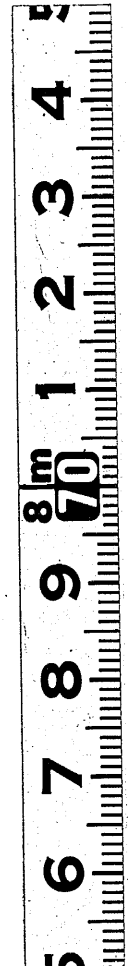


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P R O P O S A L S

For carrying on certain

P U B L I C W O R K S

In the CITY of

E D I N B U R G H.

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Advertisement to the READER.

AT *Edinburgh*, the 8th *July* 1752, the Convention of Royal Boroughs came to the following resolution.

THE Committee appointed to consider the remit from the Convention, touching the purchasing an area for a public forum or exchange at the cross of *Edinburgh*, erecting a building on the ruins on the south side of the Parliament-clofe, containing a Borough-room, providing proper Repositories for the public records of the nation, and the other useful works mentioned in the said remit; DID REPORT, That they were unanimously of opinion, that they greatly approve of the intention of carrying on these works of such a public nature, and so beneficial to the capital of this part of the united kingdom: And in order to give the more solid and effectual countenance to so extensive and commendable a plan, and render the national subscriptions for carrying on the same the more universal, they were of opinion, That the Convention should signify their hearty approbation of the said schemes, and, without coming to an immediate resolution to contribute in a conventional way, should injoin all the particular members of this Convention, to lay the same before the town-councils of their respective boroughs immediately on their return home, and use their utmost interest with them to come to a resolution to promote this laudable undertaking, as the most likely

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and effectual method to secure a generous and handsome assistance thereto from the State of Boroughs; and to acquaint the Lord Provost of *Edinburgh* with the resolutions which their town-councils come to: and that this Convention should recommend it to their annual committee, to prepare a full account of these schemes, cause print and disperse the same over the nation, and send copies thereof to all the boroughs. Which Report being considered by the Convention, they approve thereof, and recommend to the annual committee to prepare a full account of these schemes, cause print and disperse the same over the nation, and send copies thereof to all the boroughs; and recommend to the present members to conform themselves to the other parts of the report.

In consequence of this Act of the Royal Boroughs, the following paper was drawn up.

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P R O P O S A L S

For carrying on certain

P U B L I C W O R K S

In the CITY of

E D I N B U R G H.

AMONG the several causes to which the prosperity of a nation may be ascribed, the situation, conveniency, and beauty of its capital, are surely not the least considerable. A capital where these circumstances happen fortunately to concur, should naturally become the centre of trade and commerce, of learning and the arts, of politeness, and of refinement of every kind. No sooner will the advantages which these necessarily produce, be felt and experienced in the chief city, than they will diffuse themselves through the nation, and universally promote the same spirit of industry and improvement.

OF

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OF this general assertion the city of LONDON affords the most striking example. Upon the most superficial view, we cannot fail to remark its healthful, unconfined situation, upon a large plain, gently shelving towards the *Thames*; its neighbourhood to that river; its proper distance from the sea; and, by consequence, the great facility with which it is supplied with all the necessaries, and even luxuries of life. No less obvious are the neatness and accommodation of its private houses; the beauty and conveniency of its numerous streets and open squares, of its buildings and bridges, its large parks and extensive walks. When to these advantages we add its trade and navigation; the business of the exchange, of the two houses of parliament, and of the courts of justice; the magnificence of the court; the pleasures of the theatre, and other public entertainments: in a word, when we survey this mighty concourse of people, whom business, ambition, curiosity, or the love of pleasure, has assembled within so narrow a compass, we need no longer be astonished at that spirit of industry and improvement, which, taking its rise in the city of LONDON, has at length spread over the greatest part of SOUTH BRITAIN, animating every art and profession, and inspiring the whole people with the greatest ardour and emulation.

To

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To illustrate this further, we need only contrast the delightful prospect which LONDON affords, with that of any other city, which is destitute of all, or even of any considerable number of these advantages. Sorry we are, that no one occurs to us more apposite to this purpose, than EDINBURGH, the metropolis of SCOTLAND when a separate kingdom, and still the chief city of NORTH BRITAIN. The healthfulness of its situation, and its neighbourhood to the *Forth*, must no doubt be admitted as very favourable circumstances. But how greatly are these overbalanced by other disadvantages almost without number? Placed upon the ridge of a hill, it admits but of one good street, running from east to west; and even this is tolerably accessible only from one quarter. The narrow lanes leading to the north and south, by reason of their steepness, narrowness, and dirtiness, can only be considered as so many unavoidable nuisances. Confined by the small compass of the walls, and the narrow limits of the royalty, which scarcely extends beyond the walls, the houses stand more crowded than in any other town in *Europe*, and are built to a height that is almost incredible. Hence necessarily follows a great want of free air, light, cleanliness, and every other comfortable accommodation. Hence also many families, some-
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times no less than ten or a dozen, are obliged to live overhead of each other in the same building; where, to all the other inconveniencies, is added that of a common stair, which is no other in effect than an upright street, constantly dark and dirty. It is owing to the same narrowness of situation, that the principal street is incumbered with the herb-market, the fruit-market, and several others; that the shambles are placed upon the side of the *North-Loch*, rendering what was originally an ornament to the town, a most insufferable nuisance. No less observable is the great deficiency of public buildings. If the parliament-house, the churches, and a few hospitals, be excepted, what other have we to boast of? There is no exchange for our merchants; no safe repository for our public and private records; no place of meeting for our magistrates and town-council; none for the convention of our boroughs, which is intrusted with the inspection of trade. To these and such other reasons it must be imputed, that so few people of rank reside in this city; that it is rarely visited by strangers; and that so many local prejudices, and narrow notions, inconsistent with polished manners and growing wealth, are still so obstinately retained. To such reasons alone it must be imputed, that EDINBURGH, which ought to have set
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the first example of industry and improvement, is the last of our trading cities that has shook off the unaccountable supineness which has so long and so fatally depressed the spirit of this nation.

MR FLETCHER of *Salton*, a very spirited and manly author, in his second discourse on the affairs of SCOTLAND, written so long ago as the year 1698, has the same observation. "As the happy situation of LONDON, says he, has been the principal cause of the glory and riches of ENGLAND; so the bad situation of EDINBURGH, has been one great occasion of the poverty and uncleanness in which the greater part of the people of SCOTLAND live."

To enlarge and improve this city, to adorn it with public buildings, which may be a national benefit, and thereby to remove, at least in some degree, the inconveniencies to which it has hitherto been liable, is the sole object of these proposals. Before we enter upon a more particular explanation of them, it will be proper to mention the motives which have induced us at this time to offer them to the consideration of the public.

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AT no period surely did there ever appear a more general, or a better-directed zeal for the improvement and prosperity of this country. Persons of every rank and denomination seem at length to be actuated by a truly public and national spirit. Private men who adventure to propose schemes for the public good, are no longer ridiculed as vain projectors; nor are the more extensive undertakings of societies and companies condemned without examination, as the engines merely of the factious and designing. Had we therefore this general spirit of our countrymen for our sole encouragement, we might rest assured that our proposals would meet with no unfavourable reception. But when we consider the rapid progress which our trade and manufactures have actually made within these few years, and attentively compare the present state of this country as to these particulars, with what it was in former times, we are persuaded, that an attempt to enlarge and beautify this metropolis, will now at length be deemed necessary. To trace the gradual advancement or decay of our trade and manufactures, through the several revolutions which this kingdom has experienced, would far exceed the bounds we have prescribed to ourselves: A very few observations will sufficiently answer our present purpose.

FROM

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FROM the general state of *Europe*, as well as the particular circumstances of this country, we may safely conclude; that before the union of the crowns in the person of *James VI.* the arts of peace were but little known or cultivated. Before that period, even those kingdoms which have since ingrossed the trade of the world, had made but very inconsiderable advances. *Holland*, a little before this time, had but just emerged from her fens and marshes, nor had she attained that security which an extended commerce requires. Trade was as yet unknown in *France*: That it ever got a footing there, must be entirely ascribed to the enterprising spirit of *Lewis XIV.* and the operations of his minister *Colbert*. Though some faint attempts had been made more early in *ENGLAND*, yet *Elisabeth* was the first who established the trade of that nation upon a solid foundation.

No wonder then, if, amidst the distractions which constantly prevailed in this country, we had neither leisure nor inclination to improve those arts, which are generally the offspring of quiet times, and a well-ordered state. The imperfection of our government and laws, the jurisdiction and exorbitant power of our nobility, the weight of personal service, and the obligation of

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the military tenure upon their vassals, were of themselves obstructions scarce to be surmounted: but when we add to these, our continual wars with ENGLAND, the dissensions of our great families, our religious quarrels, and the frequent minorities of our princes, can we be surpris'd that our commerce and manufactures were but little the objects of attention? Yet even then our linen manufacture subsisted, and our fisheries were carried on with some success, till, by the ill-judged laws of some of our Kings, they were meanly sacrificed to certain absurd privileges, which were then granted to the importunity of the boroughs.

FEW persons of any rank, in those days, frequented our towns. The manners of our peers, of our barons, and chiefs of families, were not formed to brook that equality which prevails in cities. The solitary grandeur of a country-life, at their own seats, and amidst their own vassals, suited better with the stateliness and pride of those petty sovereigns. EDINBURGH, though perhaps it might be styled the capital, yet in reality possessed none of those advantages by which a capital is usually distinguished. Though strengthened by the castle at one end, and a lake on each side, yet was it too near ENGLAND to be thought perfectly secure. Accordingly

Accordingly we find, that, till about the union of the crowns, the residence of the court, the seat of parliament, and of the courts of justice, were not absolutely fixed there. Our Kings often chose to reside at their country-houses. The parliament was as commonly held at *Perth*, at *Stirling*, at *Linlithgow*, and other towns, as at EDINBURGH. Our courts of justice were for many ages ambulatory, as appears even from the style of our common summons. Thus, while trade and manufactures were neglected, while the feudal manners prevailed, and the seat of government was unfixed, EDINBURGH might be large enough to be the capital of SCOTLAND, though then an independent kingdom, and yet at this day be too small for the chief city of NORTH BRITAIN.

THE union of the crowns took place in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and from that time the situation of SCOTLAND was more deplorable than ever. We had indeed the honour to send a King to ENGLAND, but this honour cost us dear. We remained in a strange equivocal situation, little better than that of a conquered province. The nation was dispirited; the little trade we had, languished and decayed; every project we formed, ENGLAND discouraged; our great men, who had now no wars to wage,

[14]

wage, and no court to resort to, either retired fullen to the country, or inlisting with foreign princes, vainly lavished their blood in the quarrels of strangers. EDINBURGH however began now to increase, though by very slow degrees. Its neighbourhood to ENGLAND, which had been formerly one cause of its being so little frequented, was now the chief reason of its increase. From this time it became the seat of parliament. But of what consequence was that to the city? The parliament met commonly in summer; it continued sitting but a few days; nor had the members any inducement to bring their families to town. For many years before the restoration, the spirit of Fanaticism, and the distractions of the civil war, put an entire stop to every national improvement. By the restoration, the government was seemingly placed upon its ancient basis. But the genius of this country was still depressed, by the severity with which certain religious innovations were enforced, by the tyranny of the great men intrusted with the administration, and by the arbitrary proceedings of the privy council.

THE revolution opened to us a fairer prospect. Liberty was ascertained and established, our grievances redressed, and many excellent laws enacted. But the genius and
manners

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manners of a people are not to be changed by laws alone. To produce so important an alteration, nothing less will suffice than a general spirit of reformation in the leading men of a country. What laws can never do, example, imitation, and an attachment to the manners of the great, will soon perform. But at the revolution, unhappily for this country, no such spirit appeared. And indeed, if it had appeared, its effects could not have been felt very sensibly. We had still to struggle with those innumerable disadvantages which our incompleat relation to ENGLAND occasioned.

THE union of the two kingdoms, an event equally beneficial to both nations, is the great æra from which we may justly date the revival of that spirit and activity which the union of the crowns had well nigh suppressed. All the advantages of this union, were not indeed for many years either fully understood, or properly cultivated. The pride of an independent kingdom, and our deep-rooted enmity to the *English*, turned the popular current against a measure which was now become essential to our very being as a nation. Hence, the arts of industry which prevailed in ENGLAND, made in this country but a slow progress. Our manufactures were little at-
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tended to. The dependence of our tenants; the services to which they were still subject; their racked rents, short leases, and small stocks, all conspired to prevent the improvement of our husbandry. Before the union, our foreign trade was chiefly to *France, Holland, and up the Baltic.* The *English* high duties, to which we now became liable, naturally stopped the course of that trade, and it required time before it could fall into another channel. The trade to the Plantations, which the union opened to us, was at first of little advantage; as we had then no home commodities of our own to give in exchange for what we imported from them.

By the treaty of union, certain funds were expressly destined to the improvement of our trade and manufactures; but so little attention was at that time given to our commercial interest, that for several years the application of these funds was entirely neglected. By the 15th article of the union, a certain sum was agreed to be paid to this kingdom, by way of equivalent for that proportion of our revenues which were to be applied to the payment of the debts of *ENGLAND.* Out of this equivalent *L. 2000* were destined to be applied annually for seven years to the promoting and encouraging our manufactures and fisheries. As it was
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manifest, that, in consequence of the union, our revenues would be considerably improved, it was provided, that an account of the duties arising in *SCOTLAND* should be kept, in order that the precise increase of these duties might be regularly ascertained; and for such proportion of that increase as should be applied to the payment of the *English* debts, a further growing equivalent was to be allowed. The overplus of these several sums, after answering the uses to which they were in the first place to be applied, was also destined to the improvement of our trade and manufactures. But as the ascertaining the growing equivalents, and adjusting the several accounts upon which they rested, were attended with great difficulties; by an act of the 5th of *George I. anno 1719,* in lieu of all such equivalents, certain annuities and provisions were established. One of these annuities, consisting of *L. 2000 per annum,* was appointed to be wholly applied towards the promoting the fisheries, manufactures, and other improvements in *SCOTLAND.*

HAD these several regulations been early and properly followed out, their good effects would have soon appeared in every part of the country: but so negligent were we of our interest, or rather so little were we
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accustomed to attend to matters of this kind, that it was full twenty years after the union before one farthing of the sums which had been thus destined to the improvement of the country, was either applied or made effectual. It was not till about the year 1725 that we came to have a proper sense of this unaccountable negligence. At that time a better spirit began every where to exert itself. Various plans were proposed for the improvement of our manufactures, and proper schemes were concerted for obtaining an application of the legal funds. At length, by the well-judged interposition of the Royal Boroughs, and the laudable zeal and activity of certain persons who interested themselves in our public affairs, an act of parliament was obtained for carrying these beneficial projects into execution. By this act, which was passed in the year 1727, his Majesty was empowered to establish, by his letters-patent, a proper plan by which these legal funds might be wholly applied agreeably to the terms of the 15th article of the union. By the same act, he was empowered to name twenty-one persons, trustees and commissioners for the managing and directing these sums according to the established plan. That very year the first trustees were appointed by his Majesty's patent. Their funds consisted of the *L. 14,000 Sterling* which

which had become due upon the expiration of the first seven years after the union; of the annuity of *L. 2000 per annum*, provided by the act of the 5th of the late King, and of part of the arrears due upon that annuity; and, lastly, of certain surpluses arising from the duty upon malt.

THE trustees have applied these funds so successfully, and have exercised every part of their office with such zeal and faithfulness, that their institution may be justly esteemed one of the principal sources of the many improvements which have since that period been introduced into the country. But the difficulties they had to struggle with were so numerous, and their funds so inconsiderable, that a very quick progress could not be expected. In some parts of the country, indeed, both trade and manufactures were, from about that time, very remarkably increased; yet in EDINBURGH, and the neighbourhood of it, there was still a total stagnation. But since the year 1746, when the rebellion was suppressed, a most surprising revolution has happened in the affairs of this country. The whole system of our trade, husbandry, and manufactures, which had hitherto proceeded only by slow degrees, now began to advance with such a rapid and general progression, as almost exceeds the

bounds of probability. They are no longer the detached efforts of *Aberdeen*, of *Glasgow*, of *Dumfries*, or any other single town; but it is the united force of the whole nation, which seems at length to be exerting itself. Husbandry, manufactures, general commerce, and the increase of useful people, are become the objects of universal attention. These are assertions, which every one who is in any degree acquainted with the present state of this country, will readily admit. It is easy, however, to confirm them by a few particular instances; and at this time it may not be improper.

THE linen manufacture has ever been our staple commodity. Let us shortly trace its progress. Before the institution of the trustees in the year 1727, it was gone almost to nothing. For several years after their institution, its progress was very inconsiderable, insomuch that, for the first five years, ending the 1st of *November* 1732, the value of the linen cloth stamped for sale within SCOTLAND, amounted only to *L.* 662,938 *Sterling*; for the five years ending the 1st *November* 1742, it amounted to about *L.* 949,221 *Sterling*: but for the five years ending the 1st *November* 1751, it arose to *L.* 1,607,680, no less than *L.* 658,459 above the

the last mentioned period, and *L.* 944,742 above the first.

SINCE the year 1746, the following public companies have been established for the carrying on manufactures, or other branches of trade, which before that time were scarce known in this place, *viz.* the *British* linen company, the rope and sail-cloth manufacture, the iron and carpenter manufacture, the whale-fishing company, the sope-work, the gold and silver lace company, the herring-fishing company, the glass-manufacture, the sugar-work. The additional sum employed in the trade of this country by these several companies, is very considerable.

To show the increase of the consumption of malt by our distilleries within the same period, a single example may suffice. Within the seven years preceding the 1745, there were distilled in EDINBURGH 185,997 *English* gallons of *Aquavita*; but within the seven years preceding the 1752, there were distilled 723,150 *English* gallons: so that the increase since the year 1746 is no less than 537,153 gallons.

AN account of the tonnage of the shipping which belongs to the port of *Leith*, may serve to give us some notion of the great

great increase of our trade within the same period. The whole shipping in *Leith*, in the year 1692, amounted only to 1702 tons. In the year 1744 it amounted only to 2285 tons; so small a progress had we made in the space of fifty-two years. But the tonnage of the ships belonging to *Leith* for this present year 1752, amounts to 5703 tons.

WITHIN the same time a trade has been opened from the port of *Leith* to the *West Indies*; turnpike-acts have been obtained for repairing the roads in the neighbourhood of this city; and the art of printing has been carried to the highest perfection. We might produce several other instances to the same effect; but what has been already observed, will, if we mistake not, sufficiently answer our present purpose.

VARIOUS reasons have been assigned for so surprising a progress in the course of a few years. The money brought into this country, in consequence of the rebellion, the price paid for our jurisdictions, and some other circumstances of the same kind, have no doubt had their weight: but they are by no means causes adequate to so general and so sudden an effect. The uncommon attention which the legislature has given, for these six years past, to the improvement of
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this country, and the countenance and encouragement which every kind of industry has met with from our nobility and gentlemen of fortune, seem to afford us a more satisfactory solution of this question. The many excellent laws which have been lately made with that view, are too recent to need being enumerated. Their good effects have in some degree been already experienced; of which the general attention that they have occasioned to the true interest of the country, is not the least considerable. The great spring, however, which has set the whole in motion, is, that spirit, liberality, and application, with which our nobility and landed gentlemen have of late engaged in every useful project. They are the chief adventurers in our fisheries, manufactures, and trading companies. Animated by their example, persons of every rank and profession have caught the same spirit. Whoever reads the lists of the members that compose the several companies which were mentioned above, will find the names of merchants make the smallest part. Trade perhaps is not best carried on by companies when once it is established; but while it is in its infancy, such combinations are of the utmost consequence to its future advancement.

THE melancholy view of neglected arts
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and industry, both in ancient and later times, which has been presented to us by this short deduction, is fully recompensed by that fair prospect which our present situation opens, of growing wealth and national prosperity. Whoever feel a warm concern for the honour and welfare of their country, will rejoice in every new opportunity of exercising that generous spirit which has produced so happy an alteration. A project for enlarging and beautifying this city, could never surely have been suggested at a more proper juncture. The improvement of the capital must necessarily bear some proportion to the improvement of the country.

THE meanness of EDINBURGH has been too long an obstruction to our improvement, and a reproach to SCOTLAND. The increase of our people, the extension of our commerce, and the honour of the nation, are all concerned in the success of this project. As we have such powerful motives prompting us to undertake it; so chance has furnished us with the fairest opportunity of carrying it into execution. Several of the principal parts of the town are now lying in ruins. Many of the old houses are decayed; several have been already pulled down, and probably more will soon be in the same condition. If this opportunity be neglected,

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all hopes of remedying the inconveniencies of this city are at an end.

THE magistrates and town-council, the college of justice, and several persons of rank who happened to be in the neighbourhood of this place, having at length taken this matter under consideration, came unanimously to be of opinion, that a proper plan should immediately be drawn out of the improvements proposed to be made, and of the methods for carrying them into execution. With this view committees were chosen by the Town-council, by the Lords of Session, the Barons of Exchequer, the Faculty of Advocates, and the Clerks to the Signet.

THESE committees having had several meetings, they concerted and agreed upon certain proposals, a full copy whereof is annexed by way of appendix: the substance of which proposals may be comprehended under the following heads.

1^{mo}, To build upon the ruins on the north-side of the high street, an exchange, with proper accommodations for our merchants.

2^{do}, To erect upon the ruins in the parliament-close, a large building, containing

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such accommodations as are still wanting for the courts of justice, the royal boroughs, and town-council, offices for the clerks, proper apartments for the several registers, and for the advocates library.

3^{to}, To obtain an act of parliament for extending the royalty; to enlarge and beautify the town, by opening new streets to the north and south, removing the markets and shambles, and turning the *North-Loch* into a canal, with walks and terrasses on each side.

4^{to}, THAT the expence of these public works should be defrayed by a national contribution.

WHAT has already been observed, renders it unnecessary to enlarge very particularly upon the advantages which must accrue to our country from the execution of this plan.

THIS is perhaps the only city pretending to an extensive trade, that has no exchange. Our merchants at present meet in the public street; where, to the great interruption of business, they transact their affairs in the midst of that hurry, which the continual passing of coaches and carriages,
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and of numbers of people, necessarily occasion. A proper exchange will at once be a real advantage to our merchants, and create an opinion of the importance of our trade. Before the year 1566, the merchants of LONDON met in *Lombard-street*, just as our merchants do now at the cross of EDINBURGH. That year, Sir *Thomas Gresham*, a private citizen, at his own expence, built the exchange of LONDON. The first stones were laid by the hands of the aldermen; and, in the presence of Q. *Elisabeth*, a herald proclaimed it THE ROYAL EXCHANGE. The name of this generous merchant is still held in great veneration by the people of ENGLAND. In my Lord *Cobham's* gardens at *Stowe*, his bust is placed in the temple of the *English* worthies, with this inscription. "Sir *Thomas Gresham*, who, by the honourable profession of a merchant, having enriched himself and his country, for carrying on the commerce of the world, built the Royal Exchange."

THE accommodations still wanting to the courts of justice, Royal Boroughs, and Town-council of EDINBURGH, are so plainly a national concern, that to enlarge upon them is unnecessary. The Advocates library is too great an ornament to our country, not to merit a place in this new building. It already
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ready contains between 30 and 40,000 volumes, besides a very valuable collection of manuscripts, relating chiefly to the history, laws, and antiquities of SCOTLAND. It is daily increasing; and its apartments, which are very incommodious, must soon be full. The several registers appointed by our law, are justly esteemed of the greatest consequence to this country. Some of the most material of them are: The *Lord Register's office*, to which most of the records of this kingdom are appointed by law to be transmitted; where also are kept the acts and proceedings of the *Scots* parliament, and all our other public archives:—The registers kept at the *Signet-office*, *Privy Seal*, and *Chancery*; where, among other things, are recorded all charters and other deeds proceeding from the crown:—The records kept at the three several offices belonging to the *Clerks of Session*. In these are recorded, not only the decrees of the court of session, but also contracts, dispositions, and other rights and obligations. In these also are lodged the many valuable deeds produced in processes; as likewise, the warrants of unextracted processes, which are now swelled to an inconceivable bulk. In a word, we may safely affirm, that, in a course of twelve or fifteen years, through these offices pass the greatest part of the valuable rights of SCOTLAND. Besides these, there are the general *Register of Seisins*; the several

several registers of *Incumbrances* upon land-rights, and many others too tedious to enumerate. The advantages of these several records, for the preservation of valuable deeds, for the supplying such as are lost, and for securing purchasers of land from all hazard, are sufficiently known. The *Lord Register's office* is so incommodious, and so full, that an enlargement of it is quite necessary. There are still unopened, for want of room, ten hog-heads of papers, which, with the other records, had been taken away by *Oliver Cromwell*, and were brought back from LONDON in the year 1660. The other offices are mostly kept in hired houses, and in different quarters of the town. They already begin to run into confusion, which must soon be inextricable. They are exposed to numerous accidents, particularly that of fire from the contiguous houses. What a dreadful calamity the burning any of these repositories would be to the nation, every one must acknowledge. In the year 1700, the register of the commission of teinds was destroyed by fire and not above two years ago, one of the clerk's offices run the utmost hazard of the same misfortune. If every gentleman be careful to provide a secure repository for his own private deeds, ought he not to think it equally his interest to contribute to a building, which may be justly styled *The great charter-room of the nation?*

THE extending the royalty, and enlargement of the town, make no doubt the most important article. So necessary and so considerable an improvement of the capital cannot fail to have the greatest influence on the general prosperity of the nation. It is a vulgar mistake, that the greatest part of our principal families chuse to reside at LONDON. This indeed is true with regard to a few of our members of parliament, and some particular families who were settled there before the union. The rest go only occasionally; and if their stay be long, and their expence by consequence greater than this country can well bear, it must be entirely imputed to the present form and situation of EDINBURGH. Were these in any tolerable degree remedied, our people of rank would hardly prefer an obscure life at LONDON, to the splendor and influence with which they might reside at home. An uninterrupted country-life, is what they will never be brought to submit to. Attention to the forming an interest, the pleasures of retirement, or a taste for agriculture, may induce them possibly to pass some part of their time at their country-seats; more cannot reasonably be expected. It might indeed be otherwise in ancient times, when the feudal customs prevailed, with their large dependencies and extensive jurisdictions. The institution of our govern-
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ment is now different: our manners must be different also. A nation cannot at this day be considerable, unless it be opulent. Wealth is only to be obtained by trade and commerce, and these are only carried on to advantage in populous cities. There also we find the chief objects of pleasure and ambition, and there consequently all those will flock whose circumstances can afford it. But can we expect, that persons of fortune in SCOTLAND will exchange the handsome seats they generally possess in the country, for the scanty lodging, and paltry accommodations they must put up with in EDINBURGH? It is not choice, but necessity, which obliges them to go so frequently to LONDON. Let us improve and enlarge this city, and possibly the superior pleasures of LONDON, which is at a distance, will be compensated, at least in some measure, by the moderate pleasures of EDINBURGH, which is at home.

It has been objected, That this project may occasion the centre of the town to be deserted. But of this there can be no hazard. People of fortune, and of a certain rank, will probably chuse to build upon the fine fields which lie to the north and south of the town: but men of professions and business of every kind, will still incline to live in the neighbourhood of the
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the exchange, of the courts of justice, and other places of public resort; and the number of this last class of men will increase in a much greater proportion, than that of the former. *Turin, Berlin,* and many other cities, shew the truth of this observation. In these cities, what is called the *new town*, consists of spacious streets and large buildings, which are thinly inhabited, and that too by strangers chiefly, and persons of considerable rank; while the *old town*, though not near so commodious, is more crowded than before these late additions were made. The national advantages which a populous capital must necessarily produce, are obvious. A great concourse of people brought within a small compass, occasions a much greater consumption than the same number would do dispersed over a wide country. As the consumption is greater, so is it quicker and more discernible. Hence follows a more rapid circulation of money and other commodities, the great spring which gives motion to general industry and improvement. The example set by the capital, the nation will soon follow. The certain consequence is, general wealth and prosperity: the number of useful people will increase; the rents of land rise; the public revenue improve; and, in the room of sloth and poverty, will succeed industry and opulence. Ancient commerce was all carried on by
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great and populous cities. Modern commerce was first revived in *Venice, Genoa,* and the other large *Italian* towns, where the great and opulent were in use to resort. The same observation holds at this day. *Holland* in particular is little else than a wide extended city, full of inhabitants, industrious and indefatigable. Enormous cities are sometimes indeed attended with real disadvantages, for which no wealth can make amends; such as vicious luxury, a general depravation of manners, and a loose or neglected police. But let us boldly enlarge **EDINBURGH** to the utmost. As it is not the seat of government, it can never become the centre of luxury and vice. When we have fully removed the inconveniencies which render it at present an obstruction to the prosperity of the country, it will be time enough to guard against the disadvantages of too bulky a capital. About the time of the revolution, if we may believe *Sir William Petty*, the number of inhabitants in **DUBLIN** did not much exceed what **EDINBURGH** contains at present; but by following measures similar to those which are here proposed, that city is now incredibly enlarged, and the number of its inhabitants nearly tripled. What advances **IRELAND** has made in manufactures and commerce, are well known. Their nobility go more rarely to **LONDON**, and reside more at
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DUBLIN; their public entertainments are under the best regulations, and their theatre even rivals that of LONDON. The DUBLIN society were the first who gave vigour to their manufactures, by the distribution of well-judged premiums: but, in imitation of the capital, the same practice is become universal; and at every quarter-sessions in the country, premiums are distributed with the greatest success.

THE last article of our present proposal is, that the expence of this undertaking should be defrayed by a national contribution. As it is of the utmost consequence, to prevent every suspicion, that the money which is to be levied, may be either imbezzled or misapplied, the greatest care has been taken in concerting this part of the scheme. It is proposed, that there should be thirty-three Directors; eleven to be chosen by the College of Justice and Barons of Exchequer; ten by the other Subscribers; eight by the Magistrates and Council; and that the Provost for the time, and other three of the Magistrates, should be Directors in virtue of their office. The Lords of Session, Barons of Exchequer, Faculty of Advocates, Clerks to the Signet, and Town-council, have already chosen their several Directors; and a list of their names is annexed. The Subscribers are to chuse the other ten upon the

22d of *November*. We are at liberty to assure the public, that several persons of the first rank in the nation, who have already subscribed liberally to this undertaking, will not decline acting as Directors in the conducting so great and so useful an undertaking. It is also proposed, that the money should be paid in to either of the banks, to be called for as occasion requires; so there will be no need to lodge it in the hands of any private cashier.

SUCH being the nature and end of these proposals, we can have little doubt but they will meet with general encouragement. Whoever is warmed with a sincere concern for the prosperity of his country, will cheerfully contribute to so national an undertaking. Extensive projects, which little minds are apt to condemn as impracticable, serve only to excite generous spirits to act with greater industry and vigour. Peace is now generally established; the rage of faction in this country is greatly abated: there is a concurrence of almost every circumstance, which can prompt us to undertake, or enable us to execute great designs. Such of our young men of rank and fortune as are not sunk in low pleasures, must find employment of some kind or other. If the great objects of war and faction no longer present themselves, may they not find a more humane, and

not less interesting exercise of their active powers, in promoting and cultivating the general arts of peace? In the reign of Queen *Elisabeth*, ENGLAND was but a forming state, as SCOTLAND is now. It was then that the spirit of the *English* began to exert itself. Ships were fitted out, nay fleets were equipped, by private gentlemen. In the same manner public buildings were erected, colonies were settled, and new discoveries made. In a lesser degree, the same disposition begins to discover itself in this country. Building bridges, repairing high-roads, establishing manufactures, forming commercial companies, and opening new veins of trade, are employments which have already thrown a lustre upon some of the first names of this country. The little detail of an established commerce, may ingross the attention of the merchant: but it is in prosecution of greater objects, that the leading men of a country ought to exert their power and influence. And what greater object can be presented to their view, than that of enlarging, beautifying, and improving the capital of their native country? What can redound more to their own honour? what prove more beneficial to SCOTLAND, and by consequence to UNITED BRITAIN?

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The PROPOSALS.

AS the city of EDINBURGH is the metropolis of this part of the united kingdom, the seat of the supreme courts, the repository of our archives, land-rights, and other valuable securities; and, besides, has now the fairest appearances of becoming a place considerable for trade and manufactures; it is natural for all who wish well to the public, to desire such a city were more compleatly appointed than it is in several respects; and the following particulars seem to be what most people agree call for most immediate attention.

THE city at present has no hall or borough-room for the boroughs of SCOTLAND to meet in at their annual convention, or for the reception of any person of distinction by the magistrates; neither is there any convenient council-chamber.

THE Judges of the courts of Session and Exchequer have not proper apartments for their going into before they are ready to take their seats on the bench, and for retiring to.

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THE Director of the Chancery, the Clerks of Session, Justiciary, and Commission of Teinds, the Clerks to the Signet, and the Keeper of the General Register of Seifins, whose offices ought all to be near the courts, have most of them no certain and fixed places, but are obliged to take private houses for their accommodation; and the fixed places which any of them have, are neither commodious nor safe.

THE Lord Register's office, which is kept immediately below the session-house, is now quite full, and so cannot receive the registers which from time to time fall to be transmitted to it by the different Clerks through the kingdom; nor is there any conveniency for putting up in it what valuable registers and papers may be found in the hogsheds there, which have long been proposed to be examined with care, as indeed they deserve to be: and, besides, one of the rooms where this office is kept, is too damp, and very improper for preserving records.

THE Lawyers library, which does so much honour to this country, and is increasing daily, has not a suitable apartment.

THERE is no exchange for merchants and people of business to meet in.

THERE

THERE is no proper communication between the city and the fields immediately to the south and north; which, in the view of an extension of the royalty, a thing much to be wished for, would be absolutely necessary; and the want of it even at present is extremely inconvenient.

THESE being the things most desiderate, it happens that at present there is an opportunity to have them supplied with far greater ease than could be proposed for some ages before this, or can reasonably be expected hereafter.

FOR the ruins adjoining to the session-house are in the hands of the magistrates of EDINBURGH, who are willing the whole of that fine area, except the space necessary for a borough-room and council-chamber, be employed for accommodating the courts of justice and the public; the Judges may have there convenient apartments to go into before they take their seats on the bench, and for retiring to; the Director of the Chancery, the Clerks of Session, Justiciary, and Commission of Teinds, the Clerks to the Signet, and the Keeper of the General Register of Seifins, may there have convenient offices; the Lawyers library may have a suitable room; and by its being moved from

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from the place where it is at present, a convenient addition may be made to the Lord Register's office.

AGAIN, for answering the view of an exchange, it happens, that the place most commodious for it is at present in ruins; and there is reason to believe, that all the proprietors will be disposed to sell for a rational price, in order to forward so public an undertaking.

AND, in like manner, which will greatly facilitate the communication with the north, most of the houses which stood in the place where this communication would most commodiously fall to be made, are now totally ruinous, and may easily be purchased.

IT is hence apparent, that NOW is the time for setting about the above necessary undertakings.

IN order to carry the same into execution, a voluntary subscription has been proposed, and is already begun; and from the universal approbation the scheme meets with, there seems to be good ground to hope money will be raised sufficient to carry it on; and therefore it will be proper to have some plan

[41]

plan as to the procedure concerted; and the following is humbly suggested to be considered.

THAT the conduct and direction of the whole scheme should be lodged in thirty-three Directors, of whom seventeen to be a quorum.

THAT three of these Directors be chosen by the Senators of the College of Justice, two by the Barons of Exchequer, three by the Faculty of Advocates, three by the Clerks to the Signet, ten by those who subscribe to the extent of *L. 5 Sterling*, eight by the Magistrates and Town-council of EDINBURGH; and that the Lord Provost, the Dean of Guild, the Treasurer, and Deacon-Conveener, for the time being, shall *ex officio* be Directors, besides the above eight.

THAT where any person chosen by the Town-council to be an ordinary Director happens to hold any of the aforesaid offices, which without any election intitle to be Directors, that it shall be in the power of the council to elect a temporary Director; who shall have power to act as a Director so long as the ordinary Director continues to hold the office which intitles to the direction *ex officio*, and thereafter his power to determine.

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THAT these Directors shall be chosen by the several bodies above mentioned, as soon as possible; only that the election of Directors by the Subscribers shall be delayed till the 22d of *November* first.

THAT, in case of the death of any of the Directors, his successor shall be chosen by the same body that had elected him, except he was chosen by the Subscribers; in which case, to prevent unnecessary delays, it is proposed that the surviving Directors shall have power to name his successor.

THAT as the Directors are to have the ordering of every thing relating to the execution of the work, so no part of the money subscribed, or to be subscribed for, shall be exigible except upon the order of the Directors.

THAT when money is called for from the subscribers, it shall be paid over to any of the two banks the subscriber pleases; and the Cashier's receipt to be sufficient exoneration to the Subscribers, and the money to remain in the bank till the Directors have occasion for it to carry on the undertaking.

AND whereas an act of parliament will be necessary, in order to annex so much land as shall

[43]

shall be thought proper on the north-side of the *North-Loch*, (on which streets are to be laid out and houses to be built), to the royalty of EDINBURGH, and also some other parts round the city not now under the royalty, That it shall be in the power of the said Directors, to determine when such act of parliament shall be applied for, and to prepare a proper act, and give proper directions for carrying the same through, and for preparing the streets and avenues to lead from the high-town towards the places to be brought under the royalty.

IT is also understood and agreed, That if there be an excrescence of the subscription-money more than shall be sufficient to defray and complete the expence of the proposals now in view, that the Directors shall have power to employ or apply that excrescence to any public use within or adjacent to the city of EDINBURGH, as they shall think most proper for the advantage of the town.

The

The persons named by the several societies
to execute the foregoing *propofals*.

By the Lords of Seffion.

The Right Honourable the Lord President.
The Honourable the Lord Minto.
The Honourable the Lord Drummore.

By the Barons of Exchequer.

The Right Honourable the Lord Chief Baron.
The Honourable Baron Maule.

By the Town-council of Edinburgh.

The Right Honourable George Drummond, Esq;
Lord Provost.
Baillie John Broun.
Dean of Guild James Stuart.
Mr David Flint, Old Dean of Guild.
Mr Alexander Kincaid, Old Baillie.
Conveener James Ker.
Mr William Keir, Deacon of the Baxters.
Mr Alexander Sharp, Merchant.
Mr William Alexander, Old Provost.
Treasurer William Sands.
Mr Gavin Hamilton, late Baillie.
Mr George Cuninghame, Deacon of the Surgeons.

By the Faculty of Advocates.

Mr Robert Dundas, Dean of Faculty.
Mr Alexander Boswel.
Mr Gilbert Elliot.

By the Clerks to the Signet.

Mr Alexander Macmillan, Keeper of the Signet.
Mr Hew Crawford.
Mr John Mackenzie.