking, than most of his contemporaries. The present physical race hold his works in much esteem.

M E L M O T H.

Fitzosborne's Letters are a very rare instance of letters succeeding that were written

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written merely for the press; they are however rather essays than letters; full of ingenuity, and agreeable observations of men, manners, and opinions.

M I L L A R.

One of the few writers that have gained a great reputation by treating of the culture of the earth. His gardeners dictionary is a most valuable work.

M I D D L E T O N.

One of the sharpest enemies to Christianity, though a Doctor of the Church of England. His controversial writings have wit, but it is a local, and an uninteresting wit: his Life of Cicero is a work of genuine merit.

M I L L S.

Best known by some husbandry writings which have met with a good reception; he threw together and published the last volume of Blackwell's court of Augustus, in a manner that did him honour. He also

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also translated Crevier's Roman History, in twelve volumes, and other works from the French.

M O O R.

One of the editors of the famous Glasgow edition of Homer; and a most learned and penetrating critic. His *Essays read to a literary society* are full of agreeable turns and observations. His *End of Tragedy, according to Aristotle*, contains a criticism that shews how much the generality of critics, even of name and reputation, take things for granted and copy one another.

M O N T A G U.

I shall, without the idea of an exception, rank this lady at the head of all among her sex who have in any language become authors. She possessed an imagination full of graces, nothing dropt from her but elegance; and every emotion of her mind seemed the efforts of taste and fancy. Her travels are the most animated relations that ever

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ever were published. Her poetry is elegant, much exceeding in a happy Horatian delicacy many writings of more famous poets.

But when the long hours of publick are past,
And we weet with Champaign and a chicken
at last,
May ev'ry fond pleasure that moment endear,
Be banish'd afar, both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal and I to be proud,
Till lost in the joy we confess that we live,
And he may be rude and yet I may forgive.
I loath the lewd rake, the dress'd fopling despise,
Before such pursuers the *nice* virgin flies;
And as Ovid has sweetly in parables told,
We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

M O N T A G U.

His *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the antient Republicks* is an excellent work. He is one of the best antiquaries in Europe: and among the greatest travellers in the world; if he obliges the publick with the minutes of his tours
through

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through parts of Asia and Africa, they will form one of the most interesting works that have been published this many years.

M U L L E R.

His treatises on fortification and other parts of military mathematics are in great esteem.

N E W T O N.

Has gained a deserved reputation by his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, which are full of candour and penetration. He is also known by the best edition we have seen of Milton, with many useful notes.

N U G E N T.

Has composed, compiled, and translated many useful works; and merited to have met with a greater reward than such writers usually inherit.

O G I L V I E.

A poet of indisputable merit, and one who has had the spirit to reject the too
common

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common example of copying and translating, and strike into the pure regions of fancy and imagination. In some of his pieces he indulges rather too much in the luxuriance of epithet; native simplicity is not common with him. The following passage in his *Ode to the Genius of Shakespear* is fine.

I. 1.

Rapt'd from the glance of mortal eye,
Say bursts thy genius to the world of light?
Seeks it yon star bespangled sky?
Or skims its fields with rapid flight?
Or mind yon plains where fancy strays,
Courts it the balmy breathing gale?

Or where the violet pale
Droops o'er the green embroider'd stream;
Or where young zephir stirs the rustling sprays,
Lyes all dissolv'd in fairy dream?
O'er yon bleak desert's unfrequented round,
See'st thou where nature treads the deepening
gloom,
Sits on yon hoary tow'r with ivy crown'd,
Or wildly wails o'er thy lamented tomb;
Hear'st thou the solemn music wind along?
Or thrills the warbling note in thy melliferous
song?

I. 2.

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I. 2.

Oft while on earth 'twas thine to rove,
Where'er the wild ey'd goddess lov'd to roam,
To trace serene the gloomy grove,
Or haunt meek quiet's simple dome;
Still hovering round the nine appear,
That pour the soul transporting strain;
Join'd to the Love's gay train,
The loose rob'd graces crown'd with flowers;
The light wing'd gales that lead the vernal year,
And wake the rosy featur'd hours.
O'er all bright fancy's beamy radiance shone,
How flam'd thy bosom as her charms reveal!
Her fire clad eye sublime; her starry zone,
Her tresses loose that wanton'd on the gale.

II. 1.

Say, whence the magic of thy mind?
Why thrills thy music on the springs of thought?
Why at thy pencil's touch refin'd,
Starts into life the glowing draught?
On yonder fairy carpet laid,
Where beauty pours eternal bloom,
And zephyr breathes perfume;
There rightly to the tranced eye,
Profuse the radiant goddess stood display'd,
With all her smiling offspring nigh.

Sudden

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Sudden the mantling cliff, the arching wood,
 The broider'd mead, the landskip and the grove;
 Hills, vales, and sky-dipt seas, and torrents rude,
 Grotts, rills and shades, and bowers that breath
 of love,
 All burst to fight! —while glancing on the view,
 Titania's sporting train brush'd lightly o'er the
 dew.

P H I L I P S.

A woman of abilities: her apology was
 written from the heart; her letter *to Lora
 Chesterfield* from the head; of course the
 former is excellent, the latter a nothing:
 women never shine, but when they speak
 from their feelings; they were not made
 to reason and reflect.

P O S T L E T H W A Y T E.

A very useful compiler, but a sad cox-
 comb. It is pity his Dictionary of Com-
 merce has not fallen into the hands of some
 sensible abridger.

P O T T.

Much esteemed among the physical
 writers of the present age.

P R I N-

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P R I N G L E.

Another medical writer; truly useful
 and philosophical.

R A L P H.

No person can deny him abilities; but
 his history is a mere party perform-
 ance; Sir Robert Walpole giving him a
 pension for stopping his attack on his ad-
 ministration, shews, if any thing was
 wanting to shew the little knowledge
 that minister had of the pieces wrote
 for and against him. The best works of
 this author are the *Critical Review of Pub-
 lick Buildings*, and the *Case of Authors*.

R I C H A R D S O N.

The delineation of character in his ro-
 mances, exceeds that of any writer an-
 tient or modern: but the portraying the
 passions peculiar to certain personages in
 a long novel in prose, is easier than mak-
 ing a strong impresson from the same ef-
 fort

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394 LETTERS *concerning the* fort in the space of a play. Shakespear's great excellence is his character drawing—Richardson is equally original.

R O L T.

One of those general writers that would have made an author of great merit, had he met with other patronage than that of the bookfellers.

R O B E R T S O N.

His *History of Scotland* may be pronounced the best history in the English language; and his history of Charles the Fifth one of the most entertaining; but the latter work in point of abilities is inferior to the former; a period of no more splendor than that of which he treated in his Scotch History, would have sunk in his hands after the superior merit of the first.

S A V A G E.

Was the author of some very masterly performances; but is much better known

Present State of ENGLAND. 395 known from the life of him written by Dr. Johnson, than from his works.

S A L E.

Well known for the *Koran*; he was also the author of the oriental part of the *Universal History* (Antient), which was well executed.

S A U N D E R S O N.

His *Algebra* is a work that proved clearly the greatness of his mathematical knowledge.

S H E R I D A N.

His oratorical works have merit, and his literary undertakings have in general utility for their end.

S H E R I D A N

(Wife of the preceding). The *History of Sidney Biddulph* is the best novel that has appeared since the death of Richardson. The characters are excellently drawn,

C c 2 the

396 LETTERS *concerning the*
the plot good, the incidents natural, and
the language sprightly and agreeable.

S H E R L O C K.

A prelate whose writings do honour to
the age: his sermons are the best in the
language.

S H E N S T O N E.

A writer of rather placid and agreeable
parts, than shining and original ones. His
Pastoral Ballad is the best poem of the
kind in the English language, being unri-
valled in that beautiful simplicity, which
destroys not elegance of composition;
Rural Elegance is a fine ode, and *Jessy*
a pathetic elegy.

S M A R T.

Many of his works are good, and some
of them excellent; and well deserve to be
remembered; the fate of the author re-
flects disgrace upon the age.

S M O L-

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S M O L L E T T.

Numerous works of various kinds, and
in almost every branch of literature, prove
this gentleman to be possessed of considera-
ble abilities: in some of his pieces he
gives the clearest testimony of genius;
and in all, that of an entertaining agreeable
writer. He ranks among those authors on
general subjects, who ought to have met with
greater encouragement than in the power
of the mere publick to bestow. Had an
easy fortune, independant of his pen, been
in the possession of such a writer, he would
have taken more time to polish and perfect
his works. *Roderick Random* continues to
be read with pleasure.

S M I T H.

The *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in a
work that does honour to this ingenious
writer.

S P E N C E.

A very spirited and penetrating critic,
whose *Polymetis* was an undertaking the
best

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best calculated that could be thought of for clearing up the obscurities of the classical writers. His humanity deserves the highest encomiums, for twice publishing for the benefit of distressed ingenuity.

S T E R N E.

This inimitable writer has the clearest pretensions to *originality*; a point much deserving of attention, in an age so abounding with copiers and imitators. It is true, he sometimes drove his originality into extravagance; but this is no more than saying, that a great genius was guilty of producing faults and blunders; and how few original ones are there that do not produce such: a truth so clear, that one may venture to pronounce a work a tame, spiritless performance, that has not many absurdities in it. The great force of Mr. Sterne's genius was in the pathetic, in which he has left us many strokes of such genuine, tho' refined nature, that no poet exceeds him.

T H O M P-

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T H O M P S O N.

A poet of undoubted merit, but this merit has been extolled beyond its due degree, from a want of great genius in the age in which he flourished. There is a stiffness, a want of ease in his pieces, which offend the least delicate ear.

W A T T S.

A worthy, religious, humane man; and had he written nothing but his logic, would have been esteemed a good writer.

W A R N E R.

His *History of Ireland* is an able performance; but none of his works are inferior to their author's reputation.

W A L P O L E.

One of the most agreeable, spirited and lively writers that this age has produced: with him, the *Gentleman* is never lost in the author: his *Royal and Noble Authors* is the best of his works, and is full of in-

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geniety and penetration: his *Historic doubts* shew, what a thorough master he is of the English history.

W A L T E R.

His account of Lord Anson's voyage is one of the best written pieces in our language.

W A R B U R T O N.

More famous for erudition than for genius; a keen controvertist; a bad historian; a worse commentator.

W H A R T O N.

His poems are forceable, and at the same time pleasingly agreeable. His criticism on Pope is full of learning, taste, and affectation.

W E B B.

The most pleasing animated critic of the present age. His style and manner much exceed Longinus: his observations are so original, and his ideas so truly elegant, that while he seems to attend to the
works

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works of others alone, he raises a noble monument of his own abilities. In numerous passages he is more a poet than the poets he quotes.

W E S T.

Had the courage to attempt Pindar, and the abilities to come off successful. His criticisms are excellent.

W H I S T O N,

With undoubted parts, great learning, and infinite application, he published innumerable works, three fourths of which are now forgotten; and the rest bid fair for the same oblivion. This is an instance that refinement is necessary even in the abstruse studies.

W H I T E H E A D.

Ranks with a fair reputation among the minor poets of this age. The best of all his works is his *Song for Ranelagh*.

Y O U N G.

Y O U N G.

His poetry is excellent; the satires full of wit; and the tragedies of the true pathetic; his Night Thoughts have a *fine frenzy* in passages, sometimes indeed bordering on madness. His prose is in blank verse, and in some of his pieces uncommonly spirited.

Y O U N G,

(Son of the preceding) the writings of this gentleman are full of beauties and full of faults; but if utility is alone considered, his tours through England deserve to be ranked among the best works the age has produced. His other pieces on the subject of husbandry, if we may judge by the avidity with which they are read, must have merit.

F I N I S.

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" 'Tis not my design in handling this subject, to use any artifices or false colours, to foment such jealousies as these, but to discharge a duty which I owe the community, and to prevent an intolerable sort of slavery, which may be brought upon us, if care be not taken against such acts of power, and infringements of our liberties, by shewing the injustice and illegality of them." *Extract from the Preface.*

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