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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
HONOUR and PRIVILEGES
OF THE
Commons of *Great-Britain.*

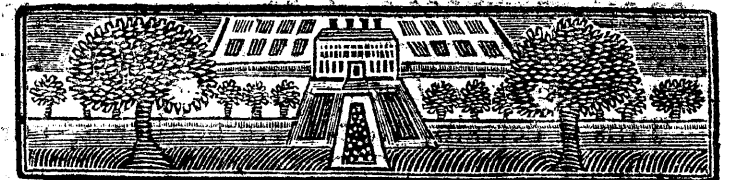
With the CASE of
PLACE-MEN IN PARLIAMENT,
Confidered Impartially.

tantumne ab re tua est otii tibi
Aliena ut cures ————— ?
Homo sum. ————— Ter.

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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
HONOUR and PRIVILEGES
OF THE
COMMONS of *Great-Britain, &c.*

IN the several Disputes arising from some late and present Occurrences, concerning (*as they are stiled*) Place-Men in *Parliament*, these few, as leading Questions, are chiefly considerable. How far is that an Evil in itself? How far may it be so by Accident? In *either Case*, What Remedy does it admit of? If, in itself, it is really no Evil, so far there is nothing to be said against Place-Men. If, by *Accident*, it may be, but yet in the Nature of Things, that *possible* Evil is not to be avoided by any Caution

tion or Contrivance of *Law*; it is in vain to urge a Complaint about it, at least, to endeavour at *such a Law*.

This is certain, that there neither is, nor can be any Form of Government, any Method of Administration wholly free from Exceptions; so that the utmost which may be expected, or should be desired, is that Form and that Method, which is liable to the least and fewest; and whoever aims at more Perfection in either, than consists with human Establishments and human Frailties, must be looked upon as a mere Visionary, or *something worse*: If his Schemes of Reformation strike at the Essence, the necessary constituent Parts or Appendages of Government in general, of ours in particular, and there is room to think it no Error of his Judgment, but the Fault of his Will, he deserves the heaviest Censure; instead of being reputed a Patriot, to be stigmatized as an *Incendiary*,* as an avowed Enemy to the Peace and Happiness of his Country.

That a Member of Parliament holding a Place of Trust, &c. under the Government is not *malum per se*, a Thing absolutely Evil, I take

* CROMWELL tampering in this Sort, *viz.* to render the People jealous of the Parliament; a Consultation was held at the Earl of *Essex's* House about accusing him as an Incendiary; it was even moved (according to the Temper of those Times) to arrest him as such, and only waited in Expectation of plainer Evidence; by which the Opportunity was unhappily lost, as the Sequel of that Story but too plainly shews. *Rapin* Vol. II. Page 512. (Note 3.)

take for granted, both from the Nature of the Thing, and because our Reformers plead only to reduce and limit the Number of them. To judge then of the accidental Evil, which the present Number, according to them, may occasion; we are to consider the Complaint, which is, the Possibility of a Suspicion of *undue* Influence, by Means of these Places, upon the Votes of *such* as may happen to enjoy them. In this View, we have heretofore seen printed Lists of Members distinguished by their Posts and Offices, and their Manner of voting, in certain Instances, offered in Proof of their Partiality, or, as some have chose to call it, Corruption, thereby, intended to be insinuated. The common Answer to which (*by Way of Reprisal*) has been, the Possibility of, at least, equal Partiality, or Corruption of *those* in the Opposition, through the Want and Desire of those Places that others have; and their Hopes, thereby, of, *one Day*, obtaining them; and their *general Method* of voting has been urged in Support of this, I can't but say with equal Probability; and, no doubt, one Extreme is as blameable, being equally pernicious, as the other; for, certainly, supposing any *such Cases* to be, he that opposes against his Conscience, to get a Place, is as much bribed as he that *complies* to keep one: And if too great a Complaisance to the *Crown* may endanger our Liberties on the one Hand; so from a
pre-

pretended Maintenance of them, under a contrary Disposition in Parliament, the People of *England* have experienced *real Servitude* on the other.* However, with regard to Party Merit, thus to accuse, and recriminate, is alike begging the Question on both Sides; it remains, therefore, that some other and more certain Rule of judging be pitched upon, whereby to determine the respective Merits of each dividing Party; a Disquisition foreign to my present Purpose, which is only (as a Matter of necessary Speculation at *this Time*) to consider *impartially* the Expediency or Inexpediency (*as it may be at all Times*) of passing a Law to reduce and limit the Number of Place-Men in Parliament. A Question not a little interesting, even in this Respect, as different Persons are intended to gain or lose Reputation by the different Reception it meets with; and for *that Reason*, as well as on Account of its *natural Tendency*, it deserves to be well considered; and, in the first Place, apart, wholly detached from any other Matters, with which it has no necessary Connection, (especially such as have already been the Subject of Controversy among us) as a mere Problem, in the most abstracted View of *Men and Things*; after which to give every Consideration its due Weight, some collateral Reasons may take Place; as Physicians, besides the present acute Complaint,

* *Rapin* of the long Parliament.

plaint, will always have Regard to the chronic Habit and Humours of their Patient.

It would certainly argue great Ignorance, to say, that Honour, Favour, Power, Profit, conferred, are Things of such Indifference, as to make no Impressions upon ingenuous Minds; and, if possible, a yet greater Degree of Credulity, to think that a Thirst after *any* of them, attended with Disappointment, is not also a Bias, liable to raise our Passions, to prejudice our Affections and Judgments, and to *influence* our Actions accordingly: And in what Body of Men may we ever expect to find any Number of Persons, so philosophical, so wholly *disinterested*,* as to be quite regardless of these Things?

If then, to act with the common *Passions* of a Man, be the Mark of *Corruption*, to whatever Excess *they* may be carried, or in whatever Sense *that* shall be understood, there is Danger of its being so much *greater* on the Side of the *disappointed*, by how much they may happen to be, (as they will, *must* generally be) the Majority; and so much *worse*, as Persons, in those Circumstances, are apt to be carried away with Anger and Impatience, to be less careful, less judicious about their Measures; by which Means, it often comes

* A Qualification no where existing, yet, absolutely requisite in a Member of Parliament, according to *Common Sense*, November 17.

comes to pass that the Innocency of them is wholly owing to their want of Success.

This, it will, perhaps, be said, is granting, if not proving the Evil complained of, and pointing, (*as a Remedy*) to the proposed Expedient of *reducing and limiting the Number of Place-Men in the House of Commons*. As the whole Controversy proceeds upon what has been, and may be, (it being an agreed Point, that there is nothing like it at present) I may grant the Possibility of the Evil, without affronting or exempting any Party. I wish, I could as readily concur in thinking the proposed Expedient a Remedy; on the contrary, I suspect it would be a Means to heighten the Disease, and to increase the Malignity of it. For, to put a probable Case; If, at any Time, there may be many more Places, in *Imagination*, than in Reality, or, more Persons contending and expecting than *can* succeed and be satisfied in their Expectations, in that Case, the reducing and limiting the Number of Places will but heighten the Odds, increase the Number of Expectants in Proportion, consequently make Disappointments more frequent, Resentments, in Course, more strong, and Contests and Struggles about them proportionably more violent; and as the *Consequences* thereof seem to be what we complain and are afraid of, this Scheme, instead of preventing, is most likely to promote them.

But

But these being Evils only by Accident, which may or may not happen, though they should be found not to admit of a Remedy by any human Law, we may be under less Fear and Apprehension about them, if they can be thought not so frequent and general, as it has been affected to represent them; and which may not seem incredible, if it shall appear that the very same Effects, which are there attributed to *Places*, may be derived from other Causes often confounded with them, and which would subsist in the same Force, if *those* were reduc'd and limited, or even entirely taken away.

Admitting the Possibility alike to *all* Parties, it is not necessary to involve Numbers of *any* in the Suspicion of real Corruption. It is equally possible to act right upon wrong Principles, as for a Mistake to be attended with an honest Intention: particular Persons may go corruptly with a Party, even where the Majority have the purest Views imaginable. Suppose, for Instance, in any future House of Commons, some great Place-Men to be of the Privy-Council, where *some Measures* must necessarily be concerted, which, *as necessarily*, must have the Approbation and Sanction of Parliament; there is no Absurdity in believing *these* may be the Subject of free Discourse and Debate *in Council*, and the Result, what *should* be the Result of all *such* Consultations, a general Acquiescence in *those*

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those Measures, for which the strongest Reasons shall appear, in the Opinion of all, or most of them. If then, the *same* being reconsider'd by them in their Legislative Capacity, they should find no Reason to alter their Judgments, *notwithstanding their Places*, there would lie no just Objection to their Conduct; nor could it be thought strange, that what seem'd right and reasonable to them, should appear so to many others also, while yet it might not be impossible for some to be with them implicitly, in the Spirit of Party, and with a View to Party Advantages.

The like may be supposed of Gentlemen, who may happen to be in the Opposition, in which some may be governed by Principle and Opinion, while others may fall in with them merely for the sake of Opposition, without giving themselves the trouble of considering, or even against the Convictions of their own Minds; and if an anonymous Testimony was not quite ridiculous, I have an Example * before me, after which I cou'd, with at least equal Truth, say something here to the Purpose.

In this way much may be accounted for, of what we see in *Parliament*, without recurring to those invidious Insinuations, and odious Appellations, which have been so liberally dealt out by *some*, by which it has

* *Address to the Electors, and other free Subjects of Great Britain.*

been endeavoured to represent us in a very bad Situation; *such as* * confessedly, *it is far from being credible, that we either now are or ever shall be in*, to borrow an Argument from the Writer I have just quoted, the contrary is a Calumny too gross to be imposed upon the most prejudiced, and the most credulous; the bare Recollection of the Names of the Gentlemen concerned, the Quality of many, the Property of most of them, their private Characters sufficiently confute it.

However, such, it seems, is the Nature of Party Acrimony; and what is highly improbable to be the Effect of Corruption of the low, sordid, venal Kind, is plainly *Faction*, another Species of it, not less dangerous for being of a more complicated Nature, taking in some noble, with some ignoble Passions: a Misfortune we might not expect to be more free from, were there no Places; or, which comes to the same thing, were ALL Place-Men alike. We might not, even in that Case, expect a Harmony of Votes. Mens Understandings will be as different as their Statures and Complexions: Hence will arise a Diversity of Opinions, and most Men will be apt to contend earnestly and warmly for their own, and what comes nearest to their own; this Pride alone is sufficient for all the Purposes of Contention, as Contention is

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sufficient

* *Address to the Electors, &c.*

sufficient to produce every other Evil incident to Society.

It is hard to say upon what Principles Men always act; several Persons will have their several Motives; but if we consider what is most likely to be the *ruling Motive* in those who aspire to a Seat in *Parliament*, it can't be thought to be *Avarice*, the *Desire of amassing Wealth*, because every body, who knows any thing of the World, knows it to be, of all Methods for *that Purpose*, most fallible. A Man may with less Hazard, and almost equal Certainty, depend upon making his Fortune out of a Lottery. It may with much more Probability be judged to be no illaudable Desire of making a Figure in their Country, of being conspicuous and useful in Life.

It is Matter of Honour and Distinction, to be chose the Representative of any *Body of Men* in Parliament. This induces Candidates; and the same Spirit, which brings Gentlemen into the *House*, will generally be found to attend them *there*. Many of them will be Members of *Consequence*. That indeed is not in every one's Choice; however, they who have it in their Power, *i. e.* are blessed with superior Talents, and are not depressed with Modesty, will exert that Superiority, as Occasion offers; they will be Leaders, and, according to the Side they take, and the *Chance* of that Side, they will be *nominally* Patriots,

Patriots*, or *really* Place-men, if it suits their Taste; and one of their great Ends will be answered, with no small Share of Self-complacency, in *thus* finding, they are of Weight and Significancy with their *Friends* or *Party*. And upon these Principles, and for these Reasons, were Places entirely out of the Question, Divisions would be a Passion for Fame and Victory, Self-Love, and Self-Will would operate in much the like Manner, and have much the same Effect, we see them have in the present State of Things.

The Effects of *Faction*, we know, are bad enough; a *strong Instance* of it we have, not long since, seen, in a violent Clamour for a War (not without just Occasion of War) and, at the *same Time*, from the *same Quarter*, a Cabal formed, or endeavoured to be formed, to obstruct the necessary Means of carrying it on; a wonderful Instance this of *true Zeal* for the Honour and *Trade* of their Country. But can we hope that *Faction* would abate, in Proportion, as the Number of Place-men in Parliament are reduced and limited? No: If Places are a Stem, on which *Faction* grows, the lopping off Part will but make it take deeper Root, and shoot forth in more luxuriant Branches; if they are Matter of Strife and Contest in Parliament, in their present Number; by reducing the Number, the Strife will

* And tho' they changed their Titles, that would not alter the Nature of Persons and Things.

will be increased; and according as Debates, and Struggles, and Divisions are *within Doors*, so will *Faction* be *without*. It increases with the Increase of them, and strengthens with their Strength; and *as much* Strength as *Faction* gains in the Kingdom, *so much* does the Government lose of its Power at home, and Weight and Credit abroad. The best to be expected from Increase of Faction, is Weakness of Government — A Blessing, which no Man, but a good Subject, a good Friend, or faithful Ally will envy us. FRANCE and SPAIN would rejoice in the Success of *such our present PATRIOTISM*, as I doubt not but they heartily approve, if they don't contribute something to the Appearance of it. Certainly, *other Powers* will always take some of their Measures, from what they observe of that Kind; as it cannot be doubted that one of the chief Encouragements of the late Conduct of the Court of *Spain* toward us, arose from *the Heats and Animosities which were so industriously fomented among us*.

Of all the Efforts we have lately seen from that Side, whence the present Project is known originally to proceed, it is what most People see through clearly, as a Piece of *mere Grimace* and *shameless Hypocrisy*, while the Party Inclinations of too many will not permit them to explode it, in the Manner they know it deserves — Nay, some, who think tolerably of the *Thing*, have nevertheless a very

very mean Opinion of the *Persons* who are chief Actors in this Farce. For it must not be dissembled, that there are some few, who, not having sufficiently considered the Point and Mankind in that particular View, are almost persuaded that no Place-men should be in Parliament. *Eutopian Notions!* All Schemes too fine spun for human Nature, are so many Cobwebs in *civil or ecclesiastical Polity*; tho' that has not hindered worthy Persons, of warm Imaginations, from sometimes falling under Delusions of this Sort.

It is allowed by all Persons of Experience and Consideration, that some are, by the Nature of their Places, very properly Members of Parliament; and should an Opinion, or rather a Faction, at any time prevail so far, as to limit the Number, I deny that it would answer the End proposed, alledged at least, which is, *so far*, to procure an absolute Bill of Divorce, an entire Separation between *Members of Parliament* and *Places*, and all Regard to the Disposition of Places. For, notwithstanding the vehement Outcry made for this Regulation by weekly Writers, &c. with *some witty, more dull but rude Invectives*, I take it to be an *Impossibility* owing to the *Nature* of our Government, which is mixed, and to *that* of Mankind, who are not to be divested of their *natural Appetites* and *Passions*.

Our

Our Government (by the very Design of it) consists of three distinct (not independent) Parts, of which the *King* is as the *Head*, the *Lords* and *Commons* represent the *Body*, What an *Union* as well as *Balance* is hereby intended and created, and how they *jointly* contribute to the common Peace and Safety, I need not say. For the Defence of the Kingdom and Support of Government, a suitable Revenue is allotted by the Wisdom of the whole Legislature, divided into two unequal Parts; *one*, called the *Civil List*, is rightly appropriated to the Use of the *Crown*, to support the *Honour* and *Dignity* thereof; *the other* constitutes a great *Fund*, or *national Purse*, for the Supply of all the other *Exigences* of *State*. This *Honour* and *Dignity* of the *Crown*, these *Exigences* of *State*, necessarily require many *Heads* and *Hands*, and consequently create a large Number of *Places*, both of *Trust* and *Power*, which must necessarily be filled by Persons of *Ability* and *Integrity*, who in course must have Appointments equal to the *Dignity*, and *Trust*, and *Trouble*. The only Objection here is, that Gentlemen sit in *Parliament* in one Capacity as Representatives of the Body of the People, but as Place-Men they sustain another Character, *may* serve another Interest, that of the *Crown*, by which means we are told * we may become *Slaves* to the *Crown*. — A most invidious Suggestion!

As

* *Address to the Electors, &c.*

As if the Interest of the Crown and the People, *rightly understood*, were not exactly the same; or, as if the temporary Advantages of Places could easily be thought an *Equivalent* to *such* Gentlemens *Honour*, their *Consciences*, and their *COUNTRY*; in which last (I speak of the present Gentlemen in that Situation) the most angry and the most prejudic'd *must* acknowledge them to have no small Share, at the same time that they *do* acknowledge them to have a very quick Sense of and due Regard to their own particular Interests. What then if the *Crown* hath *two Parts* in these Gentlemen? If *their Country* have *ten*, it is a reasonable Security for their Attachment to the Country, especially in all fundamental Cases; and we have the more reason to be satisfied with it, if it is the best Security which the nature of Things will allow of, as indisputably it is, if moving and keeping Place-Men from Parliament (*to all the Intents and Purposes alledged*) is found to be, as I have already hinted, and do really account it, *wholly impossible*.

For after all our Refinements *in Theory*, *Power* and *Profit* *in Fact*, according to their nature, will go together so long as *Men* are *Men*, and while *those* in *Power* are not too indolent to take the *Trouble* attending the *Profit*. And the *Power* of *PARLIAMENT* is too great to suffer a Restraint upon *its Members*, which is not likely to suit their own
C Minds.

Minds. Let him that thinks otherwise ask himself these following Questions, — Who grants the Supplies for the current Service? *The Parliament.* — When is the King said to do right? *When he acts by the Advice of his Parliament;* and *vice versá.* — When are we reputed easy at home, and in consequence thereof respected abroad? *When a good Agreement subsists between the KING and his PARLIAMENT.* — But such Agreement cannot be without a good Understanding between the *two Houses of Parliament.* Now the Scheme of this Reduction and Limitation, &c. (*if it take place*) rightly enough,* supposes, that the *House of Lords* will share all the great Offices of State; and no doubt *they would be very safely entrusted with Persons of that exalted Rank and Honour.* — The Question is, how the COMMONS, not only *now,* but at ALL TIMES hereafter, may relish this BILL of EXCLUSION? Is not this *alone* an unanswerable Objection, the Danger of creating Discontent, Jealousies and Animosities, which might issue in open Ruptures between the *two Houses?* Might there not be danger of its inflaming *some future Commoners* with a stronger Passion for, and more ardent Desire of *Peerage* than would be convenient? Might it not, in many Views, open a wider Door for *Faction,* and be a means more effectually to let in upon us *all those Evils,* which (some would

* *Address to the Electors, &c.*

would have it believ'd) are hereby intended to be prevented?

Had the COMMONS never been admitted to any of the *great Offices,* their present *rich and powerful, growing Circumstances* might make a Door of Entrance for them *reasonable and necessary* — But, having been, for Ages, in Possession of this Privilege, what Heart-burning and Confusion a Regulation attended with a Restriction of this Sort (directly, or by Consequence) would occasion, a Man may foretel without the Spirit of Prophecy. Is this then the *salutary Law** we have heard so much of? Are these *the invaluable Blessings of a Place-Bill?* Do our supposed Reformers see these Mischiefs from their Scheme, which are so obvious? If they do, where is their *Patriotism* or HONESTY? If they do not, where is their POLICY or good Sense? If *Monopolies,* in TRADE, have always been looked upon as injurious to the *publick Good,* and CHARTERS *exclusive,* reckoned so many Clogs upon *common Wealth,* as being *Cramps* to *particular, private* Industry; by the same way of Reasoning, it would be an *Injury,* it would be *false Policy* for *great Offices* not to lye open without Distinction of *Peers* or *Commoners,* elder or younger Brothers, to Persons of the *best Capacity,* in order to their being discharged in the *very best Manner.*

* *Address, &c.*

“ In every regular Society, there must be
 “ Offices of Eminence and Distinction, to be
 “ filled by the most deserving Members, for
 “ the Benefit of the whole.” And to be *so* de-
 “ serving, “ is a laudable Emulation, or Am-
 “ bition, if you please, inseparable from in-
 “ genuous Minds — It is the great Spur to
 “ Industry, the great Incentive to generous
 “ and arduous Designs; without this every
 “ Branch of social and publick Virtue must
 “ languish and decay — The young *London*
 “ Apprentice is allowed to please himself
 “ with the Thoughts of being *Sheriff*, or
 “ *Alderman*, at least, if not *Lord Mayor*:
 “ The *Cadet* may have hopes of being a *Ge-*
 “ *neral*, and the *Student at the Inns of Court*
 “ expect to be *Lord High Chancellor of Great*
 “ *Britain*. This innocent Vanity is the na-
 “ tural Root, the real Ground of all *political*
 “ *Virtue* and *publick* Safety: It is this, and
 “ this only that distinguishes the Brave, the
 “ Learned and the Worthy, from the Ignorant,
 “ the Lazy, the Undeserving, in all Ranks,
 “ Orders, and Professions.” And is it fit this
 generous Emulation, which has furnished out
so many Worthies, should now be confined to
 those alone who are *born* Noble, and even to
 those, according to their Prospect of *actual*
Peerage? How many younger Brothers of
brave Spirit and *fine Genius*, who now are
 willing to *toil* and *expose* themselves in our
Fleets and *Armies*, and who, in *other Ways*,
 are

are at no small Pains to accomplish themselves
 for the *Service of their Country*, must receive
 some Discouragement from a Scheme, by
 which it is said * *the House of Lords will* NE-
 CESSARILY *share* ALL the great Offices?

The ancient laudable Practice of the *Crown*,
 has been, for the eminent good Qualities, ap-
 proved Abilities and Services of Gentlemen,
 in their respective *difficult high Stations* and
Offices, to enoble *them*, and, for *their* Sakes,
 their Posterity. — But, according to this
 Scheme, until *those* of the very best Talents
 have the Honour of fitting in the *upper House*,
 they can have no great Opportunity of exert-
 ing them in the Service of their *Prince* and
Country. This reminds me of a ridiculous
 Edict, I have heard of, *restraining Youth from*
going into the Water before they could swim.

Might we not under such a Policy fear a
 greater Scarcity than at present we have of
 Persons duly qualified for *all* the several great
 Offices which the *State* cannot be without?
 What if there are never wanting Instances
 many among the *Peers*, and we have, at this
 time, an *illustrious one*, of a *Nobleman* of the
 first Rank and *Fortune* adorning a *great* and
arduous Office, with equal *Abilities* and *Appli-*
cation? The Examples of *Noblemen*, *so able*,
 and *so willing*, it must be said, are not *too*
many, nor probably *ever* will be, considering,
 that besides a natural Genius and Turn of
 Mind,

* *Address to the Electors, &c.* p. 49.

Mind, it requires *Use* and *Præctice*, *Experience* and *Habit*, to perfect any Person for a *momentous Employ*, which is best attained by beginning *early*, and rising *gradually* in what they profess; which is not *ordinarily* the Province of *elder Brothers born to ample Fortunes*.

Of such as have signalized themselves as *able Statesmen* (any more than good Poets) there have arose but few in any one Age. It has been thought a plentiful Harvest, which produced, at the same time, a *Cecil* and a *Walsingham*; as it is notorious, that of *all those* who are celebrated *as such* by our *English* Historians, the far greater Part of them made their first Appearance in the *House of Commons*; in *which respect*, if that *honourable House* may, at this Day, compare with (as I verily think it may) if it does not excel any Period of Time we can read of, I hope it is none of the Reasons why they should put on their own Chains, by submitting to the proposed Indignity. As to the Difference just observed, without any Reflection, there may this good Account, which I have in a manner hinted already, be given of it. If we consult the Temper of Mankind in general, it is not *Difficulty* and *Danger*, *Hard-studying*, *Watching* and *Labour*, which are the ultimate Object of Desire, but *Reputation*, *Riches*, *Titles*, *Ease* at last; and it is not easy to imagine, that *too many* of those who are blessed with a competent Share of them

before-

before-hand, should be over and above solicitous to repeat those Labours, which their *virtuous Ancestors* undertook, in some measure, for *their* Benefit.

This can't be denied, that all Men of good Parts, and natural or acquired Abilities, with sprightly Industry, will ever make their Application where Promotion may be expected, (and no where else) as Rewards for their Hazard and Labour; whoever makes that a Question, needs go no farther than to himself for an Answer. To love Trouble upon its own Account, is like the Love of fighting for fighting sake; which is agreed by all Mankind to be the certain Sign of a Coward, where-ever that is pretended. If then all Men of *Parts*, *Ability* and *Industry* must be supposed alike inclined to some of the desirable Advantages in Life, and none of these are to be had in the *House of Commons*; who then, of course, are left to be our worthy Representatives? Why, truly, the Dull, the Illiterate, and the Slothful, whom no People, not quite infatuated, would pick out for their Legislators, and to support the Honour and Interest of their Country abroad, and the Liberties of their Fellow-Subjects at home. I think I need not pursue this Argument any farther, to which I have been led by the *allowed* Consequences of a *Place-Bill*. I return to that taken from the *Possibility* of a *Suspicion of Corruption*.

These

These Possibilities Party-Prejudice has a good Knack at improving into Suspicion, and from thence to Certainty. How often have we seen this vicious Circle of reasoning made use of? *Votes* first disparaged on account of Place-Men, and *then* Place-Men condemned upon the Evidence of *those Votes*. Whereas Corruption is seated in the *Heart* of Persons, and not in *Places*; and a corrupt Heart, if the *Wisdom* of Parliament cannot descry, their *Power* will not be able to hinder. Chuse an uncorrupt *Parliament* without *Limitation of Places*, and where is the Danger? Suppose a corrupt one without *any Place-Men*, and where is the Security? — But Places, it is said, give Life and Birth and Nourishment to Corruption, *whenever that happens*. Shall we then utterly extinguish them? That is impossible! They have their Foundation in the *Exigencies* of the *State*, they are *essential* to the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the *Crown*; in regard to *both*, they are *necessary constituent Parts* and *Appendages* of *Government*; and to make them incompatible with a Seat in *Parliament* (*to all the Intents and Purposes alleged*) is beyond the Power of Law. Any one for that Purpose, contrive it as you can, will be evaded by one means or other, where the Disposition to do it is strong; and if the Number is reduced and limited, there will be the same Resource for corrupt Dispositions.

It

It is a Rule in Law, That *all Obligations* (*where the Condition is impossible*) are mere *Nullities, void in course*; and that is a sufficient Reason why we should not expect it from a *wise Body of Men* to go about to enact a Law, with a View to *Ends* and *Purposes* which common Understandings (as in this Case) must see it cannot answer. It may indeed lay Bars in the way of *some* more sincere and open Tempers, which *some others*, less scrupulous, will break thro' without any Difficulty; and what is that but exposing us still more to the very Tempers and Persons against whom we are supposed to be fencing? The Watch-word upon this Occasion is, a Free Parliament, a *Cant-Term* lately * made use of to convey false and mischievous Ideas, as also to cover (what their Friends were not a little conscious of) the unparliamentary, unprecedented, not to say seditious and dangerous Conduct of certain Gentlemen in a *former*, and threatening † us with the like in *all subsequent Sessions of the same*, in case this Affair particularly should not go according to their Wishes. Suspending for a Moment all Regard to the Merits of a Place-Bill, a little History may be of use to help our Judgments in this Case. In the Year 1648, when Colonel *Pride*, with Soldiers, possessed the Doors of the House of Commons, taking into Custody such of the Members as he

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* *Address to the Electors, &c.* † *Address, &c.* p. 57.

thought fit (in Number 41.) Mr. *Whitelock* says (p. 355.) "several Members were at a Stand, whether they should any more attend the House or not, in regard to the Violence offered to many of them; and that it could not be esteem'd a free Parliament. But (adds he) many of those, upon Debate and Advice of Friends, and Consideration that they were chosen by their Country to serve for them in this Parliament, and that the Violence was not offered to these, but to other Members (whereof they were not made the Judge, nor was it left in their Power to desert the Parliament and their Trust, whilst they might have liberty to continue in that Service) these Reasons perswaded many to continue in that Trust and Service." Here was a manifest, an egregious Violation of the Freedom of Parliament, in the Persons of a large Number of Members; which yet we see was not thought sufficient to warrant a Secession in others. So far then from vindicating our late Seceders, who will take upon them to insinuate the least Colour of a Reason for it, from any want of Freedom in a Parliament, where it is notorious that at least all proper usual Liberty is both allowed and taken? Why, not to mention the *worthy Craftsman*, a certain Writer * has done it, who presuming he also may impose upon his Countrymen at pleasure, and studying what will serve his Purpose,

* *Address to the Electors, &c.*

pose, rather than to say what is true, has had the marvellous Assurance to tell us, that the late Secession arose from no previous Concert among any of the Members, but was the Result of every Gentleman's private Judgment*. This is an Evidence so thorough-pac'd, that it, with all he affirms besides, deservedly goes for nothing with unprejudiced thinking Persons.

We are told by another Hand †, that a Place-Bill is nothing less than a *reasonable, legal Security whether we are to continue a free People or not*; a Security, I suppose, that those who have a Share in the Legislature, shall not consent to the enslaving of themselves and their Posterity along with their Constituents; of which, was the Danger, *i. e.* the Probability much greater than any honest Man of *real* common Sense will pretend to say it is; yet when we talk of Security, we should consider what Things in their nature will bear.

All Power is a delegated Trust, for which no Pledge can be contrived that is an exact Equivalent; consequently, wherever it is lodged, there will always remain some Danger, *i. e.* a *physical Possibility* of its being abused; and a good moral Assurance to the contrary, is what, in many Cases, we must be content with. After having used our best Judgments in electing Gentlemen of Family and Fortune,

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* *Address, &c.* pag. 56. † *Common Sense*, Nov. 24.

with good private Characters, and of known Affection to the present Government, and our Constitution, we must (*for a Time*) depend upon the Honour and Consciences of our Representatives. If they are disposed to accept, and his Majesty think fit to confer on them a publick Employment, their Elections are, in most Cases, vacated; when they are rechosen, or they are not. If they are not, the Question is at an End. If they are, 'tis a manifest Approbation on the Part of their Constituents, and the King must be said, so far, to take their Sense in what he does; which, if it will not be taken as a Compliment, cannot be looked upon as an Injury; as little can it be esteemed, in any Member of Parliament (what the Writer, I have so often had occasion to quote, has ridiculously affirmed) a * Desertion of their Trust equal to, nay worse than that of *seceding*. And, considering that Places, and consequently Place-men must be, and that (humanly speaking) they will *always* be, many of them, *Members of Parliament, under any Administration whatsoever* (the contrary Supposition (*however it may serve a present Turn*) being a direct Affront to common Sense, as it is a plain Contradiction to the Experience of all Men in all Ages) no Body of Men have Reason to take Offence at their Representatives, *merely* for accepting a *Trust or Power* from the *Crown,* without

* *Address, &c.* p. 54, 55.

without some other Ground of Dislike, or Suspicion; they ought rather to be pleased, and rejoice at it, among others, for this obvious Reason, Who are so proper to fill Places of Trust, as they who are best to be trusted? Who are so fit to represent us in Parliament, as they, whose Ability and Integrity is best to be relied on, in our own Opinions? the same good Qualities being requisite in both, if the same Person is so happy *at once* in the good Opinion of his *Prince and Country* too, it is a good sign, at least, of an *honest, worthy, able* Man. It is a sign of a good natural Interest well founded, that, tho' he is not carried upon the Wings of false Popularity, he has *real Merit*, a more solid Support, which upholds him in the Opinion of the most *considerate* and *valuable Part of his Electors*, than which nothing is more desirable, except, (*what is impossible*) Persons and Things which shall content or rather extinguish all Parties.

THEY will exist in some Shape while the World endures; where LIBERTY is, there will be *Faction*, and where there is an Inclination to it, there will never be wanting some Pretence for it. But, what is the *real Opinion* of the Promoters of this Scheme, may well be suspected from the *Self-denying Ordinance*, in 1644, supported by a Petition from the *Citizens of London*, when so many gallant Men, and true Defenders of the Liberty of their Country were excluded, not with In-

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tent really to keep all *Place-men* out of Parliament, but to let *themselves*, a RIVAL PARTY, in, as appeared too plainly by the Event; *which Ordinance* was not only the *Forerunner*, but the *Cause* of the total Dissolution of the Government, and was foreseen by Mr. *White-Jock* (as true a Lover of the Liberty of his Country, as ever did, or possibly ever may fit within St. *Stephen's* Chapel) who (*Page 115 of his Memoirs*) (after quoting a Speech at full Length made against that Ordinance, which it is above the Reach of our *weekly Scribblers* to answer) has these Words. "The Debate held till late at Night, and then, upon the Question, (as some called it) *Envy* and *Self-Ends* prevailing, the Ordinance passed the House, and was sent to the Lords." This was the Judgment of that great Man, both of the *Thing*, and of the *Motives* of those who carried it on; which was fully justified by what followed, for in less than five Years time, not only the KING was murdered, but the *Monarchy* was dissolved, which they pretended only to restrain, the House of PEERS voted *useless and dangerous*, and that they ought to be abolished; and in three Years after that, the COMMONS themselves were by Force turned out of Doors by the Principal Contriver of that Ordinance *in Person*, and bid, with Scorn, to take away that Fool's Bawble (*the Mace*;) after which, so weary were the People justly (even the City of *London* itself) under the Government

vernment of these *Self-deniers*, after having tried it in all Manner of Shapes, that rather than bear it longer, they threw themselves (with unparallel'd Joy) into the Arms of a Prince they had so often provoked (and just before abjured) without so much as securing one single Liberty, or even stipulating for an Indemnity, to save their *Self-denying* Friends and Leaders from the Gallows. This may be a proper Lesson, not only for such as are too apt to judge of Men's Designs by their open Professions, but also to the Successors of those who were so feelingly concerned in the Consequences of that *never to be forgotten Law*. A fatal Original! which, (with uncommon want of Modesty, again, as contrary to all the Rules of Prudence) we are told* it is quite necessary we should Copy after for our future Preservation, that otherwise our Constitution will be at an End†. But surely, as *Place-men* have always sat in the House of Commons beyond any Memory or Tradition, till that memorable Year 44, the Precedent will afford no Reason to make the proposed Alteration; since it is notorious that the Nation and its Liberties subsisted many more Ages under that Distemper (if it was one) than they did Years, under that pretended Cure. *wise Men* won't follow *Quacks*, tho' they sometimes perform great Cures. — But to follow such of them as have been remarkable only for killing

* *Address*, &c. p. 53.

† P. 49.

killing their Patients, is a Degree of Folly, of which NO MAN knowingly was ever guilty.

Thus far I have treated, what is apparently a particular *Party-Project*, abstractedly as I well could from all Party Considerations, *properly such*; my Purpose being to see the real Merits of it, upon what good Foundation it stood, and how feasible it was, *Men and Things considered*; and therefore I proceeded in it, not otherwise than as if ALL the Subjects of *Great Britain* were equally Friends to our Constitution, and alike well affected to the Person and Government of his present Majesty, and to the *Protestant Succession*; as if we were generally agreed about the same *good End*, only apt (*as Men*) to differ about the *Means*, or rather about certain Emoluments, which SOME must necessarily enjoy, and ALL in the same Situation cannot possibly partake of; in which View the reducing Scheme seems (at best) to be but a *chimerical Cure* for an *imaginary Cause of Complaint*, a *Complaint* exaggerated not only beyond Truth, but even beyond Probability; a *Cure* not capable of reaching the *Evil*, if it was *real*.

And therefore when the Cause assigned appears (as in this Case) to be no Cause, or next to none, some other latent Reasons, which will not so well bear the Light, are much to be suspected. One indeed there is, which

which almost every one more than suspects, and which therefore I need not name. Besides which, 'tis observable there is hardly in *England* one single *Papist*, *Jacobite*, *Tory* or *Passive-Obedience Man*, who is not zealously inclin'd to this Scheme. Let any Man reflect upon the known Principles and Opinions of these Gentlemen, and judge whether their Motive be a superstitious Regard for the Year 1644, and a Veneration for the Memory of *those* who had a chief Hand in that Transaction; or whether it is the Preservation of the Protestant Religion, the Support of the present Royal Family, and the Defence of the Liberties of the People; or whether, recollecting the Consequences of that Event, it is not more likely to be with a View to the Destruction of *them all*. I allow the Gentlemen called *discontented Whigs*, to be as free from any such View, as the most zealous Courtiers.— But the Question is not what they intend, but what the Consequence may be of their joining with those Men. Few of the Presbyterians, in the Beginning of the Year 1660, thought of bringing in the King; but when they joined with the *Cavaliers*, a Restoration soon followed. The City of *London* itself thought fit to swim with a Stream that then was out of their Power to stem, tho' *they* before had chiefly supported all the Schemes against the *Constitution*, from the Beginning to the End of those *distracted*
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Times, as they are often called by Mr. *Whitlock*. If then it is remember'd, (and methinks it should not be quite forgot) that there is a *Popish Pretender to the Throne*,* that there are many *Papists* in *England*, &c. particularly that the *City of York* is remarkably full of them; which (*it is to be noted*) was the *first Place* in the Kingdom, where the *Common-Council* thought fit to follow the Example of the *Livery-Men* at *London*; WHERE also it is neither *impossible*, nor at all *improbable*, that *Popish Priests* and *Jesuits* may swarm in *Disguise*, even in *Republican Shapes*, in short, in *any Shape* which may do hurt; WHERE they may be as active, as they are *always* artful, and as successful *now* as *formerly* in fomenting Divisions. — If we consider, that the *TORIES* among us are not a few; that, at certain *Times*, they have ALL of them been *consequentially JACOBITES*; that many of them

* This was *Q. Elizabeth's Case*; her Right to the Crown was always contested openly or tacitly. The *Papists*, in general, considering her but as a *Queen de facto*, believed they might, with a safe Conscience, assist in deposing her, whenever an Opportunity offer'd. To which End, she had for her constant Enemies the *Pope* and *Spain*; always *some*, sometimes *all the other* Catholick Powers in *Europe*, with all the *Papists* in *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*. As she was constantly in Danger on this Account, so it was her principal Care to guard against it: It was always uppermost with her; the whole Policy of her Reign turned chiefly upon this Hinge. Thus, never losing Sight of her Danger, she *wonderfully* kept her *Crown*, and preserved her *Protestant Subjects* in great Tranquillity, amidst the secret and open Attacks of her own and their Enemies both at home and abroad. *Rapin*, Vol. II. p. 57, &c.

them were *directly*, *notoriously* and *avowedly* in the Interest of the *Pretender*, at the *Accession* of his late Majesty; that (*as a Party*) they have never given any tolerable Proof, — Proof did I say? not the least Sign of being reconciled to the *Protestant Succession*; unless a constant virulent Opposition, for twenty-five Years successively, to all the Measures of the established Government, upon all Occasions, and in all Shapes whatsoever, can be accounted *such*. — If we consider what has been the Practice of *France* heretofore upon our *Elections* and *Councils*, and what is her *present Power* and *Policy*; how, besides what * *Bishop Burnet* tells us of *French Gold* in *K. William's* Reign, we can many of us recollect the current Plenty of it, in the Time of a *Tory Parliament*, and a *Tory Administration*, at the latter End of *Q. Anne's* (but which has disappeared since that Time) — If it is considered that we have Reason to apprehend the Readiness of *FRANCE*, at a particular Juncture, to ply us again in the same Way, she having lately practised her *Liberality* †, with much Success, upon other States in *Europe* — If in the present Conjunction of Affairs, we have particular

* *Burnet's History*, Vol. 2. p. 257.

† *Monfieur Colbert*, the *French Ambassador* in *London*, sent to gain or corrupt the *English Court* and Council of *K. Charles II.* in order to induce them to break the *Triple League*, which was made to check the Power of *France*, has this Expression in a Letter denoting the Success of his Negotiations: *I have at last made them sensible of the whole Extent of his Majesty's Liberality.* *Rapin*, Vol. II. p. 653.

particular Reason to be upon our Guard against her *Arts*, as well as *Arms*—— If we consider how much *this Scheme* is made a Point of, and *by whom*, there is room to suspect the worst about it; inasmuch as if this Power should be taken out of the Hands of the *Crown*, which, at present, is but a reasonable, a *moderate* Counterbalance to the *Designs* and *Practices* of our *so potent Neighbour* and *natural Enemy*, the Scene would then be changed from what, in another View, is, at best, *Aburdity*, to *real* and *imminent Danger*. I hope we shall not be sensible of it, when it is too late! —— that we shall not thus give Occasion, not the Chance of an Occasion to have it said, —— Oh BRITAIN, **Thou hast destroyed thyself!**

P. S. **I**T was owing to an Accident that this Tract, tho' committed to the Press above a Fortnight before, was not wholly printed off on the 29th of *January*; when it was laid aside, with an Intent to be suppressed, as a Work then judg'd *out of Season*. But the Author finding since that the Controversy to which it relates, has not wholly ceased *without Doors*, for the same Reasons, and upon the same Motives which induc'd his writing at first, has upon second Thoughts resolved to publish it; which, as the Case was, he thought he might do, *jure quasi postliminii*.

F I N I S.