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A N
 E S S A Y
 O N T H E
 P U B L I C K D E B T S
 O F
 T H I S K I N G D O M.



[Price 2s. 6d.]

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In a LETTER to a Member of the House of Commons.

W H E R E I N

The Importance of discharging them is considered; the Provisions for that Purpose by the SINKING FUND, and the Progress therein hitherto made, are stated and explained; the Sufficiency of those Provisions is demonstrated; some general Mistakes about the Nature and Efficacy of this Expedient examined and removed; and the Progress of the SINKING FUND described and computed from *Midsummer, 1727.*

To which is subjoined,

An Enquiry into the General Convenience of reducing farther the Interest of our Publick Debts below 4 *per Cent. per Annum.*

Reprinted from the Second Edition, which was published by J. PEELE, in Paternoster-Row, in the Year 1726.

N. B. This Pamphlet is supposed to have been written by Sir NATHANIEL GOULD, an eminent Merchant and a Director of the Bank.

L O N D O N :

Sold by B. WHITE, at HORACE'S-HEAD, Fleet-Street.

M. DCC. LXXXII.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

PRESENT EDITION

OF THE FOLLOWING

“ Essay on the Publick Debts of the Kingdom. ”

Made in A.D. 1782.

THE following *Essay on the Publick Debts of the Kingdom* is now again offered to the publick in consequence of the great commendations bestowed upon it by the Rev. Dr. Price, of Newington Green, in his excellent tract, called, *“ An Appeal to the Publick on the Subject of the National Debt, ”* of which the 2d edition was published in the year 1772. Dr. Price there speaks of this pamphlet in these words. *“ And this opinion (which had been propagated about the year 1726, to wit, “ that, notwithstanding “ the establishment of the Sinking Fund, the publick debts had been “ for some years increasing rather than decreasing, ”)* occasioned the publication of a very curious and important pamphlet in defence of the Sinking Fund and the Ministry, intituled, *An Essay on the Publick Debts of this Kingdom.* I have now by me the fourth
“ edition

PREFACE to the PRESENT EDITION.

“ edition of this pamphlet; and I wish I could put it into every hand
 “ in the kingdom. It contains an excellent account of the import-
 “ ance of discharging the publick debts, and of the provisions made
 “ for that purpose by the institution of the Sinking Fund. It proves
 “ particularly, in opposition to the opinion I have mentioned, That
 “ the publick debts *had decreased*; and that, of the 52 millions then
 “ due, 50 millions would in 28 years be extinguished by the Sinking
 “ Fund. The same explanation is given of the nature of this fund
 “ with that which I have given: the same representation is made of
 “ its powers; and the same arguments are used to demonstrate the
 “ evil of alienating it, in order to avoid making new loans charged on
 “ new funds.—And the author of this excellent tract concludes
 “ with this general inference from all his observations, “ That the
 “ provision which had been made of the *Sinking Fund* was an ex-
 “ pedient from which the full and effectual payment of the principal
 “ of the national debt, in a few years, might, with great assurance,
 “ be expected.”

This pamphlet, Dr. Price further informs us, was answered in a
 pamphlet intitled, *A State of the National Debt*; and this produced
 another pamphlet by the author of the first, (or the *Essay on the Publick
 Debts*;) which was intitled, *A Defence of an Essay on the Publick
 Debts of this Kingdom, in answer to a pamphlet, intitled, A State of
 the National Debt*. And in this last pamphlet, intitled, *A Defence of
 an Essay, &c.* there are these words. “ The success of my *Essay on
 the Publick Debts*, and the satisfaction of hearing from the throne,
 “ that my zeal for the preservation of the Sinking Fund cannot have
 “ been disagreeable to his Majesty, gives me a pleasure that, alone,
 “ is an ample reward for my attempts to serve my country.” From
 these words it seems probable that this pamphlet (of which I have
 now in my hands the second edition, which was published in the
 year 1726;) had been very much read and approved of, and had
 tended very much to confirm the ministers of state in their resolution
 to continue, for that year at least, to apply the Sinking Fund to the
 purpose of its destination, and to induce them to advise the king to
 make use of the following words in his speech to the Parliament on
 the 17th of January, 1727, to wit, “ Let all that wish well to the
 “ peace and quiet of my government have the satisfaction to see, that
 “ our present necessities shall make no interruption in the progress of
 “ that

PREFACE to the PRESENT EDITION.

“ that desirable work of gradually discharging the national debt.
 “ I hope, therefore, you will make a provision for the immediate ap-
 “ plication of the produce of *the Sinking Fund* to the uses for which
 “ it was so wisely contrived, and to which it stands now appro-
 “ priated.”

The aforesaid excellent pamphlet, intitled, *An Essay on the Publick
 Debts of the Kingdom*, was published without a name. But it seems
 probable that it was written by Sir Nathaniel Gould, an eminent mer-
 chant, who was one of the directors of the Bank in the year 1726,
 when the second edition (and, perhaps, also the first edition of it,) was
 published. And the other pamphlet above-mentioned, which was
 written in answer to it and was intitled, *A State of the National Debt*,
 seems to have been written by the famous Mr. William Pulteney,
 who was afterwards created Earl of Bath. This may be conjectured
 with a considerable degree of probability from the following extract
 from Chandler's Collection of the Proceedings of the House of Com-
 mons, vol. vii. page 23. “ On the 23d of February, 1727, the Com-
 mons being in a committee of Supply, Mr. William Pulteney, [who
 “ was then in opposition to the ministry,] observed, “ That, not-
 “ withstanding the great merit that some persons had built upon the
 “ establishment of the *Sinking Fund*, it appeared that the national
 “ debt had been increased since the setting up of that *Pompous Pro-
 ject*.” “ Upon which Sir Nathaniel Gould, an eminent merchant,
 “ said, “ That he apprehended that gentleman had his notions out of
 “ a treatise, intitled, *A State of the National Debt, &c.* supposed to
 “ be written by that very gentleman: but that, if he [Sir Nathaniel
 “ Gould] understood any thing, it was *Numbers*; and he durst pawn
 “ his credit and reputation to prove that author's calculations and infer-
 “ ences to be false and erroneous.” To this Mr. Pulteney replied,
 “ That he took them to be right; and he would likewise pawn his
 “ credit and reputation to make good his assertion.” Upon this Sir
 “ Robert Walpole took up the cudgels, and said, “ He would main-
 “ tain what Sir Nathaniel Gould had advanced.” Several warm ex-
 “ pressions having passed on both sides, Mr. Hungerford interposed,
 “ in a jocular speech, that put the house in good humour; and so the
 “ dispute ended.”

As

PREFACE to the PRESENT EDITION.

As this pamphlet, intituled, *An Essay on the Publick Debts of the Kingdom*, is, in Dr. Price's opinion, of such importance as to deserve to be put into every hand in the kingdom; and, as it tends strongly to illustrate and enforce the utility of a measure I have long wished to see resumed and inviolably adhered to by the Parliament, to wit, "the measure of appropriating, in the strictest manner possible, some part, at least, of the Sinking Fund to the purposes of its original destination, or the gradual discharge of the national debt;" — And, as, from the enormous quantity to which the said debt is now increased by means of the present unhappy and most expensive war, the said measure is become more important and necessary than ever; I thought it would be agreeable to all such persons as are seriously concerned for the internal peace and welfare of their country, and the preservation of the national faith and honour, to see a new edition of this excellent discourse: and therefore I have caused it to be reprinted.

May 16, 1782.

THE

P R E F A C E.

*T*HERE may perhaps appear something too assuming in the attempts of an author, to inform the publick, or to direct their sentiments about matters of general importance, to admit of a better reception or entertainment from the town than what performances of this kind have of late years generally met with. I have thought therefore, that it may not be improper to mention my reason for the publication of the following sheets, as an apology for it with the reader, to whom I can with great truth and sincerity represent, that I should never have thought any knowledge which I had, or any discoveries in my power, of our circumstances with regard to our present debts, worth the publick notice, if I had not frequently met with some mistakes on this subject, which appeared to me very generally to prevail, and firmly to be insisted on and believed much to the disadvantage of our publick credit, and which at the same time I have flattered myself, might be confuted and removed, from such informations only as I should be able, on this occasion, to collect. I have so often heard it affirmed, that our publick debts have increased upon us since the provisions made for the discharge of them, that it has sometimes seemed to me to be the more common opinion even of those persons who are most interested to be rightly informed in this particular; and have almost as often heard it from hence inferred, that those provisions are therefore insufficient to answer the expectations we are supposed to have from them. And from the bad influence that the belief of this assertion, and the inference from it, must have on our publick credit, especially when it falls in with any general apprehensions for the publick peace or welfare on any other account, I have been induced to think, that as this fact is not true, nor the inference from it rightly made, it would be of general convenience that they were publickly contradicted, and proved to be otherwise; and that this were better done from that less exact and partial information which I have been able to come at upon this subject, than not done at all, or perpetually put off in expectation of its being some time done by such persons who have the exactest knowledge of our circumstances in this respect, or the best capacity for improving it for this purpose.

B

Nor

THE PREFACE.

Nor should I have been diverted from communicating the few or partial discoveries that the following sheets may be thought to contain, by being told, that such misrepresentations of our circumstances were made with design only, and by persons who better than myself knew the state of our affairs in this respect; because in this case in particular, it appears to be the publick interest, that the truth should be as generally known as may be, and that every person who is or may be an adventurer in our publick funds, should, as distinctly as can be, understand the provisions that have been made for supporting the credit of them.

What I have farther added beyond the general design, by which I was at first engaged to write upon this subject, the reader will judge of on the perusal of it. I am not insensible that there are several parts of this performance open to exceptions; but I have more hopes of the reader's indulgence to these faults as they shall occur to him, than I have that he will forgive the recital of them here, or my detaining him by endeavouring in this place to explain away or obviate any exceptions of this kind. I shall therefore mention but two particulars, in which I may be thought more than once to have offended. One is, that I have not every where used the utmost exactness in supposing, stating, or describing the publick debts, or the variations in them. To this fault, as often as I have been guilty of it from any other cause than my want of materials for that purpose, I have been chiefly induced by the views of being thereby more intelligible; having presumed that it would be better to omit any such degrees of exactness in this respect, as were more than sufficient to answer the general design of this essay, which would at the same time render it more tedious and perplexing. I have also, for much the same reason, been induced to content myself with the use of some words in what has seemed to me to have been their more ordinary acceptation, when applied to this subject; which in a longer or more elaborate enquiry, I should have thought myself obliged to define and explain distinctly before I ventured upon the use of them.

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In a LETTER to a Member of the House of Commons.

S I R,

U P O N recollecting the conversation that was the occasion of your desiring my thoughts in writing on the subject of our Publick Debts; I have concluded, that I should best answer your expectations from me in this affair, by confining my thoughts,

1. To the consideration of what advantage to the publick may be reasonably expected from the discharge of those debts, and the redemption of the duties provided for the payment of their interest.

2. To an enquiry into the reasons we have at present to expect or hope that these debts, or any considerable part of them, will within any reasonable compass of time be discharged and paid off. And,

B. 2

3. To

3. To such reflections as have occurred to me upon those measures that may for the future be entered upon, for the more speedy and effectual discharge of our present debts, from the income of the Sinking Fund already provided for that purpose; or, for still farther increasing the annual income of that fund by such reductions as may yet be made in the interest or annuities payable for the principal sums of which the present debt consists.

Of the advantages that will arise to the publick from the discharge of the national debts.

As to the first of these, or the advantage arising to the publick by the discharge of the present debts; there seems to be but little room to enlarge, after the consideration of that great annual revenue at present levied and applied to the payment of our debts, which, after the total discharge of them, will, without any loss or injury to private persons, be redeemed to, and become the property of, the publick. The present yearly expence to the Government, on account of our publick debts, computing the annual income of the Sinking Fund and the yearly interest of those debts together, will be found to amount to little less than, if not to exceed, the sum of £3,000,000. A revenue exceeding the whole farther annual expence of our civil and military government in a time of peace; and which, together with the ordinary supplies which our Government requires in a time of peace, may perhaps be a fund sufficient to answer our utmost probable expences during the most expensive war.

I do not think myself at liberty to suppose, or promise it as one advantage arising to the publick from the discharge of the present debts, that the several duties appropriated to the payment of them will, as soon as they are redeemed, be immediately removed or determined; for reasons, which in the following sheets I shall have a further occasion to mention; when I shall recommend it to be considered, whether the revenues arising from those duties, or the greatest part of them, are not raised with more ease, greater equality, and more to the common benefit of the subjects of Great-Britain, than some part of the supplies that are annually voted for the current service of the year; and consequently, how far it may be reasonable to substitute a great part of the revenues arising from those duties, after the redemption of them, in the place of our annual taxes. But it will, I presume, appear no small convenience to the publick, arising from the redemption of the aforesaid duties, that, when they shall be no longer appropriated to the payment of our debts, the principal difficulty will be removed, which has at any time obstructed the removal or lessening any of these duties, though the convenience of the publick may, upon other accounts, have persuaded to it; either as such duties may have appeared to give too great perplexity to persons employed in trade, or to prevent or obstruct any profitable branch of our commerce with foreign countries; as they may have been thought to require too strict an enquiry,

or

or too great severity or expence in the collecting them; as by being laid on any commodities universally necessary, they may have seemed too great a burthen on the poorest of our inhabitants; or as by bearing too great a proportion to the bulk of the commodities on which they have been laid, they may have made the gain arising from defrauding the publick, or the temptation to attempt it, bear too great a proportion to the hazard of being discovered; or, as in any other respect they may be found to be attended with general inconvenience, or unreasonable hardship on particular persons, employments or conditions of life amongst us.

And, however it shall be determined, after the discharge of our present debts, as to the continuance or removal of the whole or any part of the duties appropriated for the payment of them; the revenues arising from them, being redeemed, will become the property of the publick, and, if not from thenceforth removed, will be employed in the room of, and take away the occasion for, such other taxes as shall then appear a greater burthen to, or to be more unequally levied upon, the subjects of this kingdom.

Having mentioned the quantity of annual expence to the Government, occasioned by our publick debts, it seems unnecessary to proceed further in proving the importance of discharging them, or to descend to or enumerate any further inconveniencies, that upon this account we labour under. An uncomfortable employment! and which, I hope, I shall be excused from, for this further reason; that the inconvenience of our present debts, and the importance of discharging them, are so universally believed and felt, and so unanimously agreed to, that I know none of my fellow-subjects who want to be convinced of them. I shall proceed therefore to what I proposed in the

Second place, to make out the probability, and represent the reasons we have to hope, that the present publick debts will, within the compass of a few years, be effectually and honourably discharged.

Of the probability that the said debts will be discharged in a few years by means of the Sinking Fund.

What I have chiefly proposed under this head, is to describe and explain, as far as my materials for that purpose will carry me, those measures which have been already taken for the discharge of our publick debts by the provision of the Sinking Fund. To which attempt, though this provision has already been made as publick as our acts of parliament, and though the operation and progress of it, in the discharge of our debts, is without any difficulty to be computed, I find myself induced, from that general suspicion of the inefficacy of this provision to answer the ends proposed by it; and which seems to have prevailed amongst some people, who have either not had leisure for that purpose, or who have declined the trouble of collecting the materials for, or making those computations from

from

from them which are requisite, in order to their satisfaction about the use and efficacy of the Sinking Fund.

Of the establishment of the Sinking Fund in the month of March, 1717.

The first material provision that was made for discharging the principal of our present debts, was enacted in the third year of his present Majesty's reign, by three several acts of parliament at that time made; the first of which (in the order that they should have been printed amongst the statutes published for that sessions) is intitled, *An act for redeeming several funds of the Governour and Company of the Bank of England, pursuant to former provisos of redemption; and for securing to them several new funds and allowances redeemable by Parliament; and for obliging them to advance further sums, not exceeding £2,500,000 at five per cent. as shall be found necessary to be employed in lessening the national debts and incumbrances; and for continuing certain provisions formerly made for the expences of his Majesty's civil government, and for the payment of annuities formerly purchased at the rate of five per cent. and for other purposes in this act mentioned, page 331.* The second, intitled, *An act for redeeming the yearly fund of the South-Sea Company (being after the rate of six pound per cent. per annum, and settling on the said Company a yearly fund after the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, and to raise for an annuity or annuities, at 5 per cent. per annum, any sum not exceeding £2,000,000, to be employed in lessening the national debts and incumbrances, and for making the said new yearly fund and annuities to be hereafter redeemable in the time and manner thereby prescribed, page 375.* And the third, intitled, *An act for redeeming the duties and revenues which were settled to pay off principal and interest on the orders made for it on four lottery acts, passed in the 9th and 10th years of her late Majesty's reign; and for redeeming certain annuities payable on orders, according to a former act in that behalf; and for establishing a general yearly fund, &c. page 291.*

Of the several sums of which the Sinking Fund is composed.

The *Sinking Fund* of late years, (called so from its being understood to be appropriated to the sinking and discharging, as far as it will go, the principal sums of the present publick debt,) is made up of money arising yearly into the Exchequer, as the surplus of the produce of three several funds established by the three aforesaid acts of parliament, by the names of the Aggregate Fund, the South-Sea Fund, and the General Fund; the surplusses of which three funds, or what they annually produce more than the yearly sums to the payment of which they are first appropriated, are by the last of the aforesaid acts of parliament reserved for, and made applicable only to, the discharge of the principal and interest of such debts as had been before the year 1716 contracted and provided for by Parliament. The yearly sums to the payment of which those funds are first appropriated (except the sum of £700,000 per annum to his Majesty for the expence of his civil government) are generally the interest, or annuities, payable for several principal sums, of which our publick debts consist. As

As often therefore as any of those principal sums are paid off, or the proprietors of any part of the publick debt are induced to accept of a less interest or annuity for the same principal sums, the Sinking Fund is understood to increase by the yearly addition of the interest of such sums as are paid off, or the abatement of the annuity for such part of the publick debt as is agreed to be continued at a lower rate of interest. But the duties, the surplus of which the Sinking Fund consists of, not bringing in every year an equal sum of money, the surplus likewise is not every year alike; and therefore, in order to compute in what time the present publick debt may be discharged by the Sinking Fund, it is necessary to enquire from what different annual sums have of late years been produced by it, what yearly sum it is reasonable to suppose may for the future be produced by it at a medium, or one year with another. To which yearly sum we are from time to time to add the yearly interest or annuity of such principal sums, part of the present publick debt, as may be paid off by it; and all such abatements of interest of all or any part of the publick debts, as are already agreed hereafter to take place, or may for the future be agreed to by any of the creditors to the publick.

There are a great many particulars which you will see, Sir, I must want the knowledge of, in order to make this supposition with any great exactness. I could wish here to be able to state the produce of the several particular duties, the excesses of which constitute and supply the Sinking Fund; the different sums produced by them in different years, from the times they were severally granted; to assign the most probable causes of their variation, and from thence infer the probability of their producing more or less for the future: but however unprovided I am with materials for an inquiry of this kind, it may be yet worth while to proceed in describing the proportions in which any determined yearly sum (though by mistake) supposed to be the present yearly produce at a medium of the Sinking Fund, will increase, when applied to the payment of the publick debts; as those proportions will be the same with those in which any other sum, with more truth or probability supposed to be produced one year with another by the Sinking Fund, will increase when applied to the same purpose.

The best account I have been able to get of the produce of the Sinking Fund for some years last past lies now before me, and states the produce of the surplusses of the several funds, commonly called the Aggregate Fund, the General Fund, and the South-Sea Fund, (the sum of which surplusses our acts of parliament call the *Sinking Fund*) to be from the 31st of December, 1722, to the same time in the year 1723, £619,000 and upward; and the produce of the same surplusses from thence to the 31st of December, 1724, to amount to upwards of £653,000. This amount

Of the annual amount of the Sinking Fund.

8 An ESSAY on the PUBLICK DEBTS.

amount of the produce of the Sinking Fund for the two years above-mentioned, exceeds the produce of the same fund for some years before, by a greater sum than can be accounted for by the discharge or reduction of the interest of any part of the publick debt before that time; and which therefore I am inclined to attribute to several provisions about that time made by the Legislature, for preventing frauds in the payment, and for the more fully and effectually collecting of several duties which in part supply the revenues appropriated to the payment of our publick debts; and of which provisions I would hope we may long enjoy the benefit in the increase of the Sinking Fund. And from hence, I should think, we might venture to expect an annual produce from the Sinking Fund for the future, equal to the produce of the same fund for the two years above-mentioned, ending in December 1724; and increasing by the yearly addition of the interest of such principal sums as may be henceforth paid off, and of the abatements of the interest, or annuities, of any of the publick debts when the same shall take place, that already are or may hereafter be agreed for.

Of the savings of interest that will accrue to the Sinking Fund in the year 1727.

The abatements of interest in the year 1727 are so considerable, and the time when they are to take place so near, that I believe it will be thought reasonable to step forwards to the time when the Sinking Fund will be increased by the addition of those abatements; and from that time to consider the progress that may be made in discharging the present publick debt by the Sinking Fund.

From Midsummer in the year 1727, it is already provided, that the Sinking Fund be increased by the reduction of the interest from 5 to 4 per cent. or an abatement of 1 per cent. per annum on the principal sums following.

On £13,061,878, being the amount of the publick debt to the South-Sea Company, excluding £3,839,393, part of it, for which an annuity at 4 per cent. only is at present payable,	130,618	15	7
On 16,901,241 <i>l.</i> 17 <i>s.</i> of the South-Sea annuities, - -	169,012	8	4
On 3,775,027 <i>l.</i> 17 <i>s.</i> 10 <i>d.</i> part of the debt to the Bank of England;	37,750	5	6
On £4,000,000, farther part of the debt to the Bank of England, purchased by them of the South-Sea Company,	40,000	0	0

An ESSAY on the PUBLICK DEBTS. 9

To this, if the annual income of the Sinking Fund on the 31st of December, 1724, be added, supposed to be } 600,000 0 0

And the increase of it by the discharge of £600,000 per annum of such Exchequer bills as remained uncanceled on the 31st of December, 1724, and are made payable out of the Sinking Fund from the said 31st of December, to the 24th of June, 1727, viz. the interest and charge of circulating £1,500,000 Exchequer bills at 3 per cent. } 45,000 0 0

1,022,381 9 5

The amount of the said several annual sums will be upward of £1,022,000, the produce of the Sinking Fund from the 24th of June, 1727.

The produce of the Sinking Fund from the 24th of June, 1727, will be upwards of £1,022,000 per annum; and the whole of the national debts at that time will be less than 50 millions.

The publick debts on the 31st of December, 1724, are stated to amount to £52,363,471, or thereabouts: from which, if it be allowed me to deduct £1,500,000 Exchequer bills above supposed to be paid off by the Sinking Fund on the 24th of June, 1727, and such further principal sums as provision is made for the discharge of otherwise than by the Sinking Fund, the remainder to be paid off on the 24th of June, 1727, will be considerably less than 50 millions. Which sum however, (that I may not be thought to strain matters in favour of this scheme of discharging the publick debts by a Sinking Fund) I will suppose to be the principal debt to be paid off on the 24th of June, 1727, and the annual produce of the Sinking Fund to be from the same time one million only. I will likewise suppose, (as is most generally true) that the above-mentioned principal sum of 50 millions, will from the same time carry interest after the rate of 4 per cent. And, because there are some persons so sanguine as to imagine, that by force of our Sinking Fund, or some schemes formed upon it, the same debt may be still further reduced to a lower rate of interest, and the Sinking Fund increased further by such reduction; I will likewise suppose such a scheme to have taken effect, and the above-mentioned principal sum to carry 3 per cent. interest only, and the annual produce of the Sinking Fund to be increased, by an abatement of 1 per cent. interest on 50 millions, to £1,500,000. Upon both which suppositions, I shall subjoin a computation, describing in what number of years, from Midsummer 1727, the above-mentioned principal sum of 50 millions, or any particular part of it, may be discharged and paid off; in which, when I had not time to correct them, I discovered a small mistake or two, which I hope the reader will excuse, when I have assured him, that they no where misrepresent the time in which the aforesaid debt, or any part of it, may be paid off, by so much as two days.

Computations of the numbers of years in which the aforesaid national debt of 50 millions may be paid off by means of the Sinking Fund, upon suppositions of its bearing the two different rates of interest of 4 per cent. and 3 per cent.

C

Computation

Computation at 4l. per Cent.

	Payments made at Mid-summer every year.			Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.		
	£.	s.	D.	£.	s.	D.
1728	1,000,000	0	0	1,000,000	0	0
	40,000	0	0			
29	1,040,000	0	0	2,040,000	0	0
	41,600	0	0			
30	1,081,600	0	0	3,121,600	0	0
	43,264	0	0			
31	1,124,864	0	0	4,246,464	0	0
	44,994	11	2 ³ / ₈			
32	1,169,858	11	2 ³ / ₈	5,416,322	11	2 ³ / ₈
	46,794	6	10 ¹ / ₈			
33	1,216,652	18	0 ¹ / ₂	6,632,975	9	0 ⁷ / ₈
	48,666	2	3 ³ / ₄			
34	1,265,319	0	4 ¹ / ₄	7,898,294	9	5 ¹ / ₈
	50,612	15	2 ¹ / ₂			
35	1,315,931	15	6 ³ / ₄	9,214,226	4	11 ⁷ / ₈
	52,637	5	5			
36	1,368,569	0	11 ³ / ₄	10,582,795	5	10 ³ / ₈
	54,742	15	2 ³ / ₈			
37	1,423,311	16	2 ¹ / ₄	12,006,107	2	0 ³ / ₄
	56,932	9	5			
38	1,480,244	5	7 ¹ / ₂	13,486,351	7	8 ¹ / ₄
	59,209	15	2 ¹ / ₂			
39	1,539,454	0	10	15,025,805	8	6 ¹ / ₄
	61,578	3	2 ³ / ₄			
40	1,601,032	4	0 ³ / ₄	16,626,837	12	7
	64,041	5	9 ¹ / ₄			
41	1,665,073	9	10	18,291,911	2	5
	66,602	18	9 ¹ / ₂			
42	1,731,676	8	7 ¹ / ₂	20,023,587	11	0 ¹ / ₂
	69,267	1	1 ³ / ₄			

Computation at 3l. per Cent.

	Payments made at Mid-summer every Year.			Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.		
	£.	s.	D.	£.	s.	D.
1728	1,500,000	0	0	1,500,000	0	0
	45,000	0	0			
29	1,545,000	0	0	3,045,000	0	0
	46,350	0	0			
30	1,591,350	0	0	4,636,350	0	0
	47,740	10	0			
31	1,639,090	10	0	6,275,440	10	0
	49,272	14	0			
32	1,688,363	4	0	7,963,803	14	0
	50,650	17	4 ¹ / ₂			
33	1,739,014	1	4 ¹ / ₂	9,702,817	15	4 ¹ / ₂
	52,170	8	5 ¹ / ₄			
34	1,791,184	9	9 ³ / ₄	11,494,002	5	1 ¹ / ₄
	53,735	10	8 ¹ / ₄			
35	1,844,920	0	6	13,338,922	6	7 ¹ / ₄
	55,347	12	0			
36	1,900,267	12	6	15,239,189	18	1 ¹ / ₄
	57,008	0	6 ³ / ₄			
37	1,957,275	13	0 ³ / ₄	17,196,465	11	2
	58,718	0	6 ¹ / ₄			
38	2,015,993	13	0 ¹ / ₄	19,212,459	4	8 ¹ / ₄
	60,479	16	2 ¹ / ₂			
39	2,076,473	9	8 ³ / ₄	21,289,032	14	5
	62,544	4	1			
40	2,139,017	13	9 ³ / ₄	23,428,050	8	2 ³ / ₄
	64,170	10	7 ³ / ₄			
41	2,203,188	4	5 ¹ / ₂	25,631,238	12	7 ¹ / ₄
	66,095	12	11 ¹ / ₄			
42	2,269,283	17	4 ¹ / ₄	27,900,522	10	0
	68,078	10	3 ³ / ₄			

Computation at 4l. per Cent.

	Payments made at Mid-summer every year.			Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.		
	£.	S.	D.	£.	S.	D.
1743	1,800,943	9	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	21,824,531	0	9 $\frac{3}{4}$
	72,037	14	9 $\frac{1}{2}$			
44	1,872,981	4	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	23,697,512	5	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	74,919	4	11 $\frac{1}{4}$			
45	1,947,900	9	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	25,645,412	14	10
	77,916	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$			
46	2,025,816	9	11	27,671,229	4	9
	81,032	13	2 $\frac{1}{4}$			
47	2,106,849	3	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	29,778,078	7	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
	84,273	19	3 $\frac{3}{4}$			
48	2,191,123	2	5	31,969,201	10	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
	87,644	18	6			
49	2,278,768	0	11	34,247,969	11	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
	91,150	14	1			
50	2,369,918	15	0	36,617,988	6	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
	94,796	15	0			
51	2,464,715	10	0	39,082,703	16	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
	98,588	12	4 $\frac{3}{4}$			
52	2,563,304	2	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	41,646,007	18	7
	102,532	3	3 $\frac{1}{2}$			
53	2,665,836	5	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	44,311,844	4	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
	106,633	9	0 $\frac{1}{2}$			
54	2,772,469	14	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	47,094,313	19	0
	110,898	15	9 $\frac{1}{2}$			
55	2,883,368	10	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	49,977,682	9	6 $\frac{1}{4}$
	115,334	14	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	22,317	10	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
56	2,998,703	5	4	50,000,000	0	0
	1296	14	8			
	3,000,000	0	0			

Computation at 3l. per Cent.

	Payments made at Mid-summer every year.			Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.		
	£.	S.	D.	£.	S.	D.
1743	2,337,362	7	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	30,237,884	17	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
	70,120	17	5			
44	2,407,483	5	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	32,645,368	2	10
	72,224	9	11 $\frac{1}{2}$			
45	2,479,707	15	1	35,125,075	17	11
	74,391	4	7 $\frac{3}{4}$			
46	2,554,098	19	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	37,679,174	17	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
	76,622	19	4 $\frac{1}{4}$			
47	2,630,721	19	1	40,309,896	16	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
	78,921	13	2			
48	2,709,643	12	3	43,019,540	8	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
	81,289	6	2			
49	2,790,932	18	5	45,810,473	7	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
	83,727	19	9			
50	2,874,660	18	2	48,685,134	5	6 $\frac{3}{4}$
	86,239	16	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,314,865	14	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
51	2,960,900	14	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	50,000,000	0	0
	39,099	5	1 $\frac{1}{2}$			
51 $\frac{1}{2}$	3,000,000	0	0			

You

Observations on the preceding computations.

You will be pleased to observe, Sir, that the annual income of the Sinking Fund, in this manner applied to the discharge of the principal of the publick debts, increases yearly in the same manner and proportion as a principal sum put out and continued at compound interest, or interest upon interest, at such a rate of interest as the principal sum to be paid off is supposed to carry: that the increase of it in every year, is by the interest of that principal sum which was paid off in the year next before it; and that the whole of the increase of it in any one year, from the beginning to apply it in discharge of the principal debt, is the sum of the interest of all the principal sums that have been in the year before paid off by it: and that the whole of the debt proposed to be paid off by a Sinking Fund in this manner applied, will be compleatly discharged the year before the Sinking Fund itself is increased, by the addition of the whole interest of the debt to be paid off.

From which observations, it will be easy to compute the progress of any other annual sum, greater or less, than what I have supposed to be the produce of the Sinking Fund in the year 1727, in the payment of a principal sum of 50 millions, at 4 per cent. or any other rate of interest, or any other principal sum which you may think it more reasonable (as our affairs now stand) to provide for the payment of, by the common rules for calculating the increase of principal sums continued at compound interest.

In the use of which rules, you will find, Sir, if you should think it more reasonable to set the income of the Sinking Fund, from the year 1727, at £800,000, or (as some persons have represented it) at £1200,000 per annum, that a debt of 50 millions, carrying 4 per cent. interest, would in the first of these cases be paid off in about 32 years, and in the other in 25 years and one month; or if in either case the Sinking Fund should be supposed to be increased by £500,000 per annum added to it, from the interest of the same debt, reduced to 3 per cent. from the same time, it would appear that it might be fully discharged and paid off, by a Sinking Fund of £1,300,000 per annum in about 25 years, and by a Sinking Fund of £1,700,000 in 21 years and 8 months, or thereabouts.

A mistaken opinion has of late been propagated, that the publick debts have increased since the establishment of the Sinking Fund.

But to whatever may in this manner be observed or proved, relating to the efficacy or progress of the Sinking Fund increasing annually by addition of the interest of such debts as are discharged by it, I have heard it objected and strongly insisted on to be true, that our publick debts have been far from decreasing or made less since the contrivance and application of this expedient for that purpose; but, on the contrary, have been growing upon us, and are now considerably greater than they were about the time when the surplusses of several funds were first appropriated to the discharge

discharge of those debts. And this melancholy circumstance the same persons aggravate, with observing, that the increase of our debts has been in a time of almost uninterrupted peace; and infer, that our debts must increase still faster upon us, in case of any publick troubles.

I have often wondered how so uncomfortable a mistake could so generally prevail, against the testimony that the memory of every person at all acquainted with publick transactions of this kind must bear, that our publick loans of late years (except such as have been made on funds provided to discharge the monies advanced upon them within the year,) have not been equal to the sums that have within the same time been paid off; till upon further enquiry upon this subject, I have had put into my hands copies of accounts, supposed to be made up at the Exchequer, stating the totals of the publick debts for different years to be greater considerably from the year 1720, than in that year, and in that year to be more than in any year before it. From which accounts I cannot but think this mistake must arise and prevail with persons who satisfied themselves with observing the totals only, and have not attended to the particular articles of which they were made up; but in examining the particular articles of which those totals are made up, they will find that the great increase of figures in the description of our present incumbrances, is not owing to any real increase of their true quantity.

An account of the circumstances that have given rise to the said mistaken opinion.

In an account now before me, of the amount of the publick debts on the 31st of December in several years, beginning in 1717, and ending in the year 1724, the amount of the publick debts in the first of those years is described to be £47,894,950, and in the last to be £52,363,471. Of which great increase in the description of our debts, the chief reasons are; first, the subscription of several irredeemable annuities for different terms of years into the South Sea Company's stock, in the years 1719 and 1720; by which those annuities were converted into a redeemable debt from the Government, and purchased back from the proprietors at higher rates, or a greater number of years purchase, than were paid by the proprietors for the same annuities when they were first purchased from the Government. Before these subscriptions made, this part of our publick incumbrances is described in the aforesaid account, by the principal sums originally advanced by the proprietors on the purchase of them; and afterwards by the quantity of redeemable debt, for which by virtue of the aforesaid subscriptions they were exchanged; which generally exceeds by four years and one half's purchase the sum originally contributed by the proprietors of those annuities, and which upon the whole of the said annuities at those different times subscribed, amounts to about £3,155,858. This in the present view must, I think, be admitted to be no real increase of the publick incumbrances, or at least not properly brought into the account.

1st. The purchase of certain irredeemable annuities for different terms of years.

account of those years in which the aforesaid subscriptions were made; those subscriptions being well enough known and understood to have been of great advantage to the publick, and very much to have facilitated the discharge of the whole of our present debts; and it being very obvious, that whatever real incumbrance has been growing upon us on account of those annuities, it is to be attributed only to the increasing value of those annuities, and to be computed from the times of their being valued at higher prices, and not from the times of the subscriptions above-mentioned, by which the further increase of their value was most fortunately prevented; and about which, all that we have to wish is, that it had been done sooner.

Army-debentures.

Another article increasing in the aforesaid accounts of the publick debts from the year 1717 to the year 1724, is of army-debentures, or annuities charged and made payable out of the fund commonly called the General Fund, after the rate of 4 per cent. for such principal sums, as in pursuance of several acts of parliament for appointing commissioners to state the debt due to the army, have been certified to have been due for services in the late war, and before the year 1717. This, Sir, from 40,157*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.* which on the 31st of December, 1717, is only stated to be due from the publick under this article, is on the 31st of December, 1724, by the aforesaid accounts described to amount to upwards of 2,140,157. But as this debt was due before the year 1717, in the present inquiry, whether the publick debts are since that time increased or no, this sum is (now that the quantity of it is determined,) to be reckoned in the amount of the publick debt, as well in the year 1717 as in the year 1724; or, in other words, to be considered as due from the publick from the time it was contracted, and not from the time only when it was certified to be due.

Exchequer notes.

Another article increasing the total amount of the publick debts in the year 1724 beyond that of the year 1717, in the aforesaid accounts, is, that of 1,000,000 of Exchequer notes made out and lent to the South-Sea Company in the year 1720, and in that year added to the amount of the publick debts. This sum, on the re-payment of it by the South-Sea Company, would have been deducted from the amount of the publick debts in that year in which it was repaid, if it had not been provided by a subsequent act of parliament, that the aforesaid Exchequer notes should be cancelled and paid out of the Sinking Fund; and that the sum of 1,000,000, due from the South-Sea Company, should be applied, when paid, to the discharge of a farther million of Exchequer notes made forth in the year 1722, and upon which money was raised for the discharge of a like sum in arrear to the navy; which said sum of 1,000,000 being in this manner ultimately supplied out of the Sinking Fund, it is necessary to suppose

suppose it to have been due from the publick before the year 1716, the Sinking Fund being, as I have above observed, about that time appropriated to the discharge of such debts only as were due before that year; and consequently this sum of 1,000,000 being in the year 1717 owing, and in arrear from the Government, should also in our present inquiry about the increase of the publick debts, be in that year added to the amount of them.

As should also, for much the same kind of reasons, the following Other less material articles, viz.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Navy-annuities, a debt, though before due, not brought into the publick accounts till the year 1718,	110,312	0	0
A further provision for the sufferers at Nevis and St. Christophers, about — — — —	41,000	0	0
The increase of a deficiency on the East-India Company's fund stated in the publick accounts, to be from the year 1717 to the year 1720, about — —	67,500	0	0
A sum in the year 1723, raised for immediate service on the credit of Exchequer notes, the payment of which was at the same time provided for by a tax on the estates of Roman Catholicks, — —	100,000	0	0

To these articles are to be added the three first above-mentioned, viz.

The increase computed on the subscription of irredeemables, — — — —	3,155,858	0	0
Of army debentures, — — — —	2,100,000	0	0
And the sum raised for discharging arrears to the navy,	1,000,000	0	0
The amount of which sums together is, — —	6,574,670	0	0

And this sum, Sir, must be added to the above-mentioned total of our publick debts in the year 1717, before the comparing it with the total of the same debts in the year 1724 will truly determine how far our debts are increased or grown less from one time to another. Let this then be done. — — — —

	47,894,950	0	0
	6,574,670	0	0
	54,469,620	0	0
And the aforesaid amount of our debts in 1724,	52,363,471	0	0
deducted from it, — — — —	2,106,149	0	0

D And

The national debts have really been diminished by the sum of £2,106,149 from the year 1717 to the year 1724. Another method of estimating the diminution of the national debts in the same period.

And it will appear, that our debts are not in reality increased from the year 1717, to the year 1724; but, on the contrary, are diminished by the sum of £2,106,149, or thereabouts.

The same thing will appear from enumerating the particulars of the real increase or decrease of our debts from one time to the other; of which, Sir, the following is very nearly a true account, viz.

Money at different times borrowed on the duty on coals for building churches, more than in the mean time has been paid off by the particular provision made for that purpose,	92,778	2	0
Money borrowed for the service of the year 1719, more than paid off by the provision made for that purpose on the 31st of December, 1724,	439,300	0	0
Money borrowed on the plate-act for the service of the year 1720,	312,000	0	0
Total,	844,078	2	0

And this sum of 844,078*l.* 2*s.* is the whole sum that our debts can, with any propriety, be said to be increased by from the year 1717. Such other sums as have been since that time borrowed having been employed in aid of the Sinking Fund, and applied in the discharge of some other debts at a higher interest; of which the following (except what of this kind has been already mentioned) is likewise a true account, viz.

Borrowed in the year 1719 by lottery,	500,000	0	0
Advanced in the same year by the South-Sea Company on the increase of their stock and funds, about	544,142	0	0
Advanced in the year 1723, towards the discharge of the lottery annuities unsubscribed to the South-Sea Company, about	1,000,000	0	0
Total,	2,044,142	0	0

By which sum, together with the Sinking Fund, have been paid off from 1717 to 1724, viz.

Of Exchequer notes,	2,924,612	0	0
Of lottery annuities unsubscribed,	1,204,786	0	0

Bank

Bank annuities unsubscribed,	235,297	0	0
Deficiency of the East-India Company's fund,	191,028	0	0
Besides, there has been in the same time paid in part of a principal debt contracted by two lotteries in the years 1713 and 1714, by provision for that purpose at the same time made, about	429,490	0	0
Total,	4,985,213	0	0
From whence the total of the last above-mentioned loans being deducted, viz.	2,044,142	0	0
The remainder will be the sum of what has been paid off from the year 1717 to the year 1724 by the Sinking Fund, or otherwise without the assistance of those loans.	2,941,071	0	0
And from thence	2,941,071	0	0
Let us farther deduct the total of the aforesaid articles by which our debts have really, in the mean time, been increased, viz.	844,078	0	0
And that remainder	2,096,993	0	0

will be the sum by which our debts, within the aforesaid seven years, appear by this computation really to have been diminished; differing indeed from that sum which I have from the first computation stated to be the decrease of the publick debts in the same time by near £10,000. But which difference, if I pretended to the utmost exactness, might be removed, by either adding to the last remainder, or reckoning amongst the particulars by which our debts have decreased within the time aforesaid, the value of such annuities for lives as within that time have reverted to the Crown.

The said debts have, according to this second estimation, been diminished in the same period by the sum of £2,096,993.

This sum, perhaps, especially if it be farther reduced by the deduction of one million at two different times borrowed, to supply the deficiencies of the provision for the expence of his Majesty's civil government, considered as part of, and an addition to, our publick debts, may be thought too inconsiderable a diminution of our debts to be boasted of as the effects of this expedient for so great a length of time. But, as it is no real objection to the truth of those computations which I have made, of the progress of the Sinking Fund from the year 1727, I presume it will likewise be no discouragement to our dependance on this provision for the payment of our debts; especially after we have considered the great addition that will be made to the Sinking Fund in the year 1727, and

have farther observed the much greater dispatch which a yearly sum applied to the payment of any determined debt at interest, and increasing annually in the manner above-described, will make in the discharge of such a debt in a few years after the first application of it to that purpose, than it will do when it first begins in that manner to be applied.

Another mistaken opinion which has lately been advanced concerning the Sinking Fund.

The little progress, however, hitherto made in the diminution of our debts, leads me to the examination of another opinion, which I think I have observed to prevail with the same persons, who affirm our publick debts to have increased upon us; which is, that upon the supposition that such debts are really increasing upon us by new loans equal to or exceeding the discharges made in the same time by the Sinking Fund, the Sinking Fund is in such case making no effectual progress at all in the diminution of our debts. It is perhaps the more material to consider here, how far this opinion is true, for this reason, that though this supposition on which it is founded has not been true hitherto, it must be, however, admitted to be not improbable, that some future exigencies of the Government may make such new loans necessary, as may exceed any sums in the same compass of time produced by or applied to the discharge of our debts from the Sinking Fund. And in this case, upon the supposition that such new loans are made upon further funds found out for payment of the interest of the money so to be advanced upon them, this opinion, that the Sinking Fund, applied as aforesaid, would be making no effectual advance to the compleat discharge of the whole of our publick debts, would not be true. This will be best explained, if during the time that the above supposed Sinking Funds are employed in the discharge of the aforesaid debt of 50 millions, the whole of our debts should be supposed, by new loans upon further funds borrowed at 4 or 3 per cent. interest, to be increased by a further sum of 50 millions, and that sum to be discharged in the same manner, and by the same Sinking Funds, after the discharge of the first 50 millions; or if the account of the progress of the above supposed Sinking Funds be carried on, till instead of 50 millions they shall have discharged a principal debt of 100 millions.

Computations of the times in which another debt of 50 millions of pounds, (contracted upon new funds during the time of discharging the first debt of 50 millions by means of the Sinking Fund,) might be paid off by means of the said fund, if the interest of money is 4 and 3 per cent.

Computation

Computation at 4l. per Cent.

	<i>Payments made at Mid-Summer every year.</i>			<i>Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.</i>		
	£.	s.	D.	£.	s.	D.
1755				49,977,682	9	6 $\frac{1}{4}$
56	2,998,703	5	4	52,976,385	14	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
	119,948	2	7 $\frac{1}{4}$			
57	3,118,651	7	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	56,095,037	2	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	124,746	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$			
58	3,243,397	9	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	59,338,434	11	10
	129,735	17	11 $\frac{1}{2}$			
59	3,373,113	7	0	62,711,547	18	10
	134,924	10	8			
60	3,508,037	17	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	66,219,585	16	6
	140,321	10	3 $\frac{1}{2}$			
61	3,648,359	7	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	69,867,945	4	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
	145,934	7	6			
62	3,794,293	15	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	73,662,238	19	11
	151,771	15	0			
63	3,946,065	10	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	77,608,304	9	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
	157,842	12	5 $\frac{1}{2}$			
64	4,103,908	2	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	81,712,212	12	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
	164,156	6	6			
65	4,268,064	9	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	85,980,277	1	8
	170,722	11	6 $\frac{1}{2}$			
66	4,438,787	0	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	90,419,064	2	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
	177,551	9	6 $\frac{3}{4}$			
67	4,616,338	10	6	95,035,402	13	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
	184,653	10	9 $\frac{3}{4}$			
68	4,800,992	1	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	99,836,394	14	5
	192,039	13	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	163,605	5	7
69	4,993,031	14	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	100,000,000	0	0
	6,968	5	0 $\frac{1}{2}$			
	5,000,000	0	0			

Computation at 3l. per Cent.

	Payments made at Mid-summer every Year.			Total of all the payments from the beginning in every year.		
	£.	s.	D.	£.	s.	D.
1750				48,686,134	5	6 $\frac{3}{4}$
51	2,960,900	14	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	51,646,034	0	5 $\frac{1}{4}$
	88,827	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$			
52	3,049,727	15	4	54,695,761	15	9 $\frac{1}{4}$
	91,491	16	1 $\frac{3}{4}$			
53	3,141,219	11	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	57,836,981	7	3
	94,236	11	7 $\frac{1}{4}$			
54	3,235,456	3	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	61,072,437	10	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
	97,063	13	8 $\frac{1}{4}$			
55	3,332,519	16	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	64,404,957	7	2 $\frac{1}{4}$
	99,975	11	10 $\frac{1}{4}$			
56	3,432,495	8	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	67,837,452	15	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
	102,974	17	3			
57	3,535,470	5	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	71,372,923	1	10 $\frac{1}{4}$
	106,064	2	2			
58	3,641,534	8	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	75,014,457	9	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
	109,246	0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$			
59	3,750,780	8	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	78,765,237	18	9
	112,523	8	3 $\frac{1}{4}$			
60	3,863,303	17	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	82,628,541	15	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	115,899	2	3 $\frac{3}{4}$			
61	3,979,202	19	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	86,607,744	15	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
	119,376	1	10			
62	4,098,579	1	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	90,706,323	16	4
	122,957	7	4 $\frac{1}{2}$			
63	4,221,536	8	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	94,927,860	4	10 $\frac{3}{4}$
	126,646	1	9 $\frac{1}{4}$			
64	4,348,182	10	4	99,276,042	15	2 $\frac{3}{4}$
	130,745	9	6	723,957	4	9 $\frac{1}{4}$
65	4,478,927	19	10	100,000,000	0	0
	21,072	0	2			
	4,500,000	0	0			

From

From hence, Sir, it presently appears that the above supposed Sinking Funds, in this manner increasing by the addition of the interest of the principal sums in every year paid off, and consequently by additions in every year greater than those made to it in the year before, will be sufficient not only to discharge our present debts, but any probable addition in the mean time to be made to them by further loans on new-invented funds, in a few years after the present debts shall be discharged: and that the time required for the discharge of our debts, increased by any addition in this manner made, will by no means be lengthened out, or the payment of the whole of our debts by the Sinking Fund retarded or delayed in proportion to the addition to or increase of the debt itself: the total payment of our publick debts becoming by no means desperate from any Sinking Fund, however less than those above supposed, upon account of any determined increase of or additions made to them; unless those additions are supposed to be continued increasing in every year in the same or a greater proportion to one another than that in which the additions yearly made to the Sinking Fund increase. This is so true, that suppositions about the increase of the publick debt might be carried to the utmost extravagance, and still appear to be provided for by the above-mentioned Sinking Fund of £1,000,000, increasing at the rate of 4 per cent. compound interest; which, if it were worth while, might be shewed to be sufficient, in about 105 years, to pay off a debt of 1575 millions, allowing for the increase of the present debt of 50 millions, by an addition of 15 millions in every year in which that Sinking Fund should be so applied. Nor will this at all surprize persons who have been accustomed to attend to the increase of money put out at compound interest, or quantities continued in geometrical progression; an enquiry into which will remove all doubts about the truth of what I have here advanced. It would however be true, that if at any time, on the discharge of any part of the principal of the present debt, the interest were not added to, and applied in the further discharge of, the remaining debt, but another equal or greater principal sum should be borrowed on the same annuity; the progress of the Sinking Fund would by such measures, if the same sum were borrowed, be stopped; and, if a greater, be put backwards: but as long as these measures are not taken, or the Sinking Fund diverted or applied to any other purpose than the discharge of our debts; the full and effectual payment of all our debts by this expedient, is by no means to be despaired of from the increase of them by new loans on further duties.

Observations on the great efficacy of the Sinking Fund in diminishing the national debts, notwithstanding new sums of money should in the mean time be borrowed by the publick upon new funds to pay the interest of them.

But this is upon a supposition that the Sinking Fund is never charged with the interest of the new loans.

And that the Sinking Fund will, from time to time, be applied to the discharge of the publick debts, and not be diverted or applied to any other purpose whatsoever, is what, I think, we may securely promise ourselves; from considering that the aforesaid fund has been appropriated to that purpose by the Legislature, and our publick faith in the same manner engaged

The publick faith is engaged to the proprietors of the national debt, that the Sinking Fund shall never be applied to any other purpose but that of discharging the said national debt.

engaged to the creditors of the Government, that the surplus of the
aforesaid duties should be applied to the discharge of the principal of their
debts, as the funds themselves to the payment of the interest or annuities
contracted for: which faith of the publick in this manner engaged, I
think we have all the reason in the world to believe will be as inviolably
observed in this as in any other part of their contract with the proprietors
of the publick debts.

The clause of the
act of parliament,
(3 Geo. 1, cap. 7,
sect 37,) by which
the Sinking Fund
is so appropriated.

This appropriation of the Sinking Fund to the purpose aforesaid, you
will find, Sir, to have been made by the aforesaid acts of parliament.
In the last of which, taking them in that order in which I have referred to
them, page 320, after reciting that by the two other acts of parliaments,
the surplusses of the Aggregate and South-Sea Funds are provided to be
reserved to the disposition of Parliament only; it is enacted, That the
surplusses of the General Fund thereby created, should in like manner be
accounted for and reserved for the disposition of Parliament. And then it
is further enacted in the words following, " That all the monies to arise
" from time to time, as well of or for the said excess or surplus, by virtue
" of the said act made for redeeming the funds of the Governour and
" Company of the Bank of England [viz. the Aggregate Fund] and of
" or for the said excess or surplus, by virtue of the said act for redeeming
" the funds of the said Governour and Company of Merchants trading to
" the South-Seas, &c. and of or for the said excess or surplus of the said
" duties and revenues by this act appropriated as aforesaid, [viz. the
" General Fund] and the said overplus monies of the said general yearly
" fund by this act established or intended to be established as aforesaid,
" shall be appropriated, reserved, and employed to and for the discharging
" the principal and interest of such national debts and incumbrances as
" were incurred before the 25th of December, 1716, and are declared to
" be national debts, and are provided for by act of parliament in such
" manner and form as shall be directed and appointed by any future act
" or acts of parliament to be discharged therewith or out of the same, and
" to and for none other use, intent or purpose whatsoever."

The said clause
ought to be con-
sidered as a so-
lemn contract en-
tered into by the
Government with
the publick cre-
ditors.

By these words, I think, the surplusses therein mentioned, of which
the annual income of the Sinking Fund is made up, sufficiently appear to
have been appropriated by the legislative power to the payment of our
publick debts, till they shall be intirely discharged and paid off. Nor can
this provision well be understood as made by the Government for what
then appeared for publick convenience only, and consequently to be
altered by subsequent acts whenever it shall appear, or be pretended to be
otherwise; but must, I think, be considered as a contract by the Govern-
ment with the publick creditors, if the occasion of these acts of parliament
be attended to. In which case it will appear, that the several provisions
by

by these acts made, were enacted and proposed to the creditors aforesaid,
as inducements to them to accept of an interest, or annuity, for their debts
by one sixth part less than that which till that time they had received;
of which the most obvious inducement was, that what was thus deducted
from the yearly interest of their debts, should be applied for the better
securing and gradual discharge of the principal of the said debts. To
which security, amongst the other benefits by the same acts of parliament
proposed to them, they must, I think, be considered to have intitled
themselves by their subscriptions afterwards made, subsequent to, and in
consideration of, such proposals made to them by the Legislature. And
whoever will be at the trouble of turning over the several subsequent acts
of parliament relating to the publick debts, will find this provision for the
application of the Sinking Fund frequently repeated and confirmed: and
in cases where by act of parliament application of monies in the Sinking
Fund to the discharge of debts that were less obviously, or less generally,
known to have been within the description of the debts intended by the
provision above-recited, such debts have been, by the recitals, declared and
explained to have been debts incurred before the 25th of December, 1716,
and provided for by Parliament in a manner that has plainly intimated it
to be understood by the Legislature, that the above-recited provision was
an engagement, or contract, of the Government with the publick creditors,
about the punctual observation of which from time to time they were
intitled to have all possible satisfaction; or at least, that the punctual appli-
cation of the above-mentioned surplusses to the discharge of our present
debts, was regarded by them as a matter of the highest consequence to the
publick welfare. And as long as the publick welfare shall be in the least
regarded, and this continues to be the only expedient for removing such
heavy incumbrances on our affairs, and redeeming so considerable a revenue
to the use of the publick, I think we may confidently expect, that no
persons whatsoever, whose hands the administration of our affairs may at
any time for the future be committed to, can ever be induced to approve
of, or recommend, the application of the produce of the Sinking Fund, in
any possible exigence of our affairs, to any other uses than those to which
it stands now appropriated, though there were no other considerations
to enforce it.

Therefore it can-
not be supposed
that any ministers
of state whatso-
ever will ever pre-
sume to divert the
produce of the
Sinking Fund
from the purposes
of its original
destination.

For let us inquire a little, what publick exigencies can be supposed to
happen, that can make it at any time adviseable to divert or apply the
produce of the Sinking Fund to any other purpose till after the entire
payment of our publick debts. Let the expence that the circumstances of
our affairs may at any time make necessary, be, or be supposed to be, ever
so much more than what can be conveniently raised within the year; it
must, I think, always appear more eligible in regard to the publick interest,
as well as more easy to those persons in the administration, to whom the
care

In any supposed
exigencies of state,
that are likely to
arise, it will be
more expedient to
raise money by
new loans, with
new funds, or
taxes, to pay the
interest of them,
than to break in
upon the Sinking-
Fund.

care of providing the necessary supplies shall at any time be allotted, to raise what shall be further wanted by increasing the publick debt with further loans upon interest provided for by new duties, than to supply the same sums in any way from the produce of the Sinking Fund.

An illustration of this proposition by an example.

The computation that I have last made was to shew, that the time in which the above supposed Sinking Fund of £1,000,000 will be sufficient to compleat the discharge of the publick debts, will by no means increase equally to the increase of the principal sum of those debts by further loans on new funds: but it may be of further use to shew, how much less the increase of the publick debts, by borrowing further sums at interest provided for by new funds, will retard the discharge of the whole of the publick debts, than the supplying the same sums in any way from the produce of the Sinking Fund would do. Let us suppose, for instance, that the Government were obliged for 25 years together to increase the present debt, by a million borrowed in every year at an interest of 4 per cent. provided for by further funds, the above-made computation will shew that that additional debt of 25 millions would be paid off by a Sinking Fund of one million, applied as is therein supposed, in little more than 7 years after the discharge of the present 50 millions. But if the same sum were to be supplied out of the produce of the Sinking Fund, it is obvious that the payment of the publick debts must stand still for 25 years, and be by more than two thirds of that time retarded beyond the time in which they would otherwise be discharged, though increased as aforesaid; and the greater the sum is supposed to be, that in these different ways is to be supplied, the greater will be the proportion in which the payment of our debts will be delayed, by supplying such expences from the Sinking Fund, more than by the other way: or if the sums in these different ways supplied should be supposed less, the difference of the delay in these two cases will be indeed less: but on supposition of the smallest sum to be these two different ways supplied; the delay arising to the discharge of the publick debt by this misapplication of the Sinking Fund, will be at least three times as great as that which will be occasioned by increasing the publick debt in the other method.

The borrowing money, and charging the interest of it on the Sinking Fund, instead of laying new taxes for that purpose, would be as pernicious an alienation of the Sinking Fund as the taking gross sums out of it

The borrowing money on the income of the Sinking Fund in any form, if no more were in any one year borrowed than what had been by the Sinking Fund the year before paid off; and if that money be supposed to be borrowed at the same rate of interest that was payable for the debt before paid off; will have the same effect in delaying the payment of the publick debts, as the misapplication of the revenue of the Sinking Fund the year before would have had: but if greater sums be at any time borrowed on that fund, the payment of the publick debts will not only be stopped, but put backwards; and that in a manner that obviously leads that were equal to the money so borrowed, not

not only to delay the payment of the publick debts, but the taking away intirely the only security yet provided, that they shall ever be paid off. For which reason I shall not trouble you, Sir, with any computation of the different degrees in which different steps in pursuing these measures will affect us; but at once suppose it impossible that any persons can propose to borrow money, (or much less to succeed in it) on the credit of schemes that themselves destroy all probability of the re-payment of it; which, such measures as these, must evidently appear to do, to those that consider, that we have already had the greatest advantage from the reduction of interest that can with reason be hoped for in the provision of the present Sinking Fund; which if we once part with in exchange for an increased principal debt at a lower rate of interest only, it will be madness to expect that either such a lower rate of interest, or any alteration in our circumstances for the better, will admit of the same kind of provision to be made again for the payment of our debts increased by such measures as these are.

I cannot therefore, Sir, amongst the ordinary vicissitudes of the affairs of any nation, not even amongst any long and expensive wars, that it may be necessary for the defence and safety of these kingdoms to carry on with our neighbours, find out that exigence of our affairs that can make the misapplication of the Sinking Fund appear necessary, or probable to be put in practice; while it is so certain, that the lands, estates, expence, or commerce of Great-Britain, will yet easily admit of farther duties sufficient to furnish new funds to answer the interest of such sums as any publick occasions that I can represent to myself can call for. Nor can I fear, that such duties will not be chearfully voted and submitted to, when they shall appear necessary to prevent the misapplication of an annual sum employed in so useful and necessary a service to the publick, as the reduction of our debts; while that appears to be retarded so much more by discontinuing the payment of those debts, than by the increase of them.

There is another objection to the probability of the payment of our publick debts, which, if I did not frequently meet with it, I should chuse not to mention, from my apprehensions, that in stating of it as I have met with it, I should be obliged to mention my superiours with less decency, than that grateful sense of the happiness we enjoy under the present reign would on all other occasions lead me to, or than you, Sir, from the same motives would expect from me. But as you are pleased to admit you have often met with it from others, you will give me leave to mention it, in my way to answer it. The objection I mean is, That the continuance of our publick debts is, and always must be, the interest of persons in the administration; that the greatest profit of their employments arises from hence; and that the necessary power and influence to support themselves in those

Examination of another reason which has lately been advanced for suspecting that the ministers of state will not long continue to apply the whole of the Sinking Fund to the discharge of the national debt.

employments, depend greatly on their having reserved to themselves the disposition of the various offices and employments in collecting and applying the revenues appropriated to the payment of the publick debts; which, when those debts shall be discharged, can subsist no longer.

It must be observed, in answer to this reason, that both the king and the ministers of state have hitherto been anxiously careful to apply the Sinking Fund to its proper use, the discharge of the national debt.

Whatever truth we should admit to be in this objection, we have the pleasure of observing, that it appears to be equally true, from the frequent and earnest recommendations from his Majesty of the necessary measures for discharging the publick debts to the care and endeavours of the legislature; the several steps that have been taken by them; and the great and effectual provision that is already made for this purpose; that nothing can have been, or will be, more sincerely intended and endeavoured by his Majesty, or the persons who have had, or shall have, the honour to be employed by him.

It may further be observed, in answer to the said reason, that it is not necessary, or probable, that, when the national debt shall be all paid off, the taxes which now pay the interest of it will be abolished.

But from the sense I have just now professed to have of the blessings we enjoy under the present government, I must confess, I should with no pleasure look forwards on that period of time, when his present Majesty or his successors should be deprived of the means of supporting it, or even of rewarding and encouraging the fidelity and services of their best subjects. The chief use therefore that I have proposed to make of this objection, is to take an occasion from it, of considering how far it is probable that such a reform as is above supposed, of the various employments in collecting and receiving the present revenues, will take place on the discharge of the publick debts; or how far it is reasonable that it should do so. And this supposition being founded on a presumption, that the particular duties now appropriated to the payment of the publick debts will, after the payment of them, be immediately removed, the reasonableness of that presumption will be the matter in question.

The Government is now supported by other taxes, that are granted anew every year, to wit, the land-tax and the malt-tax.

For the purpose of this inquiry, Sir, I should propose it to be considered, that the support of our government necessarily requires a considerable annual expence, that is at present ordinarily supplied by other taxes than those which have been provided to answer the payment of the publick debts; that the present ordinary provision for that annual expence has been hitherto determined, rather by the necessities of the publick, than by choice; and that it yet remains to be debated, how far the duties at present appropriated to the payment of our debts, or part of them, may, after the discharge of those debts, be continued and made to answer the ordinary annual expence of our government, more to the advantage of the publick, with less burthen and expence to the particular estates of his Majesty's subjects in this kingdom, and consistently with a more equal and reasonable proportion of the burthen or expence by every subject submitted

These taxes might, when the national debt was all paid off, be dropt, and their

place supplied by some of the duties which now pay the interest of the said debt.

to, to the benefit he receives from the support of our government, than is now done by the present provision made for the aforesaid ordinary annual expence.

It is in vain to suppose, that the necessary expences of a government are to be supplied by any taxes that are no ways burthensome to the whole or some part of the community, and consequently to which some objections may not be dressed up by persons interested in avoiding them; which objections, however, when such taxes appear necessary, it is unreasonable to propose or aggravate. I shall not therefore point out any inequality or hardship that I may apprehend to be in the ordinary annual provision made amongst us by a land-tax; but content myself with making some observations, tending to recommend the greatest part of the duties now appropriated to the payment of our debts, as the most convenient and reasonable taxes to supply the ordinary expence of our government, when redeemed by the payment of those debts.

This would be found to be very equitable and convenient.

Upon enumerating the several duties which at different times have been provided to answer the demands of the publick creditors, it will appear that the greatest part of them (whether collected by custom or excise) have been laid upon commodities in general use and consumption amongst that part of the inhabitants of this country, whose circumstances will admit of the expence.

The latter duties (which now pay the interest of the national debt,) are, for the most part, duties on the consumption of commodities.

About these duties it will appear upon reflection to be generally true that they have been added to the price which those commodities had before the imposition of such duties, and from thenceforth to be ultimately paid in the last price of such commodities by the consumer.

Upon which supposition, if the aforesaid duties are either, by way of custom or excise, generally collected throughout the country where such commodities are consumed; it is plain that the said duties will generally be paid by every person residing in such a country, nearly in proportion to his ordinary annual expence.

And this, Sir, is the share or proportion which, of all others, I think most eligible to be taken from every person residing in a country where great part of the inhabitants subsist by commerce, towards the publick expences of the government of that country, when it can in this manner be done, without enquiring exactly into the expence of every particular inhabitant.

These are the most convenient taxes that can be laid in a commercial country.

For;

An advantage belonging to these taxes.

For, first, in this way the publick expence is least sensibly felt by those who really contribute towards it; every person being voluntary in his expence, and gratifying himself while he is contributing from his estate to the expence of the government.

A second advantage belonging to them.

2. Contributions in this manner generally made by the inhabitants of a country in proportion to their expence, will be likewise made in a near proportion to the real value of the property of the same inhabitants; perhaps, a nearer than it would be done by a law made, directing the publick expences to be levied in that proportion, from the great difficulty of finding out, and plain inconvenience of exactly inquiring into the real value of every man's property for a purpose of this kind, in a country so much engaged in traffick as our's is. Nor will taxes upon our expences vary much from taxes proportioned to the value of our property, (if long continued) from what may at first sight appear a reason for that conclusion; I mean, the different choice of the thrifty and extravagant in the proportion of their expences; the first of which, by contributing little himself to the publick expence, is providing for larger contributions by his successors; and the other, by contributing too largely in haste, is incapacitating himself for contributing at all.

Advantages of these taxes above direct taxes on property.

I think also, that in those particulars in which a tax proportioned to our expences, either does, or may be contrived to, vary from one intended to levy the same sum in proportion to the value of property in Great-Britain, such a tax on our expences appears the more eligible.

1. A tax proportioned to the expences of persons residing in Great-Britain, will collect a proportion of the income of the various profitable professions and employments amongst us, and of the annual gains of foreign and inland commerce; all which being received and enjoyed by virtue of the laws, and under the protection of this government, should, together with the annual income of our property, contribute towards it.

2. It will likewise collect and take in a proportion of the annual income of such estates or employments as supply the expence of foreigners on different accounts residing in Great-Britain, as well as of such of his Majesty's subjects who chuse to reside here and support their expences by the income of estates in Ireland, or any of our colonies or plantations in America or elsewhere; from whom, in return for the protection their estates receive from the arms or influence of Great-Britain, supported at our expence, no contributions in common with the inhabitants of this kingdom can be thought unreasonable.

Contributions

Contributions thus made by persons residing in Great-Britain, in proportion to their expences, will likewise include a proportion of the annual income of such estates as may be brought hither by foreigners chusing to settle amongst us, or by any of our own countrymen returning with their gains from other countries.

In short, it will include a proportion of all estates whatsoever, whether within or without the kingdom of Great-Britain, and whether discovered or not discovered, that any way supply the expences of our inhabitants, in a manner (as is above observed,) not grievous to, or liable to be complained of by, the contributors themselves, and with the further good economy of sparing on ordinary occasions, and increasing, that publick stock, that unmovable part of our property within this kingdom, to which in times of extraordinary danger and expence we must necessarily have recourse.

It may likewise be considered, in recommendation of this manner of supplying the ordinary expences of our government by duties in the manner above supposed, levied in proportion to our expences, what farther conveniencies to the publick may be procured by such duties, over and above such a supply to its ordinary expences; such as discouraging the consumption of such foreign commodities as may, in a manner plainly inconvenient to the publick, interfere with, or hinder the consumption of, the produce or manufactures of our own country; abating the extraordinary price of foreign commodities, or the exorbitant gains of foreigners by the importation of them; the diminishing a trade carried on with any of our neighbours, the balance of which is too evidently in their favour; the encouraging any other more profitable branch of the British commerce; or the preventing the increase of any particular article of expence, that may too plainly tend to debase the manners, or abate the industry, of his Majesty's subjects. Of this kind many are the conveniencies that may be procured to a country, by the same measures that supply the ordinary expences of its government. And when it shall be considered to how many publick uses of this sort several of the duties appropriated to the payment of our debts are subservient, besides the annual income produced by them; I believe it will appear by no means eligible, and much less necessary, that the whole of those duties should, immediately after the payment of the publick debts, be removed and determined; when the same conveniencies may be still preserved to us by the continuance of them, and the income of those duties be made to supply such of our expences as are now provided for by less equal, or less beneficial, taxes.

Duties of this kind may also be made instrumental to the judicious regulation of our trade.

We may therefore conclude that it will not be expedient, when the national debt shall be totally discharged, to abolish all the duties that now are employed in paying the interest of it.

Such considerations as these, I think, are sufficient to remove the above-mentioned supposition, that the payment of our publick debts is inconsistent with the interest of a British ministry; in which, however, I could

It may further be observed, in answer to the reason advanced above in page 419, that the views mentioned in that reason are too remote to influence the ministers of state for many years to come.

could still advance farther, by remarking how remote the views of any interest of this kind are placed, by the length of time that will be necessarily required for the discharge of our present debts from a Sinking Fund; and by observing, that the removal of any part of the present duties, which are any ways inconvenient to the publick, and are continued now only because appropriated to the payment of some part of our debts, will by no means imply or even admit of a reduction of officers employed in the collection of those kind of duties, either by way of custom or excise, in the several ports or districts in Great-Britain, in proportion to the income of such abolished duties; and from several other reflections that have occurred to me on this subject, if I did not think it unnecessary any farther to follow so groundless and indecent a jealousy of the integrity and publick spirit of such of my countrymen, who shall for the future deserve and attain to the favour and confidence of his Majesty or his successors.

Thus far I have been endeavouring to make out, that the provision already made of the present Sinking Fund is an expedient, from which we may with great confidence expect the full and effectual payment of the principal of our present debts within a few years. Upon which, Sir, if I have dwelt longer than you may have thought necessary, I hope you will be pleased to consider in excuse of it, how far I must have been led to do so, by attending to the happy influence that a general confidence in the efficacy of this expedient would have on the credit of our publick funds, especially in case that the measures lately taken by some neighbouring princes should make a rupture with them necessary to us; and how far such a general opinion of the efficacy of this scheme has a tendency to forward and increase the success of it.

An inquiry whether the Government ought, in prudence, to endeavour to procure a further reduction of the interest of the national debt.

I am now brought, Sir, to the last task that, in obedience to your commands, I have assigned myself; and am to inquire what measures it may be most for the interest of the publick to take in the application and use of the Sinking Fund from the year 1727. About which the only question that can, as I think, be put is, Whether it shall be from thenceforth adviseable for us to endeavour after a greater increase of the Sinking Fund, by a farther reduction of the interest of the publick debts? Or if it may not be then on the whole more for the publick interest, to endeavour only after such an increase of the aforesaid fund, as will be produced by the application of it from time to time to the discharge of the publick debts, and the addition of the yearly interest of such of the said debts as shall be from time to time paid off.

Before I proceed to any other consideration which it may be thought material to attend to in determining this question, I shall take leave to state the greater effect the first of these different measures would have in accelerating

rating the payment of the publick debts than the other of them. And this I chuse first to do, because in an affair of this publick concern, and where we are not to be supposed to give ourselves the trouble of the same exactness in computation that we should use in our own private affairs, I am a little apprehensive that people, when they turn their thoughts to this subject, are apt, upon any increase of the Sinking Fund, to promise themselves a farther degree of dispatch in the payment of the publick debts in proportion to such increase. For an instance, to explain my meaning: I fear, that upon stating from the above-mentioned supposition, that the Sinking Fund of £1,000,000 was increased to £1,500,000 per annum, by an abatement of 1 per cent. interest on 50 millions, the debt supposed to be paid off by it; on stating such a case, I say, I fear it would be in haste inferred, from the Sinking Fund's being increased to half as much again as it was before, that the publick debts would be likewise paid off by the Sinking Fund so increased half as soon again, or that the publick debts would be paid off by a Sinking Fund of one million and a half per annum in two third parts of the time that would be taken up in discharging it by a Sinking Fund of one million per annum only. But this inference would not be true, by whatever means the Sinking Fund were supposed to be so increased; and least true, when the increase of the Sinking Fund is made by a reduction of the interest of the debt to be paid off by it.

Of the effect which an increase of the Sinking Fund from £1,000,000 per annum to £1,500,000 per annum, by a reduction of the interest upon a debt of 50 millions from 4 per cent. to 3 per cent. would have in accelerating the time in which the said debt would be completely discharged.

If the aforesaid fund of £1,000,000 per annum were increased to £1,500,000 by an addition made to it of £500,000 per annum provided by a new tax, of any otherwise than by an abatement of the interest of the 50 millions to be paid off, which should continue to carry 4 per cent. interest, it would be true, that while the said increased Sinking Fund is supposed to be applied to the discharge of that debt, it would pay off in every year half as much again as the Sinking Fund of one million only, beginning at the same time to be applied to the same purpose, would do in the same year; and at the end of any number of years, in which both funds are supposed to continue so applied, will have paid off a principal sum exceeding the principal sum paid off by the Sinking Fund of one million only, by one half part of the latter; or in other words, the principal sum paid off by the aforesaid greater fund will be to that paid off by the lesser, either in an equal number of years from the time they begin to be applied, or in any one year equally distant from that time, in the proportion of three to two. And in this sense the aforesaid greater fund may be said to pay off the publick debt half as fast again, as in the same time it will pay off half as much again. But from hence it is not to be inferred, that the less fund will be half as long again as the greater in discharging the same principal sum; or that the same principal sum would be paid off by the greater fund in two thirds of the time that would be taken up in discharging it by the smaller fund: and of this the plain reason will

soon appear on inspecting the above-made computations; from which it may be observed, That the Sinking Fund applied, as we have all along supposed it, is increasing by an addition in every year made to it of the interest of that principal sum which was paid off by it in the year before; from whence both the income of the fund itself, and the principal sums annually paid off by it, are in every year greater than in the year before, and increasing in every year by an addition greater than the addition made to it in the year before: from whence it necessarily follows, that in a series of payments made by the Sinking Fund for any number of years carried on, the payments towards the latter end of such series must be considerably greater than those before; and that the amount of the payments for any number of years separated at the latter end from the rest of the series, must greatly exceed the amount of the payments for any equal number of years in any other part of the same series. And from hence it must appear, that the excess of the payments made by the greater Sinking Fund above those made by the less in the same number of years, will not be a rule for determining the time in which they must severally be employed in discharging the same principal sums.

The time of such complete discharge would not be thereby diminished to two thirds of what it was before.

And it will be further from the truth, in the case of the Sinking Fund increased from an abatement of the interest of the debt to be paid off, by an addition of an annual income equal to one half part of its income before such increase, to suppose, that from thenceforth the debt will be discharged in two third parts of the time which would have been otherwise required; because the additions from time to time made to a Sinking Fund employed in the payment of a debt carrying 3 per cent. interest only, do not increase in the same or so great a proportion, as those made annually to a Sinking Fund in the discharge of a debt at 4 per cent. From which circumstance the less Sinking Fund increasing by this greater ratio or proportion, would in a longer series than I hope we have any thing to do with in the present case, have so considerable an advantage, as to overtake the greater Sinking Fund in its payments, and from thence to be every year discharging a greater debt.

But it would only be less than before by about one sixth part of its former quantity.

But in the case we have supposed, of a debt of fifty millions, the time in which we have before computed that that debt, carrying 3 per cent. interest, may be paid off by a Sinking Fund of £150,000, is 23 years and one half nearly; and by the Sinking Fund of £1,000,000, the debt continuing at 4 per cent. interest, it may be paid off in about 28 years; so that the time saved in the discharge of our debts by the reduction of them to 3 per cent. interest, appears, on the aforesaid suppositions, to be 4 years and a half, or thereabouts; which is something less than one sixth part of the time in which the same debt might be discharged without any further reduction of the interest.

Another

Another way of stating the advantage to the publick in this contraction of the time which our debts may take up in the discharge of them, from 28 to 23 years and a half, would be to find out and assign that annual sum, which, added to the above-supposed Sinking Fund of £1,000,000 at the publick expence, and without any further reduction of the interest of the debt to be paid off, would answer the same purpose as the addition of £500,000 to that fund taken from the income of the publick creditors, and contract the time in which the payment of 50 millions would be completed, from 28 years to 23 and a half. And this, Sir, will be found to be almost £322,000; which yearly expence to the Government for 23 years and a half, would answer the same purpose as the above-supposed deduction of £500,000 per annum from the income of the publick debts. And this advantage I chuse to state distinctly as it is, before I proceed farther, because I think in all the discourse I have met with on this publick affair, I have seldom heard any distinction made about the convenience of the several reductions of interest from 6 to 5 per cent. and from thence to the rate of interest, at 4 per cent. which is shortly to take place; or relating to the further reduction to 3 per cent. which we seem to intend and be providing for; but on the contrary, they seem all to be considered and expected alike, as of equal advantage in dispatching the discharge of the publick debts; though it be at the same time true, that by the first of these reductions we came only to have any Sinking Fund at all; and to the second of these reductions, together with the provisions at the same time made about the unredeemable annuities, we owe it, that the total payment of our debts by this expedient begins to appear practicable. But in those circumstances in which we now are, and with those views which we at present have of the payment of our debts within no great length of time, from the provisions already made for that purpose, by the reduction of interest hitherto effected or contracted for; I think we are at liberty, before any further steps of this kind, to consider of some probable consequences that may follow upon them; which to have produced as objections to any former reductions of publick interest, while they appeared so necessary, might have been thought impertinent or untimely.

Another way of estimating the advantage to the publick which would arise from such a diminution of the time in which the national debt would be discharged.

It is by no means a just conclusion, that, because the former reductions of the interest of the publick debts from 6 per cent. to 5 per cent. and from 5 per cent. to 4 per cent. have been beneficial to the nation, therefore a further reduction of the said interest from 4 per cent. to 3 per cent. will also be beneficial to it.

It seems to me to have been an opinion of late years pretty generally agreed to, (perhaps as long since as the celebrated Mr. Locke's performance on that subject) That all attempts to reduce interest by compulsive methods, or by force of any laws made for that purpose, are not only unlikely to succeed, but on other accounts inconvenient to the publick; but I know not if the interest of the publick in the reduction of it by any other means effected, has been much considered; or if such a reduction of interest is not usually expected by us with general satisfaction, arising from our regarding it as the effect of the common and natural causes of a lower interest in every country, and such alterations in our circumstances as are truly enumerated amongst the instances of publick prosperity.

A reduction of the interest of money, if it is brought about without compulsion, is commonly esteemed a sign of general prosperity.

Of the causes of the variations of the rate of interest for money.

When the interest of money is lowered in a country by the causes here mentioned, it may be considered as a sign of general prosperity.

But when the interest of money is lowered by the operation of other causes than those above-mention'd, it is not certain that it ought to be so considered.

Mr. Locke, in his, aforesaid treatise on this subject, mentions, as the natural causes of the variations of the rate of interest in any country, the variations of the proportion that the quantity of money bears in such a country to the demand for it, arising either from the quantity of debts contracted amongst the inhabitants, or of the trade carried on by them. To which occasions of a demand for money, I think should be generally added all other circumstances in the affairs of such a country, as may be there supposed ordinarily to contribute to, or be the occasion of, a greater or less demand of that kind. And as a further natural and ordinary cause of a variation any where in the rate of interest, I should chuse to add such alterations in the circumstances or situation of the affairs of the country where such a variation happens, as may make it more or less dangerous or secure to advance money upon loans in all or any of the different scenes of business, where negotiations of this kind are usually carried on; by which last cause I am apt to think, that the more sudden and sensible variations in the rate of interest have been chiefly and most frequently every where occasioned. And when a lower rate of interest is supposed to be produced amongst us, by such causes as these are, it is perhaps most reasonable that it should be regarded with general satisfaction; as it is a proof of such a situation of our affairs as is of itself, and independently on this consequence from it, an instance and part of the description of our general welfare and prosperity; and as the monied man himself has in this case an equivalent for what he may be supposed to lose by the abatement of his income, in the greater safety, with which, on such an occasion, he lends his money, or the less hazard which he runs of the repayment of it, as well as in the greater frequency of opportunities which such a situation in our affairs produces, of putting out and improving money with greater safety. But as far as a lower rate of interest may be produced amongst us, either without such compulsive methods, or the concurrence of such natural and ordinary causes for it as are above mentioned, I apprehend that it yet remains to be inquired, into, if it be the interest of the publick that it should be so? and, as far as the success of any measures entered upon for this purpose may be uncertain, if it be, with regard to the publick, advisable that such a reduction of our interest should be attempted or endeavoured after? And in this case it will be allowed me, that a lower rate of interest thus produced, or supposed to be so, is no longer to be considered as a proof of, or attended with the above-mentioned instances of, our publick happiness; such a rate of interest having no tendency in itself to increase our money, or the lenders security for the repayment of it, nor, consequently, being of any effect to produce a real increase of our negotiations in advancing money; which, while no provision is made for increasing either, our capacity or disposition to lend money can by no means become greater, or more frequent, from the greater application to borrow money only.

I shall

Of the effects of stock-jobbing on the prices of the publick stocks.

I shall therefore endeavour, Sir, to describe such transactions amongst us with respect to our publick debts, as I apprehend may have been supposed to have had a great share and influence in producing amongst us lately very great and general variations in the rate of interest, and from which a still further reduction of the rate of interest may be yet expected; I mean those great adventures in the publick funds, of late years so apparently undertaken with a view to such gains, as might be quickly made by the different prices of them, and which have so much contributed to the late great and sudden variations in the market prices of these securities. In the infancy of these adventures, the chief or only motives to them probably were those pieces of intelligence about the situation of our publick affairs, from the publication of which the adventurer might reasonably infer the general satisfaction or diffidence of the proprietors of the publick debts in their several securities. And as far as intelligence of this kind was true, and the general sense of the proprietors upon the publication of it rightly conjectured or inferred, the rise or fall of stocks produced by these adventures might be regarded as an event, which in a longer time or in a less proportion would have happened, if these adventures had not been made; and in this view may not improperly have been called the growth or declension of our publick credit. But as this practice grew upon us, it is not to be wondered at, if from the general industry of great numbers to be first acquainted with every material occurrence to the publick, and to be earliest in the improvement of their information in adventures of this nature, several variations in the prices of our funds have been produced by transactions in them, undertaken upon false or uncertain intelligence, and groundless inferences and conjectures from it; which variations have not been afterwards to be accounted for from any real alteration in the posture of our affairs, or the general sentiments of the proprietors of the publick debts; and from which therefore the real state of publick credit at such a time would be uncertainly, if not falsely, inferred or determined. The later variations in the prices of our stocks would be still more improperly described to be the growth or declension of our publick credit; which credit, since the restoration of our tranquillity, and during the absence of our apprehensions for the publick safety, can only with propriety be said not to have been disputed or called in question, and which cannot, I think, be supposed to have been of late at all attended to by the purchasers of our publick securities, at premiums and advanced prices far beyond those sums for the re-payment of which the credit of the Government is any ways depended on. In short, by whatever names we have been accustomed, or may chuse, to describe the rise or fall of our stocks, I submit it to such persons who have made any observations on the late transactions in Exchange-Alley, if they have not (and especially the rise of them) been generally occasioned by such adventures made in them, as persons have been induced to from the hopes of gain, from a further

further speedy variation in the price of them, without any regard to the continuance of it; and if these variations are not of late come to be expected from any the most inconsiderable occasions, or perhaps for no reason at all, but what is to be inquired for in the market, and amongst the accounts and contracts depending there.

While this disposition continues amongst numbers to be constantly adventuring in the publick funds, and consequently upon expectations that must be generally supported by the most inconsiderable reasons, it is hardly to be doubted but that at any time in the absence of our apprehensions of any general danger, the intelligence being spread amongst them that any scheme or proposals were to be set on foot, by which the rise of stocks was either intended or supposed, would generally determine these adventurers to expect and provide for such a rise of stocks, and by their contracts founded on these expectations in a great measure to produce it: to effect which purpose, I hardly think it material, that any further reasonable provision should be made in the proposals or schemes themselves, or that any thing would be further necessary for this purpose, than declaring the rise of stocks to be intended by them. Such a rise of stocks I am almost inclined to believe might be the first effect of any intelligence communicated in Exchange-Alley at such a time as I have above supposed, that some proposals were shortly to be made to all or great part of the publick creditors, to agree to the further reduction of their interest or annuities, as disagreeable as this must at first appear to the greatest part of the creditors themselves. But how far such a rise of stocks may be in this case expected, and how far it may proceed in forwarding any proposals of this nature, I submit to be conjectured from the following considerations.

If the government were to propose to reduce the interest of the publick debts (with the consent of the owners of them,) from 4 per cent. to 3, or 3½ per cent. such a proposal would, probably, occasion a rise in the price of stocks.

Reasons in support of this opinion.

First, Such a proposal must suppose and lead our expectations to a rise of stocks in general; without which, or at least if the contrary should happen, such a proposal could by no means be executed or complied with, it being necessary to the success of this proposal, that the market price should, at the time of making it, offer the proprietor as much, or more, as, if he declined to comply with it, would be payable to him by the Government. And as the greatest part of the proprietors of the publick debts have been at different times incorporated for the purpose of carrying on certain trades, from the profits of which (as I would willingly hope) a per cent, or more, has been annually divided over and above the income of their interest in the publick debts; if their annuity from the Government, when reduced and diminished, continues to be valued as before, the price of that part which is not liable to any diminution from these proposals, may well enough be expected to rise in some proportion to such a reduction of their annuity. Thus, if to the proprietors of South-Sea stock, for instance, it were proposed that their annuities in the year 1727, should be

be from thence reduced to 3 per cent. upon the supposition that their shares in the publick debt should, after such a reduction, continue to be valued, as before, at par; it might be as reasonable to expect that the 1 per cent. continuing to be divided on every hundred pound stock, should be from thenceforth valued in the price of it at 33l. 6s. 8d. as it was before to expect it should be ever valued at 25l. And from the rise of that part of our publick securities which fall under this consideration, some advance in our other securities may likewise be expected, as the money received on the sale of those stocks which shall first, and in the greatest proportion, rise on this occasion, is generally observed to be applied to the purchase of that part of our publick debts which is conceived to be less liable to variation in the prices of them.

Secondly, Such persons as are observed to be constantly adventuring in the stocks from expectations of gain, either from the rise or fall of them, must be generally supposed to be determined to these adventures by the lowest degree of probability, that they shall succeed in them; and it is hardly therefore to be doubted, but that the ordinary adventures in our stocks would be made upon expectations of the rise of them; upon the publication of any proposals from authority that supposed the rise of stocks, or implied that it was expected by our superiours.

Thirdly, The rise of stocks upon this occasion would be further favoured, by the disposition of those proprietors who are not ordinarily engaged in adventures of this kind, to wait for the utmost advantage to be made of the rise of stocks, whatever might be their sentiments about continuing proprietors of the publick debts when reduced to a lower interest.

Fourthly, A rise of stocks on this, as well as former occasions, may be still further advanced, by the spreading of false computations of the value of our stocks, and idle opinions about credit and circulation, and by the force of a general example, assisted by the confidence of the proprietors of our publick debts in the authority by which these proposals may be recommended.

And when the stocks shall be sufficiently advanced to colour any proposals of this nature, it is perhaps not impossible that the concurrence of the proprietors to such proposals should be obtained, though at the same time they may be generally dissatisfied with the lower rate of interest proposed to them, and severally determined on that account to quit their interest in the publick debts on the next convenient opportunity. For it is to be considered,

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That the reason for their objecting publicly or declaring their sentiments against any proposals of this kind, is removed by the price of their securities at market, where they are offered for the present as much, or more, for them, as, if they thought proper to decline these proposals, would be payable to them by the Government; and that the general dissatisfaction of the proprietors should not determine them to take advantage of the then market price for the sale of their securities, and by that means occasion the fall of stocks, and prevent the success of these proposals, may in a great measure be accounted for from a general inclination to have the utmost possible advantage from the rise of stocks, from the difficulty of finding on such an occasion any immediate employment for their money, and their impatience of its lying by them unemployed, joined with that dependance which men generally have on their own foresight and skill in the choice of the fittest opportunity for this purpose; from which motives, while the bulk of our publick securities may be supposed to be kept from market, that part of them which shall be brought there, by the more wary or determined of the proprietors, will be found for a time provided for, by those considerable sums which the estates and credit that persons engaged in such adventures in the stocks as I have above described, will for a time supply the market with.

From the foregoing reasons it seems probable that the content of the publick creditors might be obtained to such a reduction of the interest of their debts. Nevertheless such a measure might not, upon the whole, be advisable.

I think, Sir, from hence it appears possible, that a proposal for reducing the interest of our publick debts, though without any reasonable foundation, may, as our affairs now stand, succeed even so far as to obtain the concurrence of the proprietors. And the inference which I would from thence make is, that it belongs to them, by whose influence or advice such a proposal shall at any time be made, first to consider if there be a solid foundation for it, or if it be likely still farther to succeed, and not to depend on the consent of the proprietors, in this manner obtained, as a sufficient proof that such a proposal was reasonable, or as a security for the still further success of it.

Whenever therefore the further reduction of the interest of our publick debts shall be attempted, it should be first enquired if the real proportion of our ordinary necessities for money to our capacity and disposition to supply them, have been so far altered as to admit of it; and if such an alteration has proceeded from those reasonable and general causes of it, which are likely long to continue and support it. Nor will such an alteration be safely inferred from the market-prices of our stocks, any further than those prices are determined and produced by such purchases only as are made with a view to the improvement of the money laid out in these securities from the interest or income of them; by which purchases of late years the prices of our stocks have so seldom been determined, that perhaps it may be more reasonable, in this case to conclude from an enquiry into the rate

rate of interest ordinarily reserved on private loans, or into those other transactions in which we are usually directed by computations upon the customary rate of interest amongst us. These transactions, however, must, as well as the prices of stocks, in this case be considered and attended to on this account, that persons in the disposition of their money will, as often as they think themselves equally secure, be determined by the greater interest they are offered for it; from whence it must be expected, that when the income of our publick securities, compared with the prices they are sold for, offer a less improvement for our money than may with equal security be made of it by private loans or otherwise, the general industry of mankind to make the best improvement of their estates, will quickly reduce either the price of our publick securities, or the rate of interest in such private transactions as aforesaid.

I question therefore, if any attempts to reduce the interest of our publick debts below 4 per cent. at present will be of any lasting convenience to the publick, or ever can be so till such a lower rate of interest shall be preceded by its being customarily accepted of upon private loans on unquestionable securities. For let it be considered how such a lower rate of interest can otherwise appear to be founded on any real variation in the proportion of our necessities for money to our capacity or disposition to supply them; or if the contrary does not appear, from a higher rate of interest ordinarily paid at the same time upon private loans. And while this continues to be the case, how reasonable is it to apprehend, that when the money and credit of those adventurers, who first advanced the price of stock, shall be withdrawn, the same ordinary necessities for money, without any increase of the provision for supplying them, will bring the proprietors of the reduced securities to expect and look out for the former annual income for their money, and thereby occasion a declension in the price of these securities proportioned to the diminution of their interest?

The reduction of the interest of the national debts, from 4 per cent. to 3½ or 3 per cent. ought not to be attempted till a proportional reduction of the interest of money lent upon private mortgages shall have previously taken place.

How far the continuance of those adventures, by which the price of stocks is supposed first on such an occasion to be advanced, may be depended on for the support of it, may be collected from the motives by which the adventurers were first engaged in them; and is from thence to be expected but till the utmost probable rise of stocks from such proposals has been effected; after which that the former supplies from their credit and estates should be withdrawn from market, is not all that is in this case to be apprehended, it being further probable that they will be from thence employed in depreciating those securities which were at first advanced by them, with a view to the same kind of profits from the fall, as they before expected from the rise of stocks. From which, together with the fresh necessities which the more inconsiderate of these adventures will naturally produce, it would not be at all strange if the price of stocks should be carried lower, beyond

beyond the declension of them in proportion to the diminution of their income, and the rate of interest for a time become higher than it would have been, if such an attempt for the reducing it had not been made. And this consequence of a rise of stock from adventures of this kind must some time or other be expected, as far as that rate of interest which our real necessities would produce is varied from or misrepresented by such adventures. It may not probably immediately succeed a rise of stocks by these means effected; these adventures in a time of general tranquillity, may for a considerable time be protracted by further views, or the market supplied by a succession of them; and this has often been the case, till upon the arrival of some intelligence about the situation of our affairs, which we call bad news, these views have been given over, and the declension of our stocks on that occasion attributed to, and accounted for only from, that intelligence: but if the real occasion of the great variation in our stocks at such a time were further enquired for, it would be found to be the precipitate sale of great quantities of stock, which, with such views as aforesaid, had been before bought up; and that this declension would as certainly, if not so suddenly, have happened from the same occasion, without the intervention of such intelligence, when these views should have been on any other account given over; or when (as, I think, I have heard some persons acquainted with these transactions express themselves) *the game had been played out.*

It is true, indeed; that the Government by those terms on which they borrow, I mean, by engaging only for the payment of the interest or annuities contracted for till the repayment of the principal, avoid all inconvenience from the interest of money advancing after their contract for the reduction of it, and leave the entire disappointment upon the proprietors. But I submit it, how far the publick can be considered to be unconcerned in a disappointment of the publick creditors, obviously owing to their concurrence with proposals recommended to them by authority; or in that general mutiny and discontent, which will be the necessary consequence of such a disappointment: which from a remarkable instance of this nature, after the execution of the late South-Sea scheme in the year 1720, we must have observed to have been once regarded by the Legislature, as of sufficient moment to induce them to release the most considerable advantage that the publick had agreed for from that scheme, though set on foot upon the proposals of the creditors themselves. And if ever the publick creditors should be generally disappointed by a considerable discount upon their securities, obviously owing to their concurrence to an abatement of interest recommended by publick authority, and proposed for the convenience of the publick; I doubt if their expectations of relief from the Government could be thought less reasonable. I cannot, for my own part, but think, that the general submission of the publick creditors in their contracts with the

It is very much to be wished that the market-price of the publick debts may be always either equal to, or greater than, their *par*, or original, or nominal, value.

the Government, to wait for the re-payment of their principal till the publick convenience will admit of it, and waving any such agreement about a determined time for the re-payment of it, as in private contracts is ordinarily provided, would be far from removing their expectations of redress under a disappointment of this nature; and rather apprehend, that this submission would be urged on such an occasion, as a meritorious instance of their confidence in the care and protection of our Government, and as a reason for their expecting in return for it, that what may be then called Publick Credit should be kept up, and their securities by all possible means preserved at *par*, till the time when they could be discharged.

The success attending the reduction of so great a part of our debt from 6 to 5 per cent. and from thence afterwards to 4 per cent. cannot certainly be looked on as a foundation for expecting the same event of our endeavours to reduce interest still further. As to the first of these reductions, we shall find it, on looking back, to have been attempted quickly after such an alteration in the circumstances of our affairs, as furnished the best foundation for our hopes of succeeding in it: at the end of a long and expensive war, that threatened us with the loss of every thing valuable, but more particularly of that part of our property which had been advanced for the services of the publick; at a time when those necessities of the Government were removed, which had obliged us for several years before to be continually increasing the publick debts, and at the same time admitted of no provisions for the discharging of them; at a time when the lasting prosperity of Great-Britain was lately secured to us by his present Majesty's accession to the throne, and, soon after, by the entire defeat of the last attempt that was likely to be made to disturb or prevent the present happy establishment. From such a foundation as was then laid for the growing wealth of these kingdoms, from the increase of our people, our commerce and manufacture, and for the particular security and greater confidence of the publick creditors, it was most reasonable to expect, that the abatement of publick interest then proposed should take place; especially, when these proposals were attended with the provisions that were then first made, for securing and rendering practicable the discharging the principal of the publick debts. Nor do I think it unreasonable to have expected, that by degrees, and from the fruits and sensible effects of this happy alteration in our circumstances, the further reduction of publick interest to 4 per cent. which has since been agreed for, and which in the year 1727 is generally to take place, might likewise be effected. And, though it may be doubted, whether the effect of this last reduction of publick interest has been yet fully tried, upon recollecting how little the interest of the proprietors of the publick debts in this reduction was attended to by themselves, at the time when it was agreed to; and how possible it is, that a far greater number of the proprietors of the present funds may have proposed to quit their interest in them, when the

Of the causes of the success of the first of the two late attempts to reduce the interest of the publick debt; by which it was reduced from 6 per cent. to 5 per cent.

Of the further reduction of the said interest from 5 per cent. to 4 per cent. which is to take place in the year 1727.

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reduction is actually to take place, than will be able to find customers for it, unless at a considerable discount: yet when, on the other hand, it shall be considered, how far this reduction has been preceded by considerable loans amongst us at the same rate of interest, as well before the exigencies of our government during the late war with France, as since his Majesty's accession to the throne; I hope we may cheerfully conclude, that this reduction of the publick interest may well enough be supported by the regular application of the annual income of the Sinking Fund to the discharging of our present debts. But no difficulty of finding employment for money at 4 per cent. interest, nor any private loans at a lower rate of interest amongst us, can yet, I think, lead us to expect that a further reduction of publick interest to 3 per cent. will be for any length of time submitted to.

There is no reason to think that a further reduction of the said interest to 3 per cent. will, for many years to come, be practicable.

And while this continues to be the case, and from 4. to 5. per cent. interest is every day offered upon unexceptionable securities, I should think it a more reasonable use made of recollecting the late reductions of our publick interest, to place them to the account of our present happy circumstances; and, before we proceed to expect from the late alteration in our affairs a further reduction of interest, to consider how far we are indebted to it upon that account already.

I have indeed sometimes heard it said, that the last reduction of our annuities to 4 per cent. still wants to be taken care of; and that the price of our publick securities proportioned to that rate of interest, is only to be supported by such adventures as will be encouraged by keeping in view the prospect of a still further reduction of those annuities to be attempted. From these persons I very much differ; and cannot but think that this last reduction (if no new troubles presently fall out) would be effectually supported by the future regular application of the Sinking Fund; from which, in a number of years, I should rather expect that a further reduction of interest may be naturally and reasonably produced, if the effect of this provision be not before-hand too far presumed upon and anticipated. But whoever really thinks that the further reduction of publick interest must be kept in view, in order to support the reductions already made, evidently supposes us to be proceeding in measures with regard to our publick debts, in which we must somewhere stop, and whenever we do so, repent of every step we have taken in advancing thither.

Examination of an argument in favour of a farther reduction of the said interest, drawn from the low rate of interest in some of the towns of Holland.

For want of examples amongst ourselves, as I suppose, to support our expectations of the further reduction of publick interest, I have sometimes heard the present low rate of interest in some of the trading towns of our neighbours the Hollanders, quoted to prove the probability, that the same, or something near the same, low rate of interest may be made to take place amongst us too. But I see not why the low rate of interest in that country should

should be more regarded as the standard for the rate of interest amongst us, than the higher rate of interest in other neighbouring countries, unless on account of our greater commerce and negotiation with the Hollanders. And after I have admitted that the rate of interest amongst them is on this account most likely to have some influence upon our's; I must expect it should be allowed me, that this lower rate of interest than our's having for several years prevailed amongst the Hollanders, has already had its effect with us in the reduction of our interest to that rate which we now consider it to be brought to; and that the further effect or influence of their example in the reduction of our interest, is only to be expected from the further reduction of the rate of interest below what it is at present supposed to be amongst them.

That the circumstances of our affairs are the same in all those particulars that lead to a low interest in any country with those of our before-named neighbours, is by no means, in the present inquiry, to be presumed; if they were so, our rate of interest must now be pretty nearly the same with theirs. But if our rate of interest considerably exceeds theirs, and has (which, as I have been informed, is true) for a long succession of years constantly done so; it must be inferred, that our circumstances, in some particulars that influence the rate of interest, differ much from theirs. And the constancy with which our rate of interest has been observed for a long time to have exceeded theirs, is enough to satisfy us that the occasion of it is to be enquired for in some difference in our circumstances which has continued with equal constancy, and for the same length of time; and not amongst any projects or contrivances at different times set on foot by either of us; to answer any purpose of this nature.

The true and general reason of this difference between our rate of interest and theirs, has, perhaps, been long since assigned by the above-mentioned Mr. Locke, and seems most probably to be the very different proportion which the lands or property of any other kind producing a certain annual income amongst the Hollanders, taxed as that kind of property has been with them, bear to the great stocks and other personal estates of the inhabitants of that country, from that which the value of lands and other property of the same kind here bear to the personal estates in this kingdom. To this difference it seems owing, that while the Hollander can find little other employment for the money he can spare from his own adventures within his own country, than in supplying the necessities which their commerce from time to time produces, the monied inhabitant of this country, besides the opportunities offered him from the ordinary necessities of persons engaged in trade, is hardly ever without proposals for the employment of his money in supplying the wants of the proprietors of our lands, by either purchasing or advancing money upon their estates; and

The true reason of the difference between the rates of interest given for money in England and in Holland.

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and from hence is in a condition to demand and obtain a greater reward for the use of money than the Hollander can do, where the demand for it in his own country is so much less. This difference between us, as far as it will be allowed to have been one cause why our interest has hitherto exceeded theirs, will be allowed also as a reason why it should continue to do so, till the inhabitants, wealth and commerce of Great Britain, shall have increased in the same proportion to the extent and value of our lands, as it may be observed they have done in the Seven Provinces.

The expectation of a further reduction of the interest of the publick debt has contributed to increase the pernicious practice of stock-jobbing.

I cannot forbear thinking, that upon this occasion it deserves most seriously to be considered, how far our late expectations of continued attempts to reduce the rate of interest, has contributed to promote and increase the aforesaid traffick in Exchange-Alley; a practice that, in the midst of those reproaches which it lies under by the name of *stock-jobbing*, and the most serious complaints of its ill consequences to the kingdom upon every declension of our stocks, seems to me to be still growing upon us. Whenever it shall be seriously intended to prevent or restrain this practice, I believe it will appear, that whatever contrivances may be provided for prohibiting the contracts in Exchange-Alley in the manner they are now made, or altering the manner of conveying our interest in stocks from one person to another, while they increase the difficulty of the most innocent and necessary transactions in the publick funds, will have little further effect on this practice, than to force it into some other channel, and perhaps increase the profit and employment of the banker only, by making his credit or assistance further necessary; and that the most reasonable method of preventing it, will be removing the encouragement and temptation to it. And though our complaints of these adventures are then only generally made, when they seem to contribute to the declension of our stocks, a little enquiry will convince us, that the foundation for such a fall of stocks was really laid by those adventures which seemed to contribute to, and attended, the rise of them. If during a time of general tranquillity, from unlimited expectations of the perpetual advance of publick credit, countenanced amongst us beyond any sufficient foundation for it, persons are induced to spread their estates upon the utmost price of our publick funds, in such a manner that a variation of 2 or 3 per cent. in the price of them threaten them with the loss of the greatest part of their estates; what can be expected, but from the earliest appearance of publick troubles, an idle rumour, (though improbable to be true,) or the apprehension of any ill accident, (though most unlikely to fall out,) should determine them, in this situation of their affairs, to consult their safety with the utmost precipitation, and crowd the market with the stock of which before they continued proprietors upon such desperate terms. A fall of stocks by this means occasioned, with persons less exactly acquainted with the reason of it, serves as a confirmation of every false report at the same time published to

to the prejudice of our affairs: from hence still further quantities of stock are brought to market, and a further declension in the price of them occasioned; from whence, to greater apprehensions of publick danger, and from thence to the further fall of stocks, by turns producing and increasing each other, we may have often been observed to proceed without any possibility of putting a stop to either of them. Upon such an occasion as this it has often, and perhaps constantly, happened, that several persons proposing to themselves gain from the calamities of the publick, have, on a presumption of the fall of stocks, contracted for the delivery of stock which they had not, and could propose to furnish only by the purchase of what the growing apprehensions of others should afterwards bring to market; and of these adventures it has been usual, on the fall of stocks, principally to complain. This is a practice, which has doubtless often contributed to the misfortunes of the publick on an occasion of this nature; but which, I doubt not, would in a great measure be prevented for the future, if the excessive adventures in the purchase of stocks, in expectations of gain from the rise of them, were first prevented; to which the contrary practice is chiefly owing. For it will, on enquiry, be found, that stock-jobbing begins from, and people have been usually initiated into this practice by, general expectations of the rise of stocks; in which when they are once habituated, and the expectations of gain from the variations in the price of stock are become the only end of their transactions, their despair of advantage by the rise of stock is quickly changed for hopes of profit from the fall of it.

Besides, the unreasonable prices to which the extravagant adventures for the rise of stock have carried them, must first have taught the more wary and less credulous adventurers to expect the fall of them, and have been the occasion of that success that has encouraged the continuance of these adventures for the fall of stocks: nor would the performance of their contracts, for the delivery of stock, which they had not, at certain times, be generally practicable, but from the contracts for the same time ordinarily made for purchasing stock without providing the money to be paid for it.

And if it be to these sanguine expectations of the rise of stocks, and the adventures founded on them, that the frequent and excessive variations in the price of them are really and ultimately owing; how dearly do the publick pay, in every instance of perplexity in our affairs, for any convenience to be reaped from, or use to be made of, this prevailing humour in the absence of our apprehensions of publick danger?

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All consequences that result from the variations in the price of the publick funds occasioned by stock-jobbing contracts.

The rise of our stocks, produced by the assistance of such inconsiderate adventures in the purchase of them as have been above described, is at best, of itself, and without attending to any consequence from it, a matter of absolute indifference to the publick in the absence of general danger; but the consequence of it in the declension of our stocks, upon the approach of publick troubles, is by no means so; then it is that the general diffidence in our securities and wreck of publick credit is of the utmost disservice to us, by rendering difficult, if not impracticable, the raising such supplies as an occasion of this kind may necessarily call for; and as the variation in our publick funds at such a time may be regarded by our neighbours as the measure of our apprehensions from their attempts upon us, and encourage them in their presumption on the unsettled circumstances of our affairs: all which difficulties in our affairs on such an occasion, attended with false and groundless reports and apprehensions of our danger, general mutiny and discontent; seditious exceptions to the conduct of our superiours, and great distress and interruption to our commerce, I cannot but think we in a great measure owe to such inconsiderate purchases of our publick funds during the general tranquillity; and that they might in a great degree for the future be prevented, if, by removing all encouragement to the extraordinary rise of stocks, the publick funds were suffered to fall generally into the hands of such persons, who, satisfied with their income, shall purchase them as a supply for their ordinary expences, with money which they are not soon likely to have any other occasion for.

The proprietors of the publick debts ought to be treated with lenity and tenderness, as persons who have deserved well of the publick.

The proprietors of our debts have, as such, not deserved severity from the publick; but, as subjects of this kingdom, are intitled to have their interest regarded by the Government, as far as the publick convenience will admit of it. And in this view there may be some room to consider the unequal hardship to the publick creditors, by the loss of a fourth part of the annual income of their estates, implied in the success of an attempt to reduce their annuities to 3 per cent. And while the convenience to the publick, to be obtained by such a reduction, is supposed to be the earlier discharge of the publick debts; the hardship appears greater from this circumstance, that what shall be thus annually deducted and taken from their income, will not go so far in answering this purpose, as two thirds of the same yearly sum any other way supplied; and for this general convenience, more equally levied upon the subjects of this kingdom: £322,000 per annum, or thereabouts, raised at the general expence, and added to the Sinking Fund of £1,000,000, being, as I have before observed, sufficient, on the above-made suppositions, to effect the total discharge of the publick debts, as soon as the addition of £500,000 per annum deducted from the interest of those debts when reduced to 3 per cent. For it should be attended to, that though the gain or convenience to the publick is to be computed upon such of our debts only as from time to time remain unsatisfied,

unsatisfied, and as long as they remain so; yet supposing the continuance and general success of this reduction of our interest, the loss to the publick creditors is from the time of such a reduction to be computed on the whole of the annuities that shall be reduced. If this, as a hardship on the publick creditors, should not be proper in this case to be considered; it may be so, however, for the purpose of collecting what their sentiments on this affair must some time or other be. The loss and inconvenience to them by this reduction will be so sensibly felt, that no misrepresentations can possibly long mislead them: the continuance of their submission to former abatements of their interest has been already accounted for, by the then late alteration in our circumstances for the better, making the purchaser of our reduced annuities a large amends in his greater security, and being convenient to the monied men in general in the frequency of opportunities of improving their estates with safety. But will the present happy situation of our affairs admit of a further equal alteration in our circumstances for the better, or that shall in the same proportion increase our security in advancing money upon the publick credit? The former reductions of our annuities may have been recommended to the publick creditors, as the only means that could render the discharge of our debts practicable to the Government; but, as far as they are interested in it, is not that end sufficiently obtained? or is the prospect that the payment of the publick debts may be thereby effected sooner, by 4 years and a half in 28, than it would be otherwise, of consequence enough to the proprietor of any part of them, to induce him for that purpose only to part with for the future one fourth part of the annual income of his estate? However the reduction of publick interest hitherto effected may have contributed to the security of the proprietors, from the next reduction it is perhaps not unreasonable to apprehend a contrary effect; and next to the great difficulty in the discharging of our debts, the most reasonable foundation of our apprehensions may be, its becoming, in the opinion of some persons, a matter of too much indifference to the publick whether they are ever discharged or no. When the publick debts, by the further reduction of their interest, shall sit so easy upon us, as to require but one moiety of the annual provision at first made for the payment of it, and leave the other at the service of the publick, the danger seems to me by no means inconsiderable, that it may soon after be determined to employ the annual income of the Sinking Fund in the room of, and to ease the publick of some other taxes by which our ordinary expences are supplied; and that it may be thought as reasonable to rest contented with the recovery of half the annual income of the publick funds without any expence to us, as to redeem the whole of them with the trouble and expence of really discharging so considerable a debt.

The further reduction of the interest of the publick debts would be a great hardship on the publick creditors, and would raise great discontents amongst them.

And if this reduction of interest be successfully carried on, the loss and inconvenience aforesaid cannot be confined to the proprietors of our debts only,

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And it would also be highly inconvenient to many other persons besides the publick creditors.

only, or to their property in the publick funds; for if it were so, it is plain, the price of them, after such a reduction, must be abated in proportion to it: it must therefore, if it succeeds, take place in the interest of all private loans, in the profits of all the different employments of our money, and by degrees must affect the profits of our commerce, and spread itself throughout the kingdom: an effect, which when not produced by, or attended with the increase of our wealth, the revival of commerce amongst us, the succession of general tranquillity to a dangerous or unsettled situation of our affairs, or other like instances of general prosperity, I know not how to regard otherwise, than as an uncomfortable and general inconvenience in a country where the personal estates are so considerable as here they are; which, if it should be thought not material to attend to, as a hardship or inconvenience merely to particular persons, should at least put us in mind of the opposition that must sooner or later be expected amongst us to measures from which a great reduction of interest is apprehended.

An examination of the advantages which some people imagine would arise from such a reduction.

Against this great and general inconvenience to the proprietors of personal estates from a lower interest, I would willingly place any further publick or private advantage that may arise from it, besides hastening the payment of our publick debts. The chief, if not the only, advantages of this kind that I have met with by any persons proposed from a lower interest, have been the increase of our foreign commerce, and the advance of the value of our lands and irredeemable annuities of any kind.

The increase of our foreign commerce.

As to the first of these, it must be admitted, that cases may be put about the particular circumstances of any country in which a lower rate of interest would have a tendency to increase their commerce; as it might be an inducement to such persons who could no longer support themselves, or were not contented with the income of their estates at such a lower rate of interest, to engage in trade; and as it might be the means of furnishing others with money for the purpose of undertaking any particular branch of trade, at such interest and upon such terms as the profit of such a trade would only answer. But all the advantage of this kind that in our circumstances, and in the present case, we have to expect, is to be collected only by an inquiry into the present state of our commerce; from whence, if it cannot be made to appear that there is at present any profitable branch of foreign commerce neglected by us, the profit of which will, over and above the hazard and other expences of adventuring, exactly bear 3 per cent. interest for the money employed in it, but will not answer four; I should think we have more reason to apprehend some ill consequences from a sudden reduction of interest amongst us with relation to our foreign commerce, which are by no means inconsiderable: such as

It is rather to be apprehended that such a reduction will be hurtful to our foreign commerce, and produce the following ill consequences.

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The rashly engaging unexperienced persons in unprofitable adventures, to their own and the nation's prejudice. 1st ill consequence.

The increasing our adventures in the several branches of our present commerce beyond the demand for our commodities, or the possibility of vending them with advantage at foreign markets; and thereby rendering the whole of our foreign commerce for the future less profitable; and by this means, 2d ill consequence.

The furnishing a temptation to the more skilful and experienced persons, at present employed in our foreign commerce, to remove with their effects and settle in other countries, from whence the commerce they are best acquainted with may be carried on with more advantage. An inconvenience which we have the greatest reason to guard against at this particular juncture, when our neighbours in the different parts of Europe are so generally attempting to rival us in our foreign commerce. 3d ill consequence.

And if amongst these consequences of the sudden reduction of our interest, the money of foreigners, which either our Government or private persons amongst us at present have the use of, (to whom most certainly a higher rate of interest than they can have at home for it, must have been the general inducement for their trusting it here) should be called from us, and applied to other uses; a higher rate of interest than before may not only be apprehended, but an absolute impossibility of supplying the ordinary demands of our commerce for some time at any rate at all. 4th ill consequence.

As to the proprietors of our lands and irredeemable annuities, I am content to admit that they may reasonably expect a higher price to be offered for their estates, in some measure proportioned to, and regulated by, a lower rate of interest produced by, and in proportion to, any solid and reasonable causes for it. But I think it has been with truth observed by Mr. Locke on this occasion, that in this higher price of their estates, those proprietors are only interested who have contracted, or want to contract, debts upon their estates; it being of no consequence to the person who neither sells nor mortgages his estate, or intends to do so, what price he may procure for it; and it being as plain, that the person who on this occasion receives a higher price on the sale of his estate, from thenceforth stands in the place of the monied man, possessed of a greater sum of money indeed than he could have had before, but which will produce no greater annual income, nor, generally speaking, go farther in any provision he has intended for himself or family, nor in any other use that he can apply it to (except the discharge of such debts as he may have contracted) than a less sum would have done when the rate of interest was higher. The principal, if not the only, general advantage of a lower interest to

Of the increase of the value of lands, or the price they will sell for, by such a reduction.

This is no real publick advantage.

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the proprietors of land, is therefore so far as they have contracted debts; which advantage to them, and to all other persons who have contracted debts, is exactly balanced in the publick accounts by an equal loss and inconvenience to their creditors.

Such a reduction would likewise, probably, be attended with a diminution of the general expences of the people, and, consequently, of the publick revenues arising from taxes on the consumption of commodities.

I will desire your attention, Sir, but to one consequence more, which I think will naturally and necessarily follow a further reduction of our interest, if it can by any means be effected, or for any length of time prevail amongst us, without the concurrence of what I have hitherto supposed to be the natural and only reasonable causes of it, viz. a considerable diminution of our expences, which the publick, as our affairs now stand, and the proprietors of land in particular, seem to me not a little interested to prevent. A fourth part of the income and usual profits of the personal estates in this kingdom, withdrawn and deducted from the whole of our ordinary annual expence, must occasion a very considerable diminution in it, when not supplied by the increase of those personal estates, or the growing wealth of our inhabitants, and must from thence occasion a considerable diminution in the price and consumption of our commodities. And this I apprehend will be the sooner and more sensibly felt, as the interest of money and the profits of personal estates are more generally the funds for, and supply the expence of, the inhabitants of this metropolis of the kingdom, than of any other part of it; and as a variation in our fashionable expences here is most likely to spread itself, by the force of our example, throughout the other parts of this kingdom, where perhaps there may not be the same occasion for it; from hence it deserves well to be considered, if the publick may not lose as much, or more, in their revenues arising from different commodities consumed amongst us, as may be saved by the reduction of our interest; or if the proprietors of land may not at last find themselves obliged to furnish from their own revenues those supplies for the service of the Government, which have been hitherto furnished by our expences. And if it be possible that this diminution of our expences should proceed further, in reducing the price of labour, and from thence of our necessary provisions and the produce of our lands, the proprietors of those estates must in their turn suffer from the reduction of their annual revenues.

And it might be necessary to increase the land-tax to make good the deficiencies of these taxes.

It might be of great publick benefit to determine immediately, by an act of parliament, the order in which the publick debts should be successively discharged by the application of the Sinking Fund.

From such reflections as these, Sir, it has seemed to me not unreasonable, that we should at least for some time rest contented with such reductions of publick interest as have been hitherto made: from whence I have been further induced to think, that it would be of considerable convenience to the publick, if the application of the present Sinking Fund, which stands now appropriated to the discharge of the publick debts in general, were by act of parliament determined as to the course and order in which those debts should be for the future discharged by it. These measures

measures with regard to the publick debts may possibly have not been hitherto proposed, on account of that advantage which the publick may have been supposed for the future to be in a condition to make in the further reduction of publick interest, while they reserved to themselves the preference of one creditor to another in the order of discharging them; but I submit it, how far this advantage would be prudently exchanged for the following conveniencies to the publick, from determining the order in which the Sinking Fund should be applied in the discharge of our present debts.

Advantages that would arise from such a measure.

First, The annual income of the Sinking Fund will, by this means, be more fully appropriated to the payment of the publick debts, and the application of it to that purpose more effectually secured, by entitling every particular creditor to expect the application of it in the order that shall be so determined.

Secondly, It will be of considerable use in fixing the credit of the publick funds, and the confidence of the proprietors on such foundations, as will support them in any time of publick difficulty, by removing all grounds for those apprehensions, which, on such occasions, are observed (greatly to the disadvantage of the Government) to prevail amongst us, that the income of the Sinking Fund will be applied to some other purposes than the discharge of our debts; and by giving every particular creditor an opportunity of computing and satisfying himself in the value of his interest in the publick funds, from the knowledge of that time when his principal will be punctually paid off.

Thirdly, It will in a great measure prevent stock-jobbing, by removing the temptation to it from the great variations in the market-prices of our debts, from such extravagant premiums paid for them in a time of peace, as if the income of them was conceived to be an irredeemable annuity; and such discounts on the other hand allowed upon them, in a time of the least general apprehension, as if they were regarded as debts almost desperate.

Fourthly, It will lay a further foundation for a greater equality in the prices of our publick debts, by giving an opportunity to the proprietors to suit their own convenience in the purchase of such part of those debts as are determined to be payable, as near the time as possible when they expect any occasion for their money; and prevent in a great measure the necessities of the proprietors being brought to market, especially in the manner in which, when any declension in the price of stocks is apprehended, it may be observed often to be done long before they have any real occasion for their money.

Fifthly;

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Fifthly, It will tend to the increase of our credit, and the facilitating both of publick and private loans at the present, or as far as is reasonable to wish for it, at a lower rate of interest, by capacitating such of the creditors, whose debts shall be in a less remote order of payment, to lend out such sums as they may have by them reserved for distant uses, in expectation of being supplied for such distant occasions by the payment of their share in the publick debts in the order and at the time appointed for it.

And lastly, such a determination of the order in which the Sinking Fund should be applied in the discharge of our publick debts, and the notice the creditors would thereby have when they should be paid off, would give them an opportunity of looking out for, and providing, the most apt and convenient employment for their money against the time of receiving it; a convenience to the creditors themselves, which, as the publick is always interested in the innocent improvement of our estates, may, I think, be esteemed a general advantage.

A recapitulation of the several propositions that have been advanced and recommended in the course of this Essay.

I shall conclude, by putting together what I have been endeavouring to represent about the reduction of our publick interest, viz. That the general and usual rate of interest in every country is determined by the proportion that the ordinary necessities or demands for money amongst the inhabitants bear to their capacity and disposition to supply them; That any other rate of interest produced without a variation in the proportion aforesaid, or a foundation laid for it, is not likely to continue; That we seem here to have had the effect of the late happy alteration in our publick circumstances, in such reductions of our interest as have been made already; That the prospects of a still further reduction of publick interest are a continued encouragement to adventures, which, though they may be made to contribute to the producing such a reduction for a time, are not to be depended on for the support of it; That these adventures are themselves at all times a general inconvenience, and particularly prejudicial to the publick on the approach of troubles. I have likewise endeavoured to represent, that the further reduction of publick interest is neither equally necessary, nor of equal advantage to the publick, as either of those that have been already made; nor does it want to be explained, that the same addition to the Sinking Fund, to be now made by the next reduction of the publick interest below 4 per cent. will diminish the remaining income of the creditors in a greater proportion than those before made, and be a greater inconvenience to them. I have recommended it to be considered, how far a reduction beginning with the publick interest must, if it succeeds, necessarily spread itself, and affect the rest of our personal estates; and from thence the opposition that measures for reducing interest will some time meet with, where some real alteration in our circumstances does not persuade to it. I have proposed it to be inquired, if there be any other general advantage to be obtained by a lower rate of interest amongst us, than in regard

regard to our publick debts only. And from such considerations, would submit it, if it might not be convenient, that not only our measures for further reducing interest, but our expectations of it were at least for some time suspended; till after the regular application of the Sinking Fund now provided for a few years, and the intermission of such extraordinary adventures as aforesaid in our publick stocks, we might with more certainty collect what lower of interest our real circumstances will admit of.

In what little I have said about the consequences of a lower interest on our commerce and expences, I have referred myself, Sir, to sentiments in which I have had the honour to agree with you, and must not pretend to have made out any thing to general satisfaction: if I had attempted to do so, I should have been carried too far beyond the design of this essay; and should have been obliged to examine some prevailing opinions on this subject, which seem to me so far from being reasonable or true, that I have sometimes thought that part of them which the private interest of particular persons have not introduced amongst us, to have been taken up merely on account of their resemblance to paradoxes, and for that reason affording the greatest amusement in conversation.

I would not have it, from any thing I have said, inferred, that I am in general against any expedient for the much speedier discharge of our present debts; I should be glad if any reasonable method for this purpose could be thought of; nor would any new burthen, or variation in the present burthen, on the subjects of this kingdom, implied in any proposals for this purpose, be with me an objection to them, if the means were but found out of proportioning such a new burthen, either to the property or expences of our inhabitants, in such a manner as would be generally submitted and agreed to: and that such an expedient were found out, I wish for this general reason, that whatever in publick affairs is thought of great and general importance to be done at all, should be done, if possible, as soon as it appears to be so; that the most eligible methods for effecting it are such as may be carried on, and finished under the direction of the same persons who were first engaged in them; and that the success of such measures should be as little as possible hazarded by the different sentiments of their successors. But this consideration will not go far in recommending the further increase of the Sinking Fund, by reducing the interest of the publick debts; which, upon the suppositions on which my calculations have been made, would not, if the Sinking Fund were increased by reducing their interest to 2 per cent. be paid off in less than 20 years and a half, or thereabouts; if to 1 per cent. in less than 18 years and 4 months; or if the creditors would be satisfied without any interest at all till the payment of their principal, in less than sixteen years and eight months.

I am, SIR, &c.

F I N I S.

THE HISTORY OF THE

The first part of the history of the world is the history of the creation of the world and the life of the first man, Adam. It is a story of the beginning of all things, and of the fall of man from the state of innocence into the state of sin.

The second part of the history of the world is the history of the patriarchs, from Adam to Abraham. It is a story of the lives of the great men of the world, and of the promises which God made to them.

The third part of the history of the world is the history of the Jews, from the birth of Moses to the coming of Christ. It is a story of the people of God, and of the covenants which God made with them. It is a story of the law, and of the prophets, and of the Messiah who was foretold.

The fourth part of the history of the world is the history of the Gentiles, from the time of the apostles to the present day. It is a story of the spread of the Christian religion, and of the lives of the great men of the world.