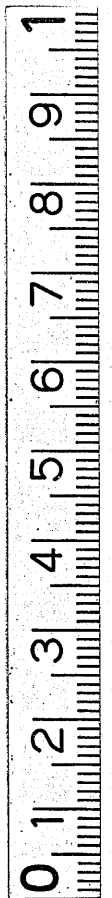


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THE
NATIONAL DEBT
NO
NATIONAL GRIEVANCE;
OR

The REAL State of the NATION,
With respect to its civil and religious LIBERTY,
COMMERCE, PUBLIC-CREDIT, and FINANCES.

Intersperfed with,
Critical Remarks on a pamphlet lately published,
Intituled,

The present State of the NATION;

To which are added,
Propofals for improving the Public Revenue, and for pro-
viding a Fund for the Exigencies of War, without laying
additional Taxes on the Public.

Addressed to the PEOPLE of ENGLAND.

BY A FINANCIER.

Thomas Mortimer



L O N D O N.

Printed for J. WILKIE, at No. 71. in St. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD.
M. DCC. LXVIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sheets would have been presented to the public soon after the appearance of *The present state of the nation*, if the author of them had not stopt the press; on seeing repeated advertisements, promising a speedy publication of *Observations on the present state of the nation*.—Conscious of his own inability, and at the same time of the necessity of giving the nation such a true and impartial account of public affairs as might serve to remove the groundless fears and apprehensions raised in the minds of men, and especially of the stockholders, by that celebrated pamphlet — he would have resigned the pleasing task with alacrity to an abler pen; but a considerable time having elapsed since those advertisements were first inserted, and no observations having yet appeared, he thought it his duty to proceed in his design; and he hopes it will be found that he has given the real state of the nation, and has thrown such a new and satisfactory light on the system of public credit, as will for the future prevent the bad effects of these false alarms which ill-designing men are continually spreading with respect to the funds. —He also most earnestly wishes, that the definition he has given of civil liberty, and of the nature and end of government, may be the means of conciliating our unhappy divisions, and of encouraging public viratue, frugality, and of encouraging public viratue, frugality, simplicity

simplicity of manners, and union among the people, with a warm attachment to our excellent constitution, due obedience to government, and the most zealous loyalty to the king.

If the scene shall appear to be full of interesting business, he hopes kind indulgence will be shewn for small inaccuracies in point of method or order; as to typographical errors, he leaves the discerning reader to correct them; and because he regards marginal notes and references as knots and uneven threads in the web of literature, which hurt the eye and interrupt the regular course of reading — he begs leave to acknowledge once for all, that he has interwoven with his own, the sentiments of the greatest writers of the present age, and of the last, on government, trade, public credit, and the finances. — Having paid this debt, he leaves the whole with the candid and judicious, whose patronage he solicits, and whose censure he hopes to avoid, for it will be to him like an untimely frost, it will destroy the tender bud of expectation, and lay an eternal arrest on his pen.



FELLOW CITIZENS AND COUNTRYMEN!

YOU live in a time when it is become extremely difficult to distinguish the voice of true Patriotism, from the idle clamours of factious discontent. — On the one hand, the fawning adulations of stipendiary courtiers, placemen, and mercenary scribblers, extolling to the skies even the blunders and obvious misconduct of their favorites in administration, — and on the other, the cavils and objections to every salutary measure of Government, propagated by the intriguing sons of opposition, equally perplex and bewilder your political judgement; and alternately elate you with visionary hopes, or alarm and depress you with chimerical and absurd fears.

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THOSE who secretly combine to clog the wheels of Government, in order to render administration difficult and painful; and whose sole view is to overturn the ministry of the day, awaken all your fears for your dear country. They represent her as on the brink of destruction — they range themselves and you under the specious banners of LIBERTY and PATRIOTISM — they endeavour to persuade you that the free constitution of this country, the subject of universal admiration throughout all Europe, is degenerating into despotism — that your darling privileges are not only attacked but openly violated — that the public welfare is neglected — that the people in power, have neither good heads nor sound hearts — that the nation is oppressed by the weight of its public debts and taxes — and finally, that we are in great danger from this melancholy situation of public affairs, either of becoming a province of France, or of sustaining a public bankruptcy: — such I think has been the substance of the terrors circulated through the land, by means of those hackney vehicles of intelligence, the public news-papers, ever since the late peace, which you justly expected was
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to secure you from all these portentous horrors; — yet perhaps there never was a time when Britons, if they knew their own happiness, might more securely enjoy it; — but, unfortunately, this nation is as much over-run with scribblers as *Ægypt* was formerly with flies and locusts; and, “ of all the engines of discontent, ” says a celebrated writer, “ there has been none more powerful among the people than the fixing names of contumely and reproach on each other, and the forming cruel and odious distinctions between his majesty’s liege subjects: — these popular errors are to be lamented, though not so easily cured, being suitable enough to the corrupted nature of mankind, but it is hard that men will not only invent ill names; but will also wrest and misinterpret good ones; — so fearful some are of a *reconciling sound*, that they raise another noise to keep it from being heard, lest it should set up and encourage a *dangerous sort of men* who prefer *peace and agreement*, before *violence and confusion*”.

How shamefully all our political writings on the side of opposition; since the peace, have tended
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ed to stifle the reconciling sound of union and harmony; by the brawling voice of licentious faction; and how daringly the artist's pencil and the poet's pen have been prostituted to keep alive hateful distinctions, all must bear witness, who are willing to remember the bitter invectives and odious satires, published and circulated through the kingdom, against our fellow subjects of the north, or the indecent engravings exposed in the windows of our print-shops, to the reproach of good manners and sound policy, tending only to render us cheap in the eyes of sensible foreigners, and to increase the distractions; not to heal the wounds, of a disunited people—I am sorry to mention the consequence: words and terms alluding to, and taken from the names of the chiefs of parties, began at first to be bandied about only in jest, but they have produced, private domestic quarrels, public tumults, riots, and disorder, and have ended in being a military signal to cut one another's throats.

ALL these disorders and fatal errors might have been avoided, if you, my countrymen, on your part, had tried all the pretensions to Patriotism

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Patriotism, by the standard of the constitution, if you had well marked the progress of opposition; and had attended to the true definition of BRITISH LIBERTY,—and if Government on their part, had shewn less passion, division, and distraction; neither punishing nor inflaming the body of the people by unpopular measures, which wore the appearance of attacking the privileges of the whole, to correct the licentiousness of a few,

IN the following sheets, I shall endeavour to fix the standard of British Freedom or true Liberty, on the basis of our excellent constitution, and to give you a test for the trial of true PATRIOTISM, by which you may examine your own pretensions to the exalted character of PATRIOTS, and the claims of those who have basked in the sunshine of your favour, and have been justly termed the Idols of the people,

ALL our public misfortunes, which after all, are easier to be remedied, than some of our great men are willing to own, owe their origin, to your amazing credulity. The object of this address is to undeceive you—to proclaim

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proclaim aloud — that you are a deluded people — and, however strange it may appear, — boldly to maintain, for your comfort, — that the existence of the renowned British empire — as an independant free state, is in no manner of danger; — that she still preserves, — (and long may she preserve!) — her credit and influence with the states of Europe; — that her public credit, with respect to her loans or funds, is built on a permanent foundation, if rightly upheld and properly managed; — that her national debt, is not any national grievance; — that her finances may be speedily ameliorated — her national strength recruited — and her natural enemy be called to reason, and commanded to keep the peace, whenever she shall seem disposed to violate it — if you will really shew yourselves true Patriots — if you will lay aside all odious appellations and distinctions, — all causeless jealousy of your rulers; and cordially unite in promoting the public welfare of your country — if you will render the grateful tribute of loyalty, dutiful affection, and chearful confidence, to the best of princes, in return for those exalted virtues he so eminently possesses, and which are

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are the surest vouchers of his affection for his people; — if you will rely on his princely word, who has just told you — “ That the preservation of the religion, laws and liberties of his people, in every part of his dominions, he knows, is essential to their true happiness, and therefore makes it the great object of his attention; ” — if you will, as you ought, firmly believe our Gracious Sovereign when he adds, “ These are the principles which ever have been and ever shall be, the sole rule of my government ” — in a word, if you will follow his bright example, which, it is to be hoped, will sooner or later diffuse its sacred influence throughout this wide-extended empire, — I will lead you on, not through the streets, in wild uproar and tumults, to erect the standard of Liberty with one hand, and violate the most sacred rights of your fellow-subjects with the other, but, through the force of argument and mild persuasion, to immortal fame: — I will convince you Sirs! that it is thinking very meanly of yourselves as subjects of this free state, where every private citizen is the guardian of his own and of his country's honour and independance, and where

where the very principles of the constitution are founded on general patriotic virtue, to imagine, that the glory, prosperity, and freedom of Great-Britain ever did, or ever will depend on the boasted wisdom, patriotism, superior abilities or integrity, of any one of your fellow-subjects. — You are all joint trustees of the sacred treasures of our constitution; and while you preserve the character which is essentially necessary for subjects of a great maritime and commercial state; while you are sober, frugal, and industrious; and have a pious and virtuous monarch on the throne, all temporary encroachments on any of your privileges, (if any have been really made) will meet with their proper punishments, and the evil will be limited, and the remedy administered, without the necessity of engaging you all in the cause of any one man, who is left at liberty, if he is aggrieved, to obtain satisfaction of the aggressors.

A QUICK succession of administrations which you have loudly complained of, is a sure proof that the errors and blunders of the king's servants are not countenanced; for when they have been discovered, a removal has generally succeeded;

succeeded, and I know no other constitutional remedy; for I believe it would surpass the wisdom of Solomon, in this degenerate age; to fix at once on a ministry, equally blest with skill in public affairs, with humility, affability, and integrity, and possessed of such fortunes and honours, as should render them deaf to the calls of ambition or avarice, and above the shameful practice of making stipulations for themselves and children, for the services to their country. What means then are left, but reiterated trials to fix virtue, ability and integrity, in every department of administration. If these trials have been frequently repeated, and as often failed, ascribe it to the frailty of human nature, and to the degeneracy of the times — always remembering how you yourselves have been deceived in the Idols of your admiration. — The consequences of your delusion have been, and will be more deeply felt, than the lesser evils that have arisen from a quick succession of administrations.

THE imbecile, puerile steps of weak or passionate ministers, in the internal administration of government, are very soon rectified in this country; except in the department of the finances,
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and as all the king's servants are answerable for their conduct, not only to the public, but to individuals, if they injure them in their persons or properties, the removing them on the well-founded, orderly complaints of the people, the calling them to account in a parliamentary way, and abandoning them to the laws of their country, — which make no distinction of characters, evidently throws them into your hands; and therefore if you are virtuous, sober, frugal, industrious, and as a consequence of these characteristics, INCORRUPTIBLE — you will have chosen such representatives in Parliament; and will give such instructions to them, that no set of ministers will ever be able to enslave, you nor to make any general attack on your rights and privileges — or supposing you the same virtuous characters, and any private citizen has been oppressed and injured in his person and property by an illegal exertion of authority in any of the king's servants — when this comes before you in your judicial capacity as jurors, you will find a verdict accordingly — I therefore maintain, that if any material defection from our excellent constitution has arisen, or shall arise in this free state, it must be originally owing to yourselves.

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THE progress of opposition, and the effects it has produced may also fairly be ascribed to my countrymen. Would to God! they were less fatal! and as easily remedied as the blunders of administration.

OPPOSITION has repeatedly triumphed within these few years by the frequent changes of the ministry, supposed to be brought about by the spirited conduct of minorities, coteries, &c. — but what fruit has the nation reaped from these political victories, which perhaps might be ascribed solely to the gracious, benevolent disposition of the Sovereign, willing if possible, by a conformity to their own ideas, to satisfy and content his people?

THE Chiefs once exalted into office, you have known them forget their colleagues, despise, spurn and persecute them; so far they were ungrateful to individuals; this had nothing to do with their public conduct in your service — but what became of all the dreadful apprehensions with which they had filled your minds — all suddenly vanished — the end of opposition being attained — the magic wands and seals

of

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of office, change the fairy scene in an instant; and the pillars of state which were shaken to and fro, by infernal furies, the harpies of avarice, fell ambition, and despotic fury — are now embraced by guardian angels, the saviours of their country: — serenity and tranquility succeed for a short time, for you are pleased, — opposition has gained the day — the nation is represented to be in a flourishing condition, free from all danger foreign or internal, and surmounting every difficulty — “ but yet a little while, ” and behold the fire-brand of popular discontent, exchanged by the last, for the lucrative employments of the state, is taken up by a new party who, in their turn, tear off the angelic form of the reigning ministry, rekindle your expiring fears for the impending ruin of the state, “ and wind up your apprehensions to the highest alarm. You are said to be an impoverished and heavily burthened public — a people “ luxurious and licentious — impatient of rule “ and despising all authority — with a declining “ trade and decreasing specie — unfortunately “ too — you have a government relaxed in “ every sinew — a corrupt selfish spirit pervading

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“ ding the whole — a state destitute of alliances, “ and without respect from foreign nations — and “ a powerful combination of two branches of “ the house of Bourbon, anxious for an occasion “ to retrieve their honour and weak their vengeance upon her: ” — the sequel of this dismal detail of our situation, for which you stand indebted to the author of *The present State of the Nation* lately published; will find a place in the following sheets: suffice it here to observe, that this is no mean inconsiderable scribbler, but in all probability, an able politician, and a better financier, yet his state of the nation, in whole and in part, is highly aggravated, as such, I am bound in duty as a loyal subject, to refute it — here then you see opposition again inviting you to enlist under its banner; and this has been your unsettled situation near six years in the midst of profound peace — in which time, you have seen the most vigorous and prudent exertions of administration fail in the hands of one set of men by their being artfully rendered unpopular, in the same manner as you saw during the war — the most expensive and ruinous measures carried into execution with alacrity and applause,

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plause, because they were projected or advised by the most renowned of all your idols — for whom you paved the way to a pension, a title, and a coronet, — whom you madly followed in all the Alexandrian schemes of extended empire and conquest ; and what then will you say to me, when I shall maintain, that territorial acquisitions, especially when uncultivated and unpeopled, are pernicious acquisitions to a commercial island like Great Britain — and always cost the nation an expence, to which no advantages to be derived from them in any shape, can possibly be adequate.

To this *your favourite*, O my Countrymen ! what did you not grant ? — a plentitude of power which no subject ever ought to enjoy — and what have been the murmurs, discontents, and open marks of disaffection, arising from suspicions never yet supported by facts, that the supposed *favourite* of the crown, had an universal influence in the councils of this nation !

But the author of the *present state of the nation* informs you “ that the present circumstances of this country bear so near a resemblance

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“ to those, by which that great prince restored order and dignity to his Government, and tranquility and prosperity to his people, cannot fail of being attended with the like happy effects in Great Britain. ” He then proceeds to acquaint you “ that the confidence Henry reposed in the duke of Sully his minister, and the firmness with which he supported him, against the calumnies and intrigues of those venal wretches, whom he had made his enemies, by reducing their *Pensions* and cutting off the sources of **CORRUPTION** in the court, enabled that upright minister to do these great things for the state. ” — What great things ? Why to lopp off unmerited pensions, useless sine-cures and expensive, unnecessary places — to reproach even an arbitrary Prince, with the smallest needless expence — and thus to produce a reform in the finances, and replenish the public treasury.

Does the simularity of circumstances and of measures requisite to be adopted in Great Britain only

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only strike us to day? — Will any man, with a court-kalendar in his hand, pretend to say, that places, pensions, or sine-cures were not as numerous ten years ago, as they are at this moment?

Who then was the upright minister, who at that time possessed the full confidence not only of the people, but after many struggles, of the Prince too? And who instead of effectuating that reform in the finances, dropped every patriotic plan by degrees, and has since, “in private conferences for arranging of ministerial offices” “dared to propose, to pension those whom he “could not place to his mind.”

I LEAVE a deluded people to answer the melancholy question, declaring that this retrospective remark, is not the effect of party malice or personal animosity; but arises from an honest zeal to prevent all such deceptions for the future; and to establish this undeniable political maxim: —

THAT the virtue of the PEOPLE constitutes the preservation of a free state — not the boasted

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boasted effects, of superior abilities, in any one or two of its members; — nor is it possible, on the other hand, for any one subject of this realm however great, or noble, or highly honoured by his prince, while our constitution remains on its present footing, with all the supposed infringements of it lately imagined, to screen himself from condign punishment, — if he has been guilty of any treasonable practices; and certain I am, that no such bad subject has really existed among us of late years; for if we look back into our past annals we shall find that few or none of such traitors, though avowedly protected by the prince, in times when despotic sentiments prevailed in the cabinet, could secure themselves, behind the throne, from well grounded accusations, honestly urged and supported by proper evidence of facts; — and if this was the case in former times, who will believe, that a real state-criminal, generally unpopular, and surrounded by powerful enemies, could now evade their vigilance to detect and expose his treason? — Believe me my countrymen! had any such really been amongst you lately, he must have suffered ere now: — nor can we suppose it possible

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possible that two thirds of the legislative power of this kingdom, amidst the contentions of party spirit which has divided and subdivided its members — have been gained over to unite in concealing any real misdemeanours of an unpopular nobleman from public view; — and if this be the case, then how hard is the fate of a prince, who cannot enjoy, uncensured, the presence, council, and advice of a select friend — esteemed in private life, to be the first of blessings.

To the candid, the rational, to men of reputation and property, this and the following sheets are addressed — to the unthinking, giddy multitude I have only a few words of friendly advice to offer. —

Let me intreat you—men and brethren! since you are all turned politicians, and that even your wives and children discourse of state-affairs, with as much freedom as they do of domestic; and since this political vein which is spread over all the land, may be indulged very innocently when it is restrained within the bounds of decency and good order — to consider, that you are all children of the state, engaged in one common bond

or

or obligation, to promote the welfare of the civil society you live under — to distinguish between true and false politics — between real and ideal Patriotism — between calumny and guilt; and, for the love of God, — to treat our state-affairs, which, strictly speaking, are your own affairs, with that decency, good-manners, and filial reverence, you would observe in writing or conversing about your private concerns, to your immediate parents, patrons, or protectors — lest our very name, hitherto illustrious above all others, become, through your means, a reproach and a bye-word throughout Europe, while we are regarded as men who have wantonly untied the bands of the best regulated society on earth. — You are charged home, by the author of *The present State of the Nation*, for certainly it is you he describes; for he never could mean to charge the whole body of the people of England *as impatient of rule, and despising all authority*; — but I am willing to acquit you on easier terms, and to believe, “ that the dangerous and doubtful wars we have often been plunged in since “ the revolution, and the numerous taxes that “ have been levied upon the nation, to support

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“ them

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“ them, have given birth to that inquisitive spi-
 “ rit for news and politics you have shewn for
 “ some years past, in like manner as the accu-
 “ mulating property in the public funds, created
 “ by those exigencies of the state, has immerfed
 “ the rich and opulent amongst you in the same
 “ political fountain. — The fluctuations occa-
 “ sioned in the stocks, by the rise and fall of
 “ administrations, make *them* ever attentive and
 “ deeply engaged in discoursing and writing
 “ on public affairs, and the sensation of your
 “ taxes operate the same effect with *you*. —
 “ Sound politicians, and moderate statesmen
 “ will not therefore blame you, for this spirit of
 “ inquiry into the state of national affairs, while it
 “ keeps within the bounds of decency and good
 “ order. I will go farther; — they will allow it
 “ to be laudable, as it animates you to be bolder
 “ champions in your country’s cause, when
 “ called forth in its defence against a common
 “ enemy; for you would never think English
 “ ground worth contending for, if it was not
 “ for the pre-eminence of English rights and
 “ privileges, which can only be known and
 “ understood, by political inquiry, and political
 “ com-

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“ comparison of your situation with that of the
 “ subjects of less happy realms. — But the mis-
 “ fortune is, you wretchedly abuse, and sadly
 “ misapply the terms POLITICS and LIBERTY :
 “ here lies all your error; and in this error you
 “ are occasionally confirmed and strengthened by
 “ ill-designing men, on selfish principles, who
 “ making the service of their country their
 “ common pretext, and being known by you
 “ to be men of superior education and abilities
 “ to yourselves, you implicitly rely on them,
 “ till you are led on to inconsiderate acts of dis-
 “ order, and to tumults, which are really sedi-
 “ tious and treasonable, if not in the act, yet
 “ in their tendency. — By these artful means
 “ you are often induced to form wrong and
 “ unworthy notions of the most virtuous rulers,
 “ and of the ablest and most honest statesmen;
 “ and to imagine, that a person cannot be a
 “ good politician, without being, at the same
 “ time, an errant villain, or an egregious knave;
 “ nor is it possible to reconcile you to the no-
 “ tion, that a statesman, or courtier, nay, even a
 “ placeman, may be the friend of the people,
 “ and use his best endeavours to promote their
 “ interest

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" interest and welfare. — If he is a servant of
 " the crown, in your opinion, he must necessari-
 " ly be bought or sold; and therefore in none
 " such will you confide; — but you will have a
 " a hero of your own, who stipulates to serve
 " you without place or pension, and pawns his
 " word of honour, for the performance of co-
 " venants; yet you have had so many heroes
 " of a superior cast, within these thirty years,
 " who were more liberal in their professions,
 " and had fairer occasions of exerting them-
 " selves in your service, than your present *favou-*
 " *rite* is likely to have, and who have all
 " failed you for a name, a title, or a fortune,
 " that I am really amazed at your credulity;
 " however, it is by such men, and such spec-
 " cious promises, never intended to be per-
 " formed, that government, which is ever sa-
 " cred, and probity, which is essential to it, are
 " represented as incompatible things, that can
 " no more subsist together than contrary ele-
 " ments can in nature, or opposite characters
 " in one person."

It shall be the business of the following sheets
 to aim at rectifying your judgements, and at re-

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reforming the public or external manners of my
 countrymen, by enquiring into the nature, and
 giving them a just idea of — CIVIL and RELI-
 GIOUS LIBERTY, a right notion of POLITICS;
 and a chearful but true state of their PUBLIC
 CREDIT and FINANCES for the improve-
 ment of which, I shall humbly offer a few plans
 or proposals, with an honest intent to promote
 the general welfare of my country, without any
 regard to party interests, or to popular applause,
 which however I wish to merit: but as upon the
 whole, I shall appear to be a friend to govern-
 ment and to the administration of to day, though
 equally so, of that of to-morrow, if it should
 please my Gracious Sovereign to change it this
 night. — It may be expected in order to remove
 all suspicion and popular prejudice, that I give
 some little account of myself; — I therefore so-
 lemnly declare, on the word of an honest man, of
 a gentleman, and what is more of a christian —
 that I am not of any party whatever — but a
 bare independant looker on, in this state of Bri-
 tain — yet a subject, and a most loyal one as any
 my Gracious Sovereign — late my royal master,
 — has, in his wide-extended domains. — I have
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Some little merit too with my countrymen, nay and with the administration. — Pardon the bare hint; — it is a merit few of our modern Patriots can boast — little as it is:

I HAVE been cruelly and unkindly discarded from the public service, at a moment's warning, when defending at the peril of my own liberty, the lives of your bravest subjects, British mariners, against an unwarrantable exertion of jurisdiction over them by the delegates of a foreign power, which might have ended in their death — the honest men were released from their danger by my efforts, and they have paid me their grateful thanks in my present private situation in London; but my zeal in their service was deemed intemperate; I believe it might, and I submit: — the minister of a foreign power was not to be affronted; — but though I have not the resource of a private fortune, yet will I not fill your news-papers with complaints against one single man in the administration, for one alone has reduced me to my present situation, in which I am left with all the feelings of a gentleman, in the elegant term of the French, *sur la pavé*; nor shall I be ashamed

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to own that your favourable reception of this little piece, will be an aid to me in my private circumstances — I have once had the happiness to serve, and to please my countrymen even in this way — should this publication prove as acceptable and be as generally read, I shall be supremely blest; and indulge the hopes, that some of my proposals for the improvement of the public revenue may take place; in case I shall not need to demand a fortune — the benevolence — the gratitude of my countrymen — will bestow it unasked. —

IF I should be so unfortunate as not to merit your approbation, this imperfect account of myself can only make me known to the noble lord, in whose department I was removed from my station, and thank heaven! the misery in which that measure has involved me, cannot be increased. —

AND now, my countrymen and fellow subjects, I will most heartily join with you in this pathetic invocation:

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*Do thou, Great Liberty! inspire our souls,
And make our lives in thy possession happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.*

C A T O.

But let us be well assured that liberty and property are endangered, before we disturb the good order of government, by publicly and indecently arraigning its measures — by contemptuously insulting the dispensers of the sacred laws of our country — by exasperating our fellow-citizens, and by animating the giddy rabble to acts of lawless desperation, which would be a reproach to the worst of times — and that these are not the worst, nor even bad times, I shall endeavour to convince you, in the sequel of this little work.

Definition

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Definition of Civil Liberty, with an Inquiry into the present State of Civil and Religious Liberty, and the Errors that have arisen in England from a Misunderstanding and Abuse of both.

ALMOST every modern age has produced political writers, on the subject of civil liberty, who have given us different definitions and ideas of this invaluable blessing, generally suited to the times and countries in which they wrote, but all agreeing in one point, that of all our earthly possessions it is the most valuable.

THE narrow limited notions of Liberty, have been mostly the productions of writers, who lived under despotic Princes, in countries where it was necessary to preserve the form and appearance of it long after the substance was lost: the enlarged, refined and exalted ideas of Liberty, have flowed from the pens of men of the highest reputation for honour, integrity and learning, who have either happily flourished in free states, where this blessing was so fully enjoyed, that men could freely speak and write their sentiments on public affairs; and the administration

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nistration of government — or have had the misfortune to live in times when daring attacks were made on this invaluable privilege under the same free constitutions; and have boldly, but with decency, asserted and maintained the common rights of the subjects; against the lawless exertions of arbitrary and ambitious rulers; when the last has been the case, they have sometimes, — to the reproach of humanity, and the eternal dishonour of civil society, — suffered shameful, ignominious punishment, nay even death, for holding up the mirror of truth to a deluded or oppressed people; leaving to their posterity the richest legacy they could bequeath to free-born men, — their immortal writings on the subject of civil and religious liberty.

It would be tedious, as well as unnecessary, to recite the opinions of such writers on civil liberty, who, from their particular situation, have given us partial definitions of it, that will by no means suit with the genius and temper of the inhabitants of Great Britain; for though the subjects of the most despotic governments in Europe warmly contend, that they enjoy this blessing

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blessing in a superior degree to their neighbours, Britons will never be brought over to their opinion; and though many fine writings have been published in republican states, where liberty is likewise supposed to flourish in its greatest latitude; yet as their notions do not accord with the fundamental maxims of our happy constitution, we shall be still wandering from the point; and since, upon the whole, it can be fairly proved “ that there is no nation in Europe, whose history affords a nobler example than our own, of the spirit of liberty exerting itself, at various interesting periods, and for a long succession of time, in spite of almost insurmountable obstacles, from the extension of arbitrary power in the crown, combined with accursed ministerial influence, and, at last, happily accomplishing its glorious end, by founding and firmly establishing, the noblest form of government, on the true principles of civil and religious liberty.” — I cannot do better than to confine myself to the writings of my immortal countrymen, whose genius in every branch of literature is rarely excelled, and is unrivalled in this, for two reasons, — First, because

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cause the liberty of the press has constantly made a part of the grand struggles for the defence of public privileges; this therefore has necessarily produced a greater number of writings on the subject of civil liberty in general, than in countries where the freedom of the press either never existed, or existing, was never contested. — Secondly, because the basis of the British constitution being founded on patriotic public virtue, every faculty of the human mind has been exerted; and the learning and wisdom of every age explored and collated, to preponderate the scale in favour of British liberty, in times of despotism and tyranny. — Our writers therefore, on this most interesting subject, are as excellent, as they are numerous.

IN a word, it is scarcely possible to offer any thing totally new, on this grand object of the literary pursuits of our ancestors; but, at the same time, such a similarity of circumstances often arises in the situation of public affairs, at different and far distant periods, that a review of the sentiments of our ablest politicians in former times, justly applied, may enable us

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to fix the standard of true liberty, on the one hand, and, on the other, to trace, correct, and reform the errors and misconduct of popular licentiousness; and thereby to reanimate in the collective body of the people, that spirit of zealous loyalty and dutiful affection to our most Gracious Sovereign, and of universal harmony and benevolence to each other, which alone can render us a VIRTUOUS nation, and without which, all the efforts of popular heroes, on the one part, and of the wisest and most upright administration, on the other, must prove equally ineffectual; — for if universal public virtue, does not prevail among all orders of men in the state, it is in vain to talk or think about public liberty. A vicious, luxurious people may clamour as loud as they please; but it is impossible they should be in earnest about the welfare of their country, or the existence and duration of its civil liberty: — it must be therefore some illusive phantom they are eagerly pursuing; for were it true liberty, they would begin by inquiring at home into their own characters, and by observing how far the means are adequate to the end. — A vicious disposition, a mind disposed

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to be corrupted, a taste for effeminacies in dress, for delicacies in food, and for expensive living in general, beyond the reach and station of each individual, cannot possibly be the characteristics of a people intent on destroying the sources of corruption and venality, and aiming at the establishment of none but men of distinguished virtues and abilities, in the great offices of the state.

An impartial reference to the most remarkable periods of the English history, when the greatest struggles were made in defence of public liberty really endangered, will soon convince you, that a virtuous, sober, frugal people, may accomplish great events for the honour of their country;—but that it is folly and madness for private vice to pretend to reform state-corruption;—for private prodigality to stop the current of public profusion;—for a people enslaved to their own unruly passions and inordinate appetites, to obtain any signal victories over venal and corrupt administrations.

To avoid giving offence to any party, in the course of our inquiries into the nature of civil liberty,

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liberty, no authors writing professedly in favour of republican forms of government, with a view, perhaps, at the time, to introduce or continue them in England, shall be directly quoted, nor, on the contrary, any of the bold abetors of the extension of the prerogatives of the kingly office, — incontestible principles, adapted to the nature of our present constitution, shall alone be carefully laid before you; — leaving it to the curious and the learned to trace our references. —

“ VIRTUE, in its most general sense, consists
 “ in an exact observance of the laws of nature,
 “ according to that subordination in which they
 “ are placed by the Author of nature; which sub-
 “ ordination every man may discover, and must
 “ acknowledge. This subordination requires us
 “ to contribute, as much as possible, — to the
 “ preservation and happiness of mankind in
 “ general; — to the welfare of the particular
 “ country, or civil society, to which we belong;
 “ — to the prosperity of our family and friends,
 “ *so far as it is consistent with the good of our*
 “ *country;* — and, finally, to the preservation
 “ of

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“ of our lives, and the increase of our happiness, *so far as is consistent with the safety of our family and friends, and the good of our country.*”
If we acknowledge this subordination, *only in principle*, it must be, in the acting conformably to it, that all public and private virtue must be tried: — and in this scale of subordination, how low is the degree of *self-love*, or *self-interest*, which is the same thing. —

AND where *self-interest* has been fairly discovered to be the ruling principle of any of your modern patriots, how little does this sketch — this outline of genuine virtue, render them! — Tarnished be their splendid coronets, by the unwholesome breath of contempt; — mouldered be their ermined robes, in the dust of oblivion, — and erased be their names from the annals of a free-born people! — But we must not stop here; — for if this be the mirror of public virtue we are to hold up to this generation, much I fear, and much more I lament it, — that very few, after all their commotions in behalf of liberty, will see their resemblance in it; no mobs will crowd and jostle for room to regard themselves in it. —

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With averted faces, and a hand smiting a conscious breast, too many must retire, to reflect that *self-interest* led them on to trample on decency and good order, it was the sale of an indecent print, or a seditious pamphlet; — while others, still more inglorious by the weight of their iniquity, must recollect how often a promised temporary provision for themselves or families, has borne down the good of their country; — if ever it has, in the abuse of that inestimable privilege, — the election of the representatives of the people, — with what face will such ever pretend to talk of liberty! — Yet much it is to be feared, that such characters as these, compose the greatest part of all tumultuous assemblies of the people, at a time when genuine virtue, cannot be said to hold the scale of subordination.

Now the general rules of virtue, or the laws of nature, are always supposed to be the foundation of the laws of civil society; and when these laws are made by the members of any particular society, they become binding on every individual; and thus are denominated establish-

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ed laws; distinguishable from the changeable arbitrary dispositions of any one superior ruler, whose absolute ordinances can only be called rules and regulations, subject to revocation at every suggestion of caprice, or inconstancy in the mind of the chief governor.

THOSE societies then, where the people are governed by established laws, enacted by their own body, or by their representatives, which is the same thing, are called free governments; and are justly esteemed the best; — and those societies which are subject to the variable rules and orders of one man are deemed slavish, despotic governments; and consequently the worst —

FROM this definition of free and slavish governments, one remark, of the highest consequence to us obviously arises —

“IN free states, the people must enslave themselves, if they are at all enslaved; for if the people are virtuous and honest, they will choose virtuous and honest representatives; and salutary

salutary laws will be enacted for the preservation of public virtue and liberty, — while in despotic states, the virtue of the people will have no effect towards operating their happiness, if they are subject to the rules and orders of a vicious and despotic monarch; for, by one single act of despotism, he may enslave a whole people.” —

THE better to comprehend the distinction we have made between these two general governments, in which all the various forms of government in the world, whether intitled monarchical, aristocratic, or republican are comprised, we shall in this place, give the only true and unexceptionable ideas or definition of LIBERTY and SLAVERY.

“LIBERTY is a natural power of doing, or not doing, whatever we think proper, so far as it is consistent with the rules of virtue, and the established laws of the civil society to which we belong.”

“SLAVERY

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“ SLAVERY is a force put upon human nature,
 “ by which a man is obliged to act, or not to
 “ act, according to the arbitrary will and
 “ pleasure of another.”

THIS state of abject submission, the subjects of this happy realm of Great Britain, have been totally ignorant of, with respect to themselves, ever since the revolution; while the subjects of all the monarchies of Europe have experienced it, in a greater or less degree, it will not therefore be necessary to enlarge on this topic, for the information of my countrymen.—Our inquiry then, shall be directed to the investigation of the established maxims of free government, and to the pleasing task of discovering that the British constitution, as by law established, and now actually subsisting, is the most perfect form of government that the wisdom of man could devise, for the full exercise of civil and religious liberty;—but while we establish this truth, we must not forget that it partakes of human frailty; consequently, that there is not any one period of time, neither the past nor yet the present, wherein it may be said this
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admired constitution has attained the summit of perfection; for it always was, still is, and ever will be capable of amendment; “ for though
 “ Great Britain enjoys numberless blessings,
 “ which other nations know nothing of, yet
 “ there are others which they possess, that are
 “ wanting to Great Britain.”—For this reason, the true life and spirit of our constitution ought to be attentively studied; and since the revolution effectually established the liberties of this nation upon such a firm and permanent basis, that we have but very little to apprehend from any evil designs to degenerate our constitution: our chief care should be to give it every amendment or improvement of which it is susceptible.
 — “ This surely is not to be effected by our
 “ mobbish way of calling our rulers to account,
 “ it may indeed lay some restraint on the exercise
 “ of their power, but it will be very far from
 “ constituting social or civil liberty: slaves are
 “ prompted by despair to acts of indiscriminate
 “ fury; but free-born subjects should have re-
 “ course to the laws of their country, for the pu-
 “ nishment of their rulers, if they have trans-
 “ gressed

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“ gressed these laws, or have committed any
“ misdemeanor in the execution of their office.”

OUR constitution consists in a due mixture of the best part of the three general forms of government that have prevailed in the world; and this supposes a rejection of every thing that was found subversive of an exact observance of the laws of nature, according to that subordination we have already described, in treating of public virtue. — An accurate inquiry into the three different branches of our constitution will shew us how far we have attained this desirable purpose, wherein we are defective; and what appears to be wanting towards bringing this noble plan, to the highest degree of perfection.

By the Monarchical part of our constitution, “ we enjoy this singular advantage, that as the
“ executive part of our government, especially
“ with regard to foreign affairs, is vested in the
“ king; we thereby avoid the inconveniences
“ and dangers that arise from the delays of po-
“ pular councils, where long debates generally
“ arise,

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“ arise. But while we thus improve on the re-
“ publican form of government, we equally
“ guard against the arbitrary sway exercised by
“ despotic monarchs; for this power is origin-
“ ally committed by the people to the king, and
“ therefore though he can declare war, or make
“ peace by his sole prerogative, he is expected
“ to lay the motives of his conduct before the
“ representatives of the people at their first en-
“ suing assembly. — There is yet another au-
“ thority lodged in the crown in virtue of the mo-
“ narchical part of our constitution, which is a
“ dispensing power — in cases of extreme necessity,
“ such as the apprehension of a famine — to
“ suspend certain established laws — as that for
“ the exportation of corn; but this is very rarely
“ exercised; and, by some political writers, is
“ declared to be repugnant to the strict rules of
“ our constitution; it is therefore sufficient to have
“ noticed it.

“ By the Aristocratical part of our govern-
“ ment, we are secured against the ambition of
“ our kings; and of private men acting un-
“ der their authority, for our nobles being en-

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" titled by their birth and high rank, to very
 " important privileges and pre-eminences, they
 " are thereby the more deeply interested in the
 " preservation of the constitution, which is only
 " to be effected by constantly securing the
 " rights and privileges of each branch of it,
 " from incroachments or extensions of power to
 " the detriment of each other, and as from their
 " situation they are necessarily supposed to be
 " more connected with the throne than the
 " commons, and more likely to fill the highest
 " ministerial offices under the crown, it is ex-
 " pected from them that they should be the
 " guardians of the state, against any attempts
 " to enlarge the prerogatives of the sovereigns;
 " as it is from the commons, being the repre-
 " sentatives of the people; that they should
 " support their rights and privileges against any
 " sinister designs of the nobles or the kings;—
 " and especially to watch with a jealous eye,
 " every motion that tends to a closer union of
 " the sovereigns and the nobles, than is con-
 " sistent with that due ballance of the three
 " estates, which constitutes the perfection of
 " the whole system of our government.

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" By the Democratical or popular branch of
 " our constitution, we remove all the incon-
 " veniences to which governments entirely
 " aristocratical are subject, since the lords with-
 " out the concurrence of the commons are de-
 " prived of all power and authority whatever;
 " and the same may be said of each branch of
 " the legislature; for laws may be proposed by
 " the commons, but if they are not approved
 " of by the lords and assented to by the king,
 " they cannot be established.—In the same man-
 " ner the kingly power falls to the ground, if
 " not supported by the necessary exertions of
 " that authority, which is vested by the consti-
 " tution in the lords and commons.—These
 " falling him, he is reduced to a worse condi-
 " tion than many private men, his dependance
 " for every article of expence attending his
 " domestic concerns, his royal state, and the
 " administration of his government resting en-
 " tirely on the supplies granted by them in
 " parliament."

It cannot surely be necessary to add more,
 to shew that every precaution human wisdom

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could suggest, has been taken to secure our happy constitution from arbitrary, despotic tyranny, such as is often exercised under absolute monarchies; against the dangerous intrigues and factions produced by jealousy and ambition in governments wholly aristocratical; and from the injustice and oppression which result from popular prejudice, as well as the languor and delay in state affairs, which prevail in republican governments.—But there is one peculiar excellence in this form of government, which deserves particular notice, especially at this juncture.—

THE Commons of Great Britain assembled by their representatives in parliament, may call the greatest subject in the state to account, and punish him for his misdemeanours.—This, says a noble author, is what gives life to our laws and social liberty to the meanest subject. No minister of state, no officer of the crown is exempt from this jurisdiction, for the House of Commons among other capacities in which they sit and act, are by the constitution appointed the great inquest of the nation, to search into
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all the oppressions and injustices of the king's servants; and especially of the judges of the land — on informations being laid before this honourable house by impeachment, petition, or any other parliamentary proceeding, which is the only legal and effectual method of calling our superiors to account.

THE House of Lords among their several rights and privileges are vested with the power and authority that denominates them, *the supreme court of judicature of the nation*, and enables them to redress the grievances suffered by the subjects from any wrong proceedings in the inferior courts of justice; and thus while it is hardly possible, that any man should finally suffer by any ill grounded popular fury, it seems equally improbable, that any dangerous state criminal should escape with impunity; and indeed of this we may be well assured by attending to the great events of this kind, that occur in the history of our country.

“ BUT our constitution goes a step farther for
“ the security of civil liberty, regarding laws and
“ oaths as ties upon king and people—maintain-
“ ing

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“ing that the coronation oath, and the oath of
 “allegiance are in effect but swearing to the
 “constitution on the part of the prince to go-
 “vern; and on that of the people to be go-
 “verned, according to it—That the laws are
 “the nerves and sinews of the state; and that
 “as the supreme magistrate is above the peo-
 “ple in his legal capacity, so is the law above
 “the magistrate—and finally that he who
 “makes himself above all law, may be a tyrant
 “whenever he pleases.

ON these principles our ancestors proceeded
 when they deposed weak or wicked princes who
 would not submit to govern or be governed by
 the established laws of their country.—Having
 thus truly defined civil liberty, and found it to
 be inherent in our constitution, and that in vir-
 tue of it, every man may sit more securely un-
 der his own vine, than in any other country,
 if he will pursue the privileges he is entitled to
 in a legal way, let us now concisely inquire into
 the real or pretended defects in our constitution,
 —they amount to no more than this — that
 parliaments may be influenced and corrupted by
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the crown, or the servants of the crown,— that
 a majority of placemen, pensioners and retainers
 of the court sitting in parliament, may render
 the Sovereign in a degree absolute, under the sha-
 dow and form of the constitution, — and that
 if the sceptre happens to be in the hands of an
 ambitious prince, who scorns the restraint of
 limited monarchy, the freedom of the state will
 be endangered if not overturned. We allow this
 to be the case; and indeed were we to attempt
 to deny it, the annals of England would but
 too fatally expose the truth.—But where does
 this defect, which is certainly a very great one,
 lie; in the constitution itself?—I once more recur
 to my grand political maxim, with respect to
 free states: “it is the virtue of the people that
 “preserves their freedom.— If therefore the
 people are virtuous, sober, frugal, and indus-
 trious, they will chuse honest representatives in
 parliament, and they will put them to as little
 expence as possible in obtaining their seats, that
 they may not be tempted to repair their for-
 tunes at the expence of the liberties of the peo-
 ple;—but if the people are vicious, idle, pro-
 fligate, and expensive, there is great danger
 that

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that they may be corrupted, and still greater danger that the corruptors may seek to indemnify themselves, by sacrificing the interests of a degenerate people — But let us carry our inquiry a little farther, and ask how it can happen that the body of the people, in a free and commercial state, where the majority are employed in works of art and industry, become at any given period of time so generally depraved? — I answer, from a defect in the constitution, because it does not tie the people down to the proper definition of civil liberty, — the power of doing or not doing whatever we have a mind, *so far as is consistent with the rules of virtue; and the established laws of the society to which we belong*; but permits civil and religious liberty to degenerate into licentiousness; and this proves what I before asserted, that though England enjoys many blessings which other nations know nothing of, there are others that she wants, which they possess. —

A FEW instances of this drawn from the present state of civil and religious liberty in
England

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England will I flatter myself open a new scene of conscientious inquiry, with all considerate people, and true lovers of their country.

WE seem for a considerable time past to have been establishing in theory and introducing into practice, a definition of liberty, the very reverse of what has been here given, we openly contend for the liberty of doing or not doing things, *inconsistent with the rules of virtue and the established laws of the society to which we belong.*

To begin with civil liberty — In the short analysis of our constitution just given, we have shewn, that there is a legal method established, by which the people may testify their just discontents, by which they may call those to account, if any such there be, who have sacrificed the interests of the nation at the late peace, who have exercised an illegal ministerial influence, or have plundered or misapplied the public revenue — the path to a cool and generous resentment, becoming a free born people lies open, nor has it been shut up within our

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memory—by regular prosecutions, on legal prosecutions you may exercise your vengeance on the guilty—To these you have been stimulated by every provocative that malice, envy, or disappointment could suggest, yet no such prosecutions nor any tokens of them have yet appeared, to what are we to impute this, but to a want of facts to support a well grounded charge against any man, or to a supposition which can scarce be admitted, that the suspected party had all this time a majority in parliament, and staunch friends at the helm.—If a majority in parliament, you are answerable for that situation of affairs, you have reserved to yourselves a power of instructing your representatives, but after the strictest examination, I do not find that any instructions have been given from the first rise of our popular discontents to this moment, to bring an inquiry into parliament in a legal method, into the conduct of any one suspected servant of the crown; but I could point out numberless illegal, unmanly designations of persons, on whom popular odium has been stamped with all the marks of malignity; and with such tokens of ignominy; that a brave man

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man would rather have died, than have seen himself thus laughed to scorn by an enraged people. To these I may add such productions from the press as must astonish all Europe; and convince the sober part of mankind, that the liberty of the press, the noblest privilege we enjoy; and which we ought to defend with our lives and fortunes; has been shamefully abused— for instead of being called in aid to support and strengthen the hands of government, or to assert and defend the real important rights of the subject—the press has been the channel for conveying to the public—fulsome panegyrics from the friends of people in power, plainly demonstrating the weakness of those administrations that could stand in need of such pitiful succours—and on the side of opposition; base invectives, detestable anecdotes of the private lives of men invested with public characters; and infamous exposures of every weak part of our political situation, sufficient to shew the foreign and domestic enemies of this country, that little or no patriotism is left amongst our great people, since rather than lose the malignant satisfaction of attacking those who hold the

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seals of office, which they and their friends want to possess, they will lay open every public infirmity of our body politic, by publishing the most deplorable accounts of our declining trade, unsteady politics; and exhausted finances, in pamphlets, which are easily conveyed to all quarters of the globe, and we are certain are bought up with avidity, and sent abroad by the agents of the several powers of Europe.— How mortifying it is to an Englishman to be told by a subaltern French, or Austrian officer, “ that our country is ruined, that our people are “ a debauched, brutal mob, our ministers a set “ of raw, unexperienced boys, our S—— the “ sport of parties, our funds a bubble, and our “ public credit an ignis fatuus which after en- “ grossing the attention of all Europe, and absorb- “ ing the property of the subjects of neighbour- “ ing states, will be suddenly extinguished; and “ leave the luckless adventurers in the abyss of po- “ verty.”—Mortifying indeed, you will readily allow—yet how much more so, to find vouchers produced in a foreign land, from your own press, to support these humiliating assertions, when from a true patriotic disposition you are inclined

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inclined to take up the cause of your injured country, in promiscuous conversation—none can describe the sensations of an honest breast on such an occasion, but those who have experienced them.—May it never more be my hard fate!—and is this the effect of the boasted liberty of the English press—I answer no, it is the licentious abuse of it grounded on a false definition of civil liberty—for the true freedom of the press consists in, *an unlimited power to write whatever we please, so far as is consistent with the rules of virtue; and the established laws of the society to which we belong*—but surely no man will pretend to advance, that bringing to light the vicious memoirs of private life barely to blacken public characters is consistent with the rules of private virtue, or if it will not offend you in this polite age, shall I say, with Christian charity and benevolence—much less will one single grain of public virtue be claimed by the man who exposes to formidable enemies, “ united branches of the house of Bourbon” the party breaches, or the uncovered and defenceless posts of our little renowned garrison—not such was the style of our admired political writers

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writers of the last century — in them may be found the grand fundamental principles of social liberty, and the nature of government founded upon them, explained and supported with spirit and energy, but at the same time, with decency and due decorum. — You will not there find the initials of the names of the ministers of the times, with details of their private pleasures, or diaries of their domestic concerns annexed to them — “nor yet studied and regular arithmetical deductions to prove to all the world “that we are on the brink of ruin as a nation, “and that we cannot be insured from inevitable “destruction, but by transferring the entire confidence of our gracious Sovereign and of his subjects unalienably, from our present rulers, to the “inventors of these gloomy narratives.” — Yet the eminent writers of the last century boldly stood up for the liberty of the press, and manfully suffered in its defence; and when they beheld glaring errors and mal-administration in government, they faithfully reprehended their rulers, but it was the correction of wisdom they exercised, not the rod of fools and madmen — They were not libellers of the Sovereign, of his servants,

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servants, nor of their country — they investigated the causes of the rise and fall of ancient states and empires, and by comparative reviews of different political measures, they accurately distinguished true, from false politics; and paved the way to the fixing the real freedom of their country on a firm basis; but their observations on government, were as generous and decent, as they were solid and convincing — the writers of our political pamphlets and letters on public affairs, cannot but be acquainted with the learned authors I have in view; and therefore as I have laid it down as a rule, not to make any mention of names past or present in this little work, it is hoped what is here advanced will be sufficient to shew, that the liberty of the press may be preserved inviolate, and yet that a due punishment may be inflicted according to law, on all those who shall presume to publish such writings as are totally inconsistent with private and public virtue, as tend to the introduction of anarchy and confusion into the state, to the subversion of the established rules of internal administration, and to the impolitic disclosure of all the mysteries and arcana of our foreign

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foreign policy, to our neighbours on the continent.

LET us now examine another effect of our false definition of civil liberty; and a very material one it is, — since it supposes every man in Great Britain, after he has paid his debts and legal taxes, to remain absolute master of his property — to have a power to do just what he pleases with his effects, real and personal — he may fling his gold into the sea, if he thinks proper — he may melt his silver into cascades and rivulets — he may cast his pearls to swine — he may disinherit his children in a fit of rage, or lust; and endow a foreign strumpet with his revenues — or, what is worse, he may depopulate a village, by pulling down all the little cottages on his estates; and thus, by depriving the industrious poor of habitations or fixed abodes — he may erase the very foundations of family connexions; and, should his humour become general, emigration and depopulation must ensue. — The king will lose subjects; agriculture and the manufactures will want hands, the necessaries of life will become scarce
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and the joint labours of a thin, rising generation; where such measures for depopulating a country are pursued, will hardly be sufficient to supply food and raiment for home consumption; so that all thoughts of producing a surplus for foreign commerce must be given up; — but this is not all, our free-born Englishman can go one step farther — he can sell his landed estate, change all his paper securities, convert all his effects into specie, into the best, the heaviest gold coin of your country, weighty guineas; and, with the first fair wind, take a final leave of his native country; or, if this does not suit him — he may limit himself to a temporary caprice — Great Britain indeed, is furnished with every salubrious spring that Europe can justly boast; her viands are wholesome, nay, delicate; the air of her different counties, joined to the ease and conveniency of travelling, seems to administer a sufficient change for valetudinarians; — the amusements at the public places of resort, for recruiting decayed strength and exhilarating the spirits, are as well conducted as any in Europe: in fine, the general manners of the middle ranks of people are neither

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rustic nor unfocial; — yet the son of liberty may annually rove to distant climes, to gratify his appetite, to decorate his person, to consummate gallant intrigues, or to repair a broken constitution, and expend a princely revenue in the heart of your rival's dominions. To complete the sketch of English liberty, as it is generally understood; — he may, on his return, evade the obsolete laws, for, I think, such there are, “ which forbid a master of a vessel landing foreign vagabonds, or persons without means, on the British shore” — import half a dozen of the most destitute, abandoned rascals imaginable, *des gens sans aveu*, as the French elegantly term them, under the denomination of his servants. — But what becomes of our true definition of civil liberty in all this destructive progress? — We have taken some pains to select it from the best ancient and modern political writers; and we shall maintain it as uncontroversial, till we are convicted of error. — It consists then in a power of doing, or of not doing whatever we have a mind, *so far as is consistent with the rules of virtue, and the laws of the society to which we belong.* — We will still try the liberty every free-born Englishman

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Englishman in our day assumes by this definition, and when we have examined each abuse of it apart, as it relates to the civil society of Great Britain, I am afraid we shall discover a very large groupe of state criminals, who were never before taken into the account of the real grievances under which this nation groans, and which will farther confirm our maxim — “ That the virtue of the whole body of the people, not of the rulers, constitutes the welfare of a free state.”

Hide me, ye petty tools of opposition! that list of placemen and pensioners; aye, and of supernumerary offices too, which you have written in such black characters. — Gracious God! these are but little scratches, in comparison of those deep wounds given to your body politic by the inhuman fiends — for, however dignified or distinguished, I will not call them by any better title — whom I am now to try by the true definition of civil liberty.

STAND forth, all ye lordly owners of those manors, whose estates comprise many villages, hamlets; and answer at the bar of public virtue

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— not as private men, but as relative members of a civil society acknowledged to be the best on earth — to the charge contained in the following indictment, it sets forth — “ THAT, from “ the year 1542 to 1780, there were 36 marriages, christenings, and burials in the parish “ of * * * * *, in the county of * * * * *, “ in England; and that, in the same parish, “ from 1755 to 1765 there were no more than “ 4.” — I will not waste the time in shewing by progressive multiplication, what the number of people in this parish might have been in the present year 1768, provided due care had been taken to find proper employment for the poor, and to let them habitations on easy terms, it is sufficient to inform you, that neither the sword nor pestilence has prevailed in this and many such parishes, but a worse scourge from heaven, flinty-hearted, or prodigal luxurious landlords, have swept away the inhabitants — it farther sets forth “ that most of the small tenements, “ and farms having fallen into the lord of the “ manor’s hands, he has let the whole to one “ or two substantial farmers; and the village “ now resembles a place that has been sacked “ and

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“ and plundered, there being above fifty dwelling houses and cots, uninhabited and falling “ into ruins.” —

FELLOW *Citizens and Countrymen!* I humbly beg leave to be heard as council for my Gracious Sovereign, against those criminals; their guilt is of the deepest dye; but I am sorry to say you have been in a great measure the occasion of it; for in the wild noise and uproar you have been making for some time about trifles, you have drowned the cry of the poor country labourer, artificer, and manufacturer, and have suffered the greatest infringement on the laws of nature, which are the foundation of civil society, to become almost general throughout the land; and while you have been employing your time in hunting down imaginary criminals, and in erecting trophies to imaginary patriots; you have let the most fragrant iniquity establish itself and get to such a height, that it has threatened you already with famine, and still menaces you with much greater evils than the revolutions of administrations, the fall of thrones, or the weight of the national debt; and

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and while you have withheld your vote and interest from worthy men, merely because they were servants of the crown, — have you ever once thought of the enormous guilt of avaricious or prodigal land-holders, who to hoard up wealth, or to supply the calls of unbounded luxury, have permitted the engrossing of farms, and have depopulated the country. — I am afraid you have not been so well employed, therefore, permit me to tell you, that if the liberty of running our fellow subjects be one of the glorious birth-rights of my countrymen, it is an apparent defect in our constitution; and unpopular as it may appear to you, perhaps you may be obliged to stand indebted to these decried placemen, to the officers of the army and navy, and to private gentlemen of small estates, in their parliamentary capacity, to provide a remedy for this great evil — let me add, you cannot do a greater service to your country, than to instruct your representatives on this important point; and in order to animate you to this laudable service, I will concisely lay before you some of the most striking grievances arising from rack-rents and engrossing of farms; — it destroys all hospitality

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and banishes humanity and benevolence. — Formerly our virtuous ancestors resided the greatest part of the year, on their estates, and with such frugal œconomy; that they were enabled not only to indulge a truly hospitable disposition; but when bad seasons, sickness or any other unforeseen calamity befell their honest tenants, to forbear the demand of rent; and even sometimes to forgive or excuse — (these were the terms then in use) a year's rent — the worthy landlord also, not having demeaned himself in the eyes of his tenants and neighbours, by the modern methods of canvassing for votes, preserved the veneration, respect, and influence due to his rank; and by his frequent residence on his estate, often interposed his good offices to compose amicably, the little differences and contentions arising among the lower class of people, which now, by the non-residence or different dispositions of country gentlemen, furnish matter for the practice of the worst part of the law. — The good lady too, *let no one despise my great grandmother's manuscript Dispensary, from whence I draw this remark*, attended to the ordinary complaints and little accidental infirmities

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mities that happened among the village hinds — she had her balsams, her cordials and her siptics, she could revive the drooping, heal the slightly wounded, and administer to the sick in most common cases; her remedies being simple, and innocent, if she erred a little in judgement, it was not attended with any bad consequence, and the poorer sort were not thrown into the hands of desperate empirics, nor reduced to penury, by the enormous charges of some hungry apothecary. — The poor cottager having all the necessaries of life to provide for a hearty, numerous family of children, as soon as he had thrashed his corn, or reared a little live stock, was obliged to carry it to market; and as the quantity raised by a number of these poor husbandmen, was considerable, and the necessity of parting with it urgent — so was the price moderate; but since wealthy farmers have become contractors for almost entire estates — provisions of all kinds have been dear, and some very scarce, the reason is obvious, they can afford to withhold the commodity for a time from the market, nor have they been so intent on breeding poultry; and the smaller
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cattle, as on raising crops of corn for exportation, and breeding horses for the same purpose. — But the most criminal part of this conduct relative to the state; and which must finally prove highly detrimental to the parties themselves is, the preventing population, which is the first object of attention in a commercial state, where a sufficient quantity of hands are wanting for agriculture the useful arts, and manufactures, for navigation; and to furnish a considerable military force in time of war — what excuse then can that man make to his country, who, by depriving the poorer sort of all prospect of the common conveniences of life, such as a fixed habitation and employment; prevents marriage and perhaps occasions many; who have not been bred up to any branch of trade or of the manufactures, to wander from their respective countries to engage in servile offices of little or no use to the state in comparison of the husbandman, or to go abroad. — To add to the evil of engrossing farms, a false spirit of emulation is set up amongst the
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farmers, and they are tempted to bid against each other daily, for new leases, till the rent of almost every estate in the kingdom is doubled, and who is to pay this advanced price?—The consumers of all sorts of provisions,—these are some of the various evils already experienced by the nation in general, and by individuals, so that it seems necessary to apply some remedy without loss of time, otherwise any temporary abatement in the price of provisions will be but transitory, nor will even a long duration of it, remedy the more weighty evil, stated in the account of the parish of * * * * *

I SHALL now attend to the disposal of the revenues arising from rack-rents, and the engrossing of farms—it has been already observed, that they are not spent in the counties where they arise; sorry I am to add, that since the peace, many of them have not been expended in the kingdom; and if you want to be informed what became of them, and of the possessors, I must refer you to the registers of the *Lieutenant de Police* at Paris; and to the lists of the company at the German Spa; on examining these

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these you will find, that they do not consist of young gentlemen travelling to complete their education, whose expences are moderate, but of grown gentlemen and ladies, who finding themselves totally *ennuyé* in England, have been learning to dance *french cotillions*; and to speak, move, eat, drink and intrigue in the french taste, at the moderate rate of from one, to ten thousand pounds per annum, hence also arises a necessity to let the estate to substantial farmers, who will not plead poverty, sickness, or any casualty for delay of rent, but will regularly pay it half yearly, that it may be remitted to the banker, and furnish a ready fund for the indulgence of every sportive pleasure, in foreign countries.

YET some few there are whose public and private virtue, has enabled them to soar above these sordid means of increasing their incomes, at the expence of their country, to these be the tribute of praise gratefully bestowed; their example followed, would do our country more signal service, than any public internal measure that has been adopted of late years, — as for

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those vultures, who thus tear out the entrails of their native land, we will leave them in the hands of a discerning people, trusting that they will never imagine such men have any true idea of social liberty; consequently, are unfit to be made the guardians of that invaluable blessing. We must now forget however to observe, that in most of the states of Europe, the idle expensive emigrations of their opulent subjects is restrained and prevented by wholesome laws—and though I tremble for my popularity when I attack even the false notions of liberty, because they are prevalent, yet I will venture to declare my opinion, that some restriction might be laid on the sumner elopements of our people of fortune, without infringing on true civil liberty.

I HAVE somewhere advanced, that though Great Britain enjoys many blessings other nations know nothing of, yet she wants many that they possess. — It remains to prove this assertion; and to add to it, that this defect proceeds from our misconceptions about civil liberty.

“ It is an ancient political maxim — *Interest*
 “ *reipublicæ ut re sua quisque bene utatur* — It
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“ is the interest or the commonwealth that every
 “ subject should make a right use of his own
 “ estate — wherefore, among the fundamental
 “ institutions of the ancient Romans, contained
 “ in the laws of the twelve tables, observed by
 “ them as sacredly, as the two tables or ten
 “ commandments were by the Jews, it is es-
 “ pecially provided — that a guardian shall be
 “ appointed and set over the person and estate
 “ not only of lunatics, but of all prodigal per-
 “ sons. — This law, derived from them, hath
 “ been handed down to all the neighbouring
 “ nations of this kingdom, and has been ob-
 “ served and enforced wherever civil society has
 “ been cultivated from its first institution to the
 “ present hour.” — In Flanders and in Holland,
 I have met with many late instances of fa-
 thers confining their sons for prodigality, hus-
 bands their wives, and wives their husbands;
 nothing is more common among the Flemish,
 yet the government of the Austrian Netherlands
 is popular; and, in many instances, particular-
 ly in the election of their chief magistrates, and
 the administration of their finances, so far as it
 respects raising supplies for the service of the
 dowager

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dowager empress queen their sovereign, they preserve a civil freedom equal to that of England, for no money can be raised but by the joint consent of the three estates of Flanders, consisting of the nobles spiritual and temporal; and the deputies of the provinces. — Their method of proceeding against prodigal persons, is as follows — The nearest relations in the order of succession to the prodigal, sign a petition to the council of state, setting forth the acts of profusion the party has been guilty of, thereby dissipating his real or personal estate; and after an impartial hearing of the cause, by examining of evidences, if the charge is supported; the court appoints guardians, who are entrusted with the receipt of the estate, in order to apply a moderate part to the maintenance of the prodigal, suitable however to his rank in life; and to pay the residue into the treasury chamber of the state; or of the province in whose jurisdiction the estate lies, which is faithfully accounted for to the next heirs; but if the prodigal has a family, it is invested in the hands of trustees for their use. — In case he is singularly vicious, or shews any revengeful disposition.

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tion in consequence of this arrangement, he is sent to some monastery, where he is confined, but treated with great civility. — This law extends to all classes of the people, so that during my residence among the Flemings, it has frequently happened, that a tradesman's wife has shut up her husband for pawning part of the stock in trade, alienating their personal effects, and other similar extravagances, the same has happened *vice versa* of husbands confining their wives — in these cases, the relations of the accused person, not of the accusers, must sign the petition and enable the complainant to carry on the cause — however repugnant this may appear to the modern definitions of civil liberty — the Flemish government justify this proceeding, on a political principle. — Their Jurisconsults allow, that private vices must and will prevail in the best regulated states; but they add, that it is the business of all wise governments to take care that they do not become public nuisances.

“ To Great Britain only this law, founded
 “ on so good a principle, is wanting — not that
 “ England

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nefit by the regulation — “ His majesty has his
 “ *breve de inquirendo de idiota* and his *breve de*
 “ *inquirendo de furioso*, and no solid reason can
 “ be produced why he should not also have
 “ his *breve de inquirendo de prodigo* directed in
 “ like manner to the escheator of the county,
 “ to be tried by a jury” — that so a general stop
 may be put to the wild expences and extrava-
 gant profuseness of our countrymen. —

I AM aware that it will be urged by the op-
 posers of this scheme, that the dissipation of in-
 dividuals is not productive of any bad conse-
 quences to society — in answer to this — we
 will set aside the influence of bad example on
 the community, and we will grant, for a mo-
 ment, that the spendthrift promotes circulation
 — and that property only changes hands — but
 will this counterballance the account of the
 revenues of alienated estates, or the yearly in-
 comes of unalienated lands, expended madly or
 idiotically, in the capitals of foreign countries
 — In one of these — to the dishonour of this re-
 nowned empire ; and to the disgrace of a noble
 family — a young British peer of the first order,
 — in

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— in the bloom of life, has long been immur-
 ed — for after languishing in the common prison
 many months, till his creditors were alarmed
 for his life, the horror of the place having
 brought him to the verge of death — he has
 been for these two last years consigned to the
 care of an order of mendicant friars, called *les*
freres celebreaux who usually have the charge of
 prodigals in that country — yet I am certain
 that unless the *breve de inquirendo de idiotica* be
 made to include the *breve de prodigo* — this un-
 fortunate nobleman cannot be construed a luna-
 tic in any other sense — but so it seems his fa-
 mily deem him, or surely some measure would
 have been taken to restore him to his country. —
 In the capital of another foreign country, a British
 subject not long since exhibited a very striking in-
 stance of that profusion which may be justly ter-
 med idiotical — He presented to a celebrated
 courtesan, a pair of gold candlesticks for a fide-
 board, the workmanship of the king's goldsmith
 — his re-ward was — this reproöf — “ none but
 “ an Englishman,” so the french term all Britons,
 “ could have been so *gauche*, so awkward and
 L 2 “ unpolite,

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“ unpolite, as to omit the snuffers and pan of
“ the same metal.”—

I HOPE my countrymen are by this time convinced how necessary it is to fix some boundaries to private liberty, that it may not by its mad operations finally overturn the freedom and independence of the state.

BUT there is another ancient political maxim adopted by many of our neighbours which I must likewise lay before you — it is, that no man shall be allowed to dispose of his real or personal estate to aliens, to the detriment and disinheriting of his wife, his children, or his nearest relations — in some countries a man may leave a third of his personal estate according to his fancy, or the dictates of his caprice — but in others, even this privilege is denied — and I know of none, except England, where an inhuman, passionate or lustful parent has it in his power, to disinherit his children, or to leave his personal estate to aliens — nor where a lewd husband may leave behind him a distressed wife; and enrich a strumpet — or which

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is nearly as bad, marry his menial servant on the demise of the mother of a race of children, who have been educated suitably to that mother's birth and fortune, and leave all his effects, to this low-bred hussy his second wife — it will be said, jointures and settlements prevent this, but if a strict inquiry were to be made into the causes of the decline of several wealthy families; and the poverty of their descendants, it would be found, that they are but a weak barrier to the evil I am describing; besides, very large fortunes are often rapidly acquired by commercial transactions, among those classes of the people, who are not generally accustomed to make jointures and settlements; and it is in the middle rank of life, that the most singular characters are to be found in England — they generally proceed upon this vulgar principle, derived from their notions of Liberty — have not I got it? — is it not all my own? — shall not I leave it to whom I please? — no vulgar error wants exploding more than this — and so, my countrymen, you glory in savage Liberty! a licence to act contrary to the laws of nature and of public and private virtue, — a Liberty shocking

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ing to humanity, to abandon to the mercy of the world, the first fruits of your strength, of your conjugal embraces — Heaven grant you a greater portion of virtue, than is the lot of most men in this licentious age — or the British constitution a power of grafting on the Flemish stock, without wounding civil Liberty, though she give to the whirl-winds your popular, airy phantom of it — surely no considerate lover of his country will be offended at my honest warmth — it is time “to cry aloud and not to spare” — when the modes of France are so interwoven into our very frames — that the sober, the frugal, the industrious citizen of London, is almost transformed into the *petit maitre de Paris* — and when the old state of conjugal infidelity has changed sides — for it is no longer the city ladies who fix ridicule on their husbands — the gentlemen citizens now openly avow their infidelities, they are the common subject of their nocturnal revels — and to add to their grotesque characters — they pursue their game with a French *couteau de chasse* at their sides — pardon my trifling on this serious subject — it is indeed a melancholy reflection — that we are
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so far lost to all sense of public virtue — that we will not submit to the least restraint, nor even conceal our vices from a rising generation, who, catching the infection, are now as bold arrogant and assuring at sixteen, — as if they had the knowledge and experience of forty years — perhaps general observations on the capricious dispositions of some parents, and the daily accounts of unequal marriages between age and youth, — of strange wills; and unaccountable bequests — not known in any other country, may have loosened the ties of filial affection too much, if so, it is high time the state should provide a remedy — for in those countries where these strange alienations of property are not allowed to take place, filial reverence and parental affection are much better kept up than among us — bigots would place this to the account of religious obligations; but I am apt to think the true cause is here assigned. —

ONCE more let me remind you, my fellow citizens and countrymen — “that on the public
“ virtue

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“ virtue of the whole people depends the prosperity of a free state.”

Nothing repugnant to this principle then, must be admitted into your commercial views as a nation — yet I much fear that *the corrupt selfish spirit* which, the author of the present state of the nation complains of, *as pervading the whole!* here exerts its baneful influence; and that from all-grossing avaritious views, you will ultimately blast your own design; and by straining for every profitable branch of commerce, throw aside all thoughts of the political state of trade — yet every branch of commerce before it is carried on, ought to be politically considered, or great detriment must ensue to the state — individuals may be enriched, but the nation may be ultimately injured. — The immediate occasion of this remark is, — a review of some branches of commerce which have been carried on from England since the peace, — which may have been beneficial to the merchant, but we must now inquire if they were not prejudicial to the state.

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It is the exportation of horses to France, Flanders and Germany — and of ordnance stores to France that I am afraid will not appear to be politic or beneficial to the nation — The increase of the breed of horses must require an increase of meadow and pasture land — it must likewise increase the consumption of oats for those animals, which still constitutes a part of the food of the inhabitants of the northern counties of England; and of all Scotland — it is plain then, that there must be an additional quantity of land employed for the raising of oats, or the people must consume a greater quantity of wheat; if the former, the less land will be cultivated for wheat — if the latter, then the quantity of wheat used for home consumption must diminish the export; and in bad seasons a scarcity must ensue, which will finally operate pernicious effects, by raising the price of provisions and consequently of labour — the question then is, whether we may place the exportation of horses in competition with the exportation of wheat, as a national benefit? I believe no merchant in London will admit of the comparison — and indeed the increase of horses

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was already become a grievance before we added to it, that detrimental branch of commerce, the exportation of them—for whoever considers the increase of private carriages of all sorts, of public stages; and of post-chaises; and how soon the horses of the latter are either killed or rendered unfit for service, so that fresh supplies are constantly wanting; will readily conclude, that the growth of wheat must have been diminished in proportion to the quantity of land wanted for pasturage, hay, and oats.—It therefore seems political to check the increase of the breed, and I shall resume the subject, when we have the public revenue under consideration.—As to the export, nothing appears more impolitic, than our mounting all the French cavalry—our regiments of light horse in the last war performed wonders, they were an improvement in the military science, and is it right to furnish them with the means of equalling us in this newly acquired advantage?—the answer is, it is a ballance of trade in our favour—and it shall be brought to account—we will give the French nation credit for this return of our specie, remitted to their capital for the maintenance of
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our prodigal sons—and in another place we will also bring to account some trifling ballances of trade not in our favour, which have escaped the notice of one of the greatest financiers in this kingdom—who is supposed to have furnished all the materials dependant on arithmetical calculation, to the author of *the present state of the nation*—perhaps they were unworthy his notice, but a candid nation will excuse my honest zeal, even if they should not appear to be of the very last importance.

BUT there is another branch of our commerce with France which seems more impolitic—It is the furnishing them with complete stands of arms; and with ordnance stores—the firelocks in general use among the military in France are badly wrought, they are subject to rust sooner than ours, and some other inconveniences are complained of, the exact detail of which I could not procure—but I saw several chests of arms landed at Dunkirk at different times, towards the close of the year 1767, which were publicly opened, and contained muskets for different regiments, particularly for

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the Irish brigades, all exactly marked, numbered and assorted for each regiment — and in March last 20 chests more were landed there, the master of the vessel being asked, if he knew their destination when he sailed from London, said, he apprehended they were for the West Indies — with respect to ordnance stores, the following extract from a letter on that subject, will best explain the nature of that branch of commerce :

Dunkirk, January 28, 1768.

SIR,

I could not get a satisfactory account till yesterday evening, which is as under — Cannon from England, in the year 1767 — Four thousand tons, from the founderies at London and elsewhere — transacted in the following manner — Old ordnance is sent from this port to England, and is sold to the masters of the founderies at a certain price per hundred weight — in return they send over new cannon and mortars, and to every piece of cannon or mortar there is 50 shot from 2 to 8 pounds, some time since there came in one vessel — 100 cannons and mortars with 50 shot to each — soon after their

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their delivery here, they are sent to other ports in France, as is the ship timber in like manner. —

I am, &c.

It does not appear from this account, what the peculiar benefit is to the master of the founderies ; but we plainly see that it is not an entire ballance of specie in our favour, only an exchange of commodity : it is sent to England to be wrought up — it will be said, we have the profit of the labour of our people, but will this partial profit to a few individuals compensate for supplying the house of Bourbon, “ which
“ is represented by the author of *the present state*
“ *of the nation*, to be fired with resentment at
“ the peace, she was obliged to make on humiliating terms, and anxious for an occasion
“ to retrieve her honour and wreak her vengeance on us ” — with our best horses to mount and improve their cavalry — with our well wrought firelocks that will not disappoint their infantry in the day of battle — or with warlike ammunition and stores, for fortifying the ramparts of their garrisons, and recruiting their magazines — in most of the garrisons of France you may now see new sets of guns mounted on

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the works, that have been cast in England since the peace — I have not room in this little work, which must contain more important matter, to make farther reflections on the subject, it is sufficient that government is well informed of this operation in commerce; and that the body of the people have the fact here stated to them, with a view to prove, that liberty in commercial points, as well as in affairs merely political, may be misunderstood.

THERE is also a kind of commerce carried on from Russia, which seems to me to envelop a mystery of no friendly nature to this country, if I am mistaken, my pardon may be pleaded, from the candour with which I mention it, especially as I withhold from the public for the present, the vouchers of the fact, lest I should injure the characters of the party concerned, till I have the general voice of my countrymen on the subject, promising at the same time, that if it shall appear to carry with it the pernicious design I suspect, no intreaties shall engage me to conceal them.

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THE fact stands thus; a merchant in London contracts for the building of ships, at Onega and Archangel, of the following burdens: from 250 to 750 tons; an English master and mariners are sent from London to navigate these vessels, they hoist British colours as soon as finished; and I suppose the owners derive some advantages as Englishmen, from our treaty of commerce with Russia — these ships are loaded with masts and timber fit for all the purposes of constructing men of war; and then sail directly for the port of Dunkirk, which they enter with British colours; but as soon as the masts and timber are landed and deposited in the French king's magazines — the English master and seamen are discharged by the French broker, to whom the ships are consigned; — and French colours are put up. Sometimes previous to this step, there is a formal sale of the ships — “part of the cargo of one of these ships was lately embarked on board one of their old crazy flat bottom boats, for Rochelle, and was lost in a storm off our coasts” — as we have no consul at Dunkirk, the illegality of discharging British seamen in a foreign port passes unnoticed, as indeed
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all the remarkable transactions of that famous port — which so highly merits the attention of Great-Britain — that I will maintain in this place, and will support it personally if called upon — that it would be highly advantageous to this kingdom in general, and to the managers of the public revenues in particular, to employ and keep in constant pay, secret agents in this port and all along the coasts from *Sluys* in Flanders to *Boulogne*, — I am informed, the minister who had the administration of the finances in the year 1764; and who certainly understands that department as well as any man in England, though he failed in other branches of his ministerial function, happily succeeded in this; and received such intelligence as proved very beneficial to the public revenue. —

It is to be wished however, that some inquiry were made concerning the use intended to be made of these ships — the destination of their lading we have already pointed out — perhaps they may be found to be properly calculated for transporting troops, and to answer

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all the purposes of invasion — if otherwise; and that there is nothing illicit on the part of a subject of England residing in London, in this transaction: the hint will be sufficient for him to clear up the matter, and therefore with him and the public I leave it.

BUT I cannot quit the port of Dunkirk so readily, as it affords me the most ample occasion to enlarge on the subject we are upon: — the errors arising from our false conceptions of civil liberty in a commercial view — “a people “luxurious and licentious,” cannot fail of producing a plentiful crop of bankrupt tradesmen — of persons engaged in divers commercial connections, who finding themselves in an insolvent state, — collect together the amount of all the effects they are able to alienate secretly; and take a final adieu of their country, instead of compromising matters with their creditors and delivering up these effects in part of payment. — Dunkirk affords them a contiguous, cheap, safe, and profitable asylum; — to this port they may retire with a fair wind in twenty-four hours — for no questions are asked, on leaving

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this free country!—this land of liberty!—where every man is entitled not only to ruin himself; but, as much as in him lies, to destroy his native country —

BUT let us suppose, among these fugitives, there are a few ingenious mechanics and manufacturers: it is not sufficient that these transport themselves and families with a little pocket-money—they must also have their *tools* and *the implements of their art*; for they cannot make them of equal goodness on the continent—these then are conveniently shipped, under the denomination of captain's stores—and thus we furnish our dreaded enemies, with arms military and civil for our destruction—while all parts of the continent, purge themselves of their scum, to use the elegant style of Shakespear; “for if they have a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance, commit the oldest sins the newest kind of ways,” the strict police of our neighbouring kingdoms renders their abode in their own country dangerous, and their subsistence precarious; so that on a general peace, hither they resort, chiefly under the denomination of servants

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vants to our inconsiderate people of quality, though, in fact, they are disguised contraband traders, of which I have melancholy, undeniable vouchers—This is the exchange we make for useful artists and manufacturers, who, during the late high price of provisions; and of all other necessaries and conveniences of life, were seduced by foreign powers to leave their country: and here I must in justice observe, that in the year 1766, the most vigorous measures were taken to prevent these destructive emigrations, by the noble general who then held the seals of the northern department; particularly by transmitting to the king's ministers and consuls, the acts of parliament relative to this matter, which occasioned the return of several manufacturers and artificers:—deluded men! were all others, who may be tempted to this rash measure, duly informed how meanly, how poorly the best artificers and workmen are fed, cloathed, lodged, and paid in foreign countries, these seductions would be at an end—yes my poor countrymen, lamentable is your mistake when you quit this your native land—which, with all its imperfections on its head—is a paradise for the husbandman,

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man, the useful artist, the manufacturer, the seaman and the soldier—in comparison of any other under the copes of heaven—and would you but lay some wholesome restraints on yourselves at home, which will be imposed on you by the hand of power abroad—I will maintain it, the lowest amongst you would taste the enjoyments of life in a degree superior, to most of their citizens of the better sort—whom I saw for several months, partly subsisting on Carolina rice, the produce of your colonies, while some of you were rising in London on account of the dearth of wheat:—yet if you go abroad, you must live as the rest of their workmen, or the produce of your labour will be too dear for their markets, which they will take care to prevent; by paying you only such wages as will barely enable you to purchase the most ordinary food and cloathing—though to entice you over, they make you the most specious promises, and give you some temporary encouragement—two instances near home, may be usefully given, to deter you from the destructive, illegal measure, of entering into foreign service.—

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NEAR the capital of the Austrian Netherlands, resides an abandoned wretch, who fled from his country, after having been guilty of a breach of trust, and carried with him the art of making coporas, aqua-fortis, and oil of vitriol. For a long time, he subsisted on the money he carried out of England; and when that was exhausted, he in vain solicited several private persons of property to be concerned with him in erecting his works; but though he gave undoubted specimens of his skill in this important art, the wary Flemings refused to engage. At length the minister, one of the most sagacious, and at the same time, one of the most arbitrary statesmen in Europe, engaged the council of finances to encourage the man upon stipulated conditions, and they are such my countrymen! as none but an abject, guilty, despairing criminal would have accepted of. He is the slave of the government—he has spies to watch his every motion—he has been obliged to reveal the secrets of his art, lest they should die with him—he cannot absent himself a league from the place where his works are established, without attendant private guards to prevent his escape; and

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the rumour of an attempt to get him from them, idly propagated by the master of an English vessel, alarmed all Flanders, as indeed it well might; for instead of our serving this country with oil of vitriol and aqua-fortis, they now serve many of the capital dyers in Holland and France, and have laid a duty on ours, equal in its consequences to a prohibition: — yet this great, this important manufacturer, has a scanty salary, goes badly clothed, is allowed little or no time for recreation, is neither esteemed nor visited by any, but the people immediately concerned in supplying him with glasses or other articles for his works, is reduced to converse with his menial servants, to be at their mercy, in an old castle, which looks more like a prison than the habitation of a freeman, a citizen of London; and, is to all intents and purposes a slave for the remainder of his life. — At Tournay, in the same jurisdiction, are three families under the same bond of subjection, in the china branch, seduced from the Bow, Chelsea, and Staffordshire manufactories; — nay even as far as from Vienna, likewise under the the dominion of the house of Austria, I have recieved the complaints
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of my unhappy countrymen, seduced from our metal button and hard-ware manufactories at Sheffield and Birmingham, by the most specious promises, and yet tied down, after their arrival, to the most abject terms. — I am the more particular in giving instances of the fate of my countrymen under the dominion of the house of Austria, because the minister I have hinted at, is a judge and patron of arts and manufactures, is affable, easy of access, of a most insinuating address, a pretended friend and admirer of every Englishman, and the best qualified of any man on earth to recover the flourishing state of commerce, and of arts and sciences, which the Flemish enjoyed in a superior degree, till the persecuting spirit of popery deprived them of it; and under him they have made very hasty strides towards retrieving their commerce and manufactures—of these neighbours then, who are now allied to France, and of such an able minister, we have just reason to be jealous; as well as to be attentive to all their motions.

PERMIT me now to observe, that it is a great pity some measure could not be taken, compatible

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tible with the true notions of civil liberty, to prevent the free, unquestioned ingresses into, and egresses from this kingdom,—as is the practice in all the other states of Europe, even in the commercial, republican state of Holland:—for want of some such regulation, the facility of escape from England, but especially from London, encourages all kinds of robberies, public and private, defrauding of creditors, and seduction of useful subjects— while, on the other hand, the same facility of landing in all parts of the kingdom, without the least personal examination, fills the capital with secret vipers, and a variety of agents on private designs, who could not meet with such success in any other nation upon earth. — It is from the mercantile body that such relief must be expected, for the hands of government are tied up— administration dare not take the necessary steps for this purpose, lest they should be deemed infringements on your commercial liberties. — God forbid they should deprive you of any valuable privilege, or break in upon the true civil liberty of this country! — but unless you yourselves will solicit the proper restraints to be laid on the false notions

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notions of this blessing — no good police can be established, no internal measures be taken, to prevent the evil disposed, from ruining your commerce; and you may expect to see it taken out of your hands by your neighbours — it is the public virtue of all men of reputation and property, that alone can save you; and you are admonished in time, for notwithstanding the deplorable picture that has been drawn of your situation, — your trade is not yet on the decline, nor are you an impoverished people — but “luxurious and licentious,” you certainly are; and if you will not reform and refrain, you may in time be an impoverished people also, — I believe however, the day is far distant, and if the interval be properly employed, it will be still more remote — perhaps never arrive. —

In the reign of queen Elizabeth of great and immortal memory; every stranger on entering any port of this kingdom was taken before a public notary, and obliged to give in his name, quality, business, proposed time of residence, and place of abode; this was regularly transmitted to the secretaries of state, and by them

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to the peace officers, in the quarter of the town where strangers proposed to reside, or if in the country, to the justices of the respective counties, — by this means if they assumed titles different from what they gave in at landing, followed occupations contrary to them, or resided a considerable time longer than they at first proposed, a door was opened to the vigilance of government, to watch all their motions. — By this prudent measure, our commerce was improved, — at that time in its infancy — and all her expeditions, embassies, treaties, and negotiations, for that end, were kept from the prying eyes of strangers. — If a number of foreign agents, and secret spies, had resided in England at that time, unknown and unnoticed, in the assumed characters of tradesmen, valets, secretaries and clerks — the other commercial states of Europe would soon have been informed of the vigorous measures she was taking at home and abroad, for rendering her kingdom, a formidable maritime, commercial state, — and their commercial interests combined with their national jealousy, would have engaged them to obstruct or prevent, her extensive operations in favour of trade and navigation. —

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No solid reason can be given why this measure should not now be revived, for if we are ever so jealous of our own liberty, the most unguarded enjoyment of it, need not be extended to every stranger, who enters this country without character, recommendation or professed business. — Nor can those be offended at it, who are of the highest rank, since they are obliged to submit to it, in all other countries. But the difficulty is, to persuade my countrymen, that any restraint laid on them at quitting the kingdom, or on returning to it, will not be a mark of slavery, — yet unless this can be accomplished, our desirable, important regulation cannot possibly take place — I suppose then, a man of character desirous of quitting his native country for a short time, on business or pleasure — what impediment can it be to his voyage, if he is obliged to give in his name, place of abode, and rank in life to the officer appointed to clear his baggage at any of the out ports from whence he embarks — under a severe penalty for giving a wrong account of himself, — as to the port of London from which vessels depart almost daily for the coasts of

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Flanders, France, and Holland; I would humbly propose the same regulation — that every person departing this kingdom be obliged to give in his name, place of abode, with the requisite additional descriptions, and the time he intends to be absent, I cannot possibly conceive the least inconvenience from this measure to any man of reputation, since the ceremonial would be attended with little more trouble than the sending to take places for a stage coach — two clerks at the most, in some office set apart for the purpose at the custom house, would be sufficient to make the entries; and to deliver the passes for passengers, conformably to their descriptions, to the masters of vessels, who should be subjected to a penalty for taking passengers on board without them. — To the sharper, the wandering spendthrift, the perfidious husband or wife, the fraudulent insolvent, the forger of bills, bonds, and acceptances of bills of exchange; to the private robber; and sometimes to the foul murderer — this would prove a galling fetter — but to the honest, the virtuous and the brave, though unfortunate, it might give time for cool reflection, engage
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them to make the best of their affairs at home, and prevent in some measure, the low contraband trade carried on from the Flanders coast to this country, which is generally undertaken by these fugitives.

THERE is another duty, my countrymen, which you owe to the commercial interests of your country which is, to procure an act of parliament to punish at least with transportation for life, the man who dares counterfeit another's mark, or export any goods with any deceptory marks, serving to denote a superior fabric or quality, and imposing by this means, an inferior — believe me this has done more harm to your manufactures in foreign countries, than the enhanced price arising from the dearth of provisions and the price of labour, about which much noise and clamour is raised, yet no man has yet stated any account of the decline of our trade, except with the colonies, occasioned by our unhappy disputes with our fellow subjects. — A matter which I intended to have taken up, but as it is depending before parliament, decency forbids my intermeddling in so serious
a contest,

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a contest, which seems to me to be like a quarrel among the different branches of the same family, which while it lasts, involves the whole in confusion; and proves detrimental to the common interest.

SURELY it must be idle for men to talk of a regard for their country, who for the sake of a little paltry profit, will fabricate goods inferior to the standard of goodness, for which they receive a value, and then stamp such a mark upon them as deceives the unwary purchaser — these frauds thoroughly detected and exposed — trust me your manufactures will be in as great esteem as ever, especially the woollen; and that they are plentifully demanded — *the author of the present state of the nation*, gives you a convincing proof, by stating the very large amount of the exports to Germany and Holland, even now there is no army on the continent, yet he says you have a declining trade, but he only asserts it, while in other points he is curious, entertaining and instructive by his exact arithmetical calculations and accounts — some complaints I have also heard abroad of
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bad measure in bale goods received upon the faith of the invoice; and the affixed usual length of the pieces — for shame, my countrymen! apply to parliament, do yourselves justice and retrieve the commercial honour of your country in these particulars — loaded as your manufactures are by the unavoidable taxes which our expensive wars, and wild expeditions in those wars; have brought upon you, do not add to them any longer this pressing weight — the tenderness of government will not admit of any restraint whatever on your trade, sensible as administration must be of the advanced price, arising from the burden already mentioned; but do you exert yourselves; generously animated by public virtue and a concern to support the honour of trade, — detect, expose and procure a punishment adequate to all fraudulent practices, which are subversive of the commercial interests of the nation, as well in its inland, as in its foreign trade — and depend upon it, you will find that your taxes do not bear so hard upon you, as the factious and discontented would make us believe — Nay I am certain that could
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I raise a spirit of real patriotic virtue in you, and of firm, permanent attachment to our government, which is the very best in the world; you would candidly own, that what you now pay to the state you can very well support, though you wish it were less — but lest my attempt to inspire this sentiment universally should fail, I must presently take the liberty to shew “the real state of the nation” and endeavour to convince the impartial, that foreign commerce has not suffered by any of the public taxes; and that the pertended injury the inland trade has suffered, is almost as ill founded.—

BUT before I enter on this subject I must just remind you of the state of religious liberty in this country. — We seem to have fled from one extreme to another, from the spirit of popish intolerance; to that of unbounded licentiousness in matters of faith and practice — as we have slackened the obligations of the laws of public virtue with respect to civil government, under the pretence of enjoying a freedom inconsistent with the rules of our constitution;

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so have many of us disbanded all the ties moral and spiritual, which held us bound to perform some acts of public devotion at stated times, for a good example unto others; and as a test of the profession to which we belong — a total absence from all places of religious worship is openly avowed by some, while on the other hand, at a time, when the veil of superstition is falling off in the countries most devoted to blind bigotry — thousands and ten thousands of my countrymen, are following a new delusion; and it seems as if the general expulsion of the Jesuits, who amassed such immense riches in popish countries, was to be the æra for distinguishing the retrograde progression of Englishmen, who are now covering themselves, in this enlightened age, with a thicker veil of enthusiasm and religious hypocrisy, than was ever worn in the darkest ages of unenlightened reason. — This error might have passed unnoticed in this place, if its influence on the people by leading them into superfluous expences which they cannot afford, had not made it an object of our attention.

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BUT when we are told by men who write by rule, with the views, interests, and designs of foreign courts before them; and with the custom house and treasury accounts cast up to their hands—“that we are an impoverished people! “tottering on the brink of universal bankruptcy,” it is time to look about us; and not only to bring every gleanings of revenue to account, but to extend the plan of Sully, referred to by the ingenious author of *the present state of the nation*, at the close of his work; and since we find “a similitude of circumstances,” with respect to the people, though we cannot allow it with respect to the prince—“to reprove the “people, not the prince”—“for the smallest “needless expences”—especially, when it makes them feel the heavier, and bear with less patience, the necessary taxes laid on them by the state.

FAR from us be the spirit of intolerance; but if religious liberty is taken in so large a sense, as to oblige us to tolerate every frantic, mad, devotional system, let us not permit it to become a real nuisance to the state, without
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using all laudable endeavours to check the growing evil; and especially, let the clergy of our established churches exert themselves to engage people of rank and fashion to countenance the religion of their country, by giving their personal attendance at their parish churches—since the common rant of the enthusiastic rhapsodies, for I will not call them sermons, delivered from the pulpits of the methodists generally turns upon the total disregard of all religion shewn by the people of quality; and from this they draw scripture inferences such as—*not many mighty, not many great are chosen, &c.*, which induces the commonalty to believe—they are the only saints on earth; and thus they gain contributions, which are almost incredible—The Jesuits set up their religious trade with much less—on you my reverend brethren, the parochial clergy of this great kingdom, I respectfully call—and I beseech you, to exert yourselves for the interest of your country—consider what a shame it is, that thousands and ten thousands of the people committed to your spiritual care, should deem you insufficient for the promotion of their salvation—In many parishes of
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this metropolis, there are no less than four or five shepherds, in some measure connected with one flock.—Let holy zeal animate you, to use every means in your power, to keep them within your own folds — the sheep seldom stray, when the shepherd is active and vigilant — the vineyard is fruitful — when the labourers are found in it, early and late — will it not be an indelible reproach to you, if your poor deluded wanderers are brought home to you, by the labours of the stage; and finally will it not induce men to believe, that you are tired of the mortifying duties of your office, and that since the fees must be paid, you are little solicitous who christens, who visits the sick, or who buries — but do you consider my reverend brethren, that “ a people
 “ burthened with taxes, disheartened by a declining trade; and lately murmuring in our
 “ streets at the high price of provisions,” — pay double fees for all the duties just recited; — do you also reflect, that if the price of provisions and the weight of public taxes bear hard upon the produce of the labour of the people, these private contributions, the amount of which can not yet be known, unnecessarily and impolitically
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increase the burthen. — Permit me then to solicit you, as the first means of reclaiming the people from their wanderings; to obtain leave from your superiors, to change the method of singing in your several congregations; for the wretched psalmody of our churches, has disgusted and driven away thousands, who have been enticed to the methodists congregations by the lure of their harmonious singing; and their total perversion has succeeded. —

TIME will not admit of my drawing out an exact computation of the total amount of the contributions, for the support of their assemblies throughout the kingdom; if this little work lives to a second edition, it shall then be published — some part of them however, we shall carry to account presently, in stating the weekly expences of the common people.—In the mean time — “ to wind up the alarm to our clergy
 “ to the highest pitch;” permit me to assure them — that it amounts to more than double the sums that are drawn from the poor labouring people in popish countries, for the support of two or three orders of mendicant friars and
 nuns

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nuns in each capital town — In a word my reverend brethren, you have inconsiderately let their teachers into your churches; and if you are not more vigilant, they will very deliberately let you out of them, or at least strip you of your revenues, for it will be impossible to pay the fees of so many spiritual physicians, should this religious fever last long and become general. —

AND here again I must insist upon it, that you my countrymen and fellow subjects! are the cause of most of the hardships you have complained of since the peace, for you have gone on increasing your expences, at the very periods when you declared that the means of subsistence failed; and you now see that I have detected numbers of you in very needless disbursements, arising from your false notions of religious liberty, — a liberty of going to some extra religious assembly, and of paying a part of the produce of your daily labour, for the support of an enthusiastic hypocrite, without being able to assign any one sensible motive for this conduct. —

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It would be endless to enumerate the many evils this kingdom labours under, from false conceptions of the nature of civil and religious liberty — those I have pointed out may be sufficient, to evince the necessity of a general public adherence to the laws of virtue in the people, if they mean to correct and amend the state. — I hope no invidious inference will be drawn from what has been advanced, that the author is an enemy to true liberty in its utmost latitude, for which he and his children would boldly meet your enemy in the gate, be he foreign or domestic, and die in the defence of your just rights and privileges — but he confesses at the same time, that he does not see them so much endangered, or your public credit, trade and finances in such a deplorable condition, as to excite the well grounded apprehensions of any honest, loyal, good subject throughout the kingdom. — The alarm however, with respect to the dangerous situation of public credit, having been given from a formidable quarter, by persons supposed to be masters of the subject — accept me as an humble volunteer in your service; and mine shall

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be the pleasing task to remove all your fears on that head;—with diffidence my sentiments shall be offered, but as the intention is laudable, I shall hope, at least, after an attentive perusal— an impartial criticism.

Of the present State of public Credit in England, proving, that if the People are virtuous, sober, frugal and industrious, it can never be carried to its utmost Extent—and that the national Debt, considering the increase of our Maritime and Commercial Strength, is not at this time a national grievance.

THE stability of public credit, depends so much on the flourishing state of commerce, that it will be necessary to remove the groundless alarms which have been lately raised in the minds of my countrymen, with respect to the decline of foreign commerce and inland trade; and as every disease is known by its symptoms, give me leave to point them out in the words of one of the greatest writers of the last century, on trade and finances.—“ There will
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“ be here and there marks of splendor among
“ the better sort— but an universal face of poverty upon the common people—the interest of money will be dear; and the purchase of land cheap—the prices of provisions and of labour will be low—rents will everywhere fall—lands will lie uncultivated; and farm houses will go to ruin—the yearly marriages and births will lessen; and the burials increase—the stock of live cattle must apparently diminish; and lastly, the inhabitants will by degrees, in some measure, withdraw themselves from such a declining country—another writer on trade no less respectable than the former— assures us, “ that it cannot be ill with trade but land will fall, nor ill with lands, but trade will feel it; and that generally, wherever provisions are for a continuance of years dear in any country, the people are rich, and where they are most cheap throughout the world, for the most part the people are very poor,”— in another place he adds, “ that high wages are a certain token of the riches of a nation,”— these general positions without entering into details
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which the limits of our plan will not admit of plainly prove, that the author of *the present state of the nation, with respect to its trade and finances*, — either never read these celebrated writers, who preserve the highest degree of esteem to this hour in the literary world — or that he is egregiously mistaken in asserting “that we are an impoverished people, with a declining trade.”—Will he offer to tell us, that marks of splendor are to be discovered here and there, only among the better sort of people—the very contrary is obvious; and universal luxury the natural effect of opulence, arising from an improved extensive commerce, in its suitable degrees of gradation runs through all the ranks of life, a luxury in dress, in furniture, in diet, in equipages, and in expensive amusements pervades the whole mass of people, and seems even to require some wholesome sumptuary laws to confine it within proper limits. — The great and highly exalted, before they take pen in hand, should employ some persons of capacity in the private walk of life, to inspect the present manners of the nation, and to bring them an accurate state of things, as they are to be found in
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the families of the inhabitants, not as they may appear upon speculative deductions from the weight of our national debts and taxes — let them send their secretaries or gentlemen to pass a week with the citizens, the common shopkeepers, and the mechanics of this city — let them eat, drink, sleep, ride out and partake of the amusements of these people; and they will find a certain ease, and even elegance throughout the whole, unknown to citizens of a much superior rank in other commercial countries — then let them carefully view all our shops, and observe if upon the whole, there appears to be any stagnation of the inland trade, even the gaming table of the state, at which the people have played at an increased expence for these two last years, is surrounded every night — each state lottery-office is as full as it can hold — let them examine the dresses and distinguish the characters of the motley votaries at the shrine of fortune — from the bold adventurer, who dedicates his sixteen guineas, — to the humble petitioner, whose prayer to the fickle goddess is but feebly promoted by the simple offering of a quarter guinea — then let them tell me, if all

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ranks of life are not included in this groupe, we will next conduct them to the public theatres, there they will find the first gallery crouded every night with livery servants, and chambermaids, the former occupiers of the second — and the pit filled with the characters that were formerly content in the first gallery, — but we must not stop here, our public tea-drinking rooms in all the environs of the metropolis; and even the skittle-grounds in the neighbourhood of the industrious manufacturing quarters must be visited on Sundays, and even on many of the week-days— I am aware that when such an inspection is taken and carried to the *author or authors of the present state of the nation*—they will immediately answer, that it confirms their observation, but I absolutely deny it, luxury and poverty never subsisted together, the latter, may in process of time, be the effect of the former, though not till luxury exceeds the proportion of the relative riches of the nation, acquired by its extensive commerce — again it will be remarked, that our prisons are full of debtors, and bankruptcies increase, — the latter may be one effect of our increased commerce — if the troubles

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bles in America suspend remittances for a time, as punctuality in payment is the soul of commercial credit, this may produce bankruptcies, but will any man infer from this or any other adventitious circumstance, that we have a declining trade — as to the petty debtors, much I am afraid their misfortune arises more from living beyond their station, from the great and the privileged running shamefully in arrear; and from the facility of escape afforded to considerable traders, who fly their country indebted to these poor people, than to the oppressive weight of our taxes, the dearth of provisions, or the decline of trade — If we look into the country, we shall find the face of cheerfulness and plenty, nay even riches in the hands of the farmers, a diminution of our people indeed seems to menace us, which has been accounted for in another place, and perhaps one immediate remedy to this evil might be, the repeal or amendment of the marriage-act — in some states — the hinderance of marriage by any means direct or indirect, is punished in private persons with excommunication, and in almost all but our's, the children before marriage are made legitimate by the marriage
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of the mother — how many lost infants, how many wretched mothers might have been saved to the nation, had this been the case with us; and surely to prevent unnatural murders, is an object of the highest consequence to a civilized people. — As to the shopkeepers in country towns, I am credibly informed by the wholesale dealers in London who supply them, that the orders they send are as frequent, as valuable, and their remittances as punctual at present, as they have been for some years past — well but our manufactures, they are declining! — what, when navigable canals are making to promote inland communications, and when every encouragement is given to the useful arts by bounties and premiums — impossible! — but the poor, working manufacturer suffers! I deny it, wages have been increased in every branch proportionably to the advanced price of provisions, and the produce of their labour has been enhanced to the consumer, to indemnify the master — an estimate of any man's dress from head to foot, or of his furniture now, compared with what it cost him ten years since, will evince this truth — we have not yet been able then, to trace the decline of our inland trade, and with re-
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spect to our foreign commerce, I will venture to say, that our manufactures, the staple manufactures of this country are as much called for as ever; and as much esteemed in countries where they have not set up similar manufactories of their own, which every nation has a right to do, derived from the law of nations, and the first principles of civil society — In many, particularly in Holland, Germany, and Flanders, the very name of English, is sufficient to enhance the value of all hard ware; and woollen manufactures, and the product of other countries is often thus imposed on the ignorant, my evidences of this fact are innumerable, nor can I believe it has escaped the notice of any sensible traveller, who has visited the shops and fairs of those countries — but what is still more in our favour, notwithstanding all the clamour that has been made about the heavy clog laid on our manufactures by the taxes — they are still cheaper than those of France; if their intrinsic value be impartially attended to — I have made the experiment and found it so, with respect to the articles just mentioned, and several others; the durability of English woollen
cloths,

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cloths, stuffs of various denominations, hard ware, British wrought silks, &c. ballances the difference in the first cost — an established household, a numerous family, and several years residence on the continent, joined to the repeated sollicitations of my foreign friends, to procure them these commodities directly from England, enables me firmly to establish this truth.

OUR trade with Portugal however, is said to be on the decline, it may be so, we cannot engross the commerce of the whole world; but we can be very inconsistent, for we can view with magnifying eyes the amount of our national debts and taxes; but we cannot envisage the cause of the greatest part of them,—expensive wars, for the preservation and extension of our commerce in different parts of the world; in a word, if we were true to our own interests, and warmly attached to government and to our excellent constitution we should fairly own, that we have as much foreign and domestic commerce, as we know how to manage to advantage, and that by conforming a little more to the principles of public virtue — and laying a

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few restraints on ourselves, which our rulers cannot impose, consistent with your enlarged ideas of civil liberty — you are very well able to bear the present public taxes, which have been attended with a proportioned increment of foreign commerce, and of domestic employment — at advanced wages.

I CANNOT quit this part of my dispute with the authors of *the present state of the nation* without mentioning, that so melancholy a subject as a declining trade, should have been supported by proofs, and not rested on bare assertions—the documents, if the fact be true, must be in their hands—for if they could so accurately state the important ballances of trade in our favour, on our exports to Holland and Germany, which alone are sufficient, to give us room to imagine our commerce is increased to these countries, why did not they give us also the amount of the exports to the same countries for ten years farther back, to prove that we have a declining trade — I am apt to think the reason was, that the ballances would have appeared to be much less; and consequently our commerce to this

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part of the world would have been found considerably increased. —

WITH respect to our commercial credit it is sufficient to observe, that all orders given by British merchants, are executed with alacrity in all quarters of the globe, that bills of exchange on England are universally received and discounted at the common course of exchange, and that no recommendations abroad are more honoured or respected, than those given by British merchants. A little internal reformation in the body of the people seems therefore to be all, that is wanting, to secure the flourishing state of our commerce and inland trade, a little more industry, and less private expence, a generous contest to promote universal harmony, an indulgent candour in the judgements you form of the administrators of our public affairs; and above all an ardent, steady, affectionate loyalty to a pious and clement Prince, who sets before your eyes a bright example of public and private virtue.

ON the prosperity of commerce depends that of our national credit, with respect to our public

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lic funds—and, gracious heaven! is it possible that true born Englishmen can regard the state of public credit with a dejected and desponding countenance! can the true patriot be alarmed for his property in the funds, and stand appalled at every idle paper phantom, that starts forth from the press, and silently but intrepidly declares — “the national credit totters—it has
“ been extended beyond its proper limits —
“ there is danger of a general bankruptcy — a
“ probability that the ballance of our trade,
“ from its declining situation, will not be sufficient to pay the annual interest to foreigners,
“ for the property they have in our funds —
“ we are unable under these circumstances
“ to go to war” — with twenty such vague notions, all equally ill-grounded, but which, admitting they were in some measure true — you, my fellow citizens and countrymen! have it in your power, to render of little or no consequence — of this I shall soon convince you — At present, permit me to exult, not to weep, over the national debt; and to pronounce it, a lasting monument to latest posterity, of the glory of Great-Britain — a trophy of renown sur-
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passing all the laurels of ambitious tyrants, the falsely admired heroes of their age — an indelible record of the public good faith of the three estates of this ancient realm, in their political capacity; and of the integrity, industry and commercial spirit of the inhabitants of this little island — by which they were enabled to contract so large a debt, not solely of each other, but of the subjects of all the neighbouring states of Europe — and to carry on an extensive war for the defence and support of their commercial rights—besides remitting large subsidies to their allies, and on the basis of public credit—unprovided with mines of silver and gold—destitute of amassed treasures, the usual resources of ancient and modern states—yet leaving untouched the personal effects of her subjects, while the silver plate of the French was melted down to supply the exigencies of that powerful adversary — already indebted on the same public faith to foreigners, as well as to her own people, near half a century — yet still augmenting it — out-living the prophecies of the death of her public credit, foretold many years since by our ablest writers — after having humbled to the dust “the two
united

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united branches of the house of Bourbon” — to terminate the war against them, on conditions highly beneficial to her commercial interests, though not quite equal to the sanguine expectations of a victorious people.

In order to prove that our unlimited public credit is a most astonishing acquisition to this nation, we must look back to the origin of our funding system—perennial ways and means might have been adequate to the expences immediately incurred by the revolution; but soon after that period, our extensive political connections for the support of our own freedom and independence as a nation, and for preserving the civil and religious liberties of our allies against the ambitious designs of France, rendered it impossible to raise the large, but necessary supplies for these valuable purposes, by any perennial means, certain taxes were therefore laid, and money borrowed on the credit of them upon various conditions which it would be tedious to enumerate — the exigencies of the state increasing, it became impracticable to pay off these loans, so that a national debt was established of near seven
millions

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millions sterling at the end of the reign of K. William III. and the taxes which were at first intended as a temporary aid, became perpetual; being engaged for the payment of annual rates of interest, on principal sums borrowed, which there appeared not the least prospect of discharging. — This debt therefore entailed on the next generation, and from them handed down to us, may properly be styled, the basis of our national debts, and of our present public credit; for the same system of funding has continued, the same method of borrowing on the credit of new taxes, and, consequently, the produce of these taxes stands engaged for the payment of the annual interest of the money borrowed on them; and therefore it is supposed cannot be taken off till the principal sums borrowed on them respectively, are paid off. — Our inquiry therefore must be, into the merits or demerits of this system of funding from its commencement; and I am sorry to say, we have but very few able guides in this task, the study of finances having been greatly neglected during a period of fourscore years, when consummate skill in that science has been most wanted.

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THE only respectable adversary I have to engage, in my defence of the necessity, expedience and advantage of the funding system, in the present situation of our public affairs, and indeed respecting the situation they have been in from the time of Queen Anne happens to be — the most accurate historian, the most candid, polite writer, and one of the best men in private life, that this, or any other nation has produced; so universally esteemed are his writings, and so venerated is his amiable character, that it is with equal diffidence and reluctance I undertake to controvert his sentiments on public credit, yet I flatter myself with success, and if I happily meet with the approbation of my countrymen, I am sure even of his applause — for his country's welfare absorbs in him, every private consideration — I cannot do him justice but by giving the substance of his arguments in his own elegant style. —

“ It appears to have been the common practice of antiquity to make provision in time of peace, for the necessities of war, and to hoard up treasures, beforehand, as the instruments
“ either

" either of conquest or defence, without trust-
 " ing to extraordinary imposts, much less to
 " borrowing in times of disorder and confusion"
 — in his usual accurate manner he then gives
 a variety of instances of this conduct from pro-
 fane and sacred history, and then proceeds —
 " On the contrary our modern expedient, which
 " has become very general, is, to mortgage the
 " public revenues, and to trust that posterity,
 " during peace, will pay off the incumbrances
 " contracted during the preceding war — and
 " they, having before their eyes, so good an
 " example of their wise fathers, have the same
 " prudent reliance on their posterity, who at
 " last from necessity, more than choice, are ob-
 " liged to place the same confidence in a new
 " posterity," in answer to this first outline of
 the inconveniences attending public debts entail-
 ed on generations yet unborn, I must beg
 leave to observe that I do not mean to esta-
 blish, that they are the most eligible methods of
 providing for the necessities of war, but I in-
 tend to prove that, long before this author
 wrote, I believe, before he was born, we had no
 choice left, we were already indebted; and
 had

had not been able to amass the treasures of
 ATHENS or of the PROLOMIES, nor yet had we
 the mines of Mexico and Peru to supply us, and
 therefore, he should have lived in an age when
 the public coffers were full, when money re-
 gorged from the profits of commerce or conquest;
 and when there was a possibility in this nation,
 during any given time of peace, to provide for
 the necessities of a succeeding war, by any other
 means than mortgaging the public revenues,—to
 have rendered the preference he gives to the an-
 cient method of furnishing the supplies, practi-
 cable — that it has not been so for above a cen-
 tury, the annals of the nation with respect to
 its finances, will plainly discover, on an impar-
 tial review. — "He next examines the conse-
 " quences of public debts, both in our dome-
 " stic management by their influence on com-
 " merce and industry; and in our foreign
 " transactions, by their effect on wars and ne-
 " gociations. — Public securities are with us
 " become a kind of money, and pass as readi-
 " ly at the current price, as gold or silver —
 " wherever any profitable undertaking offers
 " itself, however expensive, there are never
 " wanting

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“ wanting hands enough to embrace it ; nor
 “ needs a trader, who has sums in the public
 “ stocks, fear to launch out into the most ex-
 “ tensive trade, since he is possessed of funds
 “ which will answer the most sudden demands
 “ that can be made on him. In short, our na-
 “ tional debts furnish our merchants with a
 “ species of money, that is continually multi-
 “ plying in their hands ; and produces sure gain,
 “ beside the profits of their commerce — this
 “ must enable them to trade upon less profit —
 “ the small profit of the merchant renders the
 “ commodity cheaper, causes a greater con-
 “ sumption, quickens the labour of the com-
 “ mon people, and helps to spread arts and
 “ industry through the whole society.” He
 then mentions another favourable circumstance,
 but unluckily adds, “ that perhaps they are of
 “ no great importance :” the last is not indeed
 of much, wherefore I omit it. — But is it
 possible to urge any thing stronger in favour of
 our funds and in support of public credit, than
 what I have just quoted from this great autho-
 rity — against this, however “ he desires you
 “ will weigh the many disadvantages which
 “ attend

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“ attend our public debts in the whole interior
 “ œconomy of the state.” His first observa-
 tion on this head, turns on the confluence of
 people and riches to the capital, on account
 of our public funds, this is certainly an incon-
 venience, as it tends to depopulate the pro-
 vinces ; and to engage people to employ their
 time and money in the traffic of the funds, in-
 stead of residing in the counties where they were
 brought up, and applying themselves to trade
 and manufactures—but we must prove that
 trade and manufactures want directors or mas-
 ters, with capitals to carry them on, in the fe-
 veral counties of this kingdom, or there will
 not be any force in this argument.—But second-
 ly, “ they banish gold and silver from the most
 “ considerable commerce of the state,” how so !
 remittances to foreign counties are not made
 in the paper credit of the funds, but in bills of
 exchange, an ancient practice ; nor are inland
 demands paid by transfer of stock. — Suppose,
 however, that they were, I am sure, if practi-
 cable, it would be highly advantageous to the
 nation, for gold and silver coin is a very ex-
 pensive commodity, of which, we want no

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more

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more than will suffice for common circulation in such small sums, as we cannot pay in current paper " whatever is established by the authority of any nation, to be the medium of their mutual exchanges with each other in the course of traffic, is properly the money of a nation — it may therefore consist of gold, silver, and copper coin, or of paper, as bank notes, bills of exchange, promissory notes or bonds, nay even of transfers of funds, provided when the possessor quits that nation he can change them without loss, for specie current in the part of the world whither he is going, or for bills of exchange payable in that country." — How necessary then it is on this principle, to support the present extensive public credit and paper money of Great Britain. — I hope not only to support it, but to point out the means of enlarging it. Thirdly, the taxes which are levied to pay the interest of these debts, are a check upon industry, heighten the price of labour, and are an oppression on the poorer sort, — not at all, if wages are advanced, in proportion to the price of provisions; and if this advance on the

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the produce of the labour of the people, does not diminish the sale of our manufactures in foreign countries, and no man has yet proved that it has, the very contrary we have partly demonstrated, nor can these taxes for the same reason be a check on industry, — quite the reverse, if the poor are kept constantly employed at high wages, and if the home consumers are enabled finally, from the riches they have acquired by war, conquest and commerce, to pay a better price for every commodity than they could afford to give before these taxes were imposed—and that this is the true state of the nation, no man surely can doubt, who considers the opulence, derived from our Asiatic and other commercial connections, besides the fortunes raised by the profits of the last war — if this opulence did not actually subsist, it would have been impossible to have found purchasers of our funds, considering their immense amount, even at any price—but a people, mistrustful of government, will always studiously conceal their riches—it has ever been the practice in all ages, from the first ascertaining and securing of private property, by the laws of civil society, to this hour—and here let me

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me suppose for a moment, our national debt cancelled, our burthensome taxes taken off, our treasury still empty, or only producing the stated revenues for the ordinary support of government, in this case we must take it for granted the people would be rich — which way in this situation, should we provide for a sudden great emergency, “ a rupture with the two united branches of the house of Bourbon represented, as anxious for an occasion to wreak their vengeance on us,” — a people jealous of their liberties, perhaps diffident of successive administrations, would hardly deposite the money that would then regorge from all parts, in the public treasury, they would dread the misapplication of a part at least, to corrupt voters at elections, or to bribe the representatives of the people, what then would be the consequence? — I have already pointed it out — the latitude of your civil liberty permitting the emigration of your people, and the alienation of their effects, — incredulous as to the existence of true patriotism in the government, and little solicitous about it in themselves, the opulent would desert you, or lend their money to foreign powers

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powers — your public funds, supported by the inviolable faith of successive parliaments for near a century, prevents this dreadful situation of affairs, and insures the patriotism, if not the loyalty of the monied interest.

Thus we have attempted to remove the only material objections to the funding system, so far as it affects the interior oeconomy of the kingdom — our admired author, who errs so seldom, that he is the more dangerous, from the supposition men will form, that he who is generally, may be always in the right — proceeds next, to a more extensive view of his subject — he asks, “ if all our present taxes be mortgaged, must we not invent new ones? “ and may not this matter be carried to a length “ that is ruinous and destructive?” I hope not, the edition of his work, from which I draw my extracts, bears date in 1758, since which period, we have laid on a few very heavy taxes; and though the violent death of our public credit was foretold, yet we have safely conducted the vessel, forty leagues beyond the rock, on which, all our calculators declared, she would inevitably

bly split; but these gentlemen will say, we have only postponed the evil, I humbly beg their pardon, it appears evident to me, that we have totally prevented it, and that a national bankruptcy so often predicted, so strongly recommended by some, even by the writer we have been criticising, as the lesser evil in a state under heavy incumbrances; and so dreaded by all at this time, will never happen, — to avoid it however, there must be virtue and public spirit in the people, to support and even extend public credit — before I lead the way to this grand object, it will be necessary for me further to demonstrate to you, the very great importance of your national credit, what I have hitherto advanced on that head rests on my own opinion, to this we will now subjoin the sentiments of another justly celebrated, living author — “ Public credit he defines to be, the confidence reposed in a state or body politic, borrowing money on condition *that the capital should not be demandable*, but that a certain proportional part of the sum shall be annually paid, either in lieu of interest, or in extinction of part of the capital, in this definition there is an alternative,

“ tive, of paying a perpetual interest for the money borrowed, or of paying annually a sum exceeding the interest, which excess is intended to extinguish the capital in a certain number of years: in both cases, the annual payment is called *an annuity*: when it is exactly equal to the interest agreed on, it is called perpetual, and determinate when it exceeds it, and is granted for life, or a number of years”. — Let me intreat you to bear constantly in mind the grand condition, with respect to our present national debt, comprised in this definition. — The capital or principal advanced is not demandable, — for of this we shall make such a singular use, as will surprize all our predecessors, whether writers on, or managers of the public revenues. —

“ IN giving an account of the rise and progress of public credit, this author, like the preceding, informs you, that in ancient times princes amassed treasures to carry on their wars; and afterwards, when these failed them, they mortgaged their lands and principalities, acting upon the principles of private,

"vate credit: — the next step was to raise mo-
 "ney upon a branch of taxes, assigned to the
 "lender for the re-imbursment of his capital
 "and interest; — this plan of administration was
 "attended with so much abuse and oppreſſion,
 "that statesmen began to despair of carrying
 "on public affairs by such expedients: — to this
 "therefore succeeded, the method of raising
 "money within the year, or upon what they
 "called short funds; and at length public cre-
 "dit assumed its present form." — The reason
 was, the sums wanted were too large to be raised
 within the year, or by short funds, and this
 was owing to the enlarging of our political con-
 nections, for the security and extension of our
 commerce. — "Money was borrowed on deter-
 "minate, or perpetual annuities, funds were
 "provided for that purpose; and the refund-
 "ing of the capital was left in the option of
 "government; but was never to be demand-
 "able." — Our author puts a question founded
 on the present situation of the national debt,
 which deserves notice in this place, being exactly
 similar to the supposition I have stated in the
 foregoing pages—"Were the *undemandable* ca-
 "pital

"pital of 140 millions sterling, thrown by Great
 "Britain in a few years, into the hands of the
 "present creditors; and were France to do
 "the same, with her creditors, what trade
 "could absorb it? Capitals now are only of
 "value, in proportion to the interests they bring:
 "— The refunding of capitals makes money
 "regorge to such a degree, that they will fetch
 "little or no interest, in France, *anno* 1720, it
 "reduced interest to 2 *per cent.* — in another
 "place, he tells us, the spirit of the nation is
 "totally bent upon the support of public credit,
 "on which their commercial interest wholly
 "depends;" — and he gives you a very bright
 prospect of the consequence, "that the same causes
 "which have raised the credit of this nation to
 "such an amazing height" — the principal of
 which is, the inviolable faith of our parliaments
 in the provision made for the punctual payment
 not of the *principal*, but of the *annual interest*—"
 "will either force the French from their old prin-
 "ciples"— of delaying or refusing to pay the
 stipulated interest of her debts, and making oc-
 casional public bankruptcies, — "or they will
 "some time or other bury her credit in the
 "dust,
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“dust:”—but let us attend to the other effect of our great public credit: “we have now merchants of extensive credit, and fair character who serve as interposed persons for the whole monied interest of Europe, and who can fill a subscription for millions with a single name;—and as to taxes, where they are rightly established” as they are in England, and not farmed out as in France, “the people have a certain method to indemnify themselves,”—they raise it on the consumer, so that if he be a stockholder, he in some measure pays his own interest.—“Loans are filled by money stagnating, which the owner desires to realize: if he cannot do better, he lends it to government: if he can do better, he will not lend it, at home; and what will be the consequence?—He will send it abroad, in search of high interest:—the effect of public borrowing or national debts is, to augment the permanent income of the country, out of stagnating money and ballances of trade;—this income so created, may be either the property of natives, or foreigners, if the latter, they will be induced to settle in the country where
“ their

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“ their funds arise;—and as Great Britain commanded all the unemployed money in Europe, towards the close of the last war, after France had failed in her payments to her creditors in 1759, she must have derived a considerable advantage from the confluence of foreigners to her dominions, bringing with them additional property.”—But amidst these advantages—does not commerce suffer from the weight of the taxes imposed on the produce of the labour of the people?—It is impossible to follow this voluminous writer through all his dissertations on trade, public credit, and coin; I can therefore only select what is directly to my purpose.—We have enumerated, in another place, the symptoms of a declining trade; and I think we have found few or none of them with us—we have from him another token—“when a country imports any manufactures she formerly made at home.” I apprehend we stand clear of this, for on the contrary we manufacture several articles we used formerly to import, and that since the burden of our national debt and taxes has been the constant subject of complaint.—As public credit, therefore, does not
appear

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appear to have done us any harm hitherto, but rather to have promoted foreign and domestic commerce, and that we are encouraged by this eminent writer, to support it, and to continue borrowing—Let us state his opinion with respect to the consequences of increasing our national debt, on the basis of public credit, when extraordinary emergencies shall require it;—and here we must observe, that he supposes a proportional increase of taxes to pay the annual interest of future loans, which I shall not finally admit, as I propose to provide other funds for this purpose: but to remove all alarms which former writers, or the respectable author of *the present state of The nation* may have raised in your minds, we will grant for a moment, this proportional increase of taxes, and even then it appears evident, that if our profits by war, conquest, or commerce, bear their proportion also, as they really have done to this hour, the national debt will not be (*nor is it at present*) a national grievance. — Indeed it surprises me much, that in *The present state of the nation*, no mention is made of our new manufactures established, even during the war, and publicly known,

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known, because they were patronized by a public society for the encouragement of arts, commerce, and manufactures: this is a want of candour I should not have suspected in such a performance. — After removing numberless other objections to public debts, the writer, from whom we have so largely extracted, “disproves the “vulgar notion, that by contracting debts beyond a certain sum, a trading nation, which “has great ballance in its favour must be involved in an unavoidable bankruptcy. — To “say that a nation must become bankrupt to “itself, is a proposition”, says he, “which implies a contradiction.”—

IN a word, my countrymen; as I cannot find any symptoms of a declining trade amongst you, nor a want of commercial credit with all parts of the globe; and as I have demonstrated, that with a little more frugality, you would lighten the weight of your taxes, and prevent their enhancing the price of your manufactures; I must insist on it, that your public credit, or national debt, has preserved your independance as a state, and rendered you formidable

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dable to your enemies, by supplying you readily, without delay, with the means of paying your fleets and armies, and of supporting your maritime force, on which your whole system of foreign commerce depends; and I must intreat you to consider the maintenance, and even the extension, in case of necessity, of that public credit, which has operated for you such great, such glorious effects; for it is the most important object that can engage your attention — it has been declared so, by the concurrent testimony of the best political writers; and it is more eminently so at this time, in order to provide against the future measures, “of the two united branches of the house of Bourbon, anxious for an occasion to retrieve their honour, and wreak their vengeance on us.” — For it requires no great political capacity to discover in what quarter hostilities will commence, when a rupture happens, which I imagine however, is still at many years distance. — France has disburthened herself of several very expensive civil and military establishments in America; she has strengthened and firmly ratified the most powerful alliances in Germany,

and

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and she has made a very considerable progress in recruiting her finances, and recovering her naval strength; we may therefore be assured, that the next war with that power will be brought directly home to us, at least the attempt will be made; it will in that case be a contest between the fleets of the two nations; and should those of France gain only a temporary advantage, and be enabled to land any considerable regular force on this island, it is obvious to every one, that our greatest security will be, such a situation of our public credit, as shall not only prevent foreigners and natives from drawing out their property at any price, and leaving the kingdom, but as will afford us such ample supplies, that we may be enabled to command the assistance of all our inhabitants, as well as of the subjects of foreign states, our allies.

It is now incumbent on me to point out the means, premising, that what I am to offer on this head, is submitted with much humility to the consideration of the whole nation, and a pardon is solicited, if I shall appear to have

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excited

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excited curiosity, or raised expectations, without the means of gratification.

The National Debt no national Grievance, further stated — with Proposals for improving the public Revenue, and for providing Funds in time of War, adequate to the Necessities of the State, without laying additional Taxes on the People.

IN our inquiry into the state of public credit, and the nature of the national debt, we have found, that the greatest part of this debt has been contracted on this express condition, that the principal or capital is not *demandable* — perhaps we shall now discover that all our schemes and projects for paying it off; and all our clamours for lessening it, are totally useless, and highly impolitic — but we have observed also, that what gave Great Britain the command of all the unemployed money in Europe, at a crisis when she most wanted it, was, the punctual, regular payment of the perpetual, annual interest on the *undemandable principal or capital*; and that France

failing

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failing in this, lost her credit with her own subjects, and with foreign nations. — I venture to affirm then, that we have no business to trouble our heads about redeeming or paying off the national Debt. — Here methinks I see some able financier close this little work, and pass a sentence of hasty condemnation on the whole; — there were some good things here and there; crude, indigested thoughts, but well meant; he appears to be honest — what a pity he should turn out a madman! — Patience, gentlemen, I hope for the honour of your country, I am not the first *etourdi* to whom you have given a full hearing; let us resume the subject. —

I HAVE a very simple proposition humbly to offer to your consideration. — If a merchant finds himself possessed of a surplus of 20,000 *l.* which he absolutely cannot employ in trade, and from want of judgement, or other reasons, does not choose to purchase land, or to lend this large sum on private security — what is he to do with it. — In the language of my last quoted author, “ it regorges in his hands, and “ is a capital of use only by the interest it will

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“ bear

“bear.” If he sees it in the same light, he will vest it in the funds — throw it into the grand whirlpool — the national debt. — Now it happens, that a German residing at Vienna has a property in this debt, an *undemandable capital* of 20,000 *l.* which he orders his agent to sell, and the merchant purchases it — this operation thus performed, I am really so silly as to think, that it is the same thing to this German, by whom his capital is refunded by the government, or by the merchant ; and I see it in the same point of view with respect to the like transactions between the subjects of this kingdom — further, the merchant is a voluntary purchaser, and he purchases at a price often bearing a near, if not an exact proportion to the real value of money — and this very proposition leads to another already mentioned — that supposing the national debt actually paid off, money would regorge in the hands of an infinite number of people, as in the case of the merchant before us, and government must either take it again, or run the risk of losing the money, and the subjects, or at least the former, which would make to itself wings, and

and fly to foreign shores, to propagate its specie, by means of good *interest*.

I THEREFORE own my weakness, I cannot possibly get over the idea — though I have kept it to myself hitherto, and have often attempted to stifle it — that this operation answers all the purposes of a payment of the national debt, that foreigners or your own subjects can or ought to expect of you ; and that considering the situation of your finances for forty years back, and the probable situation of them for forty years to come, owing to your extensive commercial connections, and the necessary credit and influence you must support with the powers of Europe ; all other payment of the national debt is a misapplication of the public revenue ; — all we have to do is, to keep up the market in the same free and open manner as ever, and as near to the real value of money as possible ; and punctually to pay when due, *the demandable perpetual annuity*.

BUT, my fellow citizens and countrymen ! where are they ? — Fled from the man who,
by

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by leaving the national debt in its present situation, means to perpetuate their heavy! burthen some taxes! — Return, my friends, and I will ease you of your fears on this head. — Let us review the finance operations in the hands of the great men who have filled that department since the peace — you will afterwards permit me to take the management of the public revenue, devoid of the treasurer's staff and salary; and when you have thoroughly examined the measures pursued by them, and those proposed by me, I hope it will appear that my system will relieve you much sooner than theirs, from your most oppressive taxes — in which case, I intreat your recommendation of me, as an humble coadjutor to the noble duke, who at present so worthily presides at the treasury board.

You are told by the author of *The present state of the nation*, “ that in the six years of peace, reckoning to the end of the present year 1768, about seven millions of the national debt has been paid off; and the demand for interest lessened about 360,000 l. — also

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“ — also, that for this purpose, and to make good deficiencies in the supplies for the current service of these six years, 12,891,249 l. the produce of the sinking fund for that period, and the further sum of 3,030,255 l. arising from several miscellaneous articles brought to the credit of the public account — has been applied.” — But in all this operation, what benefit has the nation or any individual subject received? — except the landholders, who kindly eased themselves of one shilling in the pound on the land-tax, in opposition to administration. — The taxes which you say bear hard on our trade and manufactures have not been diminished one jot by this measure. — Now let us recollect the maxim unanimously supported by all political writers, — “ that every prudent nation should provide a fund in time of peace for the necessities of war;” and ask, what provision has been made by this reduction of the national debt, for a fund to carry on any future war? the answer is, None at all. — Yet since we have been obliged to deviate from the plan proposed at the first institution of the sinking fund; and instead of applying

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plying its produce "sacredly and inviolably to the payment of the national debt," have applied only the smaller part to that service, why not break through the design of its institution totally! — in order to provide a fund for the exigences of the state in a future war, without the melancholy prospect of laying further burthens on the people, an object which claims the preference to all others. — Can you imagine, that the payment of seven millions of the *undemandable capital* of the national debt, has raised the reputation of our public credit in the eyes of foreigners or of our fellow citizens — not at all — so long as the market is open, which it will ever be while the annual, perpetual interest, or annuity is punctually paid; it will be a matter of indifference to the possessors whether their capitals are refunded only, as they want them, by new purchasers, in the open market, or by the government paying off the national debt. — But if, after they have made a temporary use of their capitals, such as urgent occasions may require, they should find these capitals lying on their hands unemployed, I believe in that case they

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they would heartily wish the government to continue the national debt, that they might have an opportunity to replace these capitals at interest, on the faith of our public credit, by means of the open market — at least so it appears to me, on this principle, that capitals, which trade cannot absorb, become useless, unless they are placed out at interest; and we have already seen, that the wisdom of government consists in preventing capitals, when money regorges in a nation, being sent abroad; and the subjects transporting themselves with their property to foreign climes.

In *The present state of the nation* we find this melancholy reflection — "While so large a share of the surplus of the sinking fund is thus taken away yearly from its original destination, and applied to the current service in time of peace, what hopes can we have of seeing such a reduction made in the capital of the public debt, as shall enable the parliament to redeem some of our burthen-some taxes, and give relief to our manufacturers, artificers and mariners," — certainly

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none!

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none! — „ what new tax could be devised, “ which, if it proves a productive one, would “ not by adding to the burthens with which our “ trade and manufactures are already oppressed, “ sink them under its weight?”—Not one, that I know of, if you mean a general tax. — Since this is the case, there appears but one alternative — either we must remain unprovided for a future war, or we must adopt some new system in the management of our finances, and in the application of the public money — my plan comes next in view; and if it shall be deemed rational and practicable, I shall only lament that it did not occur to me some years since, previous to the disposal of the seven millions just mentioned. — I humbly submit it to your consideration, whether the annual produce of the sinking fund, after providing for the deficiencies of the current service, should not from the commencement of the year 1769, or from the time of closing the account of its produce for 1768, be converted to a new purpose, and be new christened, if I may be allowed the expression, by the name, style and title — of, *The new fund for the pay-*
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ment of the perpetual annual interest of any loans that shall be hereafter made by the nation in time of war — this fund to be vested in the hands of a committee of both houses of parliament, and of the king: as joint trustees for the nation; for being supposed to be issued out of the treasury annually, it could no longer be kept in that department without creating a jealousy of ministerial power; and all possible improvements of the public revenue that could be devised, and that should be found productive in time of peace, I would propose to consolidate or incorporate into this fund: if the present peace continues a few years, I apprehend by these means, we should be enabled to make this fund adequate to the payment of the annual interest of any sums we may have occasion to borrow in a future war — “ which the late “ peace has enabled us to carry on as effectually, and with much less expence than the last.” The produce of this fund with the additions that shall be suggested, could not amount to less than two millions, bearing an interest of 3 per cent, which interest amounting to 160,000*l.* “ taxes to that amount, might be redeemed
X 2 “ and

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“ and taken off the people of Great Britain,
 “ in every year while peace continued; and
 “ what nation in Europe would think of com-
 “ mencing war with her, when they saw her
 “ maintaining so formidable a peace establish-
 “ ment,” as the present, “ and with a clear
 “ surplus revenue of two millions with which,
 “ to augment her forces” and to make new
 loans adequate to the exigencies of war.

THE author of *The present state of the nation*,
 proposes to make the sinking fund produce
 “ a clear surplus revenue of two millions,” by
 the following additions to the usual annual
 grants for the peace establishment,

Annual revenue from America	200,000
Ditto from Ireland	100,000
Ditto from Asia, viz. from the East In- dia company	400,000
	total £ 700,000

and by reducing the peace establishment. — As
 to the sum to be drawn from Asia, I think it
 might very politically, and without detriment
 to

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to the company's affairs, be raised to 700,000*l.*
 or even to one million annually, if they conti-
 nue in the flourishing state they are now in—but
 with respect to America and Ireland, the project
 of drawing such revenues from them, will be
 found so impracticable, and the plan itself is so
 full of improbabilities, that I think after these,
 little excuse is wanting for any proposals I may
 submit, with great humility, to the public.

WE will now place to the account of our
 new fund, one million to be yearly drawn from
 Asia, and whoever considers the immense for-
 tunes made by individuals in the India service,
 the profits of the company's trade, the flourish-
 ing situation of their affairs, or the real value of
 their territorial jurisdictions which absolutely
 belong to the crown, cannot doubt their ability
 to furnish this quota, in consideration of an in-
 dulgence rather unconstitutional, on the part of
 government, in permitting such a monopoly of
 so profitable a trade, in a free commercial
 nation. —

SOME other improvements shall now be
 pointed out.—“In 1764, the laws of trade were
 carried

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“ carried into strict execution, and clandestine
 “ importations universally checked, “ so say the
 “ authors of the present state of the nation,”
 to this truth I most heartily subscribe, and hav-
 ing seen the good effects of this measure near
 home, I as cordially recommend, with all due
 deference, the revival and extension of it — nor
 can I proceed on this head without reminding
 you, my fellow citizens and countrymen ! once
 more, — “ that the virtue of the people consti-
 “ tutes the prosperity of a free state,” and assur-
 ing you at the same time, that I could give
 such instances of many of you defrauding the
 public revenue by smuggling, nay and of those
 who eat the king’s and the people’s bread, as
 would astonish you : all laws have hitherto prov-
 ed ineffectual to suppress this evil, which de-
 prives the state of above half a million yearly ;
 and that through the connivance of the very
 officers appointed to prevent it — but can it be
 expected that the subaltern officers of the cus-
 toms and excise will be incorruptible, while
 their salaries are insufficient for the maintenance
 of their families, can it be supposed, that the
 man who has every necessary to provide for
 them

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them in this dear season from thirty pounds per
 annum ; and I think the tide waiters have no
 more ; but suppose it fifty ; will always with-
 stand the temptation of conniving at passengers,
 and at the masters of vessels carrying things on
 shore in their pockets — I will attest on oath if
 called upon, the truth of the following con-
 tracts which I have heard made with the mas-
 ters of vessels in the ports of France and Flan-
 ders, — “ What must we give you captain for
 “ this packet of Brussels lace, it is small and
 “ will go in your pocket, the value about 200 l.
 “ sterling ? — Two guineas — Will not one and
 “ an half satisfy you ? No Sir, I must give half
 “ a guinea to the officer to let me carry it on
 “ shore in my pocket — For these four dozen of
 “ Burgundy ? — Two shillings per bottle ; and
 “ you must allow me to give one dozen to the
 “ officer if I cannot manage it otherwise. —

I HAVE but one remedy to propose to go-
 vernment on this head — increase the salaries of
 the officers, so as they may be enabled to pro-
 vide comfortably for their families ; and then
 make it felony for them to connive at the run-
 ning

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ning goods on shore; they will not then trust their lives in the hands of the masters of vessels, nor of passengers — and take some immediate step to prevent the daily practice below bridge, of sending little boxes, barrels, and hampers on board of outward-bound ships from the houses of the captains, which the officers receive on board, as captains provisions and stores, without any permit from the custom-house; and by this means, the tools and implements of manufacturers are sent abroad, contrary to act of parliament.

THE contraband trade from France, forms a considerable ballance against us, which I have here noticed, according to promise — and I must now mention one vulgar error, which I apprehend still prevails — it is a notion received among the common people, that smuggling is only, as they term it, cheating the king, they suppose therefore, that they only diminish the income of the crown by this illicit practice; and this they make light of — but surely, the whole body of the people should have been informed from the treasury — that our present
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most gracious Sovereign on his accession, was pleased to accept of 800,000 *l* per annum, in lieu of the tonnage and poundage, excise duties, &c. which before constituted the civil list, or revenue of the crown: these articles being by this arrangement, thrown into the aggregate fund, appropriated to the public service, smuggling now, is defrauding the nation, — in the late reign, indeed, it was only cheating the king, as the vulgar term it — the man who practised it then was a base, disloyal subject, he who continues it now, is a common thief, a plunderer of the public. —

BUT we have another ballance of trade against us from France — the importation of a set of worthless rascals before mentioned, who land here penniless, and finally return to the continent with more or less of our specie — charters have been long since granted to corporations, by which, masters in trades, arts and manufactures, are empowered to make young persons free of the corporations of which they are members — to attain this privilege, and also to learn the art and mystery exercised by these
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masters

masters—youths undergo a painful servitude of seven years; and their parents pay an exorbitant apprenticeship fee—their servitude expired—idle fashion prefers the skill of the foreign artist, and the native suffers; but it is said, let the corporations, let the injured prosecute—must they then turn informers to obtain justice; and after all, have the mortification to find those gentry provided with a retaining certificate, denoting them to be the servants of some ambassador, or of some British nobleman?—I humbly propose therefore, the laying a duty on the importation of this dry commodity—if it does not answer greatly, as to the purpose of improving the public revenue, it will at least operate a good effect as a sumptuary law, and let it extend to all foreign servants, artists and tradesmen; it will be idle to urge, that this will be retaliated in foreign countries, for I know of none, where an Englishman can make a fortune, he may spend one indeed, wherever he pleases.—

It pleases me much to find the following remark in *The present state of the nation*, “ it is
“ the

“ the duty of every government to confine the
“ expences of its people within its own domi-
“ nions” — let a duty then, be laid on the exportation of such commodities as idle, capricious, opulent subjects, who will not confine their expences to their own country, but spend their revenues in foreign nations, enriching the foreign tradesman, artist, merchant, banker, &c. while they diminish the consumption of manufactures and provisions at home, this also will operate as a sumptuary law, if it will not improve the revenue; though I am apt to think, our idle gentry will rather pay 10 *per cent.* to be exported, than be obliged to pass the residue of their declining lives, in filthy, foggy England— young gentlemen who travel for improvement must be excepted.—

A DUTY on the exportation of horses is likewise humbly recommended on the same principles, as a sumptuary law; and as a revenue act— whoever considers the price given on the continent for English saddle horses, *viz.* from fifty to three hundred guineas; the immense profit of horse jockeys and their employers, and

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the disadvantages formerly stated with respect to the growth of wheat, will not scruple I think, to fix this duty at *5 l. per horse*, which will certainly bring in more than the duty on "gum senega."

WHEN I proposed to improve the public revenue without laying additional taxes on the people, I must be understood to have meant general taxes, such as affect the husbandman, the manufacturer, the artist, the tradesman, and the labourer, the duties hitherto proposed steer clear of them — so also will the doubling the wheel tax; and I believe no man can doubt the necessity of a sumptuary law with respect to *carriages*, as they are now politely termed — those who can afford to keep them, can certainly bear the augmentation of the tax; those who cannot, will, it is to be hoped, be thereby induced, to lay them down. —

LASTLY, having duly observed the luxury of the times — that all ranks of people are living greatly beyond their incomes; and that posterity stands a foul chance of being impoverished by

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by this prevailing error — and also, that all plans of insurance or assurance of ships, houses, lives, &c. are equally advantageous to the undertakers; and to the public; I see no reason why we should not provide for infants, as well as for our wives by this means — to insure posterity from poverty, will be as beneficial to the state, as the insuring private property from the perils of fire and water, or the providing incomes for widows can be, to individuals; and since the proprietors of the several plans of insurance in this metropolis, have raised considerable capitals by their profits, I hope my plan will not prove less advantageous to government, being calculated at the rate of *25 l. per cent.* in their favour, and of near *40 per cent.* in favour of the subscribers. —

THE whole plan rests upon a supposition, that every parent, in decent circumstances, would willingly retrench some of his superfluous expences, in order to provide portions on easy terms for his children; the calculations on this subject are long and intricate; and are formed on the bills of mortality of Vienna, Paris, and London;

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London; as I have a fortune to seek, these I must withhold, till I am assured of the approbation of the public—indeed the printing of them without it, would have involved me in too heavy an expence—but I find on the whole, that the government may contract to give 100 *l.* sterling, to every child at the age of 21; which shall be registered by the parent as soon as possible after the birth, the parent agreeing to pay an annuity to the government of 3 *l. per annum* till the age of 21— if the child dies in its minority, the annuity to cease, as well as all claim on the government—the annuity to be increased in proportion for children already born, according to their different ages—all persons to be allowed to take what number of policies they please on the life of each child—I imagine people of rank, if they approved the scheme, might be induced to subscribe for 50 policies on the life of a daughter, or on the lives of each younger child, where the family was not large; as it would be a much easier method of providing a portion of 5000 *l.* for each, than by mortgaging estates,— a common tradesman I suppose would insure four children, and

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and take two policies on each child, it will be much easier conceived, that he can spare 24 *l. per annum*, out of the yearly profits of his trade, than that he can take 800 *l.* out of his capital stock, to give them 200 *l.* each, if they all live to attain the age of 21. On a moderate computation I cannot suppose a less sum than six millions to be subscribed at the first setting out;—and it is to be observed, that as children will continue to be born, and to be insured ad infinitum, the fund will be perpetually increasing in the hands of government, and no demand can be made, till the expiration of 21 years—in the mean time, a part of this sum may be applied to the public service on great emergencies, since the subscription for any given five years preceding, any given demand to be made by the survivors of any class of subscribers attaining the age of 22— will be sufficient to pay the claims—it is evident that the faith of the nation must be engaged to make the security good,—for this several ways may be devised hereafter, if the plan, in this its rude state, should merit notice, if it should not, I humbly intreat, that this loose out-line of a voluntary

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tary perpetual aid to government, may not be the means of calling in question, or of condemning too hastily, the rest of this little work, "to err is human, to forgive divine." Independent of this plan, we have seen the necessity of retrenching our expences, that we may be enabled the better to support our present taxes, and to lessen their influence on the price of our manufactures, and on the necessaries of life. — I shall therefore close the whole with stating the annual expences of a working manufacturer and his family in 1734, and the present expences of such a family, including the indulgences they are pleased to allow themselves in these hard times! — and if after all, my honest endeavours to support public credit, and to revive the drooping spirits of my countrymen should prove ineffectual; owing to an ungenerous want of confidence in their rulers, and of real patriotic attachment to their country — so that the long foreboded general bankruptcy must take place, I hope it will not be deemed presumption, if I promise, should this dreaded event happen in my day, to resume the pen, and point out a method of conducting the finances,

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finances, even in that state of anarchy and confusion, so as to retrieve in a short time the credit of the nation.

By an estimate taken in the year 1734, of the annual necessary expences of a working manufacturer in London, for himself, a wife and four children, it appears they amounted to 54 *l.* 10 *s.* 4 *d.* and by an estimate made in the present year 1768, it appears that the very same necessary expences for such a family amounts to 72 *l.* 13 *s.* 5 *d.* $\frac{1}{4}$, owing to the difference in the price of provisions and the other necessaries of life, which we compute, taking one article with another, have risen one third since 1734; some indeed have doubled the price given then, particularly butcher's meat, but other articles, such as common cloathing, &c. are not increased above one fourth; the details of these estimates would be tedious and disagreeable to the reader, but he may depend on the exactness of the computation in gross — of this difference in the annual expence of the whole family, amounting to 18 *l.* 3 *s.* 5 *d.* $\frac{1}{4}$, or one third of the amount in 1734, not 3 *l.*

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can be fairly placed to the account of any taxes laid on the public since that period, all the remainder of this increase is owing in London, to the confluence of people, to the arts of monopolizing, to the rack-rents of land, which obliges the grazier to pay so much dearer for fodder and pasturage; and raises the price of meat. — And I am sorry to add, to the unnecessary idle expences of this class of people amounting to 4 *l.* yearly, which exceeds the burthen of additional taxes, so loudly and lately so indecently complained of — they consist in some families, of contributions to methodist teachers for their own support, and quarterly or monthly payments for seats in their tabernacles, besides hymn books, Sabbath-day, and sacramental preparations, &c. — in other families they take in weekly and monthly, some paltry publications that disgrace the republic of letters, by a low retail sale of literary abilities; sometimes 'tis an History of England, then a Christian Magazine, then a Tyburn Chronicle, and thus 6 *d.* *per* week and *per* month, slide imperceptibly out of the pockets of the industrious manufacturer or artist, and
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where both the methodist contributions, and the taste for reading, unite, it forms an additional expence of 5 *l.* *per annum.* Lop off these excrescences, candidly compare the advanced price of wages, with the difference in the price of provisions occasioned by any taxes since 1734, and you will find on the whole, that the inferior classes of the people in London never had less reason to complain; it is the same thing with respect to the reputable tradesman, his annual expences for a family equal to that of the working manufacturer, with the addition of a maid, amounted in the year 1734, to 315 *l.* but it is hard to say what they amount to now, including the indulgences he chooses to allow himself and family, but I believe 500 *l.* will hardly suffice — he must therefore make 50 *per cent. per annum* of a capital of 1000 *l.* instead of 30, his profits of course must be larger, or he must fail; this makes the consumer pay dearer, and the shopkeeper who retails to him, fixes the blame on the taxes which have advanced the price of the commodity. — “ In a word,
 “ our only hopes of continuing the prosperous
 “ state this nation has enjoyed for some years
 “ past,

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“ past, depend on a general revival of our an-
“ cient frugality, and an abatement of all im-
“ moderate expences both public and private ; a
“ point of such importance to these kingdoms,
“ that our very constitution itself rests upon
“ it ; and since his Majesty by his prudent ma-
“ nagement of his private affairs, sets an ex-
“ ample of œconomy to the whole kingdom,
“ it is not to be doubted that those will most merit
“ his esteem, who are frugal in the administra-
“ tion of the public revenues of the nation.”

F I N I S.