

0421

216-12



THE
RISE and FALL

Of the late Projected

EXCISE,
Impartially Consider'd

By a Friend to the ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

— Remember, O my Friends, the LAWS,
The LIBERTY, the generous Plan of Power,
Deliver'd down by your Renowned Forefathers,
The Price of so much Blood, and never suffer
It to perish in your Hands. CATO.

LONDON:

Printed for J. PEELE, at *Locke's-Head*
in *Amen-Corner*. 1733.

0422

THE
RISE and FALL

OF THE LATE PROJECTED

EXCISE

AND

OF THE LATE PROJECTED

EXCISE, &c.

BY

J. H. ...

(5)



THE

RISE and FALL

Of the late Projected

EXCISE, &c.



WHEN the Mind is once heated, and the Passions inflamed, 'tis some Time before the Maxims of Reason can meet with a proper Regard. The late Scheme for collecting the Duties upon Wine and Tobacco being *entirely* at an End, we may *now*, 'tis to be hoped, *calmly* speculate upon it, as a Matter of an indifferent Nature. The Bill for this Purpose having been once laid aside in Parliament, this would prove an additional Obstruction to it,

A 2 and

(6)

and must confirm the *Resolution* of those who were once for it, *never* to attempt it a *second Time*. Had they intended to carry this Scheme into Execution, after it was known how many People were against it, no doubt it would have been pursued when the Bill was before the House, and not brought in again loaded with the fresh Objection of having been already dropt. The Gentlemen, who have been so deeply censured upon Account of this Design, are of all Mankind *least* likely to bring it again upon the Carpet. They well know that the *least Tendency* towards it would create immediate Jealousies among the deluded People, and raise fresh Alarms in the Kingdom. Persons that entertain a favourable Opinion of the Design, will think the Gentlemen who lately appeared for it, have sufficiently exerted themselves, and run Hazard enough in its Favour. They who are really displeas'd with it, will have no Desire to see it revived. All Apprehensions therefore of Danger from the Gentlemen now in Power, are undoubtedly at an End. Besides the most *express* and *positive Assurances* to this Purpose, we may be convinc'd of it from the Nature of Things.

The

(7)

The *Scheme* itself, and the Advantages or Inconveniencies of it being *entirely over*, it only remains to enquire, *who* are entitled to our *Resentments*, (if any must be express'd upon the Occasion) those *Gentlemen* who *propos'd* this Scheme for preventing Frauds, or those who, for the Sake of *Opposition*, would suffer those Frauds to continue still.

In order to pass a righteous Judgment, and give our Approbation to the proper Persons, it seems necessary to enquire into the *true* Design and Nature of the late Scheme. The *real* Foundation upon which the Gentlemen for the Bill proceeded, was this, and *no other*; they believed it both *reasonable* and *beneficial* to *take off* the *heaviest* of the Duties we now lie under, if this could be done, *without* laying a *new* Tax, meerly by collecting the *proper* Duties upon Wine and Tobacco already paid by the People in the Price, while the *Publick* is *greatly defrauded*.

The *Nation* confessedly *suffers* very *largely* by many considerable Frauds in the Duties upon *Wine* and *Tobacco*. The
general

(8)

general and *loose Examination* these Goods pass under at the *Custom-House*, often in a great *Hurry*, when a large *Fleet* arrives at the same time, has by no Means proved an effectual Method to collect the whole Duty upon them. Length of Time, and repeated Experiments, have introduced various Practices injurious to the Publick, which are now carried on *there* with great Skill and Dexterity. The *Frauds* and *Abuses* that do already appear from the *Report of the Committee* appointed to enquire into them, are very *extensive* and *important*. How many other *Frauds*, that from the *Nature* of them, which is to lie *deep* and *close*, must have escaped the Notice of a *publick Committee*, 'tis impossible to say; but sure they must be very numerous, that Gentlemen, not at all conversant in such unjust Practices, should in the short Time allotted to their Inquiry, be able to bring so many of them to Light, such as, The *Frauds* committed at the *Importation* of Tobacco, by setting down in the Land-waiter's Book, by which the Duty is computed and paid, *less* Weight than the several Hogsheads do really weigh, even to the gaining above Thirty Thousand Pounds Weight Duty-free in
one

(9)

one Ship. The *Frauds* at *Exportation*, by shipping corrupt or damaged Tobacco, or Tobacco mix'd with Dirt, Rubbish, and Sand, by shipping Stalks alone, and thus gaining from the Publick an *unfair Drawback*; especially by endorsing on the Back of their Cockets *greater* Weights than the Hogsheads actually contain, and this to a very large Amount. Thus *doubly* defrauding the Nation, by *short Weights* at the *Entry*, and *over Weights* at the *Exportation*; as also by *running* Tobacco, by *relanding* it, by that Complication of *Fraud* and *Perjury*, the discharging *old Bonds* by *new Importations*, and by several other Methods of Cheating; all which appear in the *Report* upon proper and substantial Evidence; and to all which the late Scheme was intended as the *most* and indeed *only* effectual Cure.

'Tis the same with respect to the other Commodity. *Many* *Cargoes* of *real Wine* are run upon all the Coasts of *Britain*, and *vast Quantities* of something called *Wine*, brewed by Coopers and Vintners, both which they sell at the *current Price*, though *no Duty* was paid for them.

B

'Tis

(10)

'Tis, I know, sometimes *pretended* there are few or no Frauds committed, and of Course the Publick could gain but little by the preventing of them. The Misfortune of this Pretence is, that with respect to *Tobacco*, no Person who enjoys his *Senses* can possibly give Credit to it after what had passed in Parliament, and what has been so fully stated in the *Report*; and with respect to *Wine*, is there a Man in *England* who believes that *half* of the *common Draught* of *Taverns* is really *Wine*? Or that the *wretched Stuff* we meet with in all *Country Inns*, ever paid *Duty* at the *Custom-House*? And of what is genuine *Wine*, how large a Part is *run* by *Smuglers*, 'tis not easy to determine.

What a *noble Relief* from other *Taxes* did it fairly promise, if the *Duty* that is received by the *Dealers* for all this *fraudulent Tobacco*, and all this *factitious* or *run Wine* was honestly paid to the Publick? The Frauds that are already known, besides what are committed in dark *Recesses*, and in Ways yet undiscovered, are sufficient to convince every reasonable Man, what *vast*
Savings

(11)

Savings might have been made *to the Nation*, had these *cheating Methods* been prevented. This is confirmed in an authentic Piece published by *Francklin* himself, where the *Member of Parliament*, who is said to *write* the Letter, endeavours to prove, that the extending the *Excise-Laws* to *Wine* and *Tobacco* would have been *destructive of Parliament*, and fatal to the *Constitution*; *destroyed*, says he, the *very Being of Parliaments*; by raising so much *Money*, (he names *Five Hundred Thousand Pounds*) the *King* would have had no *Occasion* to call a *Parliament*. Unfortunately indeed for his *Argument*, the *Profits* that would have arisen from the proposed Method of collecting these *Duties* were *no Part* of the *Civil List*, but to be applied by *Parliament*; and the present *Customs* might as well be illegally seized for the *Purposes* of *Arbitrary Power*, as any *Increase* of them. However, here is a plain *Confession* of this important *Truth*, that the proposed Method of collecting these *Duties* would undoubtedly have raised great *Sums* for the *Service* of the *Publick*. The *Gentlemen* for the *Bill* were of the same *Opinion* as to the *Produce* of it, being persuaded, as all *Mankind* must be, that
B 2 the

(12)

the Prevention of these *extensive Frauds* upon *both* Commodities must have been attended with that good Effect.

This *Increase* of the Revenue would have given effectual *Relief* in such *Taxes* as should appear to the Legislature most *unequal*, or *most heavy*. The very first *Appearance* of this Scheme looks so *agreeable*, that it is no Wonder Gentlemen, who wished well to their Country, should be pleased with it. It seems so *reasonable* in itself to demand the *Taxes* from those who constantly receive them, and this *Increase* of the Revenue would have been so useful to the *Publick*, that a Scheme built upon this Foundation must have an inviting Aspect. But supposing it possible they might be mistaken in their Opinion (Gentlemen on the other Side are equally fallible) yet surely the endeavouring to levy the whole Duty upon these *Foreign Commodities*, which may be properly consider'd as Articles of *Luxury*; an Attempt to prevent injurious and fraudulent Practices in order to give *Relief* from *Taxes* that are felt most *severe*, is highly commendable. Had *other* Persons proved such *Frauds*, and the Gentlemen in the *Administration*

(13)

nistration opposed any *Remedy* offered, without endeavouring to make it practicable, *their Conduct*, I am sure, would have been *loudly censured*, and themselves *accused* of *dividing* the *Spoil*. Men in Power might have found great Advantages in *conniving* at these fraudulent Practices, while the endeavouring to prevent them, as it was easy to foresee, would expose them to the *Rage* of those who were *Gainers* by them, and all others whom they could influence.

Their *Interest* and their *Ease* lay on the other Side the Question, but the Friends to the Bill chose the most troublesome, because they thought it most beneficial to their Country.

For it was considered, that the *Landed Interest*, after having contributed so many *Millions*, was justly entitled to some Relief from a Tax so heavy in itself, and so unequally laid in different Counties, and too often strictly levied upon those who are least able to pay it.

How many Country Gentlemen, of ancient and honourable Birth, from One Hundred to a Thousand Pounds *per Annum*,

(14)

num, unwilling to live below their Rank, and obliged to charge their Estates for younger Children, distressed at the same Time with the heavy Weight of a constant Land-Tax, have seen themselves and Families reduced to the lowest Ebb? Nay, it is to be feared, that the Revolution Interest and the present Establishment have lost some of its Landed Friends, who merely from the Pressures of the Land-Tax have been induced to join with *modern* Patriots and *Jacobites*. Such Persons therefore, for the Sake of the Publick as well as themselves, called aloud for some Relief. And no Relief could be more properly given, than by preventing Frauds in those who contribute nothing to the Land-Tax.

The Clergy also, several Thousands of whom hold Livings under Fifty Pounds *per Annum*, as *Gentlemen* of a *liberal Education*, and who are *subject* to several *other Taxations*, were considered as proper Objects of Regard, and must have received considerable *Ease* in their Taxes, had the late *Design* been carried into *Execution*.

It

(15)

It was hoped to, that if this Scheme had succeeded, it might in Time have contributed to lessen or remove some other Taxes which lye heavy upon the Poor: And therefore these Gentlemen also thought it extremely hard, that the *mechanical* and *labouring* Part of the Kingdom, (whilst those who commit Frauds, escape Taxes) should pay a Tax upon *Soap* and *Candles*, for which, with a Duty upon *Leather*, (all collected by an *Excise*) they are indebted to that *uniform* and *upright Statesman*, who has now *opposed* their *Relief* by an *Inland Duty* upon *Foreign Commodities*, under a Law vastly more favourable to the Trader, than That his Administration laid upon the *Necessaries* of Life, *Necessaries* of our *own Manufacture*; who, because he was the Author of laying those Taxes on, has now artfully misrepresented and unjustly loaded the Means to take them off. 'Tis impossible to mistake the Man, that *pious* Patriot, who had the same Regard for *Religion* when he cried out the *Danger of the Church*, as he has for *Liberty*, when he exclaims against easing the Subject by preventing Frauds.

But

(16)

But as vast Sums of Money are by the present Manner of collecting lost to the Publick, *i. e.* to every Individual who pays other Taxes, it was thought by Gentlemen, who wished to prevent Frauds, that if these Duties were fairly paid by Persons who always exact them from their Customers, it would yield effectual Relief from Taxes that are felt most heavy, and might by the Wisdom of the Nation be employed as an useful Means to take off the Excise from some of the Necessaries of Life, by placing it upon the Superfluities; and thus ease the poorer Sort of the People, by taxing the wealthier.

The Gentlemen for the Bill, sensible that the Methods at the Custom-House, where many Ships come in at once, were too loose and general, and vast Frauds committed in that Way of collecting the Duty, imagined it would be advantageous to the Publick, and could not be improper in itself to put these Foreign Commodities under a more particular Inspection in Warehouses, and Places of Sale, ONLY.

Their Desire to do the Nation Justice, induced them to think it could be no unreasonable Step to follow those open Delin-

(17)

Delinquents the Smugglers, into the Repositories of their run Goods; nor did it appear to them any Breach of English Liberty to attend the Sellers of fraudulent Tobacco, and the Wine-Brewer, in those Vaults and Cellars (for no House was to be entered) where his Compositions, frequently unwholsome, always fraudulent, were clandestinely made; that under such an Inspection they might be charged with that Duty for the Publick, which they constantly exact from their Fellow-Subjects. They imagined these injurious Dealers might properly enough be subject to the same Law, which the honest Brewer of true English Beer is continually under, without any great Trouble to himself, Danger to Liberty, or Inconvenience to the Nation.

Under this Opinion, that a more particular Inspection would be most likely to prevent unjust Practices, a Scheme was fairly proposed, proposed to the Parliament, subject to their Amendment, or to be changed for any other that would prevent the acknowledged Frauds

This was the single Point aimed at by the Gentlemen for the Bill; it was in-

C

different

(18)

different to them by what Method the Publick gained the proposed Advantage; they only endeavoured to fix upon the most conducive to that Purpose. So far from desiring to lay their Countrymen under Hardships, or fix upon them the Calamities they have been taught to annex to the Word *Excise*; so far from this, the *Bill* itself, expressly removes the greatest Inconveniencies that are complained of in the present *Laws of Excise*, and would have undergone in the *Committee* any Alterations consistent with the publick Interest. So that this *Bill*, so much exclaimed against, eased the *whole Excise Law* in several Particulars; and by levying the just Duties upon foreign Commodities, it might in Time have *taken off the Excise entirely* from *Necessaries* of Home-Production.

This was the whole Design of the Gentlemen for the *Bill*, who were *only* desirous of seeing *Justice* done to the Publick, that they might ease their Fellow-Subjects of some heavy Taxes; in what Manner this was done was to them indifferent, either in that proposed by themselves or

(19)

or in any other, the most effectual was to them the most agreeable.

'Twas one valuable Recommendation of the *Bill* they brought in, that it was *calculated*, by lessening the Number of Oaths, to *prevent Perjury*; which nothing has more *promoted* than the *frequent* and common *Use* of them. Any Man who considers that the *Life* and *Property* of every Subject in *England* depends upon the *Regard* that is had to an *Oath*, will think this a Matter of great Importance. For if it shall ever happen, (as there seems too great Tendency towards it) that the People in general shall pay little or no *Regard* to a solemn Appeal to their Maker, 'tis easy to foresee that Injustice and Wickedness must soon *triumph* and defy the *publick* Justice of the Kingdom. 'Twas therefore a valuable Advantage, that this *Bill* greatly *lessened* the Number of *Oaths* both at the *Excise-Office*, as it *relieved* the *Trader* from *swearing* to his *own Books*; and at the *Custom-House*, as it lodged the Commodities in publick *Warehouses*, and so prevented much *Perjury* in swearing to the *Identity* of Goods imported and exported.

(20)

The very *Time* this Bill was brought into the House, when the Prospect of a new Election was so near, is one Proof, among many others, that the Gentlemen for it, *solely* intended the Service of the Publick; and hoped, by *preventing* gross Abuses, and thereby *easing* some heavy Taxes, to gain the Favour of their Country. Unconcerned Spectators of great *Wisdom* and *Impartiality* are firmly of Opinion, that *this Design* of honest Popularity was their *greatest Crime*, and in Truth gave Rise to the Opposition. The *Inconveniencies* of the Bill might easily have been *obviated* in a Committee; but their Opponents, who in Cases the *most unexceptionable* discover the *same Spirit* of *meer* Opposition, could by no Means allow them to gain the Favour of the People. If we consider the *Methods* of *Opposition* employed upon this Occasion, the *Principles* from which they proceeded appear but *too plain*.

It was *necessary* in the first Place to spread a *general Terror*, and thus to *inflame* and *interest* the whole *Body of the People*. With this View, no Pains were spared, no Arts omitted to affright the Nation

(21)

tion with the strange *GROUNDLESS Terror* of a *General Excise*. They knew full well, that scarce a Man in *England* not an immediate Gainer by defrauding the Revenue, but would be pleased with raising the just Duties upon the Commodities under Consideration, had he believed, what was *really* the Case, that there was *not the least Intention* to *extend* the Excise farther. But such a *Per-suasion*, how just soever, would not answer the Purposes of *certain Gentlemen*, and therefore every Artifice was employed to suggest farther Designs. Every Article of Life was represented as coming under an Excise; nay, the *Land* itself, ridiculous as it seems, was to be visited by Excisemen and regularly gauged!

All Persons who *gained* by *cheating* the Publick (no inconsiderable Number of Men) with great Industry *propagated* the *Falsehood*. Persons who were any ways disobliged or disappointed, embraced this Opportunity to express their Resentment. To these must be added, such as hoped to be Gainers by a Change of Hands: But above all, the Jacobites and their Friends, who, it is said,

at

(22)

at first applauded the Scheme as an useful Piece of Justice, when they observed some Discontent was raised in the Kingdom, immediately turned about and exclaimed aloud against the imaginary Project of a General Excise. Contrary to their own genuine Principles they declared for *Liberty*, in order to gain the Favour of the People, and more effectually oppose those whom they have always found the greatest Obstacle to their ruinous Designs. *Gentlemen*, who had *Views* of getting into *Power*, encouraged the *Clamour*, and furnished a continual Supply of *Scandal* in Support of it: An Instance, we see, that a Nation may be deprived of a *real* Advantage meerly by *imaginary* Fears.

The *Methods* employed to fix these terrible Impressions, plainly show there was *no real* Foundation for them. Far from having the least Shadow of Truth on their Side, the Contrary was very evident. It was an express Part of the Scheme to *remove* the chief *Inconveniences*, and it would have *lessened* the *Extent* of the Excise. To support this *useful* Notion of a *General Excise*, there was *Nothing* offered by the *Inventors* of it,

(23)

it, but *bold* Assertions, which were *strongly* affirmed and vigorously *propagated* by those who found it *necessary* to form a *powerful Party*. Not the least pretended Proof of their Assertions; when we called for an *Argument*, they repeated a *Song*, and to enforce this produced a *Picture*.

It had been *Time enough* to raise *Alarms* when they found the least Tendency towards a Design to excise *any Part* of our *Food*, or enter any private House; but it was by much too soon for these Alarms, when it was certain there was *no other* Intention but to *regulate* the *Duty* upon *two foreign Commodities*: To regulate this Duty in the *same Way*, except in some Circumstances more easy to the Trader, as had been tried with universal *Approbation* and great *Success* upon other Articles. *Coffee* and *Chocolate* it was found by Experience produced very little while the Duty upon them was paid at the Custom-House; whereas, meerly by *changing* the *Manner of collecting* the *same* Duty, many Thousand Pounds a Year were gained to the Publick. An Attempt to introduce the like advantageous

(24)

tagious Regulation of the Duties *already laid* upon Wine and Tobacco, where the Frauds are so notorious, and the Gain to the Publick must of Course have been so considerable, cannot with the least Shadow of Justice be loaded with the Imputation of a General Excise; which Complaint was never heard of when a more rigorous Collection was appointed for Coffee and Chocolate, than what was lately proposed for Wine and Tobacco.

These wicked and groundless Clamours, raised with so much Malice, and scattered Abroad with so much Industry, must excite the Indignation of every honest and peaceable Man. Nor can the Authors of them have any other Excuse for their Conduct, but the *Necessity of inventing* something to propagate Discontent and carry on their dangerous Designs.

Having, by every Art the Wit of Man could devise, spread this Terror far and wide; we are next to consider how they *improved* these general Fears, and what *Methods of Opposition* they grafted upon them.

As

(25)

As these Proceedings, however unusual and important, are gloried in and recommended for future Practice, * *To be revived* (say the Advisers of them) *in the same VIGOROUS Manner upon other Occasions*. As this is the Case, it becomes highly necessary to enquire into the *Tendency* of such Proceedings, and the *Influence* they have upon the *Constitution*.

Publick Measures are *only* to be influenced by the *Publick Good*. An Affectation of *Popularity*, Regard to a particular *Borough*, Fondness for a *Seat* in Parliament, *Envy* or *Revenge*, *Avarice* or *Ambition* are dangerous Counsellors where the Safety of the Nation is at Stake. If it shall ever happen (says a late Writer to whom I am indebted for some Thoughts) that publick Measures are influenced and directed by *any* Consideration, *but* the *Reason* of Things and the *Good* of the Community, the Happiness, the Safety of a free People, and the very Being of a well ballanced Constitution are at an End.

* *Craftsman*, May 12.

D

Gen-

(26)

Gentlemen, who deliberate upon publick Affairs, are to *hear all* that can be offered upon a Subject of Debate. The Representatives of trading Corporations in particular, should be always willing to receive any *Information* from their Constituents, and learn, either from them or any other Hands, the Advantages or Disadvantages apprehended to arise from any Bill depending in Parliament. But when these Informations cease to be *meer Representation*, and are changed into *positive Commands*; when instead of declaring their own Opinion, private Persons *absolutely direct* their Member in the Choice of his; not *meerly* furnish him with *Arguments* to be laid before the *House*, but strictly *enjoin* him, without knowing what may be offered in the Course of a Debate, how to vote at the Close of it: What Effect can this have but to *prevent* the Advantages of a *free Inquiry* and destroy all Liberty of Judgment, by obliging a Man to act upon Arguments which it may be he has heard substantially confuted? Let the People, where they think it needful, give *Information*, but *no Commands* to their Members. To send such *decisive Injunctions* is passing Judgment *without a full Hearing*, and must expose the
Nation

(27)

Nation to great Inconveniencies, and at some Junctures may involve it in Ruin. For a Gentleman to be influenced by such Commands, is in Truth to please a *few* at the Expence of the *whole*; shewing a greater Regard to a particular Body of Men, than to the general Interest of the Kingdom. 'Tis setting up *another* Rule of judging besides *Arguments* and *Evidence* produced in the *House*; *transferring* the Legislative Power from the Parliament to the People, and thus *changing* a happy well poised *Constitution*.

Were this Practice to be repeated and carried, as it might be with equal Reason, to other Instances, it would soon prove *fatal*. There is no Tax more unequal than that laid upon *Land*; nor perhaps any *Complaints* better founded, than of those, who hold *small Estates*, or who *don't live where their Estates lie*. And it perhaps deserves Consideration, whether, in some Counties, the Commissioners do not ease themselves and lay disproportioned Burdens upon their poorer Neighbours. The long Continuance of this unequal Tax, the immense Sums it has already con-
tributed

(28)

tributed to the Service of the Nation, and the Unreasonableness of taxing landed Estates, in order that vast Sums of Money in the Funds, which produce better Interest, may not be subject to such Payments : These are *Arguments* that might be urged with great *Force* at a Time when the *Rents* of Land are *decreasing* in so many Places. If upon these Arguments all the *Counties* and *Boroughs* in the Kingdom should *enjoyn* their Members to vote against the Land Tax, should libel and abuse, should threaten and insult them if they did not obey these Commands, What must the Consequence be ? However this Treatment of Members may, as is boasted, work above Ground and by Day Light, 'tis so far from being such as the Constitution requires the Represented to have over their Representatives, that, to speak of it in the lowest Terms, 'tis *introducing* a new Legislative Power. The *Opinion* of the People ought to be much *regarded*, but *positive Commands* may be very *prejudicial*, since they may command without having examined, being often governed by Authority without Proof.

The

(29)

The same that is said with Relation to the Land-Tax, might be done in every other Tax or Duty ; they are all *unavoidably* attended with some *Trouble* and *Inconvenience*, which by proper Management may be represented as very dreadful. Persons that are particularly affected or artfully inflamed, may command and threaten their Members, and worthy Gentlemen be abused for yeilding to the Force of Reason, and consulting the true Interest of their *whole* Country. What must such pernicious Measures end in but the Ruin of the Nation, while they unavoidably prevent raising the necessary Supplies, which can never be done without Inconvenience to some Persons, who always dislike a Tax that affects them in particular ?

'Tis said indeed, by those who advised these *authoritative* Injunctions, that in Affairs of *Domestick Government* the People understand them better than a *Minister of State* ; which would be less Matter of Dispute, if *some Gentlemen* were in that Station. But does this supposed Knowledge empower them to *rule* the *Parliament*, either in domestick or foreign Affairs ? for the same Reasoning holds

(30)

holds in both Cases. When the *Designs* of an Enemy, or the *Posture* of *publick Affairs* demand the Equipment of a *Fleet*, or providing a Number of *Land Forces*, Is the Safety of the Kingdom at these Junctures to depend upon the Judgment of Gentlemen that hear and know the State of Things, or upon the Opinion of those who cannot have this Information? Of those who it may be are *averse* to the *Expence* of a Fleet or an Army, *only* because, from the Nature of Government, they are *unacquainted* with the *Reasons* that make them *necessary*; and so may prefer a present Saving, to their future Security and Wellfare? Of this there have been Instances. The Nation *suffered* greatly from an Experiment of this Sort in the *Reign* of *King William*; when the *Clamours* of a Party (*not yet quite extinct*) compelled that Great and Glorious Prince, who had but a little before saved them and their Country from Ruin, to *disband* a greater Part of his Troops than was consistent with the true Interest of the Nation, according to the Posture of Affairs, and the Disposition of foreign Courts, as the Event soon proved to our Cost. For the *Savings* upon that
Occasion

(31)

Occasion must be allowed to have been *deeply over-ballanced* by an *expensive* and *bloody* War, which was begun at a Time when the Nation was thought not prepared to make any vigorous Opposition.

Let Corporations enjoy, not only their legal Privileges, but *every* Instance of *Freedom* consistent with the publick Good; but it can never be for their *own Advantage* to assume such Powers as must change and subvert an excellent Constitution. Their Usefulness and Importance to the Nation, the trading Part of them in particular, justly entitle them to great Regard and Favour: But still, highly as I esteem them, it would be too great a Compliment to suppose them infallible, not to be deceived by false Reports, or imposed upon by artful and designing Men. Nor could it be any real Advantage to themselves, to take them out of their own useful Sphere of acting, and place the Reins of Government in their Hands.

I have the greatest Regard for the general Wisdom of the *English* Nation, yet cannot wish to see publick Affairs
wrested

wrested from the Parliament and placed in the promiscuous Body of the People. To their *general Sense* I should always pay a Deference, but should not so much approve their *Government*. Besides the Instability and Uncertainty which we have seen attend such popular Councils, the Persons who compose them must be too ignorant of the general State of Affairs to be entrusted with the *important Power of Governing* the Government. Such Ignorance is unavoidable, unless Ministers of State are to communicate their Dispatches to the World, and our Enemies are at all Times to be acquainted with every Step we design against them.

Nor do *private* Persons always understand the *general State* and Interest of the Nation enough to judge what Taxes are most proper. As to *Goods* imported from *Abroad*, it seems very sufficient if they offer their *Opinion* and give their *Reasons*, but leave the *Legislature* to determine what foreign Commodities shall be laid under Taxes, and in what Manner those Taxes shall be collected. 'Tis abusing the sacred Name of Liberty to employ it to promote

mote *Licentiousness*, and destroy all true Freedom.

But these *authoritative* and absolute *Injunctions* laid upon Members become still more *absurd* and *dangerous* when they are *enforced* by *Menaces* and *Tumults*. This was the next Step *advised* and encouraged by the *Leaders* of the Opposition. The *Dignity* as well as *Freedom* of Parliament is at an End when the Members of it are to be *menaced* or any way *insulted* by tumultuous Crouds. There is something so *horrid* in the very Thoughts of an *Affassination*, that it can hardly be supposed any Gentleman wishes the *Populace* had proceeded that Length; tho' *Parallels* have been *drawn* and *Instructions* given which naturally *carried* them to it. I am sensible the Merchants and Tradesmen, most of whom, by the imaginary Terror of a General Excise, were prevailed upon to joyn the Opposition, detest the Thoughts of an Affassination, and are really concerned at Instances of Violence offered to Gentlemen of the House of Commons. But there were *other* Persons who had *other* Designs and *other* Wishees, why else were those *dirty* Patriots,

(34)

Patriots, the *Labourers* in *Glass-houses* summoned to *assist* upon this Occasion, and offer *their Advice* to the Members *at Night* when the peaceable Petitioners were gone Home? Whoever are the immediate Actors in such a Tragedy, if any Violence is committed by a tumultuous Body of People, 'tis justly chargeable upon those Men, whose *Advice* and *Pen* originally inflamed and brought them together. A mixt Multitude, many of them armed with Sticks and Swords (no usual Part of their Dress) are soon thrown into a Riot. One rash Blow by a Footman, in Resentment of an Affront to his Master, the Rudeness and Violence of an enraged or a drunken Fellow, or the Artifice of those who design Mischief, may easily occasion a Quarrel. And when once a Crowd is thrown into Confusion, and a Fray began, no body can say how fatal the Consequence may be before it is ended. Can such tumultuous Assemblies, thus armed, be proper Assistants to the Deliberations of Parliament? Those Gentlemen, whose *Writings* and *Advice* brought them to the *Door* of the *House*, might

(35)

might with equal Propriety have introduced them into the House itself, and given them Seats as *Superintendants* of the Members. There is but little Difference whether such Company enter the House, or command and intimidate Gentlemen in their Passage to it. The Enemies of their Country, and the happy Form of its Government, would have taken the same Measures, and advised the like Violation of the Rights of Parliament, as these pretended Friends have done. Faction (as ancient *Rome* found to its Cost) may prove as subversive of a free Constitution, as Tyranny can be. 'Tis the Happiness of our own in particular (if some *pretended* Friends to Liberty will allow us to enjoy it) to be governed by *Law*, and that only. Neither the absolute Will of the Prince, nor the Will and Pleasure of the People, but the *whole Legislature* is invested with supreme Authority. It should be taken Notice of here, that even supposing the Bill not absolutely perfect (and what human Scheme ever was so) yet it was but a meer Proposal, it was still *res integra*, having been read but once; any Alterations might have been made in the Com-

E 2

mittee.

(36)

mittee. There was not the least Reason to hazard the whole Constitution, when every Objection might have been obviated another Way.

'Tis but a Part of the Mischief, which the Advisers of these Disorders have occasioned, that the *Publick* has *lost* all the *Savings* that might have been made, in some Shape or other, upon Articles of Trade so extensive, and so liable to Frauds as Wine and Tobacco; which Savings would have given effectual Relief upon other Taxes.

This Loss is only a Part of the Mischief; the *Treatment* of the late *Bill*, and the *Methods* of Opposition then *recommended*, will effectually *encourage fraudulent Practices*, and *frustrate* all *Endeavours* to prevent them. Without much Spirit of Prophecy, a Man may venture to foretell, that whenever any Attempt shall be made to prevent Frauds, however hurtful and notorious, it will soon be obstructed. A Method is marked out for the Purpose. 'Tis only raising a loud Outcry of Infringements of *English Liberty*, it must be called a Re-
vival

(37)

vival of that dreadful Scheme, the *Excise*; new *Ballads* published in the Streets, and new *Dragons* hung up to affright the People.

That the Abettors of the late Disturbances and Innovations in the Constitution meant only to distress the Administration, and not procure any real Benefit to the Kingdom, is farther evident from another Part of their Conduct, which was entirely to oppose the Method offered, not merely to correct its Faults, but absolutely reject the whole, *without proposing any other in its Room*.

This is a *Charge* at once so *heavy* and so just, that great Pains are taken to remove it. The *Anger* and *Uneasiness* they express at the Imputation, plainly shew they feel both the *Weight* and the *Truth* of it. Frauds so *prejudicial* to the Publick ought to have had *some Check*, and their *injured Country* was justly entitled to *Relief*.

Instead of labouring so vigorously *solely* to discredit the Method proposed, it had been very *proper* to have bestowed a
few

few Thoughts to find a better. This must have been an *easy Task* to Gentlemen of *their Abilities*, who represent the *other* as extremely *bad*. But let us hear their noble Defence. *The Gentlemen on the other Side* (say their great Leaders in the *Craftsman*) having defeated the *Excise Scheme*, by their VIGOROUS and PUBLICK-SPIRITED Opposition, were resolved to go farther, and purge themselves from any Imputation of designing to countenance Frauds of any kind. For this Purpose it was proposed by an honourable Member, that a Committee should be appointed, with full Power to INQUIRE into the Frauds and Abuses of the Customs in general.

This, by the Bye, is another plain Confession, that the Frauds in the Customs are so considerable as to deserve the Notice of Parliament, however upon other Occasions, the same Gentlemen endeavour to lessen and deny them.

Vigorous enough their Opposition was; but all Mankind are at a Loss to discover the Publick-spiritedness of leaving the Nation under the same acknowledged Frauds,

Frauds, and continuing Taxes rather than prevent those Frauds. But this vigorous and publick Spirit did what? Bring in a better Bill? No; a Committee was proposed not to prevent the Frauds, but to inquire into them! As this Motion for a Committee (say they in another Paper, being a Point they labour much) proceeded from those Gentlemen who had vigorously opposed the Excise Scheme, they have thoroughly purged themselves from the Imputation of being the Patrons of Fraud. How thoroughly the World will judge, when it is considered this is their whole Defence. They moved for a Committee to enquire into the Frauds. This Motion was made near the End of the Sessions, when Members, fatigued with the close Attendance of the Winter, were hastening into the Country. The Gentlemen who value themselves upon the Motion, well knew there was scarce time to draw up a Report, much less to form any Resolutions upon it. There was therefore little Prospect of Relief from this Step, and through the whole Course of this so much agitated Affair, even to this Day, they have made no other Proposal to prevent these hurtful Frauds,

(40)

Frauds, except *disbanding the Army* to restrain the Insolence of *Smugglers*, that *defy the Civil Magistrate*; and taking away *Patent Places* at the *Custom-House* to hinder Dealers from selling run Tobacco, and to prevent Brewing in Wine-Cellars, where *Custom-House Officers* have no Access.

That there was no real Design to prevent unfair Practices, and that the Committee was not proposed with that View, needs no other Proof, than the Declaration of *Gentlemen* who are certainly in the *Secret* of all their Measures. They, as well as the rest of the World, were sufficiently convinced of the Frauds *before* the Committee was appointed to enquire into them.

The Report, (say they again in the *Craftsman*) consists of little more than what appeared to the House from the *Commissioners of the Customs*. And were these Gentlemen on the other Side convinced of all the Frauds mentioned in the Report! Did they know how much the *Weight* at *Importation*, when the *Duty* was to be paid, was less than the *Weight*

(41)

Weight at *Exportation* when the *Drawback* is to be allowed? Did they know that unfair Dealers might pass the usual Forms at the *Custom-House*, and gain more than Thirty Hogsheads *Duty-free* in the Cargo of a single Ship? Did they know what appears so evident in the Report, how much the *Revenue*, the *fair Trader*, the poor *Planter*, suffer by these Frauds? That the *Trade* itself is *injured*, *Foreign Markets* *over-stock'd*, and the Tobacco sold at an under Price, merely for the sake of getting an *unrighteous Drawback*? Did Facts of this Importance appear to the House, and could those Gentlemen in the Opposition think it a sufficient Satisfaction to their Country, or a sufficient Vindication of themselves from *skreening* (since they like the Word) the most unjust Practices, that at such an advanced Season of the Year they moved for a Committee to acquaint them with what, by their own Confession, they knew before? They proposed no Remedy, not so much as obviating Frauds at *Exportation*, by *lodging Tobacco* to be exported in *publick Warehouses*, and thereby preventing the *Inconveniencies* and gross *Iniquities* in *Bonding*

(42)

ding for the Duty. Did these Gentlemen also know what *Quantities of Wine* were continually *run*? Were they, as well as the rest of the Kingdom, convinced of the subterraneous Frauds committed by Wine-Brewers? What Remedy did they provide? One would imagine the Obligations *certain Gentlemen* are under to some fraudulent Dealers for pretty *Home Attempts* upon a late Occasion, make them thus unwilling to enforce the Payment of Taxes. From the same Principle of *Gratitude* they tell us, (*Craftsman, Aug. 4.*) that *the Method of easing Land by taxing Commodities*, (it was too glaring an Absurdity to say *Foreign Commodities*) is only a *NOMINAL Relief for the present, which will certainly end in a more grievous Burden upon Land* than any Land-Tax *whatever*. The Reason to be sure for this Paradox, had they thought fit to give it, must have been this: A Man drinks what Wine he pleases, but is obliged to pay the full Tax for his Land whether he will or no. 'Tis therefore for his *Interest* and his Estate to pay the Land-Tax, rather than the Wine-

(43)

Wine-cooper should pay the Duty which he receives for his made Wine.

By the Help of *such Reasoning*, the poor Planter must still languish under the Oppression of his Factor, and the Wine-cooper may *now*, with great *Tranquility*, continue *Brewing*, and levy upon his Neighbours those Taxes he never pays. The *Penalty* of Frauds committed by the *Guilty* must still be inflicted upon the *Innocent*. Some Friends, it seems, are upon no Account to be disobliged. 'Tis to this Principle we owe another incomparable Piece of Reasoning from the same Quarter, * *A People*, say they, *who pay in Taxes Five Millions a Year*, should by no Means regard the Saving of *Five Hundred Thousand Pounds*. Indifferent Persons, though of a *lower Genius*, would have thought, that since the *unavoidable Interest* of the *National Debt*, and the *necessary Expences* of the current *Year* oblige us to pay so much, we have good Reason to be *exact* and *frugal* where we can.

* *Craftsman, Aug. 4.*

(44)

But agreeably to these *corrupt and all-skreening* Principles, they not only endeavour to *lessen* the *Amount* of the Frauds, and reduce it from Five Hundred Thousand Pounds (which they justly acknowledged when it served their Turn) to so small a Sum as Thirty Thousand Pounds ; but besides this, they *labour* earnestly to divert us *from* all *Methods* to *prevent* these Frauds. 'Tis with this View, when a fair and judicious Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the Frauds of the Customs, was published, instead of naming a proper Method to prevent those unjust Practices, as would become honest Patriots, they make a *dull* Attempt * to *criticise* the *Style* of the Report, and give a *fictionous* Account how that Committee was chose. Nothing but a strong Desire to divert our Thoughts from the manifest Abuses not rectified, could tempt *this Writer* to mention the *Choice* of the *Committee*, because it must occur to his Thoughts, that *a certain Gentleman* will make a most *ridiculous Figure*, after he has so *publickly* declared against *patch-*
ing,

* Vid. *Craftsman*, July 28.

(45)

ing, as well as *skreening*, if it should ever appear that *he* has been the Means of *skreening* very notorious *Frauds*, and was the *Contriver* of the *most motly* List that ever saw the Light. A List where *each Side* was extremely *ashamed* of the *other*, and *excused* to their respective Friends, what they acknowledged of one another, the keeping such very bad Company, alledging in their Defence, That no Company could be too bad to destroy a Minister, whose Merit had not only endeared him to successive Princes, but procured him the *Esteem* of the true *Friends* of the *British Constitution*, and of Course drew upon him the *united* Resentments of *Jacobites* and *false Patriots*.

I have dwelt the longer upon the *Principles* and *Practices* of these Gentlemen in the Opposition, as they are pleased to call themselves, that *impartial* People may *distinguish* the *real* from the *pretended* Friends of their Country and its happy Constitution. We have now seen the Maxims upon which each Party, in the late controverted Affair, proceeded. The
Gentlemen

(46)

Gentlemen for the Bill thought it a commendable Attempt to raise some Relief to *honest* Men, by levying the just Taxes upon such as are not so. Those of the Opposition were resolved *once more to push their Fortune*, and try if their utmost Art could not effectually distress their envied Rival. Invasions of the Constitution, Violations of the Rights of Parliament, Encouragement of Fraud and Perjury, were to them no Obstacles.

It may not be improper to carry on our Thoughts a little farther, and consider the Success of this vigorous Opposition, or, as themselves are sometimes pleased to call it, *this playing all the Game*.

The many artful Endeavours to terrify the People with the *groundless* Fear of a General Excise succeeded so well, that great Numbers became averse to the Bill, as believing it, *without the least Foundation*, introductory to such a Scheme. What were at first only Doubts and Surmises, by frequent Repetition, acquired a greater Degree of Certainty. The Terror,

(47)

ror, however groundless in its Original, spread far and wide; and, as is the *Nature* of all such *Panicks*, got deep Possession of the People, and operated very powerfully upon them.

And now, what are we to expect from Gentlemen that loved their Country? Should they pursue a Scheme, because they thought it good, when such Numbers of their Countrymen were enraged against it? The *Question* was now *altered*: It was *no longer* about the *Merits* of the Bill, whether Wine or Tobacco should pay their proper Duty; but whether the Bill itself should be farther considered when so many People (right or wrong) were greatly inflamed against it.

The Gentlemen therefore who meant only the publick Good, *gave up the Bill for ever*, rather than create any Hazard of publick Disorders. They were conscious the Bill was intended well, and still convinced it might have been made very useful; but they *generously* chose to sacrifice their *own Sentiments* to, what they thought, the *mistaken Opinion* of their
Fellow-

(48)

Fellow-Subjects. In every Division they had the *Numbers* on *their Side*. The Choice of the *Committee* by *Ballot* to enquire into the Frauds, when there was no Restraint or Terror, is a substantial Proof, notwithstanding the Subterfuges of the *Craftsman*, of the real Strength they had in the House. The Clamours upon *Bribery* and *Corruption* must be forever silenced, or the Authors of those Clamours acknowledge they might have been employed with equal Success in this as in any other Cause. But the Gentlemen for the Bill *voluntarily* chose to drop it, rather than hazard the publick Tranquillity. They *renounced* the *Triumph* of carrying a *disputed* Point (*no usual* Condescension from Men in Power) and yielded their own Opinion, how just soever they thought it, to the Prejudices of the People.

The *Reverse* of this was found in *One* of their *Opponents*, the great Chief and Leader of them: He was deaf to the Cries of the *Poor*, when he taxed the very *Candles* by which so many of them *earned* their Bread. *Dunkirk* had been
made

(49)

made *for ever harmless* to the *British* Nation, if the Sense of the whole Kingdom could have altered his corrupt and treacherous Resolutions.

The Gentlemen who proposed the Bill, were actuated by *Sentiments* directly *opposite* to these. When they first formed the Plan, their *only* View was to remove some heavy Taxes; when they entirely *relinquished* the Design, it was to convince the People of their *Regard* to publick *Peace*, and the *Deference* they paid even to *their* mistaken Notions. The *Design* from which this Bill proceeded, the *Ease* of the People, was unquestionably *good*; and the *departing* from it, under such Circumstances, an Act of *singular Modesty* and *Compliance*.

Such an *Example* is of great *Importance* in *English History*, which furnishes *too many* Instances, where Ministers of State have pursued their Designs *against* the Sense of the People. But the *Gentlemen*, who have thus *dropt* a Scheme, for which, as Authors of it, they could not want some Fondness, have *plainly*
shewed

(50)

shew'd, that the *Peace* and *Favour* of their *Country* are the Objects of their *chief* *Regard*, and *predominate* in all their *Measures*.

Thus to *recede* from a *Project*, is so *contrary* to the *usual* *Practice* of *Ministers*, and yet may at some *Junctures* be very *beneficial*; that an *Instance* so *extraordinary*, to encourage the like upon other *Occasions*, should be *thankfully acknowledged* and *applauded*.

'Tis no *Wonder*, however, that those who are *fix'd* in their *Opposition* should still *vigorously* endeavour to deprive these *Gentlemen* of their *just* *Praise*, and still labour to fix an *unjust* *Odium* upon them. It was thought *poor* *Malice* to kindle a *Flame*, unless proper *Endeavours* were used to make it *spread*. After *Gentlemen* had been *insulted* at the *Parliament-House*, the *Advisers* of the first *Disturbance* gave farther *Directions* to have them *affronted* in *Effigy* at *distant* *Places*; aiming at a *mean* *Triumph*, in this *pitiful* *Way*, over *One* whose *distinguish'd* *Abilities* and *manly* *Eloquence* give him an
easy

(51)

easy *Superiority* in every *personal* *Dispute*.

The *Danger*, had there been any, was *effectually* *over*; the *Design* *entirely* laid *aside*. But the *Nation* was *still* to be *inflamed*, and a *Spirit* of *Disorder* kept up. This *Behaviour* furnishes the *true* *Reason*, why a *few* *regular* *Forces* are so great a *Grievance*, and why *disbanding* the *Army* is so *much* *insisted* upon by some *Gentlemen*. It likewise lets us into the *true* *Reason* of their desiring the *Riot Act*, so *useful* in preserving the *publick* *Peace*, to be *immediately* *repealed*.

'Tis not at all *surprising*, that *Persons* who have taken such *Steps*, and thus *violated* the *Privileges* of *Parliament*, should next proceed to *attack* the *Crown* itself, and so discover an equal *Disregard* for the *whole* *Legislature*.

Many of the *best* and *greatest* *Men* this *Nation* ever bred, desirous to *preserve* the *Constitution*, endeavoured to fix it on that *happy* *Basis* whereon it now stands. With what *honest* *Zeal* did these *true* *Pa-*

G 2

Patriots

(52)

triot's struggle for the Protestant Succession? What Joy did they receive from the Establishment of it? Had their Lives been continued to this Time, how thankful would they have been to see their warmest Hopes exceeded? The Nation, in every Instance, governed by Law. The *Property* of the meanest Subject *secured* from all *Encroachments*. *Liberty*, both civil and religious, *preserved* without any Violation. Not a single Act of unlawful Power, nor one Attempt upon the Constitution, in the Course of many Years, except from those discontented Subjects, who *alone* complain of its Danger. Is so happy a Government founded in *Reason*, conducted with *Equity*, and so *beneficial* to the Publick; Is this Government to be aspersed and blackened, and do the Calumniators pretend to love their Country?

Under the Enjoyment of so *much Liberty* can any thing be more injurious and ungrateful, than to talk of *Slavery*, and level the *important Blessings* of the *Protestant Succession* with the *Tyranny* of a *Papish Pretender*! Their own alarming
Decla-

(53)

Declaration, *stamped with Authority*, and published by *Francklin*, fixes this Charge upon them. * *All we desire*, say these *modest peaceable Gentlemen*, is *Justice and the common Protection of Subjects*; but *it is the Nature of Englishmen*, if they *must be SLAVES*, they will be very LITTLE SOLICITOUS WHO ARE TO BE THEIR MASTERS. Their Meaning is *too obvious* to need an Explanation, and *too dreadful* to allow us to dwell upon it; it includes no less than the Destruction of every thing that is valuable to a free People, the absolute Overthrow of that happy Constitution, and those Liberties, both civil and religious, purchased with so much Blood and Treasure. It should only be remembered, to convince every Protestant *Englishman* what they aim at, that this *hopeful Declaration* was made *after the Bill* was *laid aside*, and all the imaginary Danger from it over!

Merely because a well-meant Design to relieve the Publick, by preventing Frauds, was not attended with Success, nor any other proposed in its Room, a tumultuous
Joy

* *Letter from a Member of Parliament.*

(54)

Joy has been kindled through the Kingdom, and, by the *same Arts* that gave it Birth, continued still in being. Gentlemen who have merited the highest Esteem of their Country barbarously insulted, and the valuable Blessings of the Protestant Succession slighted and abused; nay, in Violation of all the Rights of Hospitality, a *Branch* of that *illustrious House* which has been the great Bulwark of *civil* and *religious Freedom* in *Europe*, treated with *Indignity*. Sad Friends of Liberty! After all this, what do they do? Do they take *Shame* to themselves, and ask *Pardon* of their injured Country? No, they still endeavour to keep up *Noise* and *Tumults*; that the Voice of *Reason*, so powerful *against them*, may not be heard among the People.

Let these Gentlemen, if they please, continue to rejoyce and delight themselves with *vain* Schemes of Power, and *imaginary* Prospects of approaching Greatness; let them celebrate their own Praises, and *write* Letters of Applause to *themselves*; let them do this or any thing, but *pretend* a *Hatred* of *Fraud* and *Corruption*, a
Desire

(55)

Desire to *lessen* the Burden of *Taxes*, a *Regard* to the *Constitution*, or an *Intention* to preserve the *Freedom* of Debate in *Parliament*. Were the Contrivers of these late Disorders, the Gentlemen who hindered the Relief of their Country, enough at leisure, one might advise them to moderate their Joy. It would be some Abatement of their short-lived Triumph if they remember, that *Mobs* and *Riots*, though attended with some immediate Confusion, often bring *Contempt* upon the Authors of them; and that even the inglorious Peace of *Utrecht* was celebrated with Bells and Bonfires.

Such *tumultuous Mirth* must of course be *noisy*; while the Reflections of the *wise* and *sober* part of Mankind, though *less publick*, are *more just* and *solid*, and will *at last*, when these short-lived Transports are over, prove *more effectual*.

I have dwelt longer upon these high Insults and dangerous Violations of the Constitution, because the great *Advisers* of them think proper to applaud such Behaviour, and, as was observed before, propose

(56)

pose it as an Example for other Opportunities.

We have now seen upon what *Principles* and with what *Designs* the late Bill, towards the *End* of a *Parliament*, was brought into the House. The Gentlemen who were for it had *no other* View, but honestly to gain the Favour of their Country; which they hoped to do, if they could ease their Fellow-Subjects from the heaviest of their Taxes, without any new Impositions, but merely by collecting, upon two foreign Commodities, the whole Duty from *unfair* Dealers, who, to a very considerable Value, now *defraud* the *Publick*.

This was their *whole Design*, and they *defy* the most malicious of their Enemies in the least to contradict this by any *real Proof* or substantial Evidence. 'Tis impossible to prove a *Negative* which depends upon Gentlemens Intentions, any other way than by their solemn Assertions, and the Circumstances of the Case. The altering the *Manner* of *collecting* a Duty already

(57)

already laid, is, in the Nature of things, widely different from laying a new Duty, and has not the least Connexion with taxing *any other* Commodity. Ministers, it is granted, *may* have ill Designs; but 'tis as true, that ill Designs *may* be *imputed* to Ministers by *those* who *want* their *Places*. Let Facts alone determine the Case.

'Tis possible the Gentlemen, who formed the Scheme, might be mistaken; but sure *no Mistake* can be *more innocent*; none proceed from *better Purposes*. Here were *no private Views*, no personal Advantage, no particular Friends to oblige: On the contrary, their *Interest* lay on the *other Side*; a Connivance at the Abuses they designed to prevent, might have produced a plentiful Harvest to Men in Power: The *Publick alone*, that is, all who now pay other Taxes, and they only, were to receive any Profit from this Scheme. Nothing but much Trouble, Vexation and Opposition could possibly fall to the Lot of the Authors of it. The only Reward they hoped for was the Approbation of the virtuous Part of their Country.

H

When

(58)

When this Plan, however *well designed*, and by *many* of its Opposers *little understood*, proved disagreeable to great Numbers of the Trading Subjects, the Gentlemen who were for it, *without discerning* any thing *wrong* in the Thing itself, submitted their own Opinion to the Sentiments of their Countrymen.

'Tis impossible for Men to give a more substantial Proof of Regard to the Interest of their Country, than these Gentlemen have shewed by proposing a Scheme of this Tendency, at the Expence of their own Quiet: Nor can there be *clearer Evidence* that they *abhor* the Thoughts of carrying on Affairs by *mere Power*, than the *yielding up* their *Sentiments*, how right soever they thought them, to the Opinion of *other* Persons, even when they had a Majority in the House, and would certainly have carried the Point by greater Numbers had the Matter been decided by Ballot.

Thus they have proved to the People of *England*, that it is their *firm* Resolution

(59)

tion to do *nothing* against the *general Bent* of the Nation. In a long Course of Years, they have *always* acted upon the Principles of *Liberty*, and always considered the Subjects of *England* as a *free People*. It has fallen under every Body's Observation, that they have discovered *less* Violence and Obstinacy even while they are *in Power*, which is commonly impatient of Contradiction, than their *Adversaries* have done while they are *destitute* of it.

Every *Englishman* therefore, in proportion as he loves his Country, will *dread* to see Power and Authority lodged in *such* Hands; who, while no more than *private Men*, have by the most *unusual* and *daring* Practices endangered the whole Constitution. Power would quite intoxicate Persons who are already so warm and outrageous, and, what deserves our Notice, so *closely blended* with *those* who were *bred up* in Principles of *Tyranny*.

The Wisdom of the *English* Nation will, at a *proper* Time, effectually *distinguish* *those* who have always approved themselves Friends to the Liberty of their Country;

(60)

Country; on whom, by long Experience we find, Power has had no other Effect, but to make them more earnest to preserve the Constitution: Those, who with great Trouble and Hazard endeavoured the Relief of their Country; but yet shewed themselves not too fond of their own Scheme, but *gave it up for ever* to the Opinion of *others*, and with great Condescension yielded even to the Prejudices of their Countrymen.

These Gentlemen will always be distinguished from such as *opposed* the Relief of their Country, without endeavouring to mend a Scheme offered for that Purpose, or *proposing* any *other* in its Room; who with a *Violence* highly *dangerous* to the Publick, *broke* in upon the *Constitution* and *invaded* the *Rights* of *Parliament*, who have effectually *skreened* great and acknowledg'd Frauds, and given a *publick* Encouragement to *Perjury* and *Corruption*; who, even while they are out of Power, and courting publick Favour, so far *disregard* the *unanimous Sense* of the *Nation*, as to *act* in close *Concert* and even *avow* their *Conjunction* with

THAT

(61)

THAT MAN, who has effectually *obtained* the *universal Abhorrence* he has taken so much pains to *deserve*; *one* that will teach them, by his own *strong Example*, to *despise* the *Sentiments* of the *People*, when he reminds them, That, after he had resolved by *one* effectual Stroke to *ruin* for ever the *Trade* of his Country, He obstinately pursued his destructive *Plan of Commerce* against the Remonstrances of *Friends*, the unanimous Opinion of the *People*, and even against the declared Sense of the *Parliament* itself: That, not the most *general* and tender Sympathy from every *English* Breast, *united* with the *Cries* of *Europe*, could draw back his cruel and relentless Hands, from enslaving and then murdering the poor faithful CATALANS, a *free People*, whom the Sacred Faith of the *British* Nation was solemnly plighted to preserve for ever free.

F I N I S.



