A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND in the COUNTRY,

In Relation to the

NEW LAW

CONCERNING

SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

Cum vitia prosunt, peccat qui rectè facit.

P. Syr.

LONDON:

Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe*, in *Pater-Noster-Row.* 1743.

[Price Six-Pence.]

A

LETTER,

In Relation to the New Law, concerning SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.

SIR,

I AM not at all ſurprized to hear, that you are at a loſs how to account for the Clamour raiſed about a Law, which it is ſaid will ſhortly take Place, for altering the preſent Duties on Spirituous Liquors. You ſay very truly, that the Clamour is great, and give me leave to add, the Cauſe is not very eaſy to be found. But as I would willingly give you all the Satisfaction in my Power, and at the ſame Time maintain what I advanced to you, on your firſt mentioning this

Subject, *viz.* that there is really no Foundation at all for murmuring on this Head, I ſhall ſtate the Matter as clearly as I can, and give all the popular Objections that have come to my Knowledge a due Degree of Weight.

In order to this I muſt obſerve, that the principal Source of our preſent Diſquiet is ſaid to be the raiſing of new Taxes, which was not expected from this Miniſtry, conſidering the Senſe which the People had expreſſed of the Heavineſs of their Burthen under the laſt. To this I think it is added, that as it is a Shame to raiſe ſuch Taxes upon the People, it is much more a Shame to raiſe a Tax by licenſing Drunkenneſs, and giving the Populace leave to drown their Senſes in Spirituous Liquors, provided they pay for this Leave, what the Miniſtry either find or think neceſſary to impoſe. That above all, it is beyond Meaſure wrong to have Recourſe to the odious Method of a Lottery, a Thing ſo deſtructive to Trade, and ſo deſervedly decried by all true Patriots at the Entrance of our Diſputes, which muſt neceſſarily give them melancholy Proſpects of the future Methods of raiſing Supplies, when our Neceſſities ſhall become ſtill more preſſing.

These, ſo far as I have been able to learn, are the principal Motives that ſuch as complain think fit to avow; what ſecret Reaſons they may have for their Diſcontents, or what Ends

Ends they may propoſe to themſelves by reviving a Spirit of Clamour and Detraction, is what concerns themſelves moſt, and what I ſhall not therefore pretend to divine. All I aim at, is to convince you, that what has been advanced on this Subject, with the Face of Reaſon, has only that Face; and that when we come to examine them ſtrictly, the Arguments urged in Favour of the Opinions juſt now ſtated, are altogether inconcluſive, and ſerve only to prove, that there never will be wanting Arguments to juſtify an Oppoſition againſt any Miniſtry and any Meaſures.

But, previous to this, I muſt beſeech you to recollect, that an Adminiſtration is bound to take publick Affairs as they find them, to propoſe to themſelves the beſt Means of conducting them they can think of, and to contrive the eaſieſt and leaſt burthenſome Method for raiſing Supplies, that the Ends for which they are raiſed and the preſent Circumſtances of Things will allow. Attending to theſe Things is the Duty they are called to, and if they diſcharge it faithfully they are Benefactors to the Publick, and ought ſo to be accounted, tho' the Situation of Affairs might be very diſagreeable when they took upon them the Management of them, tho' through unforeſeen and inevitable Accidents, they might grow more and more perplexed, and conſequently, the providing againſt preſent Dangers,

Dangers, and endeavouring to ſecure future Felicity, require ſuch Schemes, and demand ſuch Supplies, as nothing but a juſt Senſe of the Exigencies of the State could induce the Adminiſtration to propoſe or deſire. We may with equal Reaſon exclaim againſt a Phyſician for directing diſagreeable Remedies, or againſt a Lawyer for adviſing expenſive Proceedings, when one thinks the Body, the other the Eſtate, in the utmoſt Danger of being loſt, as pretend to make it a Charge on the Miniſtry, that they have done this or that diſagreeable Thing, when the only Motive to their doing it, was the reſcuing us from ſomething much worſe.

No Man, I think, can doubt that the Perſons now in Power underſtood the State of the Nation, and were as well acquainted with the Senſe of the Nation as any Man in it. If therefore they have increaſed our Debts and our Taxes, there can be nothing more unjuſt than for us to ſuppoſe, without any Proof, that they acted in this Manner without Reaſon, ſince they muſt have been ſenſible that nothing could have been ſo much for their Intereſt as acting otherwiſe. The ſpeedy Concluſion of a Peace, the taking off, or at leaſt putting a ſtop to the increaſe of our Debts, and the leſſning of our Taxes, are Points ſo popular in themſelves, and muſt have been ſo much the Object of a new Miniſtry's Wiſh, that this, at firſt ſight, is an Argument there muſt have

have been very powerful Motives to induce them to take other Meaſures, and to hazard their preſent Peace and their future Reputation, by declining this Road.

BUT are theſe Motives ſo ſecret or ſo myſterious, that ſuch as really attend to publick Tranſactions with a reaſonable Degree of Care could not diſcover them? Was the Loſs of the Balance of Power in *Europe*, was the prodigious Influence of the *French*, was the Diſtreſs of *Germany*, the Danger of *Italy*, the Confuſions of the *North*, and the Conſequences of theſe Diſturbances to our Indepency, Intereſt, and Commerce, unknown to the People? Were their Sentiments, or at leaſt the Sentiments of ſuch as were underſtood to be their Prolocutors, unexplained? Or were theſe Explanations intended to miſ-lead the Miniſtry? No Man certainly will have the Face to avow this, and therefore I wonder that any Man can ſeriouſly take upon him to ſay, he is ſurprized at our Expences.

THAT the Nation is loaded with a heavy Debt, that ſhe groans under the Weight of many Taxes, and that beſides theſe ſhe feels ſeveral other Inconveniences, are very melancholy Truths, and ſuch, I believe, as make not greater Impreſſion on any, than on the Adminiſtration. That in Spight of all this, and in Spight of their Senſe of it, they are obliged not only to ſuſpend all Thoughts of relieving their Country, but alſo to enlarge

large our Debts and add to our Taxes, ought to be considered as a great Misfortune; but I am at a Loss to know, by what Rule in political Logick it can be construed into a Crime; whatever is necessary never can be a Grievance, and the People ought to consider before they complain, that they had before declared necessary, what are now treated as Grievances.

It is no new Doctrine, that the Safety and Welfare of *Great-Britain* depends on the State of *Europe* in general, and the Figure she makes abroad, as well as on the right Management of Affairs and the Vigour of her Constitution at home; both of these ought to be the Care alike of the Administration, and certainly it is no Proof of their Want of Care, that they made a right Choice of that which they attended to first. If they had applyed themselves entirely to the regulating domestick Concerns, foreign Affairs must have been entirely abandoned, the Balance of *Europe* for ever overthrown, and consequently, all their Pains lost and thrown away. Under a just Sense of this they have directed their Thoughts to the setting that right in Time, which the Loss of the present Opportunity would have put absolutely out of their Power. And therefore, their Conduct in this Respect is so much the more worthy of Applause, as it subjects them to greater Inconveniences, than at their setting out in another Road they might possibly have

have met with. There is more of true Patriotism in pursuing the Interests of the People, than in applying to their Passions, or gratifying their Resentments.

When the general System is fully settled, the Security of the several Powers of *Europe* effectually provided for, the ambitious Designs of the House of *Bourbon* defeated, and that Spirit of Liberty, which is not more necessary to the Independency of other States, than to the Prosperity of our own, is restored; we shall then find ourselves in a fit Condition to remedy whatever is amiss in our Government, to provide for the Payment of our Debts, the taking off our Taxes, and the putting publick Affairs in every Respect, into a right Channel. To wish it before is fond and vain, to provide for it then by a steady Attention to those Steps which are necessary to procure it, is political Wisdom and unfeigned Patriotism, whatever may be thought of it, or however it may be decried.

This is the Point on which if we will bestow a little Reflection, we may be satisfied that all Parties have agreed. The *Tories*, who make the Bulk of the present Opposition, charged the Want of attending to it as the greatest of Crimes upon the late Administration: The Friends of the late Administration defended it, by alledging that the *Tories* had put it out of their Power, by the Errors they had committed in making the Treaty of *Utrecht*.

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When the Queen of *Hungary* was attacked in Breach of the Pragmatick Sanction, it was the declared Sense of the Nation, that we were bound by Treaty and Interest to support her. To support her, how? Not ineffectually surely, not in Shew, not by faint unavailing Supplies, that might exhaust us and not benefit her; this could never be the Meaning of that Declaration, for this would be making the Sense of the Nation, Nonsense.

BUT if, on the other Hand, it was our Interest, and appeared to be such in the Eyes of the People, to support this Princess effectually, as the only Means of arriving at that happy State of Tranquillity which has been before described, and which is so necessary to us, to our Allies, and to all the independent States of *Europe*, the concerting proper Means for the attaining so salutary an End, must be true Policy, and speak the Wisdom and Justice of that Administration which makes them its Care. If encreasing our Debts however burthensome, if enlarging our Taxes however grievous were expedient, or, to speak with greater Propriety, were indispensible on this Occasion, then we have no Right to murmur at or complain of them, nor ought we any more to ascribe them to the Ministry, than if they found it necessary to raise or to borrow Money, to repair the Mischiefs done by a Storm, an Inundation, or an Earthquake. It is the Fault of the Times not theirs, whatever

ever they have done has been in a legal and constitutional Method, and therefore as to the Increase of our Burthens, our Clamour is no Proof of their Guilt, but of our own Impatience.

HAVING thus explained the Causes of our Taxes, and fully proved that they lie not in the Schemes of our Ministry, but in the Circumstances of our Affairs, of which none were more sensible than the Party, now stiled the Opposition, before the Persons of whom we are speaking came into Power. Having, I say, done this, I shall next proceed to shew you, that there is nothing wrong, nothing culpable in that Method of raising Money, which has been branded with so many shameful Epithets, and treated as a Violation of Laws, Human and Divine. This, I think, you will the less wonder at, when you consider that in every Country, where speaking has become a Trade, and declaiming been made the Road to Preferment; Men have often valued themselves upon placing Things in false Lights, and thought that Eloquence laudable, which deceived and misled a whole Nation to the Prejudice of their Benefactors. But to come to the Point:

THIS Law for raising a new Duty on Spirituous Liquors, if it carry in it any of the Poison which is charged upon it, must be faulty in abrogating some good Law formerly [illegible], or introducing some bad Practice never

 known

known till now. I will consider it impartially in both Lights, and I do not doubt but I shall be able to shew you that it is not only free from all Imputation of Wrong, but that it is in every Respect as just as it is expedient, and this too, on the very Principles of those, (if Declaimers can be said to have any Principles) who rail and clamour against it.

THE pernicious Consequences which attend a too free Use of Spirits, were long ago very fully, and, I think, very justly exposed. There cannot be a meaner, viler, or more odious Vice than Drunkenness, and perhaps there is no Species of this Vice so fatal in its Consequences, as that resulting from the excessive Use of Spirits. This it was that induced the Legislature to endeavour at eradicating so dangerous an Evil, by a Law, which was understood to be a Prohibition of Spirits entirely to the meaner Sort of People. Yet this Law was certainly very far from being agreeable to our Constitution, or from being so calculated as to reach the End it aimed at. This was foreseen before it passed, the Objections to it were made publick; and Experience has since shewn that they were not ill founded, but that it is very possible for Men who mean well to mistake their own Meaning, and be capable with a very right Intention of doing very wrong Things.

BY

BY this Law, abundance of extraordinary Steps were taken. A great Body of People, for whose Advantage and Encouragement many Laws had been made, were deprived of the Means of exercising their Trade, and to balance this Encroachment on their Liberties, an Inroad was made upon the Rights of all the Corporations in the Kingdom. The summary Power of receiving Informations, judging upon them, and carrying Sentence into Execution without the Interposition of Juries, or any of the usual Forms of Law, was in this Case widely extended, notwithstanding so much had been said but a very little Time before, as to the Danger, and Illegality of such a Practice. This shews how subject all Men are to be hurried away by their Passions, and how easy a Thing it is to sanctify very bad Measures, by pretending to apply them to a good Purpose. It would certainly have been a right Thing, if the drinking of Spirits could have been prevented; yet whether, under Pretence of doing this, it was right to break in upon, and change the Constitution, may be much doubted. But let us see, What were the Effects of this Law?

TO say the Truth, it abounded in Contradictions, and the very Methods laid down in it, were directly repugnant to the Scope of the Law itself. One Instance shall suffice; the prodigious Duty laid upon Spirits, sold in any less Quantity than two Gallons, was in it's

Nature

Nature a Prohibition, was underſtood ſo to be, nay, was declared ſo to be; and yet this Act grants Licences at a very high Rate, to ſuch Perſons as incline to ſell what the Act rendered impoſſible to be ſold. Was this a Contradiction, a Miſtake, or a Snare? It is well known, that immediately upon putting it in execution, ſuch as took out Licences, thought them a Kind of Diſpenſations and acted accordingly, which, at firſt indeed, ſubjected them to ſome Inconveniencies, but by Degrees it was acquieſced in.

We all remember with what Warmth this Law was at firſt carried, or rather attempted to be carried into Execution. We remember the Informations, Judgments, and Commitments of numberleſs Perſons, and, I muſt confeſs, I have often wondered, that among all the Accounts called for upon a late Occaſion, No-body thought of aſking for another, of ſuch Perſons as died in the ſeveral *Bridewells*, in Conſequence of this Law. But, in a very ſhort Space, this Spirit began to decline, it was ſeen that Perjury was as foul and dangerous a Crime as Drunkenneſs, and that none were ſo buſy in this Trade of Reformation, as ſuch as had loſt all Character, and ſtood in Need even of *Bridewell* Reformation themſelves; and thus, after a great Number of hard and needleſs, I will not ſay cruel, Experiments, this formidable Act fell, as all Acts of that Nature muſt do, while we continue

tinue a Free People, into total Diſuſe, and Informations were no more heard of, than before it had the Sanction of the Legiſlature.

I must likewiſe take Notice, that even from the Beginning, this Law was ſo far from effecting a Prohibition, that it really heightened, and ſpread the Evil; for one Diſtiller's-Shop that was ſhut up, ten Places were open for the ſale of Drams, they were cried about the Streets, publickly vended in Markets, People ſat with them by the Road-Side; and tho' they might not be quite ſo frequent as they were in Chandlers-Shops, yet they were as common at the Green-Stalls as Potatoes. Such were the happy Conſequences of this celebrated Law, and ſo effectually was Drunkenneſs driven out, by an Expedient which wanted not only the Civil, but the Military Power to ſupport it.

There may perhaps be many who will be ſcandalized at ſeeing this Law treated ſo freely. But, Sir, Truth ought at all Times to be ſpoken, where the Liberty, the Safety, and the Welfare of this Nation are concerned; I have no Notion of concealing, or even of ſoftening wrong Things, becauſe they are ſaid to be done upon a right Motive. The Inquiſition acts, or pretends to act, upon very noble Motives, the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls; but this does not hinder their doing very wicked, and very cruel Things, which we value ourſelves upon ſeeing and deteſting.

I muſt

I muſt own, I hate all Popery in Church and State, and am for judging of Laws, as I do of other Things, by the Fruits they produce. If theſe are ſour and bitter, I think it may be concluded, that the Root is bad, and then the next Thing to be done, is to dig it up; upon which Principle, I make no Scruple of ſaying, that this new Law cannot be blameable, ſo far as it repeals the old; for certainly in this Country, when a Law is found by Experience not fit to be executed, it ought to be judged not fit for the Statute Book. Penal Laws are never more dangerous, than when they ſleep unrepealed.

I AM now come to the latter Part of my Taſk, and am to ſhew you, that there is nothing ſhameful or iniquitous, in the new Duty, which is to be impoſed by this Law; and this, I muſt confeſs, appears to me a very eaſy Taſk.

IN the firſt Place, Sir, I muſt obſerve to you, that thoſe who are moſt clamorous againſt it, admit, that it will be an effectual Tax, and bring in as much as is propoſed. This, I take to be a very good Quality, for deficient Taxes, not only prove Diſappointments to a Miniſtry, but double Burthens on a People. Yet, What is it that convinces them of this? Is it not the Accounts that have been produced of the Conſumption of Spirituous Liquors, ſince the making the Act to prohibit them; and is not this, the fulleſt Proof, that this

this Act is of no Manner of Service to the Publick. If Spirits are drank, and drank in as great, or greater Quantities than ever, why ſhould not the Nation, which ſuffers ſo much in other Reſpects by this pernicious Practice, avail itſelf of it by a Tax.

WOULD thoſe who are ſo much offended at this Law, have the Miniſtry double the Tax upon Sope and Candles, or heap new Duties upon Sugar? Shall we lay a Load upon Neceſſaries, and make the Wants of the State bear hardeſt on the Induſtrious? I believe, few of our new Patriots would adviſe this. But, What are we to do then? If taxing Labour be oppreſſive, and laying Duties upon Vice infamous, How are we to raiſe Money at all? How are we to retrieve the Glory of *Great-Britain*? How reſtore again the Balance of Power in *Europe*, and thereby gain to ourſelves a Poſſibility of paying Debts, and getting rid of Taxes? How, I ſay, is all this to be done, or after all that we have heard of Publick Spirit, and Publick Juſtice, Who are they that would have this left undone?

BUT it is ſaid, that impoſing a new Duty on Spirituous Liquors, is licenſing the Uſe of them. Why, I muſt confeſs, if they are not drank, the Duty will never be raiſed; but if they were drank before, and will be drank ſtill, What Fault is there in this Law? Will it make the People ſo much in Love with

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the Miniſtry, that they will drink the more of theſe Liquors out of mere Gratitude for the Licence, or will People be the fonder of what they may come at with Eaſe, than they were of what for a while, and but for a little while, they were reſtrained from? Idle Dreams!

THE licenſing or not licenſing the Uſe of Spirituous Liquors, is, in Reality, out of the Queſtion, ſince the Uſe of them was as high after the Prohibition as before it. The placing, therefore, this new Duty in the Light of a Toleration, is giving a wrong Turn to the Thing, and ſubſtituting a malicious Deſign inſtead of the true one. It might be as juſtly ſaid, that granting a Charter to the Sword-Blade Company, was an Encouragement to Murder, as that this Law is in Favour of Drunkenneſs. Warm and haſty People are ſtruck with the firſt Appearances of Things; and becauſe the laſt Act was ſtiled a Prohibition, they immediately fancy that this muſt be a Toleration; though, if they would but take the Pains to examine both to the Bottom, they would be convinced that this is more a Prohibition than that, and that the putting the Preamble of the old Bill before the new, would not have been ſo good a Joke as ſome People thought it.

BY the new Law it will be provided, that Spirituous Liquors ſhall be ſold only in licenſed Houſes, and ſuch Houſes are to be under the View,

View, and ſubjected to the Authority, of the ordinary Magiſtrates, as other Publick-Houſes are, which will remedy that great Evil the other Act introduced, of vending it not only in almoſt every mean Houſe in the Kingdom, but in every Room from the Cellar to the Garret, in each Houſe. This Law too is ſo contrived, as that it may be eaſily executed, and this perhaps is one great Fault found with it, that though it carries in it Reſtrictions, yet they are not inforced by high Penalties, or extraordinary Acts of Severity. As to the Duty itſelf ſtrictly conſidered, it is very far from being a Licence, ſince in Fact it is ſo much Money taken from the Venders of Spirituous Liquors, and the Drinkers of Spirituous Liquors, for the Benefit of the Publick.

WHAT has been ſaid, I think, will ſufficiently ſhew, that the Scope of the new Law has been either miſtaken or miſrepreſented. The Contradiction that ſome People pretend to find in the Intention of the Legiſlature, is, in Reality, no more than a Conjecture of their own; for the Method, into which this Buſineſs is put by the new Law, is more likely to end in a Prohibition, than all the harſh Remedies preſcribed by the old; ſince by the impoſing a new Duty, and granting Licences that may be worth taking out, this Trade will be put under ſuch a Regulation, as will enable the Legiſlature to proceed to

 farther

farther Restraints, and that too, with Effect, whenever they think fit.

If it should be enquired why this was not now done, and a heavier Duty laid at once upon the Still-Head; the Answer is short and easy, that this seeming Remedy would have been none at all; for all who are acquainted with the true State of the Affair, know that if such a Duty had been imposed, Spirituous Liquors would not only have been vended, but distilled privately, and so the Nation would still have suffered as much, or rather more, than ever, besides the losing the Advantage that is now gained to the Public. A total Prohibition is a Thing not to be attained, or at least, not to be attained at once; by Degrees, perhaps it may, in a great Measure, be brought about, and this is the most likely Method for that Purpose. It was thought so by the best Judges, at the Time the former Law was made, but most People were then too warm to bear the Mention of an Expedient; perhaps Time, and the good Effects of the new Law, may open their Eyes, and engage them to confess they were mistaken.

But it may be said, if this be really the Case, how came so great a Clamour to be raised against it? Is it to be imagined, that so many and so wise Heads should be deceived, and only those who contrived, or who abet this Scheme, should see Things in a true Light? Can any Body imagine, that so heavy a Charge

a Charge as that of sacrificing the People, and even their Posterity, to the raising of a new Tax, should be brought against an Administration, without the least Foundation? To all this I can only say, that such Queries plainly beg the Question, and take that for granted which cannot be proved, and the contrary of which has been proved to the Satisfaction of able and competent Judges. In a few Words then, the Case stands thus. The Legislature, upon re-considering what had been done in this Matter, and upon due Proof, that the former Scheme of prohibiting had not answered its End, and was besides attended with many and great Inconveniencies, thought fit to make Trial of another Method, which is a Kind of Proceeding, no Way new or extraordinary, but what has been practised, and practised with Success, in other Cases; Time alone can discover, how far it will be successful in this.

The Argument that has been thought of greatest Weight of any that I have heard mentioned against this Law, is that, which in Reality, is no Argument at all, *viz.* that this new Duty, at this Juncture, serves a particular Purpose, and therefore it cannot be a general Benefit. But how does this appear? Is it absolutely impossible for the Administration to make Use, at a particular Juncture, of a Thing that may turn to general Advantage, or is any Scheme the worse for its serving a present,

preſent, as well as a future Purpoſe? If the repealing the old Law, and putting this Buſineſs on a new Foot, was a Thing proper in itſelf, as moſt People ſeem to confeſs it was, when Applications were formerly made to the Legiſlature for this Purpoſe, did it become leſs fit or leſs neceſſary, when it was found that it might be turned to the Benefit of the State, at a Time, when otherwiſe ſome new Tax muſt have been laid, more grievous, and, perhaps, leſs effectual. It is a very ſtrange, though I confeſs it is no new Thing, to put the worſt Conſtruction upon every Thing that an Adminiſtration does; and, for the Sake of gratifying private Prejudices, loſe all Concern and Reſpect for the Publick.

THOUGH raiſing neceſſary Supplies is the Duty of the Government; or, to explain myſelf more clearly, the propoſing the eaſieſt and moſt feaſible Method of raiſing ſuch Supplies, is the Duty of ſuch as are intruſted with the executive Part of the Government; Our Conſtitution has wiſely prevented their being the Judges of what Supplies are neceſſary; and has as wiſely provided that they ſhould propound only, and not decide as to the Methods by which they are to be raiſed. Have they in this Caſe done any more? Has not this very Law been as freely and as fairly examined as any Thing of that Kind could be; and in Conſequence of this Examination, are

are we not acquainted with many ſtrong and ſubſtantial Reaſons that may be urged in Support of it? Why then ſhould the People be inſtigated to condemn this Act of the Legiſlature, merely becauſe it has ſupplied a preſent Neceſſity? In Reaſon, ſurely, this ought farther to recommend it, unleſs we are determined to have perpetual Suſpicions of the Servants of the Publick, and to believe, that thoſe only have the leaſt Reſpect for the Nation, who are intruſted with the Care of its Concerns. Such Doctrine may contribute to mar Miniſtries, but never to mend them.

YOU will perhaps think that this is very free Language, and that ſuch as are in Power may not think themſelves much obliged to a Man that uſes it. Be it ſo, Sir, I do not write to pleaſe them, but to ſatisfy the People. It is as dangerous a Thing for them to be taught Diſcontent when they are well ſerved, as to be talked out of a juſt Senſe of their Grievances, when, ſuch as ſhould ſerve, oppreſs them. Whoever undertakes to eſpouſe the Cauſe of Truth, ought to be no more afraid of ſpeaking in Favour of an Adminiſtration, than of ſpeaking againſt one. There is a wide Difference between being the Friend and the Flatterer of the People; between courting Men in Power, and courting the Populace at the Expence of Men in Power. He, who is truly a Friend to his Country will avoid both. If we live in an Age of Parties,

Parties, which I think few will dispute we do, it follows, that we ought to hear what is said on all Sides, and after that, pass Judgment as Reason and Evidence directs; for as in such a Situation, there will never be wanting Men of Parts and Abilities to defend or decry any Scheme whatever, so the Prejudices raised by one Set of People, ought to weigh as little with a sincere Patriot, as the plausible Things another Set of People may advance.

It was in this Disposition that I set myself to enquire into this Affair; and, after satisfying my own Scruples, I take that Liberty which we at present enjoy, and, which I hope, we always shall, of publishing the Fruit of my Enquiries. I am convinced that most of the Misfortunes we have met with, for many Years past, has been owing to the unsettled State of *Europe*, and to Factions among ourselves. I am satisfied that these can never be rooted out, or even brought under any tolerable Regulation, 'till the publick Tranquillity is restored and settled upon some solid Foundation; and this led me to believe that the present Administration meant their Country well, by making those vigorous Efforts towards the obtaining this Establishment; and, from the same Motives, I am inclined to think, that since Taxes are necessary, they ought not to be blamed for finding out such Funds as are like to be least grievous,

ous, which, I hope, I have shewn was their Intention in proposing this Law. I am, last of all, to offer you some Arguments why I do not believe that the Lottery, as it is constituted, will be so prejudicial a Way of raising Money, as some People affect to think it.

The usual Objections against Lotteries are, their diverting the Thoughts of the People from their ordinary Employments, locking up, for a certain Space of Time, a great Part of the ready Money of the Nation, which ought to circulate; and by these Inconveniencies disturbing and ruining all Kind of Trade for a Season, which renders them particularly mischievous, in Countries which depend, in an extraordinary Degree, upon Commerce. These Observations are most of them very just, and therefore it is extremely reasonable to avoid, as far as is possible, this Method of raising Money; in which Sentiments, I dare say, most of the present Administration have always been, and have therefore opposed Lotteries upon these Principles, when they thought those Lotteries were given for slight Purposes, or when they believed the Exigencies of the State were not so pressing, but that the Money might have been as well or better raised some other Way.

Yet neither this general Reasoning on the Subject, nor the particular Conduct of Persons in the Administration, in other Instances,

 ought

ought to influence us ſo far, as to think, that Lotteries in all Caſes, and under all Circumſtances are to be avoided at any Rate. There is a wide Difference between uſing them wantonly, or upon every little Occaſion, and having Recourſe to a Lottery in a Time of publick Exigency, when the ſpeedy raiſing of Money is of as great Conſequence to the Publick, as the Money itſelf. In ſuch a critical Conjuncture, a Lottery becomes a proper Method, becauſe it is the only Method by which large Sums can be raiſed in a ſhort Space of Time, and at an eaſy Rate. Under ſuch Circumſtances the wiſeſt Nations have Recourſe to the Uſe of Lotteries, and we know that our ableſt and beſt Adminiſtrations have not been afraid of them, when, as in the preſent Caſe, the general Safety of *Europe*, as well as our own, depended on our vigorous Meaſures, as theſe muſt always do, on the quick raiſing of Supplies. Thus it appears that though a frequent Uſe of Lotteries may form a juſt Objection againſt the Conduct of a Miniſtry, yet it does not follow from thence, that the having Recourſe to a Lottery upon ſome particular Occaſion is an indefenſible Method of raiſing Money.

BESIDES, when we come to conſider the pains the preſent Miniſtry have taken to guard in a great Meaſure, againſt all the Inconveniencies which generally flow from Lotteries, we muſt be ſenſible that they conſidered this

this Project very well before they afforded it their Countenance, and that, by providing ſomany ſalutary Reſtrictions, they have ſhewn how much they have the Good of their Country, and the Care of it's Commerce at Heart. For in the firſt Place, we know that though the Lottery is for no more than 800,000 *l.* yet the Sum raiſed by it for the publick Service is 1,800,000 *l.* which is a Circumſtance in Favour of this Scheme, that never attended any other. But this is not all, the raiſing this Sum in this particular Manner, hinders the Lottery from affecting the Bulk of the People in that Way, which Occaſions moſt of the Miſchiefs attributed to Lotteries; for it cannot be ſuppoſed, that many can be concerned in this Way of advancing the Supply, who are not monied Men, and, conſequently, able to inveſt their Properties in publick Funds, without injuring their Stock in Trade, if they have any. At the ſame Time, that this Care is taken of the trading Part of the Nation, an equal Degree of Caution has been uſed in Favour of the Publick; with Reſpect to the obtaining ſo large a Loan at the very loweſt Rate of Intereſt that could be expected. Upon the whole therefore if we conſider the Exigency which demands this Supply, the Nature of the Supply itſelf, and the Means uſed to procure it; we muſt be convinced, that a Lottery under the Circumſtances we are in, and with the Reſtrictions provided in

 this

this Caſe, is ſo far from being either a dangerous, or a waſteful, that it is, in Fact, the eaſieſt and the cheapeſt Method, that could have been thought of, and all Things taken together, a very happy Expedient.

THE Inſinuations that have been thrown out as to the too early Uſe of a Lottery, when we are but juſt entering into a War, I muſt own, appear to me in no other Light, than that of Fictions contrived on purpoſe to frighten and diſpirit the People, and to hinder them from co-operating with the Government, in that great Deſign, which the Adminiſtration have apparently in View. For do they not take it for granted, that we are on the Point of ruſhing into a general and bloody War, which is ſo far from being certain, that I think it is not at all probable. If we had been ſlower, or leſs vigorous, the *French* and their Allies, might eaſily have reſtored their Affairs in *Germany*, have compleated their firſt Deſigns of cruſhing the Houſe of *Auſtria*, under which muſt be buried the Independency of the Empire, and all the Hopes we have of ſeeing the Safety of *Europe* placed on a ſolid Baſis. But as we have interpoſed in Time, and there is no Reaſon to doubt, that other Powers who have the ſame Intereſt with ourſelves, will purſue them in like Manner, when they ſee that all the Efforts of Faction here, cannot check the Progreſs of publick Spirit, there

there is a Kind of moral Certainty, that ſo good a Cauſe will not fail of ſucceeding, and that the exorbitant Power of a certain ambitious Court, will be at laſt reſtrained within proper Bounds. But, if the Fears ſome People pretend to have, ſhould not prove altogether chimerical, what is it that has hitherto happened, that ought to ſwell them ſo much? Is it the Chearfulneſs of the Parliament in giving, the Eaſe with which the Supplies have been raiſed, or their being raiſed at 3 *per Cent*? No certainly, theſe cannot be the Grounds of their Uneaſineſs, for we muſt then conclude them equally afraid of ſeeing us Diſtreſs the common Enemy, or of not ſeeing their own Country diſtreſſed.

THUS, Sir, I have run through as well as I could, the Hints, and Suſpicions that have been lately thrown abroad, to the Prejudice of ſuch as his Majeſty has thought fit to intruſt with the Management of publick Affairs, and though it be very difficult to obviate all the Doubts, that envious and malicious Men may ſtart in reſpect to publick Tranſactions, eſpecially for a Man who lives at a Diſtance from the Great, and can only collect their Sentiments by a fair and candid Compariſon of their Actions; yet, I flatter myſelf, that what I have laid before you, will be more than ſufficient to efface any Impreſſions the general Clamour might have made upon your Mind, and engage you in ſuch an Examination

tion of the Facts themſelves, as muſt afford you much greater Satisfaction, than it is in the Power of any other Man to give. For Truth, you know, will bear all Lights, and will appear to the greater Advantage, the longer and more ſtrictly it is conſidered.

You may poſſibly wonder, that a private Man ſhould think himſelf at Liberty to enter ſo freely, and fully, into Matters of ſo nice a Nature, and this too in ſo publick a Manner, and yet, I think, you can hardly do this, while you read the News Papers, that are tranſmitted to you every Week. In them, you ſee not only publick Tranſactions, but private Characters handled, without either Tenderneſs, or Decency, and apparently with no other View, than to excite popular Jealouſies, and general Diſaffection. In ſuch a Caſe, one ought to be ſurprized, that many Pens are not employed to diſpel theſe Clouds, and enable the ordinary Sort of People who are moſt captivated by ſuch kind of Writings, to ſee Things as they are. But Malice, and Envy, are active Paſſions, whereas Friendſhip and Good-Will, at leaſt in the preſent Age, commonly reſtrain themſelves to ſuch kind Offices as are exacted from them, without running upon every Occaſion, to the Defence of thoſe they eſpouſe. Your Application on this Occaſion brought me firſt to conſider the Expediency of ſetting theſe Points in a true Light, and therefore, you are in ſome Meaſure

Meaſure accountable for the Freedom I have taken, of which however, I think, I have no Reaſon to be aſhamed, or am in any Danger to repent.

When Things are come to ſuch a Paſs, that merely to have the Direction of publick Affairs is ſufficient, independent of Mens Actions, to expoſe them to the Rage and Reſentment of Party; ſuch as are of no Party, ought not to be ſilent, becauſe as they are to get nothing by publick Confuſion, it is their Intereſt to appear in Defence of thoſe who ſtudy to keep us quiet. The preſent Adminiſtration evidently acts on a plain and uniform Syſtem, of ſettling publick Tranquillity Abroad, and reſtoring it at Home. If they had contented themſelves with ſkipping from Expedient to Expedient, and ſupported their Meaſures, by applying to the Paſſions of the People, and courting the dominant Faction, they might have ſucceeded better for a Time, tho' they muſt have certainly, and deſervedly fallen at laſt. But while they perſiſt in their wiſe and ſteady Conduct, while they lead the Councils of *Europe*, and keep their Country at the Head of her Neighbours, while they riſque their own Peace and Safety for the Intereſt of the Nation, and the Glory of the Crown, it is but juſt that every true Lover of Liberty ſhould vindicate their Merit againſt ſuch as delight in publick Diſturbances, are for confounding all Notions of Right and Wrong, and to

to gratify their private Views, would persuade the deluded People that *Guilty* and *Great*, are synonymous Terms. At least, Sir, these are the Thoughts of,

Your sincere Friend,

Channel Row,
March 7, 1743.

and obedient humble Servant.