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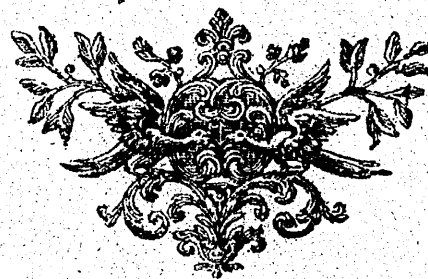
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A N
E X A M I N A T I O N
O F T H E
L A T E C O N D U C T
O F T H E
M I N I S T R Y,

With respect to the

Duties on Tobacco and Wine.



L O N D O N:

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[Price Six-pence.]



AN
EXAMINATION
Of the late
CONDUCT of the MINISTRY.



HERE is nothing more confidently affirm'd, or more generally believ'd, than that a certain eminent *Patriot* is now exalted to the highest Pinnacle of Self-complacency and Satisfaction. I own I am of the same Opinion too; for when a Man has been labouring with all his might for so many Years together, to brew the Tempest, 'tis no wonder that, like the Prince of the Air, he enjoys the Roar, and hugs himself in the Mischief that is the Work of his Hands. When *Alexander* had
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traffick'd with a poor old Fellow for his handsome Daughter, and had laden several Mules with Riches as the Price of her Dishonour; the Father, overjoy'd at his good Fortune, clap'd himself at the Head of the Cavalcade, and rid thro' the whole City, exclaiming, *All this is mine! all this is mine!*

IN like manner the worthy Gentleman above-mention'd, may cast his Eyes on the *City Bonfires*, and please himself with reflecting that 'twas he set them ablaze. Such Prospects one may reasonably suppose are his dearest Treasures, and what he would glory to keep alive, as long as the Fuel would last, or it was his Interest to furnish them with a fresh Supply—As it has been divers times insinuated too, that some in the *Ministry* have been terrified Nightly with horrible Dreams of Prisons, Scaffolds, Axes, &c. 'tis to be presumed our *Patriot* has happier Slumbers, and is entertain'd with delightful Visions of Power, Place, Titles, Stars and Garters, or, at least, of popular Eulogiums, loud Huzza's, and Corporation Speeches—Let him dream on— I fancy he will reap no other Advantage; and while his Honours are imaginary, his Actions will be innocent.

ON the other hand, many People take it for granted that the *Minister* must be weigh'd in the opposite Scale, and that as high as one ascends, the other must sink as low: But alas! they judge only as their *Leaders* would have them, not according either to Truth or Probability:

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bability; A Man, who knows his Enemy, has the less Reason to be afraid of him, and if he knows himself too, may safely set him at Defiance. 'Tis true, a wise Man may be mistaken, but one that is innocent can never be afraid. 'Twould be hard indeed, if, after having stood the utmost Strength of his *Adversary* for so many Years, he should grow apprehensive of it at last; or, after so long an Acquaintance with *popular Clamour*, he should be hollow'd down by *popular Breath*. No; there is little Danger of such Weakness on one Side, or Strength on the other. Opposition has only given him Opportunity to shew himself to more Advantage: We were before acquainted with his Candor and Forbearance, and now with his Fortitude and Resolution.—If any of his *Opponents* have had a Spleen against his Life, or have been ambitious to serve their Country in his stead, they have been told they may put in their Claims whenever they please; that he is not so tenacious of Life or Power, as to be unreasonably concern'd for either; nor so weary of them on the other hand as to part with them, merely because Envy and Disappointment would have it thought he has possess'd both too long.

ON a Review indeed of the late Conduct of the *Opposition*, one need not wonder now that they were so strenuous for invalidating the *Riot Act*, or so resolutely bent on *reforming* the Army. 'Tis plain they were thought

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thought almost insurmountable Bars in Sedition's way, and therefore cou'd not be too soon laid aside. Mr. *Fog's* late Paper in favour of *Assinations* was undoubtedly design'd as a Supplement to that *Scheme*, and none of his artful Vindications will be able to wipe off the Odium he has justly incurr'd for such detestable Doctrines.-- What Impression it has made, and how far it has been justified by the *Mob* to whom it was address'd, will appear by some late Proceedings in the *Court of Requests*, and the *Martyr'd Effigies* that have been so triumphantly committed to the Flames. Whoever those *Political Scare-crows* were design'd to represent, 'tis apparent the same persons, who play'd that *Farce of Assasination*, would make it a real *Tragedy*, if they had Courage to attempt it, or could hope to escape the Punishment due to such infamous Barbarity: Perhaps too there would be as little Dependance to be plac'd on some of the Civil Magistrates for preventing the *real*, as the *mock Execution*. However, it mayn't be amiss to put such *Furioso's* in mind, that if there are those, who, in Defiance of all Laws, and Contempt of Equity and Humanity, should dare to perpetrate so horrid a Deed; there are others, and those not a few, who still preserve the most religious Sense of both, and will be proud to defend the Fame of the Nation, as well as the Person so attack'd, against any open or secret Enemies whatever.

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I FIND I am hurried away by these Sentiments from my original Design; and, instead of remarking only on the late Steps of the *Administration*, I am engag'd imperceptibly in a quite different Enquiry. But I hope I correct my self in time, and what Personalities have already escap'd me, will be imputed to an honest Zeal, that is but too seasonable at the present Crisis, and which I heartily wish there had been no Occasion for at all.

BUT, to proceed, tho' the late *Tobacco Bill* has been set aside by the *Legislature* to a long Day; yet, as it has been so violently oppos'd, and has occasion'd such a Variety of Censures, both before and since; I will endeavour to state the Merits of the Case, with all the Impartiality in my Power, that some Stop may be put to the Growth of Prejudice, and something like Justice may be done to those Gentlemen who espous'd it within Doors, and those who were Advocates for it without.

IN the first Place, therefore, it must be remembered, that this was not originally a *Court Scheme*; but took its Rise from the Grievances, and Discouragements of the *Tobacco Planters*, who finding themselves distress'd in their Trade, and in absolute Necessity of some Relief, applied to the *Ministry* for that Purpose, and that in such strong, and pressing Terms, as would not admit of Neglect, or Discouragement; as
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may be seen at large in their *Case*. Every body knows what Importance the *Plantations* are of to the Trade of this Nation, and that no Misfortune whatever can afflict them in any remarkable Degree, but must in the End affect us. I may very justly add, that every Step towards the improving Commerce there, is an Advantage to our selves, and, however they may be disesteem'd now, they will one day or other appear to be of the highest Importance even to *Great Britain* her self. The *Plantations* are indeed no other, but detach'd Members of our own Body, and if we suffer them to languish, or mortify, the Disease, in the End, will seize upon the Vitals themselves, and then the Art of the Physician will come too late. Can any one wonder then, that proper Notice was taken of so just, and seasonable Application? Will any unprejudic'd Person complain, that Justice was attempted to be done to a *Colony* that has been so serviceable to the publick Revenue? Could we divest our selves of our Interests, and Passions, I believe this would be so far from being the *Case*, that we should reflect the highest Blame on any Administration that should turn a deaf Ear to so just and reasonable a Request. I am sure, many of the Persons in the *present Opposition*, would be the first to make use of such an Opportunity to the Disadvantage of those in Power, and would be as clamorous for Redress then, as they are busy to prevent it
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now. But 'tis not *Right*, and *Wrong*, that so much seems to be the Object of their Attention, or the Source of their *Patriotism*, as new Pretences to cavil with the Government, and fresh Stratagems to recommend themselves more to the People. If this had not been really the *Case*, why did they *oppose* only, and not *amend*? I suppose every body will allow, that, if the *Plantations* were injur'd, they ought to have some Remedy: If therefore this was not properly calculated for that Purpose; or if the Good meditated for them was hurtful to others, why did not these sage *Patriots* contrive some other way that would preserve both, without being hurtful to either? Why did they not refine on what is thought the *Ministerial Scheme*, and prove themselves as superiour Masters in *Politics*, as they would have the World believe? This would be doing themselves Honour indeed, and making their *Patriotism* of some Use to Mankind. But if it will only serve to create Dissensions, multiply publick Mistakes, and aggravate national Misfortunes, 'twill very ill deserve that Character, and rather imbroil than assist Mankind.

SUPPOSE then, the *Administration* was indeed mistaken, with respect to this *Scheme*; suppose it was not well calculated to remedy the Grievances complain'd of; something sure was due to the Intention: Or, at least, there could be no Plea for inflaming the Spirits
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of the People so furiously against it, as if a Contract had been made with the Emperor of *Morocco*, to make them and their Children *Bond-Slaves* for ever.

BUT the Application of the *Virginia Merchants* was not the only Motive for bringing in this Scheme. The Government was aware, that many *Frauds* were practis'd under the present Regulation of the Customs on Tobacco, which were greatly detrimental to the *Revenue*, and the *Fair-Trader* too: Some of these are so notorious, that a Detail of them is needless; and others so private, that they are known only by the Effects. 'Twas necessary for those in the *Ministry* to endeavour at preventing this Abuse, and set all the trading Part of Mankind on a Level. That this was their Duty, with respect to the Government, is manifest, because every Tax that is laid on the People, is impos'd to answer some particular publick Want, and is rated no higher than is necessary for that Purpose, or the Nature of the Commodity will bear: If therefore by Misfortune, or Fraud, there should be a Deficiency in the Fund, a Supply must be found out elsewhere, and every such Supply, however adequate to the Exigencies of Government, has ever been made the Subject of Debate, and Clamour; and therefore requires to be prevented with all imaginable Precaution. With respect to the *Trading Interest*, 'twas their Duty, because all, who are faithful

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ful in answering the publick Demands, deserve the greatest Tenderness that the Publick can possibly shew them. And to do this most effectually, is to prevent any collusive Methods of importing Goods, without answering the legal Duty impos'd on them. For whoever is possess'd of such uncustom'd Goods can plainly afford them cheaper, than he who adds the Duty to the original Cost; and the Buyer is always satisfied with a Bargain, without enquiring the Honesty of the Vender.

CONSIDERING therefore all these Circumstances attentively, and that no new Tax was to be impos'd; that the old one was reasonable in it self, and as such always complied with; that the Method of collecting it was only to be alter'd, without any additional Charge; that this Method was calculated at once to prevent Frauds and increase the Revenue; considering all these Things, I say, there is much Reason to wonder why it has been oppos'd so *violently*, particularly by the *Merchants*, whose Interest, in the main, it seem'd so well calculated to preserve—I think 'tis apparent from hence, there is room to conclude, they are not the most *impartial Judges*; but this is a Point too tender, it seems, for any Writer to meddle with, and notwithstanding all the notorious Liberties that have been taken by the *Malecontents* with the Persons and Characters of the *Ministry*, none of their Friends must dare to

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recriminate for fear of being burnt in *Effigy*; or at least, being pointed at as an Enemy to *Liberty* and *Them*.

BUT, granting this Scheme, so beneficial to the Revenue, *say some*, where's the Necessity of establishing it now? As we have done without it hitherto, why can't we continue to do so? And why just at this Juncture must we submit to the Alteration? To this I reply, first, that the longer an Abuse has continued, the more it demands to be redress'd; and if the Government has been injur'd by the Method of collecting it, Justice cannot take place too soon. Secondly, Tho' there may be no State Distress to demand an Addition to the Revenue upon the whole, yet it may be most just, and equitable, to improve one Part of the Revenue, in order to remit another that was more grievous and burdensome. This, as far as I can learn, was the only Design of the purpos'd Innovation, and of course, was so distant from an Oppression, or a Design to lessen the Liberties of the Subject, that it was calculated to answer directly opposite Purposes, and would have reflected national Honour on the *Projector*, if Prejudice, and Interest, had not conspir'd to render it abortive.

SHOULD it be ask'd here how any truly laudable Design, could meet with so fierce a Dislike, or create so many Enemies? I answer; the *Party*, that has always distinguish'd it self by running counter to the Go-

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vernment, long since resolv'd to prepare the Minds of Men to dislike it, even before the Particulars could be known; and seem to pique themselves on making it the Means of Mischief. This will appear more plain, when 'tis recollected, with what Art they open'd themselves to the *Merchants*, in the Beginning of the Winter, and by what Series of Adulation, in a most particular Manner, they courted their Favour. From the Moment this Warning-piece was let off, I knew they had some Design a foot, which 'twas necessary the *Trading Interest* should support; for they neither flatter nor accuse, without a View to their own Ends, and both Merit and Justice are equally seldom the Subject of their Invektive or Applause. It was apparent, in these *Papers*, that the Ground of Prejudice was laid against the Government and in their own Favour, and their subsequent Discourses on *Excises* riveted the Interest their Flatteries had begun. 'Twas Lure enough for the *Merchants* to be told, their Liberties and Properties were both at stake together, and had there been any Truth in the Alarm, there would have been Reason enough to put them on their Guard. But, as I said before, the very Hint of Danger was sufficient, and, after the Deceit had thus far seduc'd them, 'twas easy to do the rest.

THE *Opposition* desir'd no better Plea, than to have the Weight of the Commerce

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in their Scale; 'twas the Means of carrying their Popularity to what length they pleas'd; and, on the other Side, as the *Merchants* judg'd themselves aggriev'd, nothing could be more serviceable to their Cause, than to have the *Patriots* for its Support. Thus by a Coincidence of Circumstances, they help'd to support each other, and the printed Scruples and Objections of the one, were circulated in private Conversation by the other.

NEITHER was their Success thus far secur'd without the most artful Preparation imaginable: A *general Excise* was first the Subject of their dissembled Terrors; and, when the contrary was too manifest for them to play off that Bug-bear any longer; then truly, 'twas the Weight of *their* Reasonings, and the Credit of *their* Characters, that dissipated that Storm; and what would be sure to miscarry in the Lump, *we were told*, was to be introduc'd piece-meal. Accordingly, the *Tobacco* and *Wine Bills* were represented as but two Heads of this *multi-form Monster*; and the Nation was frighten'd into the Belief, that the whole Body was behind. 'Twas owing in a great measure to this, that so many were inveigled into the Snare, for to my certain Knowledge, there were abundance, who had no Objections to these Bills, till they were taught, they were introductive to many more of the same Nature.

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THIS was not all: Ways and means were found out to stir up the same Disaffection in most of the *trading Towns* in *England*. The same Spirit that prevailed here, was commission'd to take its Progress through the Nation, and make all the Profelytes in its Power, by all the Arts and Stratagems that could influence the Minds of mistrustful Men; who were mislead to be more concern'd for a small Pittance of their own private Properties, than the Peace and Happiness of the whole Community.

To this was owing all the *Rhetorical Epistles* that were *return'd* by every Post to the *Members*, in all the different Styles of *petitioning, expecting, advising, instructing, insisting*, and almost *commanding*; as if the *supreme Representative of the Nation* had chang'd Places with the *Corporation Courts*, and instead of ruling themselves, had only to hear and obey. 'Tis not for me to determine how far this Practice interferes with the *Constitution* in general, or the Privileges of the *House of Commons* in particular. I can only in my private Capacity, presume to insinuate, that it seems inconsistent with true Policy, and can only open a Door to Anarchy and Confusion.

FOR either the *Members* of that August Assembly are intrusted with the Commonwealth, or they are not; *if they are*, the People can have no Power but what they have already deputed to them, and of consequence

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sequence must abide implicitly by their Decisions; or if they are not, the Application itself is needless and ineffectual, and will prove rather an Insult to their Weakness, than an Appeal to their Power. Either way such numberless Inconsistencies result from so rash a Procedure, that 'tis to be presum'd no true Patriot will venture to encourage it, or good Subject consent for the future to so dangerous an Innovation. An Innovation that may be attended with worse Consequences, even than that formidable Hydra a General Excise it self!

SHOULD the late Remonstrances ever be deem'd of Authority enough to become a Precedent, the Legislative Power must necessarily undergo a very strange Alteration: In effect, every Freeholder in England would put in for his share of Government, and not a single Law go down that had not the Sanction of the many. Experience will teach us how difficult it is to temper Acts of Power to every Palate; and, if room is left for the People to except, or dislike, or amend the Resolutions of the House of Commons, I don't know but in time the West Country Colliers may plead Privilege for destroying the Turnpikes, or insist on passing Toll-free in spite of an Act of Parliament to the contrary.

To leave it in the Power of the People to influence, or over-awe a House of Commons, is tacitly to allow them the Superiority, which is little better than erecting a fourth Estate

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Estate to controul the other three, or perhaps let in the rude Tide of Democracy to destroy them all.

I do not know whether the Inlet of this levelling Principle is a real Tenet of our modern Patriots political Creed; or whether 'tis favour'd by them only at present to answer a particular turn; but sure I am, that if 'tis suffer'd to grow into a Custom, 'twill be a Thorn in the Side of Power, that no strength will be able to remove; and give such a Wound to the Bosom of Peace, as no Art will be cunning enough to heal.

And yet this is the Legacy these Knights Errant for Liberty have thought proper to leave us; this is the favourite Spirit they have taken such Pains to conjure up; and yet, if ever they should come into Power, according to their Wishes; this very Spirit, like Cromwell's Adjutors, will defy their most subtle Expedients to lay. I have heard one of the Rosicrucians had a Demon for a Valet on condition he kept him continually employ'd; for on the first Moment's Recess he was to tear his Master in Pieces. I need not make any Application: 'Tis obvious to every Understanding, and my Readers will make what Use of the Hint they please.

Now casting our Eye back on the different Steps that have been successively taken, to form, manage, and unite all the detach'd Parties in the Kingdom; the disaffected with the Merchants; the Merchants with the Corporations; the Corporations with their Representatives;

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representatives; is it any wonder that Prejudice grew so strong, or that the Tide of Popularity run so violently against the Proposals of the Ministry? No certainly: Had it been ever so notoriously advantageous to the Nation in general, and prejudicial only in Name, to any Sett of Men, who had Interest enough to bias the Multitude in their Favour, it would have met with the same Fate. The People, at some Periods, take a delight in opposing themselves to the Government, and are never happier than when they seem to have them at an Advantage.

I must confess ingenuously, I am not one of those who *run with the Multitude to do Evil*, neither have I such Complaisance for their Opinion, as to esteem it infallible. Perhaps were they left to themselves to judge from the Simplicity of their own Hearts, apart of Interest and Passion, they might correct one another's Mistakes, and blunder upon Truth in the End. But, when they are made but a Pipe for Disaffection to *play upon*; when their Prejudices, Humours, and inherent Love of Change, are made the Rests, Hopes, and Ventiges, as *Shakespear* has it, to found out Uneasiness, and modulate Discord into Harmony; I can by no means approve the Musick, or join my Voice to the Concert.

I know there are some who will have it, that the Majority are always in the Right; that is, when they themselves make a Part of the Number: But, in my Opinion, nothing can be more erroneous than this Sentiment, and I can refer to many Matters of Fact,
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to justify this Censure. When the late Dr. *Sacheverel* had slip'd through the Noose of the Law, and rode in triumph through the Kingdom, with the *Highb-church Mob* at his heels; 'twas as unpopular to blame his insolent Behaviour then, as to hint a Word in Favour of the *Tobacco Bill* now; and yet Time has worn off that stupid Prejudice, and a Man may venture to speak Truth at last. In the *South-Sea Year*, 'twas the current Belief, that to be in that *Company's Books*, was to possess the Philosopher's Stone; and such who had Prudence enough to forbear the bait, durst hardly avow their Continence, for fear of being condemn'd among the Number of those who had not Spirit enough to make their Fortunes. These two Examples are sufficient to prove, that even the *infallible Multitude* may err; and tho' it may be esteem'd almost High Treason to say so, with regard to their present Temper, one may presume to take that Liberty with the past. In short, the Conduct of the People to their Governours, on all remarkable Transactions, exactly resembles the Behaviour of a young Girl to her Lover: First she is fond, then jealous; and last of all, troublesome. Indeed this may be making a little too free with our *Political Mistress*, since she is in such *high keeping* at present; and 'tis odds, if Mr. *D'Anvers* her *Bully*, does not call me to an Account for it. But, if he does, 'tis my Comfort, I am ready to give him Satisfaction at any time.

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It may be ask'd here, that since the People oppos'd these *Bills*, more out of Humour, than Judgment; and since the *Ministers* were convinc'd that they were calculated for the publick Profit, why *they* were not prosecuted with Resolution, as *they* had been projected with Wisdom? Or why was the intended Good so long post-pon'd, as to appear absolutely laid aside? To this I answer, that it has always been my Opinion, the Resolutions of Parliament were ever justified by their own Authority; and since the Wisdom of the Nation has so determin'd, I think we have nothing left us but to suit our Minds to theirs. However as these Questions frequently recur, and we have the Liberty of speaking, and writing freely, I will presume to guess at some of the Motives that might influence the Suspension of this important Affair, and I hope it will be remembered in my Favour, that the Questions are a much greater Insult to the Authority of the House, than my endeavouring to enter into their Views, in order to return a reasonable Answer.

In the first place, then, it appears to me to have been post-pon'd on the same Principles it was first form'd, *the Good of the whole*. For, tho' 'tis plain, the Revenue would have been increas'd by this Scheme, in such a proportion as had inabled the Government to have dispens'd with more burdensome Taxes, as well as prevented Frauds, and put the whole Trade in Wine or Tobacco on the same Foot-
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ing; yet even these Advantages, great as they are, ought not to be bought too dear: And if the People took it into their Heads to be displeas'd in the wrong Place, yet so much Complaisance is due to their Opinions, as not to put the publick Peace to the Hazard, or insist even on *serv'ing* them by Measures they dislike. In the next place, it may be remembered, 'tis only post-pon'd, and not absolutely laid aside: Perhaps this breathing Space is indulg'd to the Prejudices of the People, that they may grow cool in their Examinations, that they may be better satisfied in the Views of the *Ministry*, and be assur'd by their Conduct, that they had no Designs on their *Liberty*, as has been so often, and so falsely surmis'd. Again, this very Suspension seems to me the strongest Proof of the Integrity of their Views; for, if they had no Regard to the Rights, or even the Humours of the People, why was it not carried? 'Tis plain by all the Divisions, that it was in their Power within Doors, and, if we may believe the *Craftsman's* Declamation on *Standing Armies*, they could have secur'd it without. If therefore they were thus strongly supported both by Law and Arms, and had any arbitrary Schemes to pursue, why did they not put them in Execution? It could not be Fear that deter'd them; no, Mr. *D'Anvers* says, the Troops are such a Check on the People, that they cannot assert their Liberties, even in case they were invaded; and, if not Fear, sure
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it must flow from a more beneficent Principle, a real Tenderness for the present Mistakes of the People: If from so beneficent a Principle, how is it consistent with the many Charges that have been laid against them for illegal, and arbitrary Schemes? If the *Tobacco*, and *Wine Bills*, were in any Degree contrary to the Constitution, how comes it about, that those who have Power in their Hands don't make use of it to establish them? Or how comes it about, that the *Ministry* can be Friends and Enemies to the People, at the same Time. I must own, these are Contraries I don't know how to reconcile; and, till I have much stronger Proofs of the Malignity of their Intentions, than are witness'd by these *Bills*, I must, and will conclude, that the suspending them must for ever silence all such Slanders for the future, and give them as good a Title to *Patriotism*, as any of those who have usurp'd the Name.

'Tis true, many Persons are so far influenc'd by the popular Cry, that they forsake the Cause they first engag'd in, and heartily approv'd; perhaps they might persuade themselves, they saw something like Reason in the Arguments that were offer'd against the *Bill*; but many more, I am apprehensive, fall off for want of Firmness to stand against the Torrent, or for fear of having *invidious Distinctions* tagg'd to their Names. Slight as these Incidents may at first sight appear, I am morally assur'd, they

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they were, generally speaking, the only Motive that turn'd the Scale, and not the other, and serious Determination of the Mind, that the *Bills* were really injurious to the publick Good.

YET notwithstanding all the new Accession of Profelytes, which were added to *Opposition*, on this Occasion; notwithstanding the most pressing Instances to reject the *Bill* intirely, there still remain'd Friends enough to the *Ministry* to over-rule that Motion, and defeat whatever was intended to be the Consequence; an undeniable Proof, that the Persons in Power made this Suspension of the *Bill* a Compliment of their own, to the present Disposition of the People; and if they themselves had inclin'd to have carry'd it, they would have found as little Difficulty in gaining their Point, as deferring it to what is call'd a *long Day*.

THE Circumstance therefore of suspending it, I have always look'd upon one of the most lively Expedients that could have been imagin'd: In the first place, it was a Proof, as has been said before, of the sincere Concern of the *Ministry* for the Inclinations of the People; secondly, it prevented the Triumphs of the *Opposition* in setting it intirely aside; and thirdly, it left a Door still open for the Revival of the *Scheme*, when Party-spleen, and Self-interested Views are better reconcil'd to the publick Good, and perhaps for the *Bills* themselves to be more successfully adapted to the Business of the State, and the Humour of the Nation.

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WHAT then is become of the Trophies, which certain Persons flatter'd themselves with on this Occasion? And where are the mighty Acquisitions, which result to the *Patriots* from their pretended Victory? Why truly there are some ingenuous enough to confess, they are sorry the *Bills* did not pass, and that the Fires they had artfully kindled all over the Nation, should be extinguish'd with so little Mischief. They had great Hopes, this was the happy Crisis they had so long waited for, and that the *Spoils of the Field*, at least, would witness to their Conquest. But Disappointment is an old Acquaintance of theirs, and is like to continue so, tho' they are so much displeas'd with its Company.

THEY amuse themselves indeed with what they call a powerful Consolation; the Hopes of making the *Ministry* odious for only proposing what was disagreeable to the People, tho' 'twas withdrawn as soon as that appear'd. If this should really happen to be the Case, I don't know any thing more ungenerous or unjust; neither can any Circumstance in the World set a *Minister's* Conduct in a more critical and injurious Light. For how should he know the Sentiment of the People, without first presenting his Thoughts for their Approbation? or how could he foresee, that a Scheme truly calculated for the mutual Advantage both of Government and People, could reasonably give Offence? If he persever'd in his Measures, after he was sensible

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how displeasing they were to the Publick, and their Consequences should prove as fatal in the Execution, as they were at first describ'd; 'twas then but time for the Hatred, and Resentment of the Publick to take place. But when he testifies so great a Regard for the national Voice, as to drop his Pursuits, on their Remonstrances, especially when the Majority was in his Favour, surely we can do no less than absolve him of any premeditated Design to hurt us, and, charitably, at least, suppose his Intentions were honest, tho' his Sentiments and ours did not happen to agree.

SOME People, forsooth, will have it, that Mr. *Danvers's* learned Essays on Taxes, should have been understood by the *Ministry*, as the Sense of the People, and therefore they should have been sufficiently on their Guard. I think nothing can be more weak than this Assertion; for, if the Government were to vary their Measures according to his fluctuating Politicks, there would be no End to their Mistakes; besides, must every pert *Demagogue* hold the Fescue to the Administration, and point out his narrow Conceits, as the only Method to make a Nation happy? Is it reasonable; nay, is it possible, that those at the Helm should wait for the *Craftsman's* Instructions, before they adventur'd to make any Alteration in Affairs of State? At this rate, Power will change Hands indeed, and a Writer of Libels on *Record*, would officiate instead of the *Privy-Council*.

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I MUST needs say, great Deference and Regard is due to the Peace and Happiness of the People, and 'tis the Duty of a *Ministry* to consult both to the utmost of their Power. But, on the other hand, I know nothing more dangerous than the making Concessions to their Demands; or preferring their Humours to the real Welfare of the State. Suppose their first Remonstrances are made with such Temper and Decency, and seem to have such an Air of Reason to recommend them, that 'tis judg'd most advisable to comply with them; this Mildness, and Easiness of an Administration, is so far from rendring them less troublesome for the future; and they themselves attribute so little to the Lenity of the Government, and so much to their own Importance, that they increase their Clamour, and, under the Pretext of new Grievances, foment new Disorders, and wrestle with the sovereign Power for his own Authority.

I AM not inclin'd to think this is the Case at present, but it may not be unnecessary to touch on the Possibility of such a Conjunction, that it may serve as a Caution to the present Age: What has happen'd in one Reign may happen in another, and 'tis notorious, that formerly too large Concessions to the People have been the Overthrow of the Throne. What makes this Caution the more reasonable is this: The Success of the *Merchants*, with respect to the *Tobacco Bill*, may serve as a Snare to mislead others into Applications,

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Applications, and keep up a Spirit of Discontent, that may do more Mischief than any body is at present aware of. Let me add, that we have certain busy Demons among us, who lie in wait to blow the first Sparks of Trouble into a Flame. No one can doubt of this, who regards with any Attention, what has been already hinted, with respect to the regular Scheme that was laid, to render the late *Bills* abortive. And, if such a mutinous Disposition could shew it self, in the first Appearance of a Struggle between the *Ministry* and the People; if the Constitution it self could receive such a Blow by the Instructions, I could almost say, Threats of the Boroughs to their Representatives, and such was actually attempted on the highest Personages, who happen'd to be obnoxious to the Populace; what might we expect from a Continuance of this Mood? And when the Deluge was afloat, who would tell us when it would be staid?

SURELY we are not so in Love with this *false Patriotism*, as to be dup'd by it to destroy our selves; nor so eaten up with blind, and preposterous Zeal, as to sacrifice the whole, to preserve a part, and that too not in any visible Danger: However we may flatter our selves, there is no Affair in Life of greater Consequence, than the opposing or defaming a Government. Many Men, by ridiculous and groundless Apprehensions, have brought themselves in real Dangers, and many Governments, that have been at-

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tack'd without Reason, have not hearken'd to Reason in doing themselves Justice. I don't believe we are in any such Danger from ours; but wise Men should always guard against the worst, and in being indiscretely concern'd for our selves, may make a real Sacrifice of our Posterity.

IN all popular Discontents I have observ'd some great and eminent Person is always singled out, to be the Butt of the publick Resentment; and he is generally one of the Sovereign's most faithful Servants; one who has been the most vigilant for his Interests, and whose Services have been attended with the most Success. Such is the Case before us in the most remarkable manner; and I am sorry to observe, that, in the warmest Expressions that Prejudice uses against him, he is upbraided most with his Care and Assiduity in establishing and supporting the Revenues of the Crown. I will not pretend to say from what Views he is so eternally attack'd on this Head; but I dare be sure he is still pleas'd with having done his Duty, and that let Disaffection rail as loudly as it will, he may always depend on the Countenance and Protection that is due to his Fidelity.

THE *King* has hitherto upheld those that were attach'd to him with the utmost Firmness and Resolution, and there is not the least Probability that his Majesty will withdraw his Favour as long as they continue their Zeal for his Service.

A Minister in *England* has indeed a most ticklish

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ticklish Situation; oblig'd to be obedient to his Prince, and at all times liable to the Censure and Maledictions, if not the Prosecution, of the People. Hardly ever rewarded with Praise for his best Actions, and certain to have his worst aggravated and condemn'd; but seldom sure of his Friends, and always expos'd to his Enemies: In short, his is a Station, wherein 'tis next to impossible to please his Master and his Country together, and yet the Hatred of either threatens him with Ruin. So peculiarly nice and delicate is this Office, and yet so insensible do we seem of the difficulties which must attend the Possessor, that there is scarce a Coffee-house Declaimer in Politicks, that does not think himself abundantly qualified to fill it with Address, and would undertake to please all Parties, where so many have fail'd before him. 'Tis to this Self-conceit that our Severity of judging the Actions of Ministers, is owing; and as we believe it so easy a Task to govern, we wonder how any thing can be amiss. Indeed those who are at a distance from Power, form but very short Views, and judge by very narrow Notions of the intricate Nature of State Affairs, and yet in this Twilight of Knowledge do these *Political Owls* presume to give their Judgment, and as confidently too, as if the medium was as faithful as the open Day.

To say the Truth, we are started up into a Nation of Statesmen and Criticks together, and there is scarce a Footman among us, who does

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does not flatter himself he has Talents to reform the Stage, the Press, and the Nation. I should be very far from discouraging the Growth of true Knowledge and Politeness; but the Affectation of either is intolerable, and when we see what wretched Pretences are made to each of them in turn, it puts Patience to the severest Tryal.

THIS Comfort however results from undiscerning, and prejudic'd Censure, that tho' 'tis noisy and scurrilous for the time being, yet 'tis soon over, and is remember'd no more. Beside, even while it lasts, 'tis like a drunken Man fighting in the dark, it deals about its Blows at random, and 'tis by chance that any one lights on the proper Place.

I DON'T pretend to enter into the Heart of the *Minister*, whose Name and Character, in Scripture Language, have been so long given to be *buffeted by Satan*; but if we may judge by Appearance, he has no other Concern on him, but that his honest Intentions have been so widely mistaken, and the People run so obstinately counter to their own Advantages, that he should dissent from any wise, or upright Man, and his Foes take Advantage of their *Popularity*, to insinuate that the Interest of the *King* and his Subjects are not the same.

WITH respect to the common Cry, when 'tis loudest it can hardly reach him; or if it does, it must be heard only to pity some, and despise the rest. He is very well convinc'd they *know not what they do*, their
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Heads and Hearts are in the Hands of their Leaders, and, whatever Mischief they may really do, they can't be accus'd of *designing* any. 'Tis Crime enough in their Opinion to be great, but unpardonable to continue so long together. Change of Hands in State Affairs, is Employment for Rumour, and all her Tongues; the *new Man* is always their Favourite; but as soon as they are weary of him, they *bis* him off like the former.

IF he had any Reason to be concern'd for the Safety of his Person, I presume he knows how to apply the Fable of the *Civet-cat*, and appease his Hunters with less than his Life; or if he was too fond of Power to part with it on any Terms, he need not consult his Enemies for the means to preserve it. On the whole, both his Power and Life are in more merciful Hands; and, while they are, he cannot be uneasy for either.

THUS have I made use of the common Freedom, that is every *Englishman's* Right, in publishing my Sentiments on the late Transactions, with respect to the *Tobacco* and *Wine Bills*, and whether they are right or wrong, true or false, hold my self excus'd on the Principles of Liberty, for committing them to the Press. This I am oblig'd to mention, because of the many Reflections that have been thrown on such Writers who engag'd on this Side of the Question, and the arbitrary Treatment the Writings themselves have met with only for being unpopular,

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pular, not unjust. It has long been a favourite Point of the *Antiministerial Party*, that *Government* it self is not *sacred* from the publick popular Enquiry and Censure, and surely then there is equal Indulgence to be allow'd to those who write in its favour.

I AM very sensible, that 'tis not in the Power of Words to reconcile the different Conceptions of Men, or reduce them all to the same Standard of judging; but 'tis possible however to clear up Facts, and remove Calumnies: This is all the Liberty I contend for, and it will be very hard if a Man should be condemn'd for doing common Justice. Suppose any Person should dislike my manner of Reasoning, or dissent from my Conclusions, he is welcome; I don't desire to force him; but he has no need to *burn my Papers*, to prevent any body else.

IN a word; if I have mistook either Persons or Things in the preceding Pages, I have the Satisfaction however of intending well; and, if there are Numbers who should slight or condemn my Arguments, or my Cause, there are as many to justify them, both by their Words and Actions: Such too whose Understanding are known to be eminent, and their Characters unspotted; and, to appear in such Company, can be no Disgrace, particularly to me who has nothing but his Zeal and his Sincerity to recommend him.

F I N I S.