

THOMAS GORDON,
Political Discourses upon Tacitus (1737)

THE
WORKS
OF
TACITUS.
IN
FOUR VOLUMES.

To which are prefixed,

Political DISCOURSES

Upon That

AUTHOR.

VOL. I.

The SECOND EDITION, corrected.

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- vol. 1 - Gordon's Discourses on Tacitus (Part 1) and The Annals of Tacitus Books I-III.
- vol. 2 - The Annals of Tacitus Books IV-XVI.
- vol. 3 - Gordon's Discourses on Tacitus (Part 2) and The History Books I and II.
- vol. 4 - The History Books III-V; A Treatise of the Situation, Customs, and People Of Germany; The Life of Agricola; and An Account of the Situation, Climate, and People of Britain.

Editor's Introduction

To make this edition useful to scholars and to make it more readable, I have done the following:

1. inserted and highlighted the page numbers of the original edition
2. not split a word if it has been hyphenated across a new line or page (this will assist in making word searches)
3. added unique paragraph IDs (which are used in the "citation tool" which is part of the "enhanced HTML" version of this text)
4. retained the spaces which separate sections of the text
5. created a "blocktext" for large quotations
6. moved the Table of Contents to the beginning of the text
7. placed the footnotes at the end of the book
8. formatted short margin notes to float right
9. inserted Greek and Hebrew words as images

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DISCOURSES UPON TACITUS (PART 1)

[I-iii]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

First Commissioner of the Treasury, Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, one of his Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.

SIR,

AS You were the first who promoted the following Work in a public manner, I take liberty to present it to the Public under your name, and to do an act of acknowledgment [I-iv] for one of generosity. Be pleased to be the Patron of a Book which under your Patronage was composed. It is natural and common for men who profess Letters, to seek the countenance and protection of Men of Power; and from such of them as to greatness of fortune were happy enough to join greatness of mind, they have not sought in vain.

POWER without Politeness and Complacency, is at best distasteful, often hated; amiable when it knows how to condescend. It is thus that men in high stations avoid envy from such as stand below them. He who cannot rise to their height, finds a sort of retaliation and amends in their coming down to him. No Man is pleased with a behaviour which represents him as contemptible. To make us think well of ourselves, by another's shewing us that we are well thought of by him, is a generous [I-v] and artful civility: a lesson which stately and rebuking men want to learn. A mean man of great quality and figure (for such incongruities we often meet) teaches others to scorn him, by his shewing that he scorns them. Affability therefore, accompanied with good sense, which will always guard it from exceeding, is the art of keeping great Splendor from growing offensive to the rest of the world.

It must be owned, that no Affability, even the most flowing; no Genius, even the most elevated, can escape particular distastes; and from the dislike of Persons to that of Actions the transition is easy and too common. Men do not easily discern good qualities and intentions in one, to whom they do not wish well. All men, even those of the most unexceptionable Characters, are apt to form their judgment over-hastily, [I-vi] when their passions are warmed: and from this cause it has often proceeded, that the inevitable misfortunes of times and accidents have been charged upon such, whose interest and study it was to prevent them. This is one of the evils and uneasinesses inseparably attending every Administration. When a State is under heavy burdens and difficulties, the means to relieve and support it will be, almost always, proportionably heavy: and as whatever proves heavy, however necessary, is easily called Oppression; so the hand, which administers a remedy, may, merely because it is felt, be easily styled oppressive.

BESIDES the reason which I have already given for this Address, I have another; one taken from the Character of my Author. As he was a Man of Affairs, a great Minister, I chuse to present him to another; to one who having [I-vii] been long engaged in public Life, having had long experience of men, seen far into their bent and foibles, and been conversant with the mysteries and primary operations of Government; can thence readily judge whether TACITUS has refined too much in his Politics, or been over-severe in his Censures upon mankind: or whether this charge has not been chiefly raised by men of speculation, who, however furnished with Learning, were yet unacquainted with the transactions of States, and ignorant of human nature; or perhaps willing to do honour to it, or to themselves, at the expence of

Truth. Men are to be known, not by Theories taken up in closets, but by Commerce with men; and best of all in those great scenes of public Life, where You, SIR, have sustained, for so many years, a high and important part, and gained eminent experience [I-viii] as well as the just opinion of great sufficiency.

I could here, agreeably to the usual style and purpose of Dedications, say a great many advantageous things, without risking the usual censure incurred by Dedicators. But such things I would much rather say of you, than to you. In this place, I shall only profess to be, what I intirely am, with perfect truth, and high regard,

SIR,

Your most obliged, and most
obedient humble Servant,
T. GORDON.

DISCOURSES UPON TACITUS.

DISCOURSE I.

Upon the former English Translations of TACITUS.↩

Sect. I. Of the Translation by GREENWAY and Sir H. SAVILL.

I AM going to offer to the publick the Translation of a Work, which for wisdom and force, is in higher fame and consideration, than almost any other that has yet appeared amongst men; a Work often translated into many Languages, seldom well into any, into ours worst of all. The first was done in Queen ELIZABETH'S reign, the Annals by one GREENWAY, and four Books of the History by Sir HENRY SAVILL, a man exceeding learned, and esteemed for his critical notes upon TACITUS, as well as for those upon St. CHRYSOSTOM, of whose works he has published an elaborate edition. But though he was an able Grammarian, and understood the Antiquities in TACITUS, and his words, his Translation is a [I-2] mean performance; his stile is stiff, spiritless, and obscure; he drops many of his Author's ideas, preserves none of his turns, and starves his meaning even where he best conveys it. 'Tis a mere Translation, that rather of one word into another, than that of a dead tongue into a living, or of sense into sense. The Roman idiom is forced and wire-drawn into the English, a task altogether impossible; and not adopted and naturalized, a thing possible enough; and out of a Book prosuse in eloquence, fine spirit and images, he has drawn a work harsh, halting and barren. OGILBY is not more unlike VIRGIL. GREENWAY is still worse than SAVILL; he had none of his learning, he had all his faults and more: The former has at least performed like a school-master, the latter like a school-boy.

Sect. II. Of the English Translation by several hands.

ABOUT a hundred years after them another English Translation was undertaken by several hands, Mr. DRYDEN and others. DRYDEN has translated the first Book; but done it almost literally from Mr. AMELOT DE LA HOUSSAYE, with so much haste and little exactness, that besides his many mistakes, he has introduced several Gallicisms: he follows the French author servilely, and writes French English, rather than trust him out of his eye. It is true, LA HOUSSAYE is an honest Translator, and one of the foremost: He has gone as far as the thirteenth Annal inclusive; but his phrases are often weak and trifling, and he is subject to all that faintness and circumlocution for which the French tongue is noted. DRYDEN copies his manner as well as his meaning. It was pure hurry and want of application; for he was a fine writer, had a copious imagination, a good ear, and [I-3] a flowing stile. Strike away all that is bad in his works, enough will remain to shew him a great Poet, a man of parts and a master of language. Even his many enemies and opposers shew the considerableness of the man; but his excellencies in many things excuse not his faults in others; his Translation of TACITUS is poor and languid, no where derived from the original, generally full of mistakes; at best it is only the French Translator ill translated, or ill imitated.

Sect. III. Of the last Translation of the first Annal.

TACITUS talking of the latter end of AUGUSTUS his reign, says, *domi res tranquillæ. Eadem magistratum vocabula.* These are two sentences independent of each other; yet Mr. DRYDEN translates, "all things at Rome being in a settled peace, the Magistrates still retained their former names;" as if the one was all the cause of the other. This blunder is owing to LA HOUSSAYE ill understood: *tout étoit tranquille à Rome, les Magistrats avoient les mêmes*

noms: if instead of *avoient*, he had said *ayant*, the translation would have come pretty near the French. But the English Translator does not seem to understand French, though he has no other guide, else how could he so miserably mistake, *pars multo maxima imminentis dominos variis rumoribus disserebant*; as to render it, “the greater part employed their time in various discourses of future matters?” From this it is plain he never looked into the original, or understood it not. He was misled by the French which he appears here to have as little understood; *la plus part se plaisoient à faire divers jugemens de ceux qui aloient devenir leurs Maitres*.

[I-4]

BUT more wretched still is what follows: TACITUS represents the Romans discoursing, during the decline of AUGUSTUS, concerning the next successors in view, AGRIPPA Posthumus and TIBERIUS, and makes them say of LIVIA the Empress; *accedere matrem muliebri impotentia: serviendum feminae, &c.* “His mother of a violent and imperious nature, according to the sex themselves, subjected to the slavery of a woman.” This is jargon and nonsense, tho’ the author seems to have followed the French; *qui (Tibere) a une mere imperieuse & violente, selon la coutume du sexe, à laquelle il faudra obéir en esclaves*. Well may he be said to follow the French Translator blindly; and less is the wonder that he adopts his Gallicisms where he happens to understand him.

When DRUSUS, the son of TIBERIUS, entred the camp of the seditious Legions in Pannonia, and the mutinous soldiery were gathered round him; TACITUS makes a charming and strong description of their behaviour, with the several vicissitudes of their passions, which shifted strangely according as they dreaded his person and authority, or recalled their grievances, and surveyed their own numbers and strength; and he concludes the whole, according to his custom, with a fine reflection: *Illi, quotiens oculos ad multitudinem retulerant, vocibus truculentis strepere; rursus, viso Cæsare, trepidare. Murmur incertum, atrox clamor, & repente quies; diversis animorum motibus, pavebant, terrebantque*. This is all pretty well translated by LA HOUSSAYE. I shall only quote the last clause or reflection: *par des mouvemens tout differens, ils prenoient l’epouvante, & la donnoient*; and this I quote only to shew how impotently the English Translator hangs by the French phrase and takes it literally: “by their different motions, says he, they gave and took terror in their turns.”

[I-5]

Is not this pithy and sounding? There are numbers of such instances both as to language and strength; insomuch that I have been sometimes tempted to think it not to be DRYDEN’S: but I have many assurances of its being his. I take it for granted it was a jobb for the Booksellers, carelessly performed by one, who wanted no capacity, but only pains or encouragement to have done it much better, perhaps very well.

Sect. IV. Of the last Translation of the second Annal.

THE next Annal is translated by another hand, less negligently, but with small taste and vigour; no resemblance of the original, where in every sentence almost there occur surprizing images and turns, which no where appear in the Translation. ’Tis not the fire of TACITUS, but his embers quenched with English words cold and Gothick. Let any one read particularly the two speeches of ARMINIUS and MAROBODUUS to their different armies just before they engaged, cap. 45. and 46. and he will find that between TACITUS and his Translator, there is just as much difference as between a living soul and a cold carcase. Yet the lifeless Translation of this Annal compared with that of the third by a different hand, is an able performance.

Sect. V. Of the last Translation of the third Annal.

THIS translation is in truth wretched beyond belief; 'tis below drollery, and a sort of a middle between bad sense and good nonsense. TACITUS says of the arrival of the fleet, which brought AGRIPPINA from Asia with her husband's [I-6] funeral urn, and her children now fatherless; *classis paulatim successit, non alacri, ut adsolet, remigio, sed cunctis ad tristitiam compositis*, An. 3. c. 1. "The fleet (says the Translator) came in, not rowing briskly, as they used to do, but slowly, and with sorrow in their countenances;" a translation worthy of one who could make TACITUS say elsewhere, "DRUSUS left the City to enquire his fortune:" Would not one think that he went to some remote country to consult a cunning man? Or meant the Translator to joke upon the religion and solemnities of the Romans? The words of TACITUS which he thus perverts, or rather quite drops, are, *Drusus urbe egressus repetendis auspiciis*: "DRUSUS went without the gates, to repeat the formality of the auspices."

TACITUS at the end of his discourse upon laws, says, *Cæsar Augustus, potentia securus, quæ Triumviratu jusserat, abolevit, deditque jura, quis pace & Principe uleremur: acriera ex eo vincla, inditi custodes, & lege Papia Poppæa præmiis inducti, ut si &c. sed altius penetrabant, (custodes, scil.) Urbemque & Italiam, & quod usquam civium, corripuerant, multorumque excisi status; & terror omnibus intentabatur, nisi Tiberius statuendo remedio, &c.* Now observe the force, and elegance, and truth, with which this is rendered by the Translator; </p>

"AUGUSTUS CESAR being settled in his authority, he abolished those things he commanded in the Triumvirate, and gave new laws to be observed in time of peace, and under a Monarch. And that they might be the better kept, he appointed some to look after them:" [as if the laws had been a flock of sheep] "The law PAPIA POPPEA provided, &c. But the informers went farther, not only in the City, but thro' all Italy, where any citizens were, ruined many families and frightened all. To remedy which TIBERIUS," [I-7] &c. A little farther TACITUS says, *adversis animis acceptum, quod filio Claudii socer Sejanus destinaretur: polluisse nobilitatem familiæ videbantur, suspectumque jam nimia spei Sejanum ultro extulisse*. "There were (says the Translator) great discontents upon CLAUDIUS'S son's being to marry SEJANUS'S daughter as a disparagement to him, [to what him? SEJANUS was the last named.] "But SEJANUS, whose ambition was suspected, was much exalted upon it."

TACITUS discoursing of the revolt of FLORUS and SACROVIR, and representing the sentiments of the people upon that and other alarms, says, *incredabant Tiberium, quod in tanto rerum motu, libellis accusatorum insumeret operam. An Julium Sacrovirum majestatis crimine reum in Senatu fore? Exstitisse tandem viros, qui cruentas epistolas armis cohiberent: miseram pacem vel bello bene mutari. Tanto impensius in securitatem compositus, neque loco, neque vultu mutato, sed ut solitum per illos dies egit: altitudine animi, an compererat modica esse & vulgatis leviora*. Hear how this is translated. Blaming

"TIBERIUS for employing himself in reading informers accusations where there was so great commotions. What, said they, have the Senate found JULIUS SACROVIR guilty of treason? Some have had the courage to suppress by arms the bloody libels of a Tyrant; war is a good change for a miserable peace. But he neither changed place nor countenance; affecting to shew he was not afraid, either through courage, or that he knew things to be less than they were reported."

Was ever good sense so vilely burlesqued? were one to study to ridicule TACITUS, what more miserable stuff, void of all sense and sound, could one make him utter? It puts me in mind of a notable compliment in an address from a learned Society to the late King; "We perceive that you are one that is not [I-8] afraid that posterity should make mention of you;" or words of the like force and beauty. Neither have I picked out these passages invidiously, as the worst: I have read the whole Annal, and I know no part of it better done.

Sect. VI. Of the last Translation of the fourth, fifth, and sixth Annal.

THE fourth, fifth, and sixth Annals are done by another hand, and poorly done. In him you find little of the true meaning of TACITUS; of his spirit and manner nothing at all; but frequent deviations from his sense, and even from all sense. TACITUS in the Character of SEJANUS, says; *intus summa apiscendi libido, ejusque causa modo largitio & luxus, sapius industria ac vigilantia, haud minus noxiae, quotiens parando regno finguntur.* Who but the Translator would have discovered, that by these words TACITUS meant to declare, that “virtues are as dangerous as vices, when they meet with a turbulent spirit aspiring to Empire?” Yet the Translation of this passage is as just as that of many others. Sometimes he drops whole phrases and passages, such as he knows not what to make of, and oftner loses out of sight the meaning of others however plain.

TACITUS says, *ut series futuri in Agrippinam exitii inciperet, Claudia Pulchra sobrina ejus postulatur, accusante Domitio Afro. Is recens praetura, modicus dignationis, & quoquo facinore properus clarescere, crimen impudicitiae, adulterum Furnium, veneficia in Principem, & devotiones objectabat.* “To begin the ruin of AGRIPPINA, [how insipid and defective!] DOMITIUS AFER lately Pretor [not a word of *modicus dignationis*] and ready to engage in any thing to gain himself credit [observe the force!] accuses CLAUDIA PULCHRA of adultery [I-9] with FURNIUS [the words *sobrina ejus*, which explain the rest, and the word *impudicitiae*, one of the articles of the charge, are omitted] “and to have a design on the life of that Prince with her charms and person:” What Prince? FURNIUS was none; TIBERIUS has not been mentioned in several pages: it is nonsense; and “a design on his life with her charms and person,” multiplies the nonsense.

WHAT follows fares not much better: *Agrippina semper atrox, tum & periculo propinquo accensa, pergit ad Tiberium.* “AGRIPPINA always of a violent temper, but at present extremely enraged, runs immediately to TIBERIUS, &c.” He drops *periculo propinqua*, as useless words.

TACITUS says, that amongst other reasons assigned why TIBERIUS retired from Rome, some alledged the authority assumed by his mother; who having persuaded AUGUSTUS, contrary to his inclinations, to postpone GERMANICUS and adopt TIBERIUS, did afterwards upbraid TIBERIUS with so signal a service, and even challenged the Empire as her own: *idque Augusta exprobrabat, reposcebat.* “The Empress (says the Translator) seemed to reproach him with that favour, and requested it for her son.” What gibberish! she had but one son, and he had it. She, forsooth, reproached her son TIBERIUS for having given him the Sovereignty, and from the same TIBERIUS claimed it for the same TIBERIUS. SEJANUS, once when a cave fell in upon TIBERIUS and his company, covered the Emperor with his own body: *major ex eo*, says TACITUS. “This admirable and undoubted fidelity,” says the Translator; which TACITUS never said nor meant. How miserably too does he translate, *ingentium bellorum cladem aequavit malum improvisum: ejus initium simul & finis exstitit.* “Happened a calamity [I-10] in which we sustained as great a loss as in the greatest defeats, though it was all done in an instant.” I will venture to say, that this is as well done as any other part of all the three Books.

Sect. VII. Of the last Translation of the eleventh Annal.

THE eleventh Annal is translated by another Gentleman; but not with another spirit: it is like the rest, full of feebleness and mistakes and low phrases. I shall here give some instances. The Pleaders, in a speech to the Emperor CLAUDIUS, in defence of taking fees, and in answer to SILIUS, who alledged against them the example of certain great Orators of the former age who had never taken any; say, *facile Asinium & Messalam, inter Antonium & Augustum bellorum praemiis refertos, &c. c. 7.* “ASINIUS and MESSALA, who feathered their nests well in the Civil Wars ’twixt ANTHONY,” &c. This is the Language of a chairman, but of a piece with the rest, such as, a King’s [a] *playing the good fellow*; [b] *trumping up*

ARMINIUS's title; [c] being equipped with money; [d] his reputation began to exert itself far and near; [e] saw but one poor snake; [f] more bloody than he ought to be; Senators [g] squabbling in the house; A silver mine [h] which bled but a little; [i] It was not come to that yet; [k] Advice hurts not the guiltless; [l] Men had [I-II] recourse to impudence when their ill actions came to be discovered; [m] others were in the same predicament with them in that matter; [n] Claudius as he was easily angry, so he was easily pleased; [o] Matrimony the last comfort of those who give themselves to lewdness; [p] Assidavits of her lewdness; [q] The vast treasures given to Silius for his drudgery. Such cant, jargon, and ill-favoured nonsense, is called the Translation of TACITUS.

Sect. VIII. Of the last Translation of the twelfth and thirteenth Annals.

THE two succeeding Annals are Englished by another hand, and miserably Englished they are; rather worse than the former. 'Tis all wretched tittle-tattle, unmeaning and ill-bred; nor could any number of words thrown together at random, without thought or idea, be more shallow or vulgar, more destitute of ornament or sound. To pass by his *top Orators; Knack of speaking; Staving off a war any ways. — He being rectine. — The Emperor himself their worthy. Yea, Gentlemen and Senators do make no other original to themselves but from thence;* and the like gibberish which occurs in every sentence: I shall here transcribe a passage where he seems to aim at a meaning and to exceed himself:

“ [r] The power his mother had over him [I-12] “(NERO) dwindled away by degrees, and NERO fell in love with ACTE, a freed-woman, and made OTHO and CLAUDIUS SENECEO the confidants of his new Amour, one of which (to wit) OTHO, was of a consular family, but SENECEO, a son of one of CESAR's freed-men; who at first without the mother's knowledge, and since in spite of all she could do, worked himself by degrees into the Prince's affections, by luxury and secret ways, that no body knew, which the best friends he had, indulged him in, and were pleased to see him take up and content himself with that woman, a thing which did no body an injury: for he had the misfortune to dislike his wife OCTAVIA (whether it be that we naturally slight what we can have, and eagerly pursue what is forbidden) of an illustrious family, and of an unspotted virtue, and 'twas feared he might fall into a vein of debauching women of quality, if he was checked in that intrigue: but AGRIPPINA could not bear that a freed-woman should nose her,” &c. That “a freed-woman should beard her,” says the old Translation.

How clear, how strong, and how just! This is in the thirteenth Book: take one or two samples more out of the twelfth.

“ [s] 'Twas enacted that [I-13] if they (women) married (to slaves) without their master's consent, they should remain such” [who should, the women or the slaves? the former were none, and could not remain what they were not; and to say it of the latter, is nonsense.] “BAREA SORANUS, Consul elect, moved that PALLAS (whom CESAR said was the first that brought it into the House) should have the Pretorial honours, and fifteen millions of Sesterces, and, that SCIPIO CORNELIUS might have the Thanks of the House, for that being descended from the Kings of Arcadia, he forgot his birth and quality to serve the publick, and was contented to be one of the Prince's servants. CLAUDIUS assured them, that PALLAS, satisfied with the honour the Senate had done him, would live as retiredly as he used to do. In short an act was made,” &c.

THESE two passages are as brightly translated as any in the two Books, indeed beyond most passages.

I shall quote one more; it is in the thirteenth Annal, cap. 26. It was importunately urged in the Senate that such freedmen as by abusing their Lords, had shewn themselves unworthy of their liberty, should remain at the mercy of the said Lords, and be subject to their former

chains, *nec deerant qui censerent*, says TACITUS, *sed Consules relationem incipere non ausi ignaro principe (i. e.)* “There were Senators too ready to have voted for such a [I-14] Decree; but the Consuls durst not propose it to the vote without acquainting the Emperor.” Of all this plain matter the Translator understood not one word. He says, “neither were there those wanting who would censure them (*nec deerant qui censerent*) but the Consuls durst not, without the Emperor’s knowledge, determine the matter.”

I cannot omit one polite phrase more out of this Book. *Suilius Senecam increpans*, says TACITUS. “He laid it in SENECA’s dish,” says the Translator, c. 42. “laying it in SENECA’s dish,” says the old Translation. He indeed has stolen all he knew of TACITUS from the old Translation, with all its blunders and stupidity, and improved both notably. Behold another specimen. “At Rome he cheated men of their legacies, and wronged the fatherless, who were deluded by him [t].” The words of TACITUS are, *Romæ testamenta & orbos, velut indagine ejus capi*, c. 42.

Sect. IX. Of the last Translation of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth Annals.

A Fresh hand has undertaken the three following Annals, and by good fortune such a hand as has preserved an eminent uniformity with the foregoing; only he is somewhat more gross. TACITUS says, it was reported that when AGRIPPINA studied to draw NERO her son into an incestuous commerce with herself, *Senecam contra muliebres inlecebras subsidium a femina petivisse: immissamque Acten libertam*. “SENECA (says the Translator) [I-15] soon brought in ACTE, NERO’s beloved woman, to expel one whore with another.”

When AGRIPPINA had escaped the first attempt upon her life, she dissembled, and seemed not to think it designed, nor to entertain any future apprehensions: *simulata securitate*: “Under the appearance of security,” (says the Translator.) But as ACERRONIA one of her maids had perished in that attempt, she ordered her Will to be found, and all her effects to be sealed up. This she did, says TACITUS, without any dissimulation; *id tantum non per simulationem*, c. 6. “She takes all necessary care (says the Translator) for the cure of her wound; the Testament of ACERRONIA to be looked out, her coffers to be sealed up, and all things necessary to be done without the least dissimulation:” How nicely he understands the original, and how grammatical is his English! Here however there seems to be some meaning aimed at; in what follows, even that is wanting: “The image of the villains who were stained with the guilt of this parricide, still haunted him.” The words of the original are *observabanturque maris illius & litorum gravis adspectus*, c. 10.

In truth, to expose the insipidness and nonsense of these Annals, were to transcribe them. In some places he is so gross, that his words will not bear repeating; as particularly where one of OCTAVIA’S maids tells TIGELLINUS, *castiora esse muliebria Octaviæ quam os ejus*. His Translation of this is abominable, as well as ridiculous and false; and many such like instances there are in him. I beg leave to quote one short passage more out of this Annal. When that Lady was by the Tyrant divorced, and banished into Campania under a guard; *inde crebri questus*, says TACITUS, *nec occulti per vulgum, cui minor sapientia, & ex mediocritate fortunæ, [I-16] pauciora pericula sunt*, c. 60. This is a fine reflection; observe how execrably it is rendered: “Upon the clamour of the people (who having nothing to lose, are commonly fearless, not out of any love or relenting at his severity) this was remitted.”

THE fifteenth Annal is done just like the fourteenth, wretchedly. Here follows a specimen: CORBULO and CESENNIUS PETUS commanded in the East: *sed neque Corbulo æmuli patiens* (says TACITUS); & *Pætus, cui satis ad gloriam erat, si proximus haberetur, despiciebat gesta, nihil cædis aut prædæ, usurpatas nomine tenus urbium expugnationes, dictitans: se tributa ac leges, & pro umbra Regis Romanum jus victis impositurum*, c. 6. The misfortune was, (says the Translator)

“the one was impatient of a rival, and the other could not endure a superior; and PETUS, who ought to have contented himself in being second to CORBULO, ever took pleasure to diminish the glory of his actions, upbraiding him that his victory in taking of towns was imaginary, without conquest or plunder. That he would impose laws and demand contributions, introduce the Roman power in the place of their Knights, and render them a meer shadow.”

HE often seems to be without the least glimmering of TACITUS’s meaning, or any meaning, and puts down a parcel of words at random. How clearly does he English, *provisis exemplis Caudinae ac Numantinae cladis*; “resolving to follow the example of Numantian, and the Caudine defeat, which practice they thought they might justify, since the Parthians were at this time more powerful than the Carthaginians or Samnites:” [were they in truth? what a discovery is here?] *neque eandem vim Samnitibus Italico populo, aut Pœnis Romani imperii æmulis*. He goes on: *They were now beginning to talk that the Antients were always commended [I-17] for their address in suiting all things to the times, and securing a safe retreat when fortune should frown upon them*. This is another discovery which he has made from these words: *validam quoque & laudatam antiquitatem, quotiens fortuna contra daret, saluti consuluisse*, c. 13; that is, “these same venerable Antients, so very stubborn and invincible, and so much adored, always consulted self-preservation, as often as pressed by the assaults of a calamitous fortune.”

When PETUS had submitted to such shameful conditions from the Parthians, he, amongst the rest, made a bridge over the river Arsianias, and to hide his disgrace, pretended it was to shorten his own march; when in truth, it was done in obedience to the commands of the Parthians, as a monument of their superiority and conquest: *namque iis usui fuit; nostri per diversum iere*, c. 15. “It being commodious to them, (quoth the Translator) and not in any manner to molest us.” Were ever two meanings more remote? He often adds words of his own to those of TACITUS, and often drops many more of the original, sometimes whole sentences. TACITUS says, there prevailed then a pestilent custom of making fraudulent Adoptions, by such Candidates for Offices as had no children of their own; and as soon as the Election was over, they instantly dismissed such as they had occasionally adopted. This abuse raised a storm from such as were real parents; who, having applied to the Senate with warm representations against such fallacious dealings in others, and such injury done to themselves, add, *sibi promissa legum diu expectata, in ludibrium verti, quando quis sine sollicitudine parens, sine luctu orbis, longa patrum vota repente adæquaret*, c. 19. All this is dropped by the Translator, and the following jargon of his own inserted: “They took children to quit them at [I-18] their fancy in contempt of those laws, while they had a great many priviledges, for care or sorrow, the other with ease enjoyed the same.”

I am afraid I have tired my reader, as I have done my self, with such a dull deduction of stupidities. I did not at first intend to say any thing of the former Translations: I took it for granted that every man who had seen them, must have condemned them, and found them as pitiful and bad as they really are. But when upon publishing my Proposals, I found that some, who by their titles and profession should be learned, others who by their high quality, ought to have taste and elegance, had commended the former Translation, and uttered their despair of seeing a better; I found it necessary to give some account of that performance, which I think to be as low, defective, and wretched as any thing in print; neither language, nor sense, nor decency, and as much unlike TACITUS the Historian, as the meanest slave of TACITUS the Consul, was unlike his master. It is much worse than the old Translation, which is exceeding bad. It is in my own defence, as well as in defence of TACITUS, that I have censured it, and against my inclination. It looks indeed as if the Translators themselves had no opinion of it, since they have not, as is usual, said one word about it by way of Preface. This is what Mr. DRYDEN particularly never used to omit doing; why did he omit it now in the Translation of a work of such name and weight? As far as the sixth Annal there is a Translation too of LA

DISCOURSE II.

Upon TACITUS and his Writings. ↩

Sect. I. The Character of TACITUS.

AS to the Character of TACITUS and his writings; he was the greatest Orator, Statesman, and Historian of his time; he had long frequented the Bar; he had passed through all the high offices of State: he was Edile, Pretor, Consul; and after long acquaintance with business and men, he applied himself to collect observations, and to convey the fruits of his knowledge to posterity, under the agreeable dress of a History. For this task he was excellently qualified: No man had seen more, scarce any man had ever thought so much, or conveyed his thoughts with greater force and vivacity; a mighty genius, for which no conception or design was too vast; a powerful Orator, who abounds in great sentiments and description: yet a man of consummate integrity, who, though he frequently agitates the passions, never misleads them: a masterly Historian, who draws events from their first sources; and explains them with a redundancy of images, and a frugality of words: a profound Politician who takes off every disguise, and penetrates every artifice: an upright Patriot, zealous for publick Liberty and the welfare of his Country, and a delared enemy to Tyrants and to the instruments of Tyranny; a lover of human-kind; a man of virtue, who adores Liberty and Truth, and every where adorns and recommends them; who abhors falshood and iniquity, despises [I-20] little arts, exposes bad ones; and shews, upon all occasions, by the fate and fall of great wicked men, by the anxiety of their souls, by the precariousness of their power, by the uncertainty or suddenness of their fate, what a poor price greatness obtained is for goodness lost; and how infinitely, persecuted virtue is preferable to smiling and triumphant wickedness. GERMANICUS under all his hardships and disfavour, is a happier man than TIBERIUS with all his power and Empire; happier in peace of mind, happier in his fame and memory. TIGELLINUS is a great favourite with NERO, but detested by all the rest of the world and fearful of all men. SENECA is disliked by the Emperor, but universally beloved and regretted. TACITUS is a fine Gentleman, who suffers nothing pedantick or low, nothing that is trifling or indecent to fall from his pen. He is also a man of wit; not such a one as is fond of conceits and the quaintness of words, but a wit that is grave, majestick, and sublime; one that blends the solemnity of truth with the fire of imagination, and touches the heart rather than the fancy; yet for the better reception of truth, pleases and awakens the fancy.

THE telling of truth is dry and unaffecting; but to enliven it with imagery, is describing it: and every one knows the advantages that Description has over bare Narration. Hence the force of fine painting; though, in my opinion, the Orator has the advantage of the Painter, as words can multiply ideas better than the pencil, throw them thicker together, and inflame them more. What piece of APELLES could have animated the Athenians against PHILIP of Macedon, like one of DEMOSTHENES's Orations? What picture of Love can equal the description of that passion by LUCRETIUS, the noblest wit of all the Latin Poets? It [I-21] is hardly, I believe, possible for colours to carry images higher than they are by MICHAEL ANGELO carried, in his piece of the Last Day: yet I believe it not only possible, but easy to make a description of that day more affecting than the sight of that celebrated piece.

Sect. II. How much he excells in Description and Force.

PAINTING in words is the strongest painting; and in that art TACITUS excells to amazement. His images are many, but close and thick; his words are few, but pointed and glowing; and even his silence is instructive and affecting.

How justly does he represent that noble sullenness and disdain of the wife of ARMINIUS, when brought with other captives before GERMANICUS? *Inerant & feminae nobiles, inter quas uxor Arminii, eademque filia Segestis, mariti magis quam parentis animo, neque victa in lacrymas, neque voce supplex, compressis intra sinum manibus gravidum uterum intuens*, A. 1. c. 57. A circumstance of distress more moving than this last, could not be devised; and what words, or exclamations, or tears could raise compassion so effectually, as the representation of a spirit too great to weep or complain; of a grief too mighty to be uttered?

THE March of GERMANICUS and his Army to the Forest of Teutburg, to bury the bones of VARUS and his Legions, there massacred by the Germans; the description of that Camp, with the revival of the circumstances of that tragical event; and the sympathy and resentments of the Soldiers, are all beautifully displayed with great force and brevity, with equal tenderness and horror.

PERMOTO ad miserationem omni qui aderat exercitu, ob propinquos, amicos, denique ob casus bellorum, [I-22] & sortem hominum. *Incedunt mæstos locos, visuque ac memoria deformes. Prima Vari castra lato ambitu, & dimensis principiis, trium legionum manus ostentabant: dein semiruto vallo, humili fossa, accisæ jam reliquiæ consedissee intelligebantur: medio campi albertia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disjecta vel aggerata: adjacebant fragmina telorum, equorumque artus, simul truncis arborum antefixa ora; lucis propinquis barbaræ aræ, apud quas tribunos ac primorum ordinum centuriones mactaverant. Cladis ejus superstites pugnam aut vincula elapsi, referebant, hic cecidisse legatos, illic raptas aquilas; primum ubi vulnus Varo adactum, ubi infelici dextra, & suo ictu mortem invenerit; quo tribunali concionatus Arminius; quot patibula captivis, quæ scrobes; utque signis & aquilis per superbiam inluserit. Igitur Romanus qui aderat exercitus, sextum post cladis annum, trium Legionum ossa, nullo noscente alienas reliquias an suorum humo tegeret, omnes ut conjunctos, ut consanguineos, auctâ in hostem irâ, mæsti simul & infensi condebant, An. 1. c. 61, 62.*

HERE is eloquence and description! What can be added, what can be taken away? His stile is every where warm and pathetick, and he never informs the understanding, or entertains the imagination, but he kindles the affections. You are not only convinced by his sentiments, but governed by them, charmed with them, and grow zealous for them. This is a trial of the power and skill of a writer: this the drift and glory of persuasion and eloquence; and this the talent of TACITUS.

To display Tyrants and Tyranny he chuses the strongest words and figures: *facinora ac flagitia sua ipsi quoque in supplicium verterant. Si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse adspici laniatus & ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita sævitia, libidine, malis consultis, animus dilaceretur: quippe Tiberium non fortuna, non solitudines, protegebant, quin tormenta pectoris suasque ipse pœnas fateretur, An. 6. c. 6.*

[I-23]

It was his business and design to lay open the iniquity and horrors of their mis-rule; *sæva jussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium*. You see the bloody hands of the executioners, Rome swimming in the blood of her own Citizens, and all the rage of unrelenting Tyranny; *undantem per domos sanguinem, aut manus carnificum*. You see the bands of accusers let loose, nay hired to destroy, and breathing death and exile; *sævitiæ oratorum accusationes minitantiæ: delatores per præmia eliciebantur*. You see the barbarous outrages of an insolent and merciless soldiery; *cuncta sanguine, ferro, flammisque miscent*. You see madmen bear rule, these mad rulers governed and made worse by slaves, villains, and harlots; yet all these monsters adored, their persons, wickedness, and even their fury sanctified; iniquity exalted, virtue trod under foot, laws perverted, righteousness and

truth depressed and banished; every worthy man doomed to scaffolds, rocks, and dungeons; the basest of all men pronouncing that doom, and making a prey or a sacrifice of the best; fear and distrust and treachery prevailing; the destroyers themselves haunted with the perpetual dread of destruction, at last overtaken by it, yet seldom leaving better in their room.

ALL these melancholy scenes you see exposed in colours strong and moving: the thoughts are great, the phrase elevated, and the words chaste and few. It is all a picture: whatever he says, you see, and all that you see affects you. It puzzles one to give instances, because there are so many in every page. How many affecting images are there in these few words near the beginning of the first *Annal*; *Quotusquisque reliquus qui rempublicam vidisset?* How mournful too and expressive, yet how plain are these which immediately follow! *Igitur verso civitatis [I-24] statu, nihil usquam prisca & integri moris;* as well as those a little before; *rebus novis aucti tuta & praesentia, quam vetera & periculosa mallent.*

WITH what thunder and vehemence does ARMINIUS rouse the Cheruskans, his countrymen, to arms, when his wife became a captive to the Romans, and his child a slave though yet unborn? *Egregium patrem! magnanimum imperatorem! fortem exercitum! quorum tot manus unam mulierculam avexerint: sibi tres Legiones, totidem legatos procubuisse: non enim se proditione, neque adversus feminas gravidas, sed palam adversus armatos bellum tractare. Cerni adhuc Germanorum in lucis signa Romana. Coleret Segestes victam ripam, redderet filio sacerdotium, &c.* In how few words does he comprise a long and perplexed debate in the council held by GERMANICUS, how to proceed with the mutinous Legions! *Augebat metum gnarus (superior exercitus) Romanæ seditionis, & si omitteretur ripa, invasurus hostis; ac si auxilia & socii adversum abscedentes Legiones armarentur, civile bellum suscipi: periculosa severitas, flagitiosa largitio: seu nihil militi, seu omnia concederentur, in ancipiti Respublica. Igitur, &c. An. 1.*

Sect. III. Further instances of the justness of his Genius, and of his great Thoughts.

HIS account of the persecutions of GERMANICUS, with his last words and amiable Character, makes a fine Tragedy; so does the Death of SENECA; so does that of the Conspirators against NERO. With what magnanimity and calmness does SULPITIUS ASPER the Centurion answer the brutal Tyrant, when asked, why he had conspired against his life? *non aliter tot flagitiis ejus subveniri potuisse.* With what silence and firmness did the Consul VESTINUS die? though he was NERO'S [I-25] old companion and friend, and unconcerned in the conspiracy, and no crime nor accuser against him: *vigens ad huc balneo infertur, calida aqua mersatur, nulla edita voce qua se miseraretur.* How beautiful, how deep, and just are his observations upon human nature! *Molles in calamitate humani animi: mobiles ad superstitionem percussæ semel mentes: cupidine ingenii humani lubentius obscura credi: neque morum spernendus, nisi quod paupertatem præcipuum malorum credebat. Vivorum ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis: eandem virtutem admirantibus cui irascebantur: manebat admiratio viri & fama, sed oderant. Beneficia eo usque læta sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antecessere, pro gratia odium redditur. Exacto per scelera die, novissimum malorum fuit lætitia. Rumore populi, qui neminem sine æmulo sinit: minore spe veniæ, crescit vinculum sceleris: populus novarum rerum cupiens pavidusque: vulgus eadem pravitate interfectum insectatur, qua viventem fovemat.*

How masterly and profound are those upon Government! *Primas dominandi spes in arduo: ubi sis ingressus adesse studia & ministros. Arduum eodem loci potentiam & concordiam esse. Potentia cautis consiliis tutius habetur. Major e longinquo reverentia. Principibus præcipua rerum ad famam dirigendo. Insociabile regnum: cupido regni fratres & filia potior. Scaurum cui implacabilis irascebatur (Tiberius) silentio tramisit. Intelligebantur artes, sed pars obsequii in eo, ne deprehenderentur. In summa fortuna æquius quod validius.* These I do not quote as the finest Thoughts in TACITUS, but only such as occur to me.

HE paints Thoughts and Faculties, Men and Passions, Tyranny and Slaves. His imagination is boundless, yet never out-runs his judgment; his wisdom is solid and vast, yet always enlivened by his imagination. His designing is great, his drawing just, his colouring beautiful. See the description [I-26] of a Pestilence at Rome, An. 16. c. 13. *Domus corporibus exanimis, itinera funeribus complebantur. Non sexus, non ætas periculo vacua. Servitia perinde ac ingenua plebes raptim extingui, inter conjugum & liberorum lamenta, qui dum assident, dum deflent, sæpe eodem rogo cremabantur. Equitum Senatorumque interitus quamvis promiscui, minus flebiles erant, tanquam communi mortalitate sævitiam Principis prævenirent.* Under a Tyrant, a Plague was a blessing.

WHO but TACITUS could have said as he does of the antient Germans: *Argentum & aurum propitii an irati Dii negaverint, dubito?* or that afterwards of the same people: *mira diversitate naturæ, cum iidem homines sic ament inertiam, quietem oderint?* or that of the Sitones, a particular Clan of Germans, who were under the Government of a Woman; *in tantum non modo a libertate, sed etiam a servitute degenerant?* These are such instances of discernment, sagacity and happy expression, as few Writings can shew. By them and a thousand more, it is manifest that TACITUS saw every thing in a true and uncommon light: and his reflections are like mirrors where human nature and government are exhibited in their proper size and colours.

I cannot help thinking That to be a bold and gallant Saying of BOIOCALUS to the Roman General, who refused him a mansion for himself and his people in the vacant lands of Frizia; and thence provoked him to implore the Sun and Stars: *quasi coram interrogabat, vellente contueri inane solum? potius mare superfunderent adversus terrarum ereptores. Deesse nobis terram in qua vivamus; in qua moriamur non potest.* What a sublime thought is that of his concerning the Fennians? The most savage and wretched race this of all the wild Germans; their cloathing, skins; their bed, the earth; their food, the grass; destitute of horses, houses, and arms; [I-27] the thick branches of trees their only shelter against tempests and the ravening beasts: Here they find cradles and protection for their babes; here live the old men, and hither resort the young. Yet this miserable life they prefer to that of sweating at the plough, and to the pains of rearing houses: they thirst not after the fortunes of others; they have no anxiety about preserving their own; so that they hoped for nothing that was not theirs, and having nothing of their own, could fear to lose nothing; *securi (says TACITUS) adversus homines, securi adversus deos, rem difficillimam adsecuti sunt, ut illis ne voto quidem opus sit.*

Sect. IV. The Morality of TACITUS, and his spirit virtuous and humane.

AS obvious too as his other great qualities, is his love of Mankind, of Civil Liberty, and of private and publick Virtue. His Book is a great tablature of the ugliness and horrors of Tyranny; of the scandal and infamy of servitude and debasement; of the loveliness of virtue and a free spirit; of the odiousness of vice and sycophancy. Such was his sympathy for the sufferings and severe lot of the Romans under TIBERIUS, that he is glad of a digression from home, and keeps thence as long as he can, to relieve his soul from attending to domestick evils; *duabus æstatibus gesta conjunxi, quo requiesceret animus a domesticis malis.* He grieves for the slavish spirit, for the stupid tameness of the Romans under the Tyranny of the detestable NERO. So much Roman blood wantonly shed by that monster, is a load upon his soul, and oppresses it with sorrow. *Patientia servilis, tantumque sanguinis domi perditum, fatigant animum, & mæstitia restringunt.*

HE delights in good times, in publick Liberty and virtuous Reigns, and delights to praise them; [I-28] such as those of NERVA and TRAJAN; *rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quæ velis, & quæ sentias dicere licet.* In what a different strain does he speak of the foregoing Emperors? *Nobilitas, opes, omissi gestique honores pro crimine, & ob virtutes certissimum*

exitium. He glories however that the worst and most faithless times produced many instances of friendship and generous fidelity; *non tamen adeo virtutum sterile seculum, ut non & bona exempla prodiderit*.

HE is fond of a virtuous Character; as that of LABEO: *Labeo incorrupta libertate & ob id fama celebratior*: such as that of LEPIDUS; *hunc ego Lepidum temporibus illis, gravem & sapientem virum fuisse comperio: nam pleraque ab sævis adulationibus aliorum, in melius flexit*: and that of L. PISO chief Pontiff; *nulli servilis sententiæ sponte auctor*. How amiable are the Death and last words of L. ARRUNTIUS, like those of a Patriot, and a Prophet! But how vile every where, and even miserable and insecure, are Tyrants, Flatterers and the Ministers of Iniquity? What he says of the first I have quoted above: and against the other hear his honest indignation: *tempora infecta, & adulatione sordida fuere. Fædaque & nimia censerent. Adulatio perinde anceps si nulla, & ubi nimia est. Delatores genus hominum in exitium publicum repertum, perniciem aliis, ac postremo sibi invenere*. What an odious insect is VATINIUS; what a horrible villain TIGELLINUS; what infamous sycophants are CAPITO and VITELLIUS; and what a shocking paricide is SERENUS, the accuser of his father and a general accuser?

[I-29]

Sect. V. The Stile of TACITUS, how pertinent and happy: his Obscurity, a charge of the moderns only.

BESIDES the grandeur and dignity of his phrase, he is remarkable for a surprising brevity: but let his words be ever so few, his thought and matter are always abundant. His expression is like the dress of POPPÆA SABINA, described by himself; *velata parte oris ne satiaret aspectum, vel quia sic decebat*. He starts the Idea, and leaves the Imagination to pursue it. The sample he gives you is so fine, that you are presently curious to see the whole piece, and then you have your share in the merit of the discovery; a compliment which some able Writers have forgot to pay to their Readers. I cannot help thinking Mr. LOCKE a great deal too wordy, and that the plainness of his propositions, as well as their strength, suffers often by an explanation over-diffuse. Dr. TILLOTSON's stile is much better, indeed very fine, but takes up too much room; it is likely he chose it as fit for popular discourses; since it is plain from the vivacity of his Parts, and the many fine turns found in his Writings, that he could have been very sententious. These two great names are by no man revered more than I reverence them, and without malignity I mention them, as I do that of the worthy Lord CLARENDON, whose language is weighty, and grave, but encumbered and even darkened, I might say flattened, with a multiplication of words.

STILE is a part of Genius, and TACITUS had one peculiar to himself, a sort of a language of his own, one fit to express the amazing vigour of his spirit, and that redundancy of reflections which for force and frequency are to be equalled by no Writer before or since. Besides, the course and [I-30] fluency of his Narration, is almost every where broken by persons whom he introduces speaking and debating; insomuch that a great part of his History comes out of the mouths of other people, and in expressions suitable to their several Characters. It is plain too that the older he grew, the more he pruned and curtailed his Stile; for his Histories are much more copious and flowing than his Annals: and thus what has been by others reckoned a fault, was in him the effect of his judgment. Neither were his Works intended for the populace; but for such as governed States, or such as attended to the conduct of Governors; nor, were the Stile and Latin ever so plain, would they ever be understood by such as do not. As PLUTARCH came to understand the Roman Tongue by understanding their Affairs; TACITUS is to be known by knowing human nature, and the elements and mechanism of Government.

It is madness to wish for the manner and redundancy of LIVY in the Writings of TACITUS. They wrote at different times, and of Governments differently formed. TACITUS had transactions of another sort to describe, and other sorts of men; (for by Government men are changed); the crooked arts of policy, the false smiles of power, the jealousy, fury and wantonness of Princes uncontrolled; the flattery of the grandees; the havock made by the accusers, and universal debasement of all men: matter chiefly for reflection, complaints and rebuke! *Nobis in arto, & inglorius labor: mæstæ urbis res, &c.* LIVY had another field and more scope; the History of a Commonwealth rising, forming and conquering; perpetual victories and matter of panegyrick; and his pen flowed like the prosperity of the State. *Ingentia bello, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges, discordias Consulium adversus Tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, [I-31] plebis & optimatum certamina, libere egressu memorabat, An. 4. 32.* Doubtless he could have adopted another Stile if he would, perhaps the stile of LIVY, as I think this very quotation shews; but TACITUS had another view and different topicks; nor would another stile, the easy and numerous stile of LIVY, have answered his purpose. I fancy too that no body who knows TACITUS, would wish him to have written in a strain different from what he has done. There are charms in his manner and words, as well as in his thoughts, and he wears the only dress that would become him.

It is amazing that this obscurity of his should never be mentioned by any of the Antients who mention him. It is a fault discovered by the Moderns, though, in my opinion, common to him with other Classical Writers; nor has he puzzled the Commentators more than HORACE, CICERO, PLINY, SALLUST, &c. His Latin is truly pure and classical; he has few or no words which had not been used by approved writers, nor does he often give new ideas to old words. If his Works were no wise obscure to men of sense when he composed them, as we have no reason to think; it is insolence and folly in us to reckon his obscurity a fault. It is a dead language which he writes in, and he wrote seventeen hundred years ago. When TACITUS the Emperor directed copies of his Books to be placed in all the Libraries, and for their better preservation, to be transcribed ten times every year, he ordered no Grammarian to explain his abstruse places; though the Historian had been then dead near two hundred years. Great Writers are in their manner and phrase a Law and Authority to themselves; and not confined to the Rules that fill the heads or grammars of small wits and pedants. MILTON has a stile of his own, and rules for writing of his own; and who that tastes his genius [I-32] would wish him more fashionable and exact, or to have written otherwise. I am even pleased with the jarrings of MILTON'S phrases. But here I chiefly mean his poetical style. Of his prose I shall make mention hereafter.

WHEN the subject varies, so should the stile: that of TACITUS is marvellously suited to his subject and design; had it been more familiar, it had neither been so just nor so beautiful. To me nothing is more so than the manner of TACITUS; his words and phrases are admirably adapted to his matter and conceptions, and make impressions sudden and wonderful upon the mind of man. The doleful condition of the Emperor VITELLIUS, when deserted by his fortune and all men, is strong and tragical as imagination and words can make it. *Terret solitudo & tacentes loci; tentat clausa; inhorrescit vacuis; fessusque misero errore, & pudenda latebra semet occultans, à Tribuno protrahitur. Vincitæ pone tergum manus; laniata veste, fædum spectaculum ducebatur, multis increpantibus, he adds, nullo inlachrymante; and the reason he gives for this, is judicious and fine; deformitas exitus misericordiam abstulerat.* What follows is in the same affecting strain; as are the first sensible approaches of his calamity. *Vitellius, capta urbe, Aventinum in domum uxoris cellula defertur, ut si diem latebra vitavisset Terracinam—perfugeret: dein mobilitate ingenii, & quæ natura pavoris est, cum omnia metuenti, præsentia maxime displicerent, in palatium regreditur, vastum desertumque; dilapsis etiam infimis servorum, aut occursum ejus declinantibus.*

WHO would blame TACITUS for a paucity of words, when he conveys so many images in so few? *Is habitus animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur?* Where can there be a happier expression than that concerning GALBA, when the Empire was already rent from [I-33] him, and he knew it not? *Ignarus interim Galba & sacris intentus, fatigabat alieni jam imperii deos.* When OTHO, proclaimed Emperor by no more than three and twenty Soldiers, was advancing to the Camp, & *paucitate salutantium trepidus;* the behaviour and acquiescence of those he met in his way are accounted for with surprising brevity and justness; *alii conscientia, plerique miraculo; pars clamore & gladiis, pars silentio, animum ex eventu sumpturi.* There is infinite pathos in what he says of the Omens and Phænomena, which were observed during the Civil Wars, and the strife of Princes; *cælo terraque prodigia, & fulminum monitus, & futurorum præsentia læta, tristia, ambigua, manifesta.* What can be more solemn, sounding and sublime, even in LUCRETIVS? When NERO was disgracing himself and the Roman State, by debasing his person to that of a player upon the publick Stage; how pathetically is the behaviour and spirit of BURRUS described in a few words; *adstabat Burrus mærens & laudans!*

Sect. VI. A general Character of his Works.

THERE is no end of specimens and examples; it is all over a wonderful Book, full of wisdom, full of virtue; of astonishing strokes of genius and superior sense. Yet he seems not to value himself upon his great thoughts; the finest things fall from him like common things; he says them naturally, and never dwells upon one, because he has always more to utter. When he has struck your imagination, and you want to stand still and ruminare, you have no time; he draws, or rather forces you forward, and the next thought strikes you as much; so does the third, and all of them; and you go on reading and wondering, yet wishing for leisure to ponder and recollect. But he gives you [I-34] none; for from first to last the present reflection is always the best.

'Tis all of it eternal good sense, and will bear an eternity of time and censure. It is no wise akin to your pretty trifles of humour and fancy, that just tickle the imagination, but go no deeper, and please for a day. His beauties are solid, and upon the strictest examination discover no paint or tinsel; his wisdom and instruction are inexhaustible, and his works consequently an everlasting feast. I have seen several performances of tolerable length and notable reputation, all derived from so many short sentences of TACITUS, well wiredrawn and paraphrased. He is indeed a fund for Writers who have discretion and stile, but want depth.

There is a fine short Character of TACITUS in OWEN'S Epigrams;

Veracem fecit probitas, natura sagacem,
Obscurum brevitæ te, gravitasque brevem. Ep. 157.

Sect. VII. TACITUS vindicated from the imputation of deriving events from counsels too subtle and malevolent.

HE is accused too of over-much subtilty and refining, and of deriving the actions of his Princes, even the most innocent and plausible, from crooked designs, and a base heart; and of imputing to craft and politicks what was often no more than the effect of inclination and passion: A charge in my opinion intirely groundless. TACITUS describes things and men as they are, shews particulars acting agreeably to their characters, their situation and views; and represents counsels flowing from such sources only as were likely to produce them. Let us examine his reign of TIBERIUS for which he is chiefly censured.

[I-35]

THE first feat of this reign, was the murder of AGRIPPA, the grandson of AUGUSTUS. TIBERIUS ordered it, and denied it, and threatned the Centurion who was the executioner, that he should answer for it to the Senate. This is the account given by TACITUS, and the same is given by SÜETONIUS; the former adds, that it was done from jealousy of State, and for the removal of a Rival; and what other reason is to be given? for he had shewn how improbable it was that the same had been ordained by AUGUSTUS, though this was pretended, as SÜETONIUS too testifies. Nor was any thing more natural than his apprehensions of GERMANICUS, a young Prince popular above all men, and at the head of a great army, who wanted him for their Emperor in the room of TIBERIUS. This is matter of fact, and well attested. Now where is the extreme refining, to represent TIBERIUS as contriving to remove such a dangerous man, one of such good pretences and powerful interest, first from his faithful Legions, and then from home, for ever; though at the same time he flattered him, extolled him, and heaped honours upon him? All this is but the common road of such Courts, when they have the same designs and fears. Is it not usual in Turkey to load a Bashaw with Imperial Presents, to bestow upon him some great Government, and to murder him before he arrive at it?

Is not power a jealous and artificial thing, full of fears and wiles; and is not TIBERIUS allowed by all men to have been a Prince of infinite distrust, craft, and cruelty? What meant he by making great men Governors of Provinces, and yet never suffering them to go thither for a course of years, nor even out of Rome, though they still held the name? What meant he by continuing others in the actual possession of Provinces for a long tract of years, nay [I-36] frequently to the end of their life? Was it not his distrust of the former; and that as to the latter, he could not make a safer choice, and therefore was afraid to choose any? Yet TACITUS, far from diving into his Politicks in this matter, or being subtle and dogmatical about it, gives you the sentiments of others; *alii lædio novæ curæ, semel placita pro æternis servavisse. Quidam, invidia, ne plures fruerentur. Sunt qui existimant, ut callidum ejus ingenium, ita anxium judicium; neque enim eminentis virtutes sectabatur, & rursus vitia oderat: ex optimis periculum sibi; a pessimis dedecus publicum metuebat.* Never was any thing said more impartial, never any thing more just and solid. From the doubles and even contradictions that possess the heart of man, the conduct of men will be perplexed and contradictory. It is allowed that *alieni appetens, sui profusus*, was a just branch in the Character of CATILINE, and is reckoned one of the beauties and strong places in SALLUST. Without peradventure, as beautiful, and strong, and just, is this of TACITUS; *neque eminentis virtutis sectabatur, & rursus vitia oderat*; the reason too assigned for it, is equally just and fine; *ex optimis periculum sibi; a pessimis dedecus publicum metuebat.* Is not this accounting, from the principles of nature and self-preservation, for the conduct and politicks of TIBERIUS? Many of his actions and measures, recounted by TACITUS, are supported by collateral evidence, by SÜETONIUS, PLINY, DION CASSIUS, and others; many by them omitted are by him related, with such probability, and so perfectly resemble the rest of his conduct, that we must deny TIBERIUS to have been such a Prince as all men agree he was, or believe the account of him given by TACITUS.

His dissimulation was constant and notorious. In the very beginning, while he confidently acted [I-37] as Emperor, with all the pomp and might of Majesty, he openly refused the Empire; *Principatum* (says SÜETONIUS) *quamvis neque occupare confestim, neque agere dubitasset, vi & specie dominationis assumpta, diu tamen recusavit impudentissimo animo*; Such severe language as this is not given him by TACITUS.

DOES TACITUS represent him as hating and fearing the great Romans, and illustrious Senators? And do not other Historians; do not the facts themselves prove it? Was he not continually destroying them, till they were almost all destroyed? Of the twenty Grandees particularly (*principum Civitatis*) whom he desired of the Senate, for his Confidants and

Counsellors, he left not above two or three alive; all the rest were by treachery and feigned crimes cut off by him: *Horum omnium vix duos aut tres incolumes præstitit; cæteros, alium alia de causa percudit*, says SÜETONIUS. Is TACITUS therefore too refined, in discovering what facts demonstrate? Is it not SÜETONIUS too who says, *Multa specie gravitatis, ac morum corrigendorum, sed magis naturæ obtemperans, sæve & atrociter factitavit?* “It was usual with him, to do actions exceeding barbarous and merciless, yet all under shew of Justice, and the reforming of Manners; but in reality from the instigation of his own cruel spirit.” Is SÜETONIUS also over subtle, the Historian in the world the most plain, and seldom aiming at a reflection? For what reason did he suffer the boundaries of the Empire to be invaded, and Provinces to be seized by the Barbarians, but from fear of trusting any great Officer with the conduct of the War?

THAT he affected to derive all power from the Senate, yet left them but the shadow of authority, and was even jealous of that shadow, is sacredly true. It was even natural; and wanted no resining, to discover it. Did not CROMWEL do the same? [I-38] And are not all men willing to have their power, however lawless, legitimated, and the odium of their acts of violence transferred upon others? Will any one say, that the Senate liked his acts of Sovereignty, his frequent impeachments of their Members, often the best and most innocent, and his obliging them to condemn, (for he that dares not refuse is forced to consent) and his leaving every particular in continual dread of being the next; which was a farther motive in each to hatred and complaisance? He knew he had earned their hate, *reputante sibi publicum odium*. Is it likely now that he loved them, or that there was or could be sincerity or confidence on either side? What did his retirement in the Isle of Capreæ, with his perpetual absence from Rome, infer, but continual distrust of the Senate and People? Just before he expired, he was hastening from a ramble upon the Continent, back to his Den, *non temere quidquam nisi ex tuto ausurus*; to take measures of vengeance against the Senate, for that he had read in their acts, that they had discharged certain persons accused, though he had writ to the Senate, that they were only named by the informer; *pro contempto se habitum fremens, repetere Capreas quoque modo destinavit, non temere, &c.* This too is related by SÜETONIUS. It is certain the Senate were to all these Tyrants a constant mark of jealousy and hate; and some of them, particularly CALIGULA and NERO, had proposed to extirpate that venerable Assembly, by murdering the whole Body.

Sect. VIII. More Proofs of the Candour and Veracity of TACITUS.

TACITUS makes TIBERIUS no worse than he was, hardly so bad. That he doomed almost his whole family to exile, famine, or the [I-39] executioner; that his cruel suspicion and distrust extended even to women, even to his mother, nay to children, relations and strangers, to names, nobility, and all men, is undeniable. Nor does TACITUS relate any part of the conduct or politicks of TIBERIUS, but what evidently results either from the nature of the man, or the nature of his power. He frequently speaks well of that Prince; and ill he could not avoid speaking, if he spoke of him at all. Nay the whole sixth chapter of the fourth Annal, is a fine panegyrick upon the moderation and wisdom of his Government for eight years before: *publica negotia, & privatorum maxima, apud patres tractabantur; dabaturque primoribus disserere, & in adulationem lapsos cohibebat ipse; mandabatque honores, nobilitatem majorum, claritudinem militiae, inlustres domi artes spectando: ut satis constaret non alios potiores fuisse. Sua consulibus, sua prætoribus species; minorum quoque magistratuum exercita potestas; legesque, si majestatis quæstio eximeretur, bono in usu, &c.*

WHAT can be fairer than this? and do not other Historians agree that he grew worse and worse: that he had long smothered his vices, and was, first and last, a complete dissembler? And is it just upon TACITUS, to accuse him of displaying the subtleties and craft of a Prince, who was all craft and subtlety? Does he not give us the good and bad of his character, and frequently defend it? Does he not say of him, in opposition to popular opinion and report,

non crediderim ad ostentandam sævitiam, movendasque populi offensiones concessam filio materiam; quanquam id quoque dictum est? An. 1. c. 76.

DOES he not represent TIBERIUS elsewhere as mollifying a rigorous sentence of the Senate, for banishing a criminal to a barren and desolate Island, and arguing that to whomsoever they granted life, they ought to grant the conveniences of life; *dandos [I-40] vitæ usus, cui vita concederetur?* Does he not represent him in another place absolutely refusing a new accession of power, and arguing against it, like a Republican; yet charges him there with no dissimulation?

IN TACITUS you have no false colouring, no true worth blemished, no bad qualities disguised; but fair representations and equal justice. TIBERIUS is a dangerous Prince, extremely false, extremely cruel; but he has many abilities, and some good qualities. He is prudent in moderating the excesses of others, where he was not instigated by his own personal anger; *prudens moderandi, ubi propriâ irâ non impelleretur.* He loved power without bounds; yet was constant and resolute in rejecting pompous honours; *spernendis honoribus validus*: a great Tyrant, but a Prince observing the rules of primitive parcimony; *antiquæ parcimoniæ princeps*: furiously jealous of prerogative; yet the laws, where processes of treason interfered not, were in proper force; *leges, si majestatis quæstio eximeretur, bono in usu.* He is inflexible in his vengeance, and where-ever his jealousy or anger centers, there terrible tragedies are sure to follow; yet the popular imputation of his poisoning his son, is by TACITUS exposed as incredible and fabulous; with many the like instances of eminent impartiality. He gives fair quarter to the Man, but none to the Tyrant.

TO CLAUDIUS, a stupid Prince, and almost a changeling, who had no judgment, no aversion of his own, but only such as were insused and managed by others, he allows a share of sense at intervals; allows that he did some reasonable things, gave good advice to the Prince of Parthia; and wanted not elegance in his speeches, when his speeches were premeditated. He owns the spirit of Sovereignty to be jealous and unsociable; but as an exception from this rule, mentions the amiable friendship and [I-41] union between GERMANICUS and DRUSUS, in the Court of TIBERIUS, though their different interests had rent the whole Court into factions. He owns the friendship of DRUSUS, for the children of GERMANICUS; though the participation of power, and the union of hearts, are seldom compatible.

The same fair temper and truth he observes in the Conduct and Character of GALBA, OTHO, and even of NERO and VITELLIUS; and it was his business and design to lay open the iniquity and horrors of their misrule.

THESE are some of the objections made to the Writings of TACITUS, and I think with extreme injustice. His Critics are more subtle than he; they are false refiners, who for the reputation of sagacity, make singular remarks, and serve him as they say he did TIBERIUS; they pervert and blacken his designs, and are too curious to be equitable. TACITUS, with a masterly discernment, unravels the mysterious conduct of TIBERIUS; it is from awe of his Mother, it is from fear of GERMANICUS, it is from jealousy of the Grandees, and with design to amuse and humour, or to deceive them all, that he rules and acts with such temper and moderation, against the bent and pride of his nature always imperious and tyrannical. But when he had well established himself; when GERMANICUS was dead; when his Mother too was gone; when he had crushed some of the Grandees, and terrified all; and especially when he was far from the eyes of Rome, is it not most true, that he then gave a loose to all the excesses of vileness and cruelty? *cuncta simul vitia, male diu dissimulata, tandem profudit.* It is not TACITUS who says this.

WAS he not continually mocking and deluding the Senate? First he would by no means accept the [I-42] Empire, at a time when he was actually in possession; sometimes he was weary of it, and would needs resign at every turn. Before he quitted the City, he was for visiting the Provinces, and for this purpose many preparations were made, and high expectation raised; then, when he had retired to Capreae, he was continually amusing them with his immediate return to Rome, nay begged one of the Consuls to guard him. He carried the deceit so far, that he often visited the Continent, and the very Walls and Gardens about Rome; but never once returned to Rome, nor visited the Provinces, nor had a thought of resigning. The Commonwealth was always in his mouth, even when he was acting the Tyrant most; he professed eminent moderation while he was meditating acts of cruelty; and in instances of injustice and rigour, pleaded law and mercy.

His malice in leaving so wicked a Successor appears more from SUETONIUS than from TACITUS, who allows him to have had some thoughts of appointing another; but the former testifies expressly, that TIBERIUS was wont to foretel what a devouring Dragon he reared for the Roman people, and what a PHAETON or incendiary to the whole earth. TACITUS is vouched by SUETONIUS in what he says was reported for the motive which determined AUGUSTUS to adopt TIBERIUS; *ambitione tractum, ut tali successore considerabilior ipse quandoque fieret. Suet. in Tiber. c. 21.* The same too is testified by DION CASSIUS.

[I-43]

Sect. IX. Mr. BAYLE's unjust censure of TACITUS; and how well the latter knew and observed the Laws of History.

MR. BAYLE in his *Dictionary* in the Article of *Tacitus*, quotes some passages out of a Book entitled *Anonymiana*, (a very foolish book) where TACITUS is criticized as above, and approves those passages. This is the less matter of wonder to me, for that Mr. BAYLE, with all his immense learning, acuteness, and candour, had a strange and unnatural bias to absolute Monarchy, though he had fled from the fury of it, and taken refuge in a free State. A proof this that great weakness cleaves to the greatest minds; and who can boast an exemption from prejudices, when a spirit so signally disinterested and philosophical as that of BAYLE was not exempted? He himself says of TACITUS, *qu'il y a bien à reprendre dans l'affectation de son langage, & dans celle de rechercher les motifs secrets des actions, & de les tourner vers le criminel.* That this charge is groundless I have already proved. Much less to be regarded is the authority of Mr. St. EVREMOND in his censure upon TACITUS: his observations are without depth, to say no worse; nor have I found in his Works any political observations remarkable for solidity and force. What he has said of the Romans, is superficial, and often wrong.

TACITUS knew perfectly the Laws of History, and blames the passionate and partial accounts given by those who described the same reigns; since those of them which were written during the lives of the Princes, were falsified through dread of their Tyranny, and when dead, through detestation of their late cruelties. He had no motive to be [I-44] partial; free as he was from affection, free from resentment. He knew that truth uncorrupted was the Business of an Historian, and that personal affection and hate should have no share in the work; *nec amore quisquam, & sine odio dicendus est.* Of GALBA, OTHO, and VITELLIUS he says, that to him they were known by no mark either of favour or diskindness. The same is true of AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, and NERO. He shews how the truth was corrupted, first by flattery, then by resentment; and professes to be far from either. I think he is as good as his word.

Sect. X. An Apology for the wrong account by TACITUS given of the Jews and Christians, and for his disregard of the Religion then received.

THERE are other accusations against TACITUS: he has misrepresented the Jews and Christians, and wanted Religion.

CONCERNING the Jews, he followed the tradition and accounts current amongst the Romans. He tells you what different relations there were, and neither adds any thing, nor misrepresents things maliciously. It was an obscure State, generally enslaved to some greater power; to the Assyrians, Ægyptians, Grecians, and then to the Romans; and contemned by all, as much as they themselves hated all. They had not common mercy or charity toward the Gentiles and uncircumcised; and being persuaded that the Almighty loved only themselves, they fancied that he abhorred, and therefore they abhorred, the whole human race besides: so that it was said by TACITUS too truly, *adversus omnes alios hostile odium*. They were likewise ever solicitous to hide their mysteries from the [I-45] eyes of the Heathens, and could not blame them for not knowing what was not to be known. Yet he was not ill informed in some instances, especially in their spiritual notions of the Deity, with their aversion to Images, and to the adoration of the Emperors: *nulla simulacra urbibus suis; non regibus hæc adulatio, non Cæsaribus honor*.

OF the Gospel it is manifest he knew nothing; he could not else have made so ugly a picture of those who professed it; for it is not likely that the Christians were yet so degenerated as to disgrace the Christian Religion. TACITUS wanted an opportunity to be better informed. That Religion, as it began among the lower sort of people, had not probably hitherto gained many proselytes of name and quality, to countenance and recommend it to men of figure. TACITUS considered it like a Statesman, as a new Sect inconsistent with the Laws of Rome, and threatening civil tumults and innovations. It is probable too he had heard and credited the calumnies then usually thrown upon the manners and meetings of that people. Nor after the best instruction could he have become a Believer without the illumination of the Spirit; which, it is plain, was withheld from him: and, without a change of heart, it was impossible for him to conceive the Resurrection of the dead, and the Crucifixion of the Son of God. Yet he does them the justice to vindicate them from the obloquy of NERO, and exposes the barbarity of their treatment by that Tyrant.

FOR his disregarding the Religion then received, when I consider what sorts of absurdities the Pagans held for Religion, I cannot so much blame him. It was a worship paid to Deities altogether frantick and impure, by sacrifices and follies ridiculous and vain; and both their Worship and their Gods were invented by the cunning or delusion of men. It [I-46] consisted in no purification of heart, nor amendment of morals; the things which men and societies require; but in sounds, gesticulation, and the blood of beasts; not in truth and sense, in benevolence and rectitude of mind; but in lying oracles, unaccountable mysteries, and a raving imagination; sometimes in professed acts of lewdness; often in those of fury and madness; always in such as were foreign from real virtue, and the restraining of the passions. Public calamities were never thought to be brought down by public depravity and vice, nor to be averted or removed by public reformation. The Gods were not offended but by the omission, or wrong performance of some ceremony or grimace; and by grimace and ceremony they were to be appeased. And when the Deities were deemed to be endowed with the peevishness and caprices of children and apes, or the phrenzy of lunatics, what man of sense could reverence them, or believe in them? It would not have redounded to the reputation of his sense, if he had. Where Religion is pure Superstition, and the belief of it absolutely groundless and blind; where its Rites are fanciful, foolish, and unmanly, as the Religion, and Gods, and Worship of the Pagans were; it would have been a revolt from common Reason to have had any such Religion. We know how freely CICERO deals with their Gods.

It is true that these great men of Rome, who either had no notion of Religion, or one quite opposite to that publicly received and practised, regarded it as far as it was interwoven with the constitution of the State, and subservient to the ends of Government: yet they suffered their Poets, especially the dramatic Poets, to treat their Gods with severe jests and satire. They seemed to be of TIBERIUS'S mind, *Deorum injurias diis curæ*; that is, to leave to the Gods the avenging of indignities [I-47] done to the Gods. Men were punished for their libelling particulars, people of condition, and especially Magistrates; but to ridicule and lampoon the Deities, JUPITER himself, even upon the Stage, was a matter of impunity and diversion.

THEIR Religion therefore consisting in Rituals, a man might be very religious with a very debauched and libertine Spirit. *Cultor deorum parvus & infrequens*, is a complaint made by HORACE of himself, but does not seem to infer much heavenly-mindedness, nor a departure from his impure pleasures. One might, on the contrary, be exactly good and just, nay the pattern of Virtue, and a public patriot, without any tincture of their Religion. Such was CATO the Censor, such EPICURUS, and such was TACITUS. He thought that either there was no Providence (for his mind wavered between the doctrine of necessity and that of chance) or such a Providence as he could have well spared; *non esse curæ Deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem*. But this bold reproach upon the Deities, he uttered after his heart, zealous for the good of his Country, had been heated by a terrible detail of her Calamities.

NOR indeed, according to the ideas conceived of these odd Beings, so easily humoured and provoked, could one say much good of them, or expect it from them. In the reign of NERO he enumerates many presages, from which, as from signals divinely sent, great changes for the better were inferred; but all vanished into air and disappointment; *prodigia crebra & inrita intercessere, &c.* Hence he argues, that all these omens happened so apparently without any direction or interposition of the Gods, that, for many years after, NERO rioted in power and wickedness.

WHATEVER were the speculations of our Author about Religion, his Morality is strong and [I-48] pure, full of benevolence to human society, full of every generous passion, and every noble principle; a terrible rebuke to iniquity, vice and baseness, in all stations and shapes; and one continued lesson of wisdom and virtue. These are the excellencies which in civil life recommend Books and Men; these the excellencies which recommend TACITUS; excellencies which he has carried as high as the utmost efforts of human genius could carry them. Mr. BAYLE says, *Ses Annales & son Histoire sont quelque chose d'admirable, & l'un des plus grands efforts de l'esprit humain; soit que l'on y considere la singularité du stile, soit que l'on s'attache à la beauté des pensées, & à cet heureux pinceau avec lequel il a sçu peindre les disguisemens & les fourberies des politiques, & le foible des passions.*

NOR does he shew more abilities than probity, as astonishing as his abilities were; and having so much, what more did he want for his design? or what more could we wish in him? Which is the better instructor, he who has store of saith, but wants virtue, and abounds not in good sense; or he who wants the first, but abounds in knowledge and the rules of righteousness? It is for this we consult TACITUS, not for his Theological Speculations. How do his metaphysical notions impede his excellencies as an Historian and Politician; or his mistakes in one thing, lessen his discernment and veracity in another?

ACCORDING to the accounts of our best Travellers concerning China, the Mandarins who are the Nobility of the country, the Learned, and such as hold the Magistracy, have no religion at all, their governing principle is publick spirit; their principal study the good of the State; and they are noted for politeness and virtue. The *Bonzes* or Priests, on the contrary, pretend to extraordinary devotion; but are vicious, sordid, base, and void [I-49] of every virtue private or public. Here is an instance of a Monarchy the most thriving of any upon

earth, or that ever was upon earth; an Empire that contains more people than half the rest of the globe, these people full of industry and arts; yet administred by men who are of no particular Religion, or Sect, but are guided by the natural lights of Reason and Morality; nor knows it a greater blot and disgrace than the vile lives of its *Priests* and *Religious*.

AGAINST this instance set another, that of the Pope's Dominions, the center of the Romish Religions; where holy men sway all things, and have engrossed all things; where tortures and flames keep out Infidels and Heretics, and every man who thinks awry; and where the champions for devotion, so called, protect the Church, and feed themselves. Now where but here should one look for the marks of opulence, ease, and plenty, and public happiness, if by an Administration of Priests and Devotees, public happiness were advanced? But behold a different and melancholy scene! Countries fertile, but desolate; the people ignorant, idle, and starving, and all the marks and weight of Misery!

DOES not this merit reflection, that a Church blended and debauched with excessive wealth and power, is worse, a thousand times worse than none; and that the mere light of nature and reason is many degrees more conducive to the temporal welfare of humankind, than a Religion or Church which is purely lucrative and selfish? Were the Romish Church, or any other Church that teaches pains and penalties; any that exalts Ecclesiastics into power, and leaves them the sword, or weilds it for them, once established in China; there would in a little time be an end of their incredible numbers; and it would soon feel the cruel curse attending the change. In this sentiment I am vouched by that [I-50] polite Writer, and candid Prelate, Dr. TILLOTSON:

“Better it were, says he, there were no revealed Religion, and that human nature were left to the conduct of its own principles and inclinations, which are much more mild and merciful, much more for the peace and happiness of human society; than to be acted by a Religion that inspires men with so wild a fury, and prompts them to commit such outrages.” Sermon. Vol. I. p. 206.

Make another comparison between two particulars, a Heathen guided by reason, and a Christian by passion and false zeal; between TACITUS and St. JEROM; behold the politeness, candour, eternal truth, and good sense in the one; mark the rashness and enthusiasm, the fierceness and falshood of the other. So much stronger were the passions and insincerity of this great Saint, than the impressions of the Christian Religion, which is all meekness and candour; nay, he often makes it a stale for his fury, forgeries, and implacable vengeance. I meddle not with his strange maxims, some foolish, some mad, many impracticable, and others turbulent and seditious. In TACITUS you have the good sense and breeding of a Gentleman; in the Saint the rage and dreams of a Monk. Does the religion of the latter recommend his reveries and bitter spirit; or the want of it in TACITUS, weaken the shining truths that are in him?

WHEN a Writer relates facts, or reasons from principles, his good sense and veracity only are to be regarded; and we have no more to do with his speculations or mistakes in other matters, than with his person or complexion. PLINY and ARISTOTLE are reckoned Atheists; but what is this to their fine parts and learning? With small spirits and bigots every thing that is noble and free, is Atheism and Blasphemy. The littleness and sourness [I-51] of their own hearts, is the measure of all things. NERVA, TRAJAN, and MARCUS AURELIUS were Heathen Princes; but they had virtue and benevolence, and their administration was righteous: what more did their subjects want from them? JUSTINIAN, CONSTANTIUS, JOHN BASILOWITZ, JOHN GALEAS, and LEWIS the eleventh were Christian Princes, and men pretending to high Devotion; some of them great contenders for Orthodoxy, and great builders of Churches; but all barbarous and consuming Tyrants. What were the people or themselves the better for their Religion, without good nature and probity? Nay, they made Religion one of the principal

machines for Tyranny; as Religion in a Tyrant or Impostor is little else but an impious bargain and composition with God for abusing men.

SUCH in truth is the situation of things below, such the frame and foible of men, that it depends in a great measure upon Civil Government, whether Religion shall in this world do good or harm. Is a country filled with oppression, the happier for being filled too with Churches and Priests, as were Greece and Italy by JUSTINIAN? Or can a country that abounds in virtue, and happiness, and good Laws, want any more to all the purposes of social life; like Lacedæmon and Rome in their best ages? Let us praise all who have true Religion, full of mercy, and void of bigotry; but let us not condemn such as, for want of the same lights and revelation which we have been blessed with, are, without any forms of Religion, virtuous and wise. Certainly worse, much worse than none, is that Religion which inspires pride, bigotry, and fierceness, and hath not charity for all men.

To conclude this head, I shall here subjoin what I have said elsewhere to the like purpose;

“That black is not white, and that two and two make four, [I-52] is as true out of the mouth of an Atheist, as out of the mouth of an Apostle. A penny given by an Atheist to a beggar, is better alms than a half-penny given by a Believer; and the good sense of an Atheist is preferable to the mistakes of a good Christian. In short, whatever reputed Atheists do well, or speak truly, is more to be imitated and credited, than what the greatest Believers do wickedly, or say falsely. Even in the business of bearing testimony, or making a report, in which cases the credit or reputation of the witness gives some weight, or none, to what he says; more regard is to be had to the word of an Unbeliever, who has no interest on either side, than to the word of a Believer, who has; neither are the good or bad actions of an Atheist worse, with respect to the world at least, for his being one; though the sin of a Saint is more sinful than that of a Pagan. It is the greatest folly to think that any man’s crimes are the less for him who commits them; or that truth is less or more truth, for the ill or good name of him who speaks it.”

Sect. XI. The foolish censure of BOCCALINI and others upon TACITUS.

THE censure passed upon TACITUS by BOCCALINI and some of the other Commentators, as if he maliciously taught lessons of Tyranny; is so senseless and absurd, that it merits no notice, much less consutation. As well may they say that LUTHER and father PAUL display the encroachments and frauds of the Church of Rome, on purpose to teach that or other Churches how to oppress and deceive; or that LIVY, as great a Republican as ever lived, exposed the usurpations and Tyranny of TARQUIN, in order to instruct [I-53] Usurpers to support themselves and extinguish public liberty. TACITUS represents Tyrants as odious to all men, and even to themselves. But what answer could one give to a man who should advance that GROTIUS wrote his Book of the Truth of Christianity, with a view to promote and confirm Paganism?

Sect. XII. Of the several Commentators and Translators of TACITUS.

IT were almost endless to mention all who have written upon TACITUS, and their success; numbers have done it, many as Critics, some politically; and several of the former with sufficiency and applause, such as LIPSIUS, FREINSHEMIUS, old GRONOVIVS, and RYCKIUS. From the edition published by this last I have made my Translation; the text is very correct, and his notes are judicious and good. Of all those who have commented upon his Politics, I can commend but very few; I mean such as I have seen; many of them are worse than indifferent; tedious compilations of common places, or heavy paraphrases upon the original, where its vigour is lost in superfluous explications; and the lively thoughts of TACITUS converted into lifeless maxims; frequently wrong converted; frequently trifling and affected; often such

discoveries as are obvious to every peasant or child; or puffy declamations, tedious, laboured and uninstructional. Of one or the other sort are the Commentaries of BOCCALINI, ANNIBAL SCOTTI, FORSTNERUS, SCHILDUS, and divers others.

Mr. AMELOT DE LA HOUSSAYE has made a large collection of political observations upon TACITUS, as far as the thirteenth Annal inclusive; some of them pertinent and useful; but many [I-54] of them insipid, and little worth. The very first which he makes, is flat and poor; *des que la Roiauté commence a degénérer en tyrannie, le peuple aspire à la liberté.* Little better is this; *quand un Prince commence à devenir infirme, ou cassé, tout le monde tourne les yeux vers le soleil levant, c'est à dire, vers son successeur;* or this; *les refus du Prince doivent être assaisonnez de douceur & de courtoisie;* or this; *ceux même qui ont renoncé à leur honneur, & qui font gloire de leur sceleratesse, s'offensent d'être appelez traitres;* or this; *un bon General ne doit jamais hazarder une bataille, qu'il n'ait mis bon ordre par tout;* this too; *il n'y a rien dont un Favori, ou un premier Ministre, doive se mettre plus en peine, que de bien connoître l'humeur de son Prince;* this too; *un Prince dépoüillé de ses Etats ne reste pas volontiers entre les mains de celui qui en est emparé.* All this is trite, void of force and instruction.

THE Spanish Translation by DON ALAMOS DE BARRIENTOS, is accompanied with numerous Annotations, by him stiled *Aforismos*, which are as indifferent and impotent as the Translation it self is good and strong. His observation upon, *cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa, nomine principis sub imperium accepit*, is, *Quando alguno se viniere a hazer Senor de una grande, y poderosa cividad libre, lo mas ordinario serà despues de una larga guerra civil;* "the opportunity for any one to become master of a great and powerful free City, is most commonly at the end of a great civil war." TACITUS says that AUGUSTUS left the first Lords of the Senate his heirs in the third degree, though most of them were hated by him; *plerosque invisos sibi, sed jactantia gloriaque ad posteros.* DON ALAMOS observes upon this; *El principe muchas vezes haze honra a las personas que aborrece, para ganhar fama de modestia y sufrimiento;* "a Prince often confers honours on those he hates, purely for the reputation of moderation [I-55] and temper." TACITUS says of GERMANICUS, *anxius occultis in se patruï aviaque odiis, quorum caussæ acriores, quia iniquæ;* *El hombre inocente y bueno,* (says DON ALAMOS by way of Annotation) *de ninguna cosa recibe tanta congoxa, como de los secretos aborrecimientos que sabe le tienen sus parientes, sin merecerlo;* "a worthy and innocent man feels so much anguish from nothing as from the secret hate which he knows his parents bear him, without deserving it."

OF small value are such reflections, and small thought they cost to produce them; the less is the wonder that DON ALAMOS has vented such a myriad. CANINI, an Italian, has however translated them into his own language, with high encomiums, and published them with the Italian Translation of POLITI, a Translation which reads well, but hampers the thoughts of TACITUS, and from an affectation to be as concise as the original, loses much of its weight and spirit. DON ALAMOS, on the contrary, opens the sentiments of TACITUS fully, often over-fully, by supplemental parentheses, that are sometimes perfectly needless, and always mar and embarrass the reading.

THESE are the only Spanish and Italian Versions which I have seen of TACITUS. There are two more of the former, by SUEYRO and COLOMA, both well esteemed; and as many more Italian by DATI and DAVANZATI, not at all commended. Of French Translations there are five or six, all, except two, good for little, some of them good for nothing. These two are by Mr. D'HARLAY DE CHANVALLON, who has done the whole, Mr. AMELOT DE LA HOUSSAYE, who has only gone as far as the thirteenth Annal. The former is vigorous and just, like that of a man of sense and observation; nor has the latter any advantage over him, save that his French is more [I-56] modern, if that be any. ABLANCOURT is likewise one of the French Translators of TACITUS, a man of name and of a flowing stile; but if he has abused other Authors as he has

abused and transformed TACITUS, it is fit they were all done over again. There is some life in him, and harmony, but no justness nor strength. All the force and fine ideas of TACITUS are lost in ABLANCOURT.

Sect. XIII. A Conjecture concerning the modern Languages, more largely concerning the English.

OF the French Tongue itself I may venture to say, after better judges than my self, that from a laxness and effeminacy essential to it, it cannot naturalize the strong expressions of the Ancients, without spreading and weakening them considerably. It has a number of relatives, particles and monosyllables that return incessantly, and flatten the sense, and tire the ear. The English Language has indeed many words more harsh than the French; but it has likewise many more spirituous and sounding; and though it be also loaded with relatives, particles and words of one syllable, yet I think not to the same degree, nor do those we have return so often; and we can frequently drop the particles, and leave them to be understood, as well as the relatives.

IN this respect the Latins had an advantage over the Greeks; as those two Languages have over every other that is now in the world, or perhaps ever was. We are infinitely behind them in significancy and sound, and, with all our adventitious words and refinements, are still crude and gothick to them. Nearest in Language to the Ancients come the Spaniards and Italians, though still far behind; yet they stand over the heads of the English [I-57] and French, and walk while we creep. The Spanish is the more sonorous and lofty; the Italian the more sweet and gliding; and both excel in harmony, numerosity, and the pomp of words. The Italians seem to have spoiled their Tongue, by wild hyperboles, and phrases of mere sound and compliment; whether it be from the turn of the nation to Love and Music; whether it be from the Legends of their Saints, and their extravagant Panegyrics upon them, or from their Slavery to Churchmen, or the Severity of their Government, or from what other cause, I do not pretend to determine.

THE French profess to have greatly refined their Tongue; and it is indeed brought to be exceeding glib and perspicuous; but whether the refiners have not pared away its strength to make it more shapely and regular, has been doubted. Some refinements we also have made in ours, perhaps by imitating the French; though I hope we have better preserved its force. Easy writing has been studied to affectation; a sort of writing, which, where the thoughts are not close, the sense strong, and the phrase genteel, is of all others the most contemptible. Such were the productions of Sir ROGER L'ESTRANGE, not fit to be read by any who have taste or good breeding; they are full of technical terms, of phrases picked up in the street from apprentices and porters, and nothing can be more low and nauseous. His sentences, besides their grossness, are lively nothings, which can never be translated (a sure way to try language) and will hardly bear repetition. *Between hawk and buzzard: clawed him with kindness: alert and frisky: guzzling down tipples: would not keep touch: a queer putt: lay cursed hard upon their gizzard: cram his gut: conceited noddy: old chuff:* and the like, are some of Sir ROGER'S choice flowers. Yet this man was reckoned a Master, nay a Reformer of the English [I-58] Language; a man who writ no Language; nor does it appear that he understood any; witness his miserable Translations of CICERO'S Offices and JOSEPHUS. That of the latter is a Version full of mistakes, wretched and low, from an easy and polite one of Monsieur D'ANDILLY.

SIR ROGER is one amongst the several hands who attempted TACITUS, and the third Book of the *History* is said to be done by him. He knew not a word of it but what he has taken from Sir HENRY SAVILL, and him he has wretchedly perverted and mangled. Out of the wise and grave mouth of TACITUS he brings such quaint stuff as this; *to cast the point upon that issue: — sneaking departure of VITELLIUS: — at the rate of a man at his wit's end: — sottish*

multitude never went beyond bawling: — an Emperor lugg'd out of his hole: — the sexton of the Capitol: — the Government dropt into VESPASIAN'S mouth: — not cut out for a soldier: — went not a sneaking way to work: — VALENS in the interim with his dissolute train of capons: [into this senseless cant word Sir ROGER elegantly changes that of Eunuuchs used by Sir H. SAVILL; for I dare say he neither saw nor knew the original, agmine spadonum]: the Emperor guzzling and gormandizing like a beast.

SUCH jargon is hardly good enough for a Puppet-shew. Sir ROGER had a genius for buffoonry and a rabble, and higher he never went; his stile and his thoughts are too vulgar for a sensible artificer. To put his Books into the hands of youth or boys, for whom chiefly ÆSOP, by him burlesqued, was designed, is to vitiate their taste, and to give them a poor low turn of thinking; not to mention the vile and slavish principles of the man. He has not only turned ÆSOP'S plain Beasts, from the simplicity of nature, into Jesters and Bussoons; but out of the mouths of animals inured to the [I-59] boundless freedom of air and desarts, has drawn doctrines of servitude, and a defence of Tyranny.

THE taste and stile of the Court is always the standard of the public. At the Restoration, a time of great festivity and joy, the formal and forbidding gravity of the preceding times, became a fashionable topic of ridicule; a manner different and opposite was introduced; jest and waggery were encouraged; and the King himself delighted in drollery, and low humour. Hence the Language became replete with ludicrous phrases; archness and cant grew diverting; the writings of witlings passed for wit; and if they were severe upon the Sectaries, as the fashion was, they pleased the Court. By this means L'ESTRANGE got his character. It is very true that there appeared at the same time men of just wit, and polite stile; but it cannot be denied but that the other manner was prevalent; the greatest wits sometimes fell into it.

THIS humour ended not with that Reign, nor the next, but was continued after the Revolution by L'ESTRANGE, TOM BROWN, and other delighters in low jests, their imitators; and such witlings have contributed considerably to debauch our Tongue. If we go so high as Queen ELIZABETH'S time, we shall find that a good stile began then to be used, agreeably to the good sense of that Princess, and her Court; and we have the Language of that age in Sir WALTER RALEIGH, whose genius was too just and strong to go into the miserable pedantry of the next reign. Many of the productions then, and particularly the Royal productions, are wretched beyond measure; (I wish the honour and politics of those days had been better) nor could so considerable a man as Sir FRANCIS BACON escape the infection.

THE next Prince affected a high and rigid gravity, and a pomp and solemnity of stile became [I-60] common; yet the Language began to recover, when the cant and enthusiasm ensuing, gave it a new turn extremely insipid and offensive. But between the reign of King JAMES and the Restoration, several Writers appeared eminently happy in their stile: such particularly was Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, whose language is flowing, and free as his own candid spirit. The same character is due to the excellent Lord FALKLAND, and Mr. HALES of Eaton. Mr. HOBBS'S English is beautiful almost, if not altogether, beyond example; nothing can be finer than his way of expressing his thoughts; his stile is as singularly good, charming and clear, as many of his principles are dangerous and false. Under this character of his stile I do not comprize his Translation of THUCYDIDES; as it does not, however just it be, resemble his other Works. Hence I am inclinable to believe what I have heard, that it was done by some of his disciples, and by him revised; yet it far excels most of our Translations. MILTON'S English Prose is harsh and uncouth, though vigorous and expressive. The stile of SELDEN and HAMMOND is rugged and perplexed.

Sect. XIV. A Conjecture concerning the present state of the English Tongue, with an account of the present Work.

OF the Character of Writing in our own time, were I to give my opinion, I should be apt to say, that in general it comes too near to talking; a method which will hardly make it delightful or lasting; no words upon paper will have the same effect as words accompanied with a voice, looks and action; hence the thoughts and language should be so far raised as to supply the want of those advantages; but indeed this is impossible, and therefore there is the [I-61] greater cause for heightening the stile; now because laboured periods are offensive, and flat ones are insipid, the excellency lies between pomp and negligence. Let it be as easy as you please, but let it be strong; two advantages that are very compatible, and often found in the same writer. LIVY is remarkable for both; it is his eloquence and ornaments which have preserved him in such esteem, as much as his matter and good sense. The late Lord SHAFTESBURY, though he has been perhaps too anxious and affected in forming his phrase to easiness and fluency, has yet had good success; since it is manifest that his soft alluring stile has multiplied his Readers, and helped powerfully to recommend his Works. Dr. BURNET of the Charter-House wrote with great eloquence and majesty, yet easy and unaffected. Dr. TILLOTSON's stile is plain and pleasant, enlivened too with fine images, and strong sense; yet many, while they strove to imitate him, have written very poorly. This has happened to some of our Divines, who, studying his manner, but wanting his genius, have uttered a flow of words, which sound not ill, but lack spirit and matter. I have looked over whole pages of Bishop BLACKKAL's Sermons, without finding any thing which offended the ear, or pleased the imagination, or informed the understanding. I cannot help mentioning here another Writer, who has gained great reputation for Stile, without deserving any; I mean Dr. SPRAT, Bishop of Rochester. His expression is languishing and insipid, full of false pomp, full of affectation. He is always aiming at harmony and wit, but succeeds ill; for his manner is starched and pedantic. With much greater justice has the Stile of Dr. ATTERBURY, his successor, been admired.

OUR Tongue is naturally cold, and the less force our words have, the more they must be multiplied; [I-62] this multiplying of words is tedious; thence the remedy is as bad as the disease. The Latin phrases, on the contrary, are short and lively, and a few words convey many images. These difficulties, with many others, I found in this Translation very sensibly. I wanted new words, but have rarely coined any, as the creating of words is generally thought affected and vain; yet I have sometimes ventured upon a new phrase, and a way of my own, upon drawing the English idiom as near as possible to that of the Latin, and to the genius of my Author; by leaving the beaten road, dropping particles, transposing words, and sometimes beginning a sentence where it is usual to end it. I have studied to imitate the spirit, eloquence and turns of TACITUS, as far as I could, assisted by a Language weak in its sounds, and loose in its contexture. This manner of writing, I own, would be strange and even ridiculous in plain and familiar subjects; but where the subject is high and solemn, there must be a conformity of stile.

In the political Discourses following, I have likewise taken a method of my own, in reasoning largely upon topics which to me seemed of the most moment to this free Nation, and giving an idea of the politics of the Cæsars; of the *vis, artes, & instrumenta regni*, as they are called by TACITUS. I have vindicated the principles of civil Liberty; I have examined the defences made for CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS; I have displayed the genius of these Usurpers; the temper and debasement of the people; with the conduct and tyranny of their successors, to the end of the *Annals*. In my Translation of the *History* I have done the same. I have little troubled myself with the strife and guesses of Commentators, and various Readings. I have chosen the best editions, and where the meaning was dubious, taken the most probable; for, [I-63] after all, there is a good deal of guess-work and uncertainty; difficulties not peculiar to TACITUS.

I was persuaded to this undertaking several years ago by a friend of mine, a Gentleman of Letters in the City; for then I had never seen the English Translation, and knew not but it was a good one. Mr. TRENCHARD approved the design with his usual zeal for every thing which favoured public Liberty. My Lord CARTERET, who understands TACITUS perfectly, and admires him, was pleased to think me not unfit for it, and gave me many just lights about the manner of doing it; that particularly of allowing my self scope and freedom, without which I am satisfied every Translation must be pedantic and cold. A Translation ought to read like an Original. The Duke of ARGYLL espoused it generously, with that frankness which is natural to him, agreeably to his knowledge and taste of polite Learning, and to his sincere love of Liberty. So did my Lord TOWNSHEND. Sir ROBERT WALPOLE encouraged me in the pursuit of it in a manner eminently to my credit; and to many Gentlemen of my acquaintance I am much obliged upon this occasion. I own I have been long about this Translation; that I was so, is to be ascribed not so much to idleness, as to diffidence. It was done a long while before I put it to the press; after all my care and many revises, I continued apprehensive that much fault might be found, and many objections made; a misfortune which I still doubt I shall not be able to escape, and wish I may not deserve. I therefore rely more on the candour of my Readers, than on my own sufficiency. Those of them who understand TACITUS in the original, will easily make allowances for the difficulty of making him speak any other Language. I have been chiefly careful not to mistake the sentiments of my Author about human Nature and Government; [I-64] and I will venture to say, that no man who has not accustomed himself to think upon these two subjects, can ever make tolerable sense of TACITUS, let him be as learned in other things as he will. For the same reason, no man that is merely Learned, can ever be pleased with a free Translation, however faithful and just; for his chief attachment will ever be to Words and Criticism. Who had more Learning than Sir H. SAVILL? 'tis plain he abounded beyond most men; but I suppose Learning was his chief accomplishment; and thence his Translation is a very poor one. The fault cannot be ascribed to the time; for at that time the polite world wrote and spoke well; and if Sir WALTER RALEIGH had then translated it, no body I believe would have ever attempted to mend it.

DISCOURSE III.

Upon CÆSAR the Dictator.↵

Sect. I. Of CÆSAR's Usurpation, and why his Name is less odious than that of CATILINE.

NOTHING has been hitherto found a sufficient check and barrier to the exorbitant passions of men; neither kindness nor severity; nor mulcts nor pain; nor honour; nor infamy; nor the terrors of death. A proof how far human malice or ambition is an over-match for human wisdom; since Laws and Constitutions framed by the best and wisest men, have, first or last, become the sport and conquest of the worst, sometimes of the most foolish. Could wise Establishments have ensured the stability of a State, that of Rome had [I-65] been immortal. Besides adopting all the best Institutions of the free States of Greece, [a] her principal struggle and employment for some Centuries, was the subduing of foreign enemies by Arms, and the securing of domestic Liberty by wholesome Laws; and for Laws and Arms she was the wonder and the glory of the earth. But she, whose force and policy no power could withstand, not that of Greece nor of Carthage, nor of the World, fell by the corruption, and perfidiousness, and violence of her own Citizens. The only sword that could hurt her, was her own; with that she trusted CÆSAR, and that he turned unnaturally upon his own mother, and by it enslaved her.

CATILINE'S conspiracy and crime every man detests; yet CÆSAR accomplished what CATILINE only intended. Had he better qualities than CATILINE? he was so much the worse, and able to do higher mischiefs. See how infatuation prevails! the same men who abhor CATILINE, admire CÆSAR, who actually did more evil than ever the wicked heart of CATILINE had conceived. But CATILINE had no success, nor consequently flatterers. Had he succeeded, had he entailed Rome upon his race, and such as would have been concerned to have guarded his fame; there would not have been wanting flattering Poets and Historians to have echoed his Praises and Genius divine, his Eloquence, Courage, Liberality and Politics, and how much the degeneracy of Rome wanted such a Reformer, with every other topic urged in defence of CÆSAR. But CATILINE failed, and is owned to have been a Traitor. CÆSAR'S iniquity was triumphant, so was his name; and after-ages have continued to reverence him by the force of habit, and of superstition which swallows every thing, examines [I-66] nothing. When popular opinion has consecrated a man or a name, all that man's actions, however wicked or foolish, and every thing done under that name, are sure to be consecrated too. The force of authority is irresistible and infatuating, and reason and truth must yield to prejudice and words.

Sect. II. Of the publick Corruption by CÆSAR promoted or introduced; with his bold and wicked Conduct.

WAS the Commonwealth become disjointed and corrupt; as in truth it was deeply and dangerously? who had contributed so much as CÆSAR to that wicked work? From his first appearance in the world he confederated with every public Incendiary, with every troubler of the peace of the State, with every Traitor against his Country: insomuch that he was divested of the dignity of Prætor by a solemn Decree of Senate: and when he solicited for the Consulship, his ambition and violent designs were so much apprehended in that supreme Office [b] , that to check him with a proper Colleague, the Senators contributed a great sum of money; nor did even CATO deny but that such contribution, however against Law, was necessary then to save the State [c].

HE began that Office with violent acts of power; by violence dispossessed his Colleague of all Share in the Administration; and, during the whole term, he raised and pulled down, gave and took away by mere will and power, whatsoever and whomsoever he would; terrified some, imprisoned others; forged

[I-67]

plots, suborned lying accusers, and then murdered them, and trampled upon all Faith and Law.

To escape punishment for all these outrages, he corrupted and bribed the people, to chuse his own creatures into the Magistracy, or bribed the Magistrates after they were chosen. He went so far as even to engage some of them, by oath and writing, never to call him to account, nor suffer him to be called.

BY the same wicked methods he obtained for his lot the province of Gaul, and kept it for ten years, committing fresh treason every day; making war of his own head, right or wrong, upon friend and foe; insomuch that it was proposed in Senate to deliver him up to the enemy; but faction and bribery saved him, and from the most extensive rapine he derived his power of bribing. He feasted the people; he gave them largesses; he gained the Senators by money, the soldiers by donatives; nay, the favourite servants and lowest slaves of considerable men, were bribed by him. Every prodigal, every expensive youth, every man indebted and desperate, every criminal, found in him a ready support and protector; and when their expences, debts, and crimes, were so excessive as to admit of no relief from him, to such he was wont to preach the absolute necessity of a Civil War.

NOR did foreign Kings and Nations escape his court and gifts; upon them he bestowed aids, and arms, and captives, all belonging to the Roman people, and without their authority; thus to purchase foreign friendship against a day of usurpation and need. To do all this he robbed the Provinces, plundered Towns, pillaged Temples, even the Capitol he plundered, whence he stole a vast quantity of gold, and placed so much gilt brass in the room of it, and put whole Kingdoms and Provinces under contribution to his privy purse.

[I-68]

How many thousand deaths did this man deserve, even before he had committed his capital iniquity! It was he who thus principally corrupted the State, and embroiled it, and unsettled it in all its parts.

HE offered indeed to disband his forces, if POMPEY would do so too; but even this offer was giving law to Rome. The Senate was to judge, and not CÆSAR, what armies were to be disbanded, what to be retained. Besides, even that proposal was justly suspected to have been faithless and hollow; since, had he executed the same, it had been easier for him to have re-assembled upon occasion his veteran soldiers, than for POMPEY his troops lately levied.

HAD there been no corruption in the State, such a man was enough to introduce it. From his infancy he was thought to have meditated the enslaving of his Country, and in order to enslave it, created corruption, or improved it. To commit the blackest treason and iniquity that the malice of man could devise, he stuck at no other, but by a Babel of crimes accomplished the highest.

Sect. III. CÆSAR might have purified and reformed the State; but far different were his intentions. His Art, good Sense, and continued ill Designs.

DID the State want reforming? why did not CÆSAR reform and restore it? This would have been true glory, the only true use of his absolute power, and the only amends for having assumed it. The work too was practicable; the wisest and greatest men in Rome thought it so, even after all the poison and depravity introduced by him. BRUTUS, CICERO, and the Senate thought so; else he would never have been put to Death by those who did it. If the State had been [I-69] deemed irretrievable, and an Usurper a necessary evil, they could not have had a better than CÆSAR. But they judged otherwise, and for some time Liberty was actually restored. Why it subsisted no longer, was owing to casualties and the faithlessness of OCTAVIUS. No human wisdom can take in all incidents and possibilities at one view; to see them by succession is often to see them too late; and against what is not foreseen no remedy can be provided. CICERO who swayed the Senate, in hatred to ANTHONY, trusted OCTAVIUS too much, and raised him too high, and was by that false creature given up to the slaughter, to satiate the vengeance of ANTHONY, to cement their late union, and to begin the bloody Tragedy which they had meditated against their Country and her Liberty, by the murder of so signal a Patriot. What followed was horrible, continued massacres and the rage of the sword, the people armed against one another, two thirds of them destroyed, and AUGUSTUS established Sovereign over the rest. He too thought it possible to resettle the old free State, by proposing once or twice to resign; however insincere he were, it was a confession that he thought it to be practicable; and DRUSUS, his wife's son, declared his own purpose to effect it; nay, it was what TIBERIUS, after he was Emperor, pretended to do.

CÆSAR was said to have foretold the public Calamities and Civil Wars to ensue: Why did he not prevent them? By his Dictatorial power he might have removed what enormities, and made what regulations he would, suppressed the insolence of particulars, revived the force of the Laws, and reduced the Commonwealth to her first principles and firmness. Instead of this, he continued, more and more, to break her remaining balance, to [I-70] weaken and debauch the people, and to destroy every Law of Liberty.

LIBERTY and the Republic were a jest to CÆSAR; he treated the very name with ridicule and contempt [d]; he punned upon SYLLA for resigning his usurped power. He had nothing in his head or heart but absolute rule, a Diadem, the title of King, and controuling the world according to his lust [e]; nay, to have his very words go for Laws [f]; and as a proof that he meant to entail all this pompous Dominion upon his Race, he had a Law ready to be proposed for a privilege of taking as many Wives as he thought fit, and of what quality and condition he thought fit. His acts of Tyranny were indeed so many, so high and insupportable, that even his dear friends the populace, notwithstanding all his bounties, his feasts and shews, and all his other arts to sooth and debauch them, grew sullen and discontented; they declaimed against such usurpation, in their houses and in the Forum; they called aloud for avengers, and gave him public affronts.

BY the Laws of Rome the Dominion of one, and consequently the dominion of CÆSAR, was detestable and accursed, and any man was warranted to slay the Tyrant [g]: Nor was there any valid reason against killing CÆSAR, but that somewhat as bad or worse was to follow. Now the best and ablest Romans judged otherwise, as I have shewn; and who was better qualified to judge? As to CÆSAR's prophecy of worse times, it was deciding [I-71] in his own favour, and not to be credited; and there was policy in it as well as vanity.

THE accomplishments of CÆSAR, the mildness of his administration, and mercy to his enemies, have been much magnified. It is certain he had exquisite abilities and address; but how did he apply them? Was it not to be the Master of mankind? and was not this, interest and self-love? What could be more interested, what more selfish, than to take the world to himself? CÆSAR had good sense and experience; he knew that particular acts of cruelty and revenge were odious, even more odious than the slaughter of thousands, under the title of war and conquest, however unprovoked and unjust: So much more quarter from the world has

ambition than cruelty, though the former is often the more mischievous passion. He knew, that, while general acts of blood would pass for Heroism, fit to be distinguished with praise and laurels, a particular life, taken away in anger, would pass for barbarity. Such fallacy is there in sounds, and in the imaginations of men! We judge not of evil by its quantity, the true medium of judging, but by its name, and the quality of the doer or sufferer; hence the foolish causes of popularity without merit and innocence. Acts of rage, the execution of particulars, and a vindictive Reign, would have diminished the Hero, and tarnished his fame, as much as his generosity to enemies, his noble contempt of fear and offenders, blazoned his glory, and begot admirers.

Sect. IV. The probability of his waxing more cruel, had he reigned much longer.

THE generous, the forgiving temper of CÆSAR, was no sure warrant, that he would not have broke out into personal cruelties; for, of his public cruelty, Rome and the world were the theatre and [I-72] the witnesses: He must have acted agreeably to the necessities and jealousy of power, broken those necks which would not bend, and destroyed such as he could not but constantly fear. I own there came after him some Emperors who reigned without many acts of blood; but the sovereignty was then thoroughly established, and they had no high spirits to fear, bred in the notions and possession of Liberty, as were all the Romans in his time. Nor, even after servitude had been begun, and for some time suffered under CÆSAR, could the second Triumvirate think themselves secure, till they had destroyed at once by Proscription a whole army of illustrious Romans, such as they conceived would oppose and even extirpate their domination. Nor did this tragical precaution and general barbarity, put an end to barbarity in particular instances; AUGUSTUS, for the first years of his Reign, was making almost daily sacrifices of noble blood to his fears and safety.

POWER of it self makes men wanton, distrustful and cruel; CÆSAR lived not long enough in purple to shew what he would prove; five months were but a short term for trial [h]. It would be rash to assert, that he who had shed the blood of Nations and Armies, without provocation, without authority; he who had violated Liberty and Law, and put chains upon his Country, and the race of men, would have spared particular lives, when from particular lives he came to apprehend danger and revolt. He that could be piqued even to folly and ridicule, because AQUILA the Tribune did not rise as he passed by; he who could not put up this, nor forget it, nor cease mentioning it upon every occasion for a long while after, nor even forbear scolding at it, must have been capable of carrying his resentment [I-73] very far, as well as of sudden anger; nay, been full of capricious and childish humours. How far such humours, and vanity, and anger might have carried him, he lived not to shew. But he had amply shewn, that his Ambition was dearer to him than Rome and the whole earth, and to this private passion of his, every public regard had yielded; the genuine mark this of a Tyrant, who rules the State for his own sake, and, rather than not rule it, enthralls it! CÆSAR, who had committed all wickedness to gain power, would have committed more to have kept it, as soon as he found more to be necessary [i].

WHAT avails the fair behaviour of one who may do what he pleases? What avail his fair promises, which he may break when he pleases? The worst of the Roman Emperors began their Reigns well, many of them excellently well; as NERO, CLAUDIUS, CALIGULA, DOMITIAN [k]; some of them reigned well for some years. CÆSAR was generous, magnificent, and humane to affectation, but [l] every passion, every sentiment must yield to the ardent lust of reigning. Had it not been for his great and acceptable qualities, he could not have introduced public bondage; the Hero, the Orator, and the fine Gentleman, hid the Usurper, and palliated at least the Usurpation.

LET any man consider CÆSAR as a Subject of the State, altogether private; one who never bore Office or Authority; as a Physician, a Scribe or an Artist, or as one just started out of obscurity, or come from another Country; and then ask himself, What has this man, this private unknown man, to [I-74] do with governing all men against Laws established by all? His being once Consul, his commanding of Armies, and appearing in a great public light; gave him no more right to do what he did, than the quality of an Artist, a Scribe, Physician, Upstart, or stranger, would have given him. Public trusts betrayed were aggravations of his crime, horrible aggravations! so were his excellent parts impiously applied.

Sect. V. CÆSAR no lawful Magistrate, but a public Enemy.

OF CÆSAR, his Usurpation and Death, I have reasoned largely elsewhere [m] , and shall here abridge part of that reasoning.

“He had no sort of Title, but success, gained by violence and all wicked means. The acquiring and exercising of Power by force is Tyranny, nor is success any proof of right. If the person of CÆSAR was sacred, so is the person of every Usurper and Tyrant; and if all the privileges and impunity belonging to a lawful Magistrate, do also appertain to a lawless Intruder and public Oppressor, then all these blessed consequences follow: There is an utter end of all right and wrong, public and private; every Usurper is a lawful Magistrate; every Magistrate may be a lawless Tyrant; It is unlawful to resist the greatest human evil; the necessary means of self-preservation are unlawful: Though it be lawful and expedient to destroy little Robbers, who are so for subsistence, it is impious and unlawful to oppose great Robbers, who destroy nations out of lust and ambition. Public mischief is defended by giving it a good name, since Tyranny may be practised with [I-75] impunity, if it be but called Magistracy; and the execrable Authors of it are sacred, if they but call themselves Magistrates; Though it be unlawful to be a public destroyer, yet it is unlawful to destroy him, and to prevent or punish that which is most impious and unlawful. In fine, any man who has wickedness and force enough to destroy or enslave the whole world, may do it, and be safe.

“If CÆSAR was a lawful Magistrate, every powerful villain may make himself one, and lawful Magistrates may become such by mere force and iniquity. But if lawful Magistracy be not acquired by violence and butchery, CÆSAR was none: if he was not, how came he by the rights and impunity of such?

“AGAINST lawless force every man has a right to use force. CÆSAR had no more right than ALARICK, ATILA, or BRENNUS, who were foreign Invaders; his crime? was greater, as, to that of usurpation, he added those of ingratitude and treachery. It is owned that when he first made war upon his Country, his Country had a right to make war upon him; How came that right to cease, when he had heightened that iniquity by success? Is it lawful to resist a Robber before he has robbed you, but not after? Is a wickedness lessened by aggravations? CÆSAR had forfeited his life by all the Laws of Rome; was it not as lawful to take it away by thirty men as by thirty thousand; in the Senate as in the field?

“A private man in society, even capitally injured, must not be his own judge, but leave revenge to the more impartial Law; but a capital offender against all, who sets himself above Law and Judgment, is a public enemy; and violence is the proper remedy for violence, when [I-76] no other is left. In a State of Nature, every man has a right to vindicate himself; when Society is dissolved, the same right returns. Men can never be deprived of both public protection and private defence.

“CÆSAR had violated every tie that can bind the human soul; Oaths, Trust, and Law; he had violated every thing dear to human kind, their Peace, Liberty, Rights and Possessions: He did all this by means the most black and flagitious; by Plots, Faction, Corruption, Robbery, Devastation, Sacrilege, and Slaughter.

“WHAT was left to the oppressed Romans to do, under the bonds of the Oppressor with his sword at their throat? Law and Appeals were no more; a Tyrant was their Master; the Will of a Tyrant their Law. Because he had slaughtered and destroyed one half of the people, had he thence a right to govern the rest? There was no public force to oppose him; he had destroyed many of the Armies of the State, and appropriated the rest to himself against the State; it would have been madness to have thought of judicial process. In short, there was no other way of abolishing his Tyranny, but by dispatching the Tyrant.

Sect. VI. Of the share which Casualties had, in raising the Name and Memory of CÆSAR. The Judgment of CICERO concerning him.

PEOPLE suffer their own imaginations to abuse and mislead them. The sound of CÆSAR’S Name; the superstitious reverence paid to it, his great employments, great victories, and even his great usurpation, are all pompous images that dazzle the eyes, and give a false lustre to the [I-77] blackest iniquity and imposture. Nay, it proved an advantage to the fame and defence of CÆSAR, that he was assassinated. Hence so much popular pity and lamentation for him; hence so much rage and obloquy upon the Tyrannicides. A violent death or violent sufferings, often pass for great merit, often atone for great crimes; and in the compassion for the doom of criminals the abhorrence of their villainies is often extinguished; malefactors the most barbarous, who never shewed any mercy in their lives, are bewailed at their execution, only because they are executed.

THERE were circumstances also in his Death favourable to his fame; he died with decency and a manly spirit, and he fell by the hands of his friends. These circumstances, and his bloody shirt displayed to a mob, with an artful melting speech from ANTHONY, inflamed them with sorrow and fury; two gross passions which do not reason but feel. The same topics have ever since furnished undiscerning Declaimers with big words and vehemence, in behalf of so fine a man, slain for no fault but that of Usurpation and Tyranny; a small crime, that of being the enemy of human kind!

As to the glory and prosperous fortune of this mighty Conqueror, CICERO says, with great truth,

“that Felicity is nothing else but good fortune assisting righteous Counsels; nor can he whose purposes are not upright, be, from any success, esteemed in any-wise happy. Hence it is, that from the impious and abandoned pursuits of CÆSAR, no true felicity could flow: happier, in my judgment, was CAMILLUS under exile from his Country, than MANLIUS his co-temporary had been, though he had acquired over his Country that Tyranny which he lusted after [n].” The [I-78] same wise man says elsewhere, “that he would have preferred the last day of ANTONIUS the Orator, tragical as it was, to the usurped rule of CINNA, by whom that worthy Roman was barbarously murdered.”

I cannot admire CÆSAR’S ambition; he would rather have been Lord of a poor Village, than the second man in Rome. To me it appears more glory to be the Member of a free State, especially of the greatest State upon earth, than a Lord of Slaves, the biggest Lord.

Sect. VII. How vain it is to extol any Designs of his for the Glory of the Roman people.

IT is said, that CÆSAR was meditating great and glorious things for the Roman people, when he was cut off. He might indeed have gathered empty Laurels for himself by more wars at the expence of the people; but how this would have redounded to their advantage, I cannot see. I can easily see, that all the future strength he could have acquired, must have been acquired to himself, and over them; and every accession of power must, by raising his Tyranny higher, have sunk them lower, and streightened their chains. He wanted to fight the Parthians, but first he wanted to be King; and for this purpose a Prophecy was forged, that

none but a King could conquer them. Was this impudent forgery too, and the design of it, for the glory of the people who were abused by it? In short, he could have done nothing beneficial or glorious for the Roman people, but to have restored them to their ancient and substantial glory, that of their Liberty and Laws. This too would have been the highest glory of his own life, which, to those who consider things as they are, stripped of foolish fair names and disguises, is, without this, all over black and infamous.

[I-79]

No man's life can be said to be detestable, if his was not; seeing all the malefactors condemned since there were men and crimes, did not half the mischief which he did. It was even currently believed (and what worse could be believed of him than he had done?) that he meant to translate the seat of Empire, with all its strength, to Ilium, or to Alexandria; and having exhausted all Italy by great levies, (that she might never recover herself) he would have begun, probably, a new sort of Sovereignty upon his own model, exempt from the names and appearances of the old Constitution and Laws, which still had reverence paid them at Rome, and consequently were so many grievances to him. Rome he intended to have left to the dominion of his creatures. It is probable he thought himself not safe at Rome, nor in any place which had ever known the governance of Laws, nor any where but at the head of Armies. He had reason for his fear; the severest oppressor can never tie the hands of all the oppressed, nor put chains upon their resentments.

Sect. VIII. Of his Death; and the rashness of ascribing to divine Vengeance the fate of such as slew him.

IN the midst of his farther designs, whatever they were, a bloody doom overtook this man of blood, and he was lawfully slain, though not by the forms of Law [o] ; his lawless power had made this impossible. It is true, they who slew him, were themselves slain. The righteousness of a cause does not always ensure its success; too seldom, God knows; but they who perish in defence of the Laws, are slain against Law. Such was the difference between his death and theirs. They were vanquished and slain [I-80] in a great Civil War, at a time when Courage, and Virtue, and Patriotism were capital and proscribed.

DID none of those who destroyed CÆSAR die a natural death? no more did CÆSAR, who destroyed the State. If this was not a judgment upon him, why should theirs be one upon them? What rule have we to know a judgment, but from the justice or iniquity of a cause? If so, CÆSAR fell by the appointment of Heaven; BRUTUS and his brethren by the malice of Men. But if there be no rule, or if judgments, like parties, take different sides; how dare we pronounce? How many of the Cæsars his successors died naturally? Not one, if we will believe the Historians and probability, from CÆSAR the Dictator to the Emperor VESPASIAN. AUGUSTUS was poisoned by LIVIA his wife; TIBERIUS smothered by MACRO his favourite, to make way for CALIGULA, who was slain with the sword by the officers of his guard. AGRIPPINA poisoned her husband CLAUDIUS; NERO stabbed himself; GALBA was murdered by the soldiers, so was VITELLIUS. OTHO fell by his own hands.

DISCOURSE IV.

Upon OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, afterwards called AUGUSTUS. ↩*Sect. I. Of the base and impious Arts by which he acquired the Empire.*

BY the death of the Usurper, Liberty was restored, but lasted not [a] ; and OCTAVIUS succeeded CÆSAR, by no superior genius, by no military prowess or magnanimity; for tricking and deceit constituted his chief parts, and though he was bold in council, he was a coward in the field. But he usurped the Empire by methods so low and vile, as brought disgrace even upon Usurpation; by a thousand frauds, and turns suddenly made, without the common appearances of decency or shame; by thousands of murders deliberately committed, without process or provocation; by multiplied treacheries, assassinations, and acts of ingratitude; by employing ruffians, and being himself one; and by destructive wars conducted by the bravery of others.

HE levied forces without authority; and, under a lying pretence of defending Liberty, got to be employed by the State against ANTHONY. He then robbed the Commonwealth of her Armies; and was thought to have murdered both her chief Magistrates, the Consuls HIRTIUS and PANSA; the former by his own hand in the hurry of battle, the other after it, by causing poison to be poured [I-82] into his wound by GLYCO his Physician. It is certain, that the Physician was suspected, seized, and even doomed to the torture, but saved by the credit of his master OCTAVIUS; whose villainy had these farther aggravations, that he was generally believed to have been a Pathic to HIRTIUS for hire; and PANSA had ever a tender regard for him, a regard superior to that which he owed his Country, as he manifested by the advice which he gave him before he expired under agonies caused by the hard-hearted contrivance of that his beloved and perfidious friend.

WITH this very Army of the Commonwealth he turned head upon the Commonwealth, marched in an hostile manner to Rome, and sent a deputation of Officers to his Masters the Senate, to demand the Consulship in the name of the Legions: and, upon some hesitation shewn by that venerable Body, one of these armed Embassadors laid his hand upon his sword, and told them, "If you will not make him Consul, this shall." For his first credit with the Senate he was beholden to CICERO, at whose suit he was trusted with command in conjunction with the Consuls, and dignified with the title of Proprætor. We see how he requited the Senate, we see how he served the Consuls; and CICERO his father in Counsel, and the father of the Republic, he delivered up to be murdered and mangled by his implacable enemy.

Sect. II. Of the vindictive spirit of OCTAVIUS, and his horrid Cruelties.

IN the Battle of Philippi, OCTAVIUS was beaten out of the field, his Camp seized, and, but for the fortune and valour of ANTHONY, the day must have been lost. After the victory he shewed [I-83] as much insolence and cruelty, as he had wanted courage in it. He could not forbear manifesting cowardly spite to the dead body of BRUTUS, before whom he had a little before fled for his life, and sent the head of that excellent person to Rome, to be laid ignominiously at the feet of the Statue of CÆSAR. Different was the treatment shewn by ANTHONY, who had saved OCTAVIUS, and beat BRUTUS. ANTHONY beheld his Corpse with grief and tears, covered it with his own armour, and treated it with respect and tenderness. OCTAVIUS had not greatness of heart enough for such generous humanity; but treated every illustrious captive with bitter words and cowardly insults, and put them to death without

mercy [b] ; says SÜTONIUS. To one of these, imploring the privilege of burial, the base Tyrant answered, "That the fowls of the air would soon regulate that matter." When a father begged mercy for his son, and the son for the father, the merciful OCTAVIUS commanded the father and son to fight for the survivorship. This barbarous fight he beheld, beheld the son slay his father, and then himself for having done it. Had not the remaining Prisoners reason, when they were brought before ANTHONY and him, to salute the former with the honourable title of *Imperator*, and the latter with invectives and contempt?

WITH the same cruel spirit he behaved himself after the siege of Perusia. All who applied to him, whether they pleaded innocence, or begged mercy, had one and the same merciless answer [c] , "Death is the lot of you all;" and they had it. Three hundred of the chief, comprizing their Nobility and [I-84] Magistrates, were carried in chains to an Altar raised to JULIUS CÆSAR, and there butchered like cattle, as victims to his ghost, upon the Ides of March, the Anniversary of his Assassination. The City itself he delivered to the lust and plunder of his soldiers, contrary to articles, and his faith given. Never was a more tragical and horrible scene. After killing, robbing and ravishing, what the sword could not destroy, the fire did; and that great and beautiful City, one of the fairest in Italy, was reduced to ashes. There were Historians, who asserted, that the quarrel between him and LUCIUS ANTONIUS, who had shut himself up in that City, was all feigned, and a contrivance between them, for two reasons; first, to try who were real friends, and who were covered enemies; and then, by the conquest and confiscation of such, to find a fund for paying the Veterans their promised largess.

FROM the citizens of Nursia he took all that they had, their substance and even their city, and sent them forth to wander and starve; for no other crime but that, for their fellow citizens, slain at the siege of Modena, they had raised a Monument with an Inscription, "that they died for the public liberty;" though he had but just before fought and declared for the same side.

It is impossible to paint the horrors of the Proscription; by it every considerable man in the Roman world, who was disliked, or suspected by the Triumvirate to disapprove their Tyranny, was doomed to die; it was death to conceal or to help them, and rewards were given to such as discovered and killed them. Many were betrayed and butchered by their slaves and freedmen; many by their treacherous hosts and relations; and many fled with their wives and tender children to the howling wilderness, and lived or perished amongst woods and wolves. Nothing was to be seen but blood and [I-85] slaughter; the streets were covered with carcasses; the heads of the illustrious dead were exposed upon the Rostra, and their bodies upon the pavement, denied the mercy of burial, other than such as they found in the entrails of devouring dogs and ravenous birds. This looked like dooming Rome to perish at once; and when the other two were satiated with so many butcheries, OCTAVIUS, who never had blood enough, still persisted to shed more. No sort of men escape his cruelty, nor Nobles, nor Knights, strangers nor acquaintance, nay, nor his confidants, and favourite freedmen; nor even his old companion and tutor, TORANIUS, no one knows why, unless for being an honest man, and a lover of his Country.

THESE victims continued daily for a course of years; the slightest suspicions, the vilest forgeries, were grounds for slaughters, for illustrious slaughters. Nor could the great quality and venerable station of QUINTUS GELLIUS the Prætor, nor his innocence, exempt him from the bloody hands of the executioner; nor was execution the worst part of his doom; he was by a band of soldiers seized in his seat of justice, hurried away and subjected to the torture, like the meanest slave; but confessed nothing. Nor did all this injustice and barbarity satisfy the gentle AUGUSTUS, so much renowned for moderation and clemency; he had the brutal baseness to dig out the eyes of that Magistrate with his own hands, before he allowed him the mercy of being murdered outright. One of his favourite Ministers shewed his sentiments of the clemency of AUGUSTUS plainly enough, upon the following occasion. That Prince was judging some criminals, and giving himself over to revenge, and bloody decrees, without

check or compassion, when the Minister, who abhorred to see him engaged in such feats of cruelty, [I-86] sent him a note, told him, “he was a butcher,” and bad him “come down from his Tribunal.”

Sect. III. Of the treachery, ingratitude, and further cruelties of OCTAVIUS. That the same were wanton and voluntary.

THE conduct of OCTAVIUS in regard to ANTHONY, was, like the rest of his conduct, all one train of perfidiousness. First he made court to ANTHONY, then suborned rogues to murder him; then made war upon him with the arms of the State; then joined with him against the State; then by the bravery of ANTHONY he conquered the Empire, and then by plots, and the valour of AGRIPPA, he conquered ANTHONY; then he was devising ways to destroy AGRIPPA, and, but for an expedient offered by MÆCENAS, had destroyed him.

WAS it strange that against such a Prince conspiracies were frequent? As he was an Usurper he could not escape some; his falshood and cruelties begot others; and, from considerations public as well as personal, there was abundant cause for many. To punish one plot with exceeding violence, is a sure way to produce more; and, when there is no safety found in innocence, further methods will be tried.

It is a poor defence for AUGUSTUS, to say, that it was from necessity, and to serve himself, that he shed so much blood; for, besides that his cruelty was natural, wanton and unnecessary, why did he seek to be in a station where acts of blood were necessary? why did he usurp the state? why did he make himself a mark for public and private vengeance? was it not by ambition, was it not by treachery, that he assumed Sovereignty? was he not [I-87] a public Traitor? and was it not his choice to be so? why did he wilfully commit crimes so flagitious, that in their defence he must commit more? Can one horrible iniquity efface another? Is a subject justified, who, because he has deserved the pains of treason, raises a rebellion against his Prince, nay, kills him, to be safe? No villainy ever was, or ever can be perpetrated, which such reasoning will not justify.

WHEN some were bold and honest enough to talk to OLIVER CROMWEL about his excesses and usurpation, he asked them, What would you have one in my station do? He was well answered: *Sir, We would have no body in your station.* To vindicate murder from the necessity of committing it, in order to conceal robbery; is to argue like a murderer and a robber; but it is honest Logic, to reply;

“Do not rob, and then you need not be tempted to murder; but if you will do one, and consequently both, remember that punishment does or ought to follow crimes, and the more crimes the more punishment. If, by a repetition of crimes, you become too mighty to be punished, you must be content to be accused and abhorred as an enemy to human race; you must expect to have all men for your enemies, as you are an enemy to all men; and since you make sport of the lives and liberties of men, you must not wonder, nor have you a right to complain, if they have all of them memories and feeling, and some of them courage and swords.”

[I-88]

Sect. IV. Of the popular Arts and Accidents which raised the Character of AUGUSTUS.

MANY things concurred to favour the same of AUGUSTUS, and to obliterate his reproach. He reigned very long, and established a lasting peace; a special blessing and refreshment after a Civil War so long and ruinous [d]. For, though that war was the child of his ambition, yet, in a series of ensuing tranquillity, it was forgot. Nay, the greatness of the public calamities was a reason for forgetting them; the generation who felt them, were almost all cut

off by them; and the next generation, which had not suffered, did not remember [e] : what the people had not seen, they did not lament. When he died there were scarce any living who had beheld the old free State [f]. The people too were deceived into a belief that they still enjoyed their old Government, because their Magistrates had still their old names, though with just as much power as he thought fit to leave them. This was the advice of MÆCENAS, that to the Officers of the State, the same names, pomp and ornaments should be continued, with all the appearances of authority without power [g]. They were to have no military command during their term, but to possess the old jurisdiction of adjudging all causes finally, except such as were capital; and though some of these last were left to the Governor of Rome, an Officer newly created by the Emperor, yet the chief were reserved.

[I-89]

Moreover AUGUSTUS paid great court to the people: the very Name that covered his Usurpation was a compliment to them: he affected to call it the Power of the Tribuneship, an Office first created purely for their protection, and as the strongest effort and barrier of popular Liberty. It was for their sake and security, he pretended to assume this power, though by it he acted as absolutely as if he had called it the Dictatorial power; such energy there is in words! The Office itself was erected as a bulwark against Tyranny; and by the name of it Tyranny is now supported. In the same manner he used and perverted the Consulship; another Magistracy peculiar to the Commonwealth, but by him abused to the ends of his Monarchy.

HE likewise won the hearts of the people by filling their bellies, by cheapness of provisions, and plentiful markets. This has infinite effect. If people have plenty at home, they will not be apt to discover many errors or much iniquity in the public, which will always be at quiet when particulars are so. But famine, or the fear of it, children crying for bread, mothers weeping for their children, and husbands and fathers unable to stop their tears, and find the necessaries of life for themselves, and such dear relations; all these are terrible materials for tumults, sedition, and even for revolutions. But people in ease and plenty are under no temptation to be inquiring into the title of their Prince, or to resent acts of power which they do not immediately feel.

HE frequently entertained them with Shews and Spectacles; a notable means to produce or continue good humour in the populace, to beget kind wishes and zeal for the author of so much joy, and to make them forget Usurpation, Slavery, and every public evil. These were indeed used for the ends of corruption and servitude; they rendered the people idle, [I-90] venal, vicious, insensible of private virtue, insensible of public glory or disgrace; but the things were liked, and the ends not seen, or not minded, so that they had their thorough effect; and the Roman people, they who were wont to direct mighty wars, to raise and depose great Kings, to bestow or take away Empires, they who ruled the world, or directed its rule, were so sunk and debauched, that if they had but bread and shews, their ambition went no higher.

BY the same arts Cardinal MAZARIN began to soften and debase the minds of the French; and after his death the like methods for promoting of idleness and luxury were pursued; shews, debauchery, wantonness and riot were encouraged and became common; and after the Restoration, England adopted the modes of France, her worst modes. There were some, too many, who, unworthy, of their own happiness and Liberty, came to admire her Government and misfortune; and laboured, with the spirit of Parricides, though without their punishment, to bring ours to the model of that.

I cannot omit observing here, that by the same means that CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS acquired the Empire, they destroyed its force. In the Civil Wars great part of the people perished, and the rest they debauched. They had utterly drained or corrupted that source of men which furnished soldiers who conquered the earth; henceforth the *plebs ingenua* became a mere mob, addicted to idleness and their bellies, void of courage, void of ambition, and careless of renown. Armies were with difficulty raised amongst them; when raised, not good, or apt to corrupt the rest. It was such who excited the sedition in the German Legions, after the death of AUGUSTUS [h] : [I-91] “the recruits lately raised in Rome, men accustomed to the softness and gaieties of the City, and impatient of military labour and discipline, inflamed the simple minds of all the rest by seditious infusions, and harangues, &c.” Indeed the Roman Armies (so chiefly in name) were mostly composed of foreigners.

To engage new creatures and dependencies, he created many new Offices; as the multitude of Offices in France is reckoned a great support of the Authority Royal. He raised many public buildings, repaired many old, and to the City added many edifices and ornaments. He attended business, reformed enormities, shewed high regard for the Roman name; was sparing in admitting foreigners to the rights of Citizens; preserved public peace; procured public abundance, promoted public pleasure and festivity; often appeared in person at the public diversions, and in all things studied to render himself dear to the populace. In truth, when he had done all the mischief he could, or all that he wanted, and more, he ceased his cruelty and ravages. This too was imputed to him for merit. He was reckoned very good, because he began to do less mischief. It was a rational saying of that madman CALIGULA, “that calamitous and tragical to the Roman people were the boasted Victories of his great grandfather AUGUSTUS;” and therefore he forbade them to be solemnized annually for the future.

[I-92]

Sect. V. Though AUGUSTUS courted the people, and particular Senators, he continued to depress public Liberty, and the Senate.

BUT, amidst all these acts of popularity and beneficence, and this plausible behaviour of AUGUSTUS, the root of the evil remained and spread; the bulwarks of Liberty were daily broken down, and having lulled the public asleep, he was sowing his tares. The best of his Government was but the sunshine of Tyranny [k]. AUGUSTUS was become the centre and measure of all things; he was the Senate, Magistracy and Laws; the arms of the Republic he had wrested out of her hands; those who had wielded them for her, he had slain [l]. The armies of the State were now the armies of AUGUSTUS, and every Province where Legions were kept or necessary, he reserved to himself; such as were unarmed he left to the Senate and people; in kindness forsooth to them; for he studied to relieve them from all anxiety and fatigue, and to leave them nothing to do; but would take all the care and trouble to himself. Italy, the original soil of Liberty and Freemen, he utterly disarmed, agreeably to the Maxims of absolute Monarchy. The Roman people and the Roman Senate he had reduced to cyphers and carcasses [m]. Hence all the submission and duty formerly paid to the free State, were, with her power, transferred to the Emperor, and certain wealth and [I-93] preferment were the rewards of ready servility and acquiescence [n].

THIS shews that, however he depressed the power of the Senate, he paid great court to particular Senators; and it is too true, that as men generally love themselves better than their Country, they too easily postpone the public interest to their own. [o]

Sect. VI. What Fame he derived from the Poets and other flattering Writers of his time.

THE Renown of AUGUSTUS was also notably blazoned by the Historians and Poets of his time; men of excellent wit, but egregious flatterers. According to them, AUGUSTUS had all the accomplishments to be acquired by men, the magnanimity of Heroes, the perfections and genius of the Deity, and the innocence peculiar to the primitive race of men. After so many instances of his cruelty, revenge, selfishness, excessive superstition, and defect in courage; after all the crying calamities and afflictions, all the oppression and vassalage, that his ambition had brought upon his Country and the globe, one would think that such praises must have passed for satire and mockery. But ambition, successful ambition, is a credulous passion; or whether he believed such praises or no, he received them graciously, and caressed the Authors. Hence so much favour to VIRGIL and HORACE, and to such other wits as knew how to be good Courtiers; and hence every admirer of those charming Poets, is an admirer of AUGUSTUS, who was so generous [I-94] to them, and is the chief burden of their Panegyrics.

SUPPOSE he had miscarried; suppose the Commonwealth restored, and him punished as a Traitor instead of gaining the Sovereignty; would not the Historians, would not the Poets have then spoke as the Law spoke, that Law by which he had certainly forfeited his life? would not BRUTUS and CASSIUS have then filled their mouths with Panegyrics, as the Saviours of the State? would they have lamented that the Usurpation failed, and extolled the Usurper? Is CATILINE extolled, or are the Usurpations of CINNA, SYLLA, or MARIUS? nor was the conduct and domination of either, half so barbarous and tragical as was that of AUGUSTUS for a course of years. The truth is, their Tyranny was shortlived, unsuccessful, or resigned.

INIQUITY unprosperous or punished, no man praises; but wickedness exceeding great and triumphant, almost all men do, as well as decry virtuous attempts defeated. CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS succeeded; and their flattery continued, because their government and race did; [p] Sycophancy is ever a constant attendant upon greatness, says PATERCULUS, who was himself a scandalous flatterer, and has in his History, miserably perverted truth, or utterly suppressed it, that he might lye for the Cæsars. When Truth was treason, who would venture to speak it? and when Flattery bore a vogue and a price, there were enough found to court it, and take it. Hence the partiality or silence of Poets and Historians [q].

[I-95]

Sect. VII. Of the false Glory sought and acquired by AUGUSTUS, from the badness of his Successors.

ANOTHER signal advantage to the name and memory of AUGUSTUS, was the badness of his Successors; and for his posthumous lustre he was indebted to the extreme misery of the Roman people. In proportion as TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, &c. were detested, AUGUSTUS was regretted; yet who but AUGUSTUS was to be thanked for these monsters of cruelty? They were legacies by him entailed upon that great State, and he was even suspected to have surrendered the Roman people to the Tyranny of TIBERIUS, purely to enhance his own praise with posterity, by the comparison and opposition of their Reigns [r]. He sought renown from a counsel for which he deserved abhorrence. He had made a feint or two to abdicate the Sovereignty; had he been in earnest, he might at least have contrived, that his Usurpation should last no longer than his life, and have left for a legacy to the Roman people that Liberty of which he had robbed them; that dominion over themselves, which none but themselves had any right to exercise. The truth is, his power and name were dearer to him than the Roman people or human race; he made provision by a long train of successors against any possible relapse into Liberty [s]. When he had no longer any heir of his own blood, or none that he liked, he adopted the sons of his wife; and even the worst of them was destined to the succession [t].

[I-96]

If it be said that by such adoption he fortified himself, and considered heirs as [u] the stays and security of his domination; this still shews what was uppermost in his views, that he meant to perpetuate slavery. If he had studied the good of Rome, why was not TIBERIUS, whom he knew to be tyrannical and arrogant, postponed? why was not his brother DRUSUS, the most accomplished and popular man in the Empire, preferred? or (after his death) GERMANICUS his son, one equally deserving, and equally beloved? It is even said that he loved DRUSUS, loved GERMANICUS, and was suspected to have hated and despised TIBERIUS; yet TIBERIUS was preferred, and had the world bequeathed to him. Was it done to please his wife? then he loved her better than the Roman people, nay, preferred her caprice to the felicity of human kind. DRUSUS had declared his purpose to restore the Commonwealth; the same intention is supposed to have been in GERMANICUS. This perhaps was the reason for setting them aside [w] ; as was said of TIBERIUS.

Sect. VIII. The Character of AUGUSTUS.

AS to the Character of AUGUSTUS, he was a man of Sense and Art; his courage below his capacity, his capacity below his fortune, yet his fortune below his fame; because his fame was the child of able flattery as well as of propitious fortune. He was a cunning man, not a great genius; dextrous to apply the abilities of others to his own ends, and had ability enough to be counselled by such as had more; his designs were rather incidental and progressive, [I-97] than vast and conceived at once; and he cannot be said to have mastered fortune, but to have been led by it. In the times of the Republic he would have made but a middling figure; in the station and pursuits of JULIUS CÆSAR, none at all. It is not in the least likely that he would have thought or attempted what CÆSAR accomplished. He wanted CÆSAR'S masterly spirit, the eclat of that consummate Warrior, his boundless Liberality, his enchanting Eloquence. For the Eloquence of AUGUSTUS, which was easy and flowing, such as became a Prince, was quite different from that torrent of Language, and power of speaking necessary to agitate and controul the spirit of Republicans, and came far short of the talent of JULIUS, who stood in rank with the most distinguished Orators. I know not whether the vices of the Dictator had not more popular charms than the virtues of AUGUSTUS. CÆSAR made his way to the Throne, AUGUSTUS found it already made, or, where difficulties occurred, was conducted by the superior lights and force of others, whom he rewarded with all the meanness of ingratitude, and even cruelty, and did many things which the great heart of CÆSAR would have scorned. No great mind ever delighted in petty mischiefs; though to do mighty evil an elevated genius is not always necessary.

Sect. IX. Of the Helps and Causes which acquired and preserved the Empire to AUGUSTUS. His great Power and Fortune no proof of extraordinary Ability.

THAT AUGUSTUS acquired the Empire, is not a proof of talents grand and surprizing; a thousand things concurred to it, times and accidents, friends and enemies, the living and the dead, [I-98] fought and contrived for him; CÆSAR, ANTHONY, the authority of the Senate, the folly and corruption of the people, the eloquence and abilities of CICERO, seasonable conjunctures, the opposition of some, the compliance or intoxication of others, nay, the charms of CLEOPATRA, and his own treachery and fears: All these coincided to push him forwards, and to hoist him into Sovereignty; nor indeed wanted he dexterity to improve opportunities; for he was a notable man, judged well, and had a turn for business.

NOR did it require much genius to hold the Empire, when he had got it. All who could oppose him were slain or subdued. He had Armies and Guards; and the people were disarmed and enslaved; the State was so thoroughly mastered, the Roman spirit so entirely broken [x] , that any the most contemptible wretch among men, provided he were but vouched by the Armies, and called CÆSAR, might rule, insult, and lay waste the Roman world at his pleasure [y]. What was CALIGULA, what were NERO and CLAUDIUS? were they not monsters, who but

for shape and speech, were utterly disjoined from humanity? and yet were not these monsters suffered, nay adored, and deified, while they were wallowing in the blood of men, and making spoil of the creation? Nor were the savages cut off by any effort of the Roman people, but by the instruments of their own cruelty, their wives, soldiers and slaves.

THUS it was possible to be Masters of mankind, not only without common sense, and common mercy and compassion, but even armed with intense and settled hate against the race of men, and daily exerting it. The rule and havock of a Lion, or any [I-99] other beast of prey, would have been less pernicious, and less disgraceful to the Roman people, though he had required for his sustenance a vessel of human blood every day. Nay, had the imperial Lion kept about him a Court and Guard of subordinate Lions for his Instruments and Counsellors, they could not have worried and devoured faster than did the Accusers, Freedmen, Poisoners, and Assassins of the Emperors. Cruelty, inspired by hunger, ceases when hunger is asswaged; but cruelty, created by fear and malice, is never satiated, nor knows any bounds. So much less dangerous and pernicious are the jaws and rapaciousness of a Tyger, than the jealousy and rage of a Tyrant, his flatterers and executioners.

Now where was the difficulty to AUGUSTUS, where the necessity of high wisdom, to maintain the Sovereignty, when such despicable wretches could maintain themselves in it for a course of years? The Romans, who were masters of mankind, were become the tame property, the vassals and victims of creatures equal to no office in a State, even the meanest and most contemptible office; creatures void of understanding, void of courage. Such, without aggravation, were the Lords of Rome for several successive reigns. Such as were a scandal to human Nature, trod upon the necks and wantoned in the blood of human kind; nay, delegated this work, and the disposal of the Romans life and property, to the vilest of their domestics and dependants, their spies, informers, and bond-slaves.

[I-100]

DISCOURSE V.

Of Governments free and arbitrary, more especially that of the CÆSARS. ↩

Sect. I. The Principle of God's appointing and protecting Tyrants, an Absurdity not believed by the Romans.

I Do not find that a servitude so beastly and ignominious was borne by the Romans out of Principle. Their Religion, as vain and superstitious as it was, had never offered such an insult to common sense, as to teach them that their Deities, as capricious as they thought them, warranted Tyranny, and sanctified Tyrants; that the brutal and bloody CALIGULA, was the beloved and Vicegerent of Jove, almighty, all-wise and all-merciful; that the worst of men had a commission from Heaven to oppress all men, and to destroy the best; that murder, rapine and mis-rule were Government, and such lawless and bloody robbers were Governors divinely appointed; that Society had no remedy against devouring lust, and the raging sword, which were destroying all the ends of Society, and Society it self. These are Absurdities below Paganism and all its chimeras; even the Superstition of Pagans never broached such blasphemies and indignities to God and Man; never propagated Doctrines which would have turned men into idiots, destitute of reflection and feeling, nay, into beasts of burden, and beasts for sacrifice; turned the Deities into Devils; human society into a chaos of blood and carcasses, and this earth into a place of torments. It never [I-101] entered into the heart of a Greek or a Roman, nor into any heart which felt the sentiments of virtue and humanity, that it was unlawful to defend Law; a crime to ward against murder, barbarity, and desolation; and an impiety to do the most godlike action which can be done on this side Heaven, that of disarming a Tyrant, and saving one's Country from perishing. It is true, that the Romans flattered their Tyrants, as Tyrants ever will be flattered; but as the names and appearances of the old Government still subsisted, they pretended to believe that none but the old Laws were exercised; and by the old Laws the Emperors still pretended to act. For several generations after the State was enslaved, and even during the Reigns of the worst of the CÆSARS, the Romans expressed high contempt for Nations who were avowedly slaves, and for Kings who were avowedly arbitrary; and it then continued usual to behold foreign Monarchs attending the levee and train of the Roman Magistrates and Governors of Provinces; nay, they were sometimes denied access, and treated with great scorn.

GOVERNMENT is doubtless a sacred thing, and justly claims all reverence and duty; but in the idea of Government is implied that of public Protection and Security; that it is the terror of evil doers, and the encouragement of such as do well. But when what was Government ceases; and what is called Government, is, in reality, general oppression, havock, and spoil; when a power prevails which is swayed by evil doers to the destruction of all who do well; when law and righteousness are banished, lust and iniquity triumph; property is violently invaded, and lives are wantonly destroyed; is this Government too? If it be, I should be glad to know what is not Government.

[I-102]

Sect. II. The reasonableness of resisting Tyrants asserted, from the Ends of Government, and the Nature of the Deity. Opinions the most impious and extravagant, why taught, and how easily swallowed.

IT is certainly unlawful to resist Government; but it is certainly lawful to resist the deviation from Government, to resist what destroys Government and men. To resist the abuse of Government, is to assist Government. It is allowed to be just to help our protectors; but it

is equally just to oppose our enemies, madmen and spoilers. Now what was NERO, what CALIGULA and CLAUDIUS? one a bloody idiot, the other an inhuman madman; the first like the second, and all of them public robbers and butchers. If their course of cruelties and oppression was Government, so are plagues, tempests and inundations; but if their lives and actions were altogether pernicious and detestable; the exterminating of such monsters from amongst men, would have been a service to the whole race. Was TARQUIN half so black and odious? yet who has ever blamed his expulsion? was the Insolence and Tyranny of TARQUIN the Ordinance of God? what then was the succeeding Government of the People and Senate? if this was the Ordinance of God too; then every Government good and bad, or rather Misgovernment as well as Government, public robbery and ruin, as well as public security and protection, may be equally said to be his Ordinance; and there are Ordinances of his that combat one another, like the two Angels contending in one of the Prophets. But if the Tyranny of TARQUIN was, and the establishing of the free State was not the Ordinance of God, then are not the Patrons of this opinion obliged to say, and to maintain [I-103] this gross and blasphemous absurdity, that the divine Being disapproves of good Government, Equity and Laws, and delights in injustice, cruelty and confusion; not in the rule of equal justice, but in the ravages of lust and iniquity?

To say that all Governments, the good and the bad, are alike to him, equally inviolable, is to say that he takes no cognizance of things below; and at this rate, there is, in his sight, no such thing as guilt and innocence. To alledge that that Government which is best for men, is disliked by him; and the rule of lust is preferable to that of Laws; is to make him worse than indifferent, the patron of wantonness and oppression; a foe to order and benevolence, fonder of one man's caprice and violence, than of the happiness of millions; nay a professed advocate for iniquity, a professed adversary to all public righteousness. If it be said, that he approves not of Tyranny himself, and yet would not have it resisted by others; this is nonsense added to prophaneness; since what he neither checks nor allows to be checked, he may be said to approve. If I see a man going to commit murder, and by terrible threatening and penalties restrain such as would restrain him, will it not be construed, that I chose to have the murder perpetrated? It makes him besides a hard-hearted being, who forbids to remedy the highest human evil, nay, wilfully dooms human kind to the severest misery.

I never heard that he has forbid under any penalty the use of Medicines against the Plague, and I think I have found the reason why I never heard it; the Plague has no treasures, nor dignities to recompence flatterers. Had it been worth while to have made such prohibition a Doctrine of Religion; that is, had it been pleasing to Power, and the way to favour, I doubt not but it would have gained ground, and many followers, as other doctrines equally absurd have done, where the gain and craft of a few have [I-104] been followed and defended by the superstition and zeal of many; witness Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Auricular Confession, blind Obedience under the rod of Tyranny, &c. The Turks out of bigotry to that of Predestination, forbear all precautions against the Plague, when raging on every side of them. It is impossible to invent a Doctrine so monstrous and mischievous, but it will meet with partizans and admirers, provided the inventors have convenient names and habiliments, without which the most illustrious and benevolent truths will hardly pass with a multitude bewitched with the magic of words and superstition.

It is impossible for the hearts of men to contrive a principle more absurd and wicked, than that of annexing divine and everlasting vengeance to the resisting of the most flagrant mischief which can possibly befall the sons of men; yet it has found inventors and vouchers. It is plain from this instance, and from a thousand more, that there is no wickedness of which the hearts of men are not capable, and that the wretchedness of the whole race weighs not so much with them as their own profit and pleasure. It would seem from hence, as if we had lived in the dregs and barbarism of time, since to the late age (at least here in Christendom)

was reserved the infamy of hatching a Monster so horrible, that to its birth was sacrificed all Sense and Humanity, all the considerations, and even the essence of Truth, Order and Liberty.

THE advocates for this impious tenet, which represents the great and good God as incensed with men for striving to remove their chains and sorrows, are, by defending Tyranny, so much worse than Tyrants, as a Scheme of Barbarity coolly and deliberately contrived or defended, is more heinous than particular acts of barbarity committed in the heat and hurry of passion, and as Murder is a greater crime than Manslaughter.

[I-105]

WHAT avail Laws and Liberty, ever so excellently framed, when they are at the mercy of lawless rage and caprice? If we are forbid by God to defend Laws, why do we make them? Is it not unlawful to make what it is unlawful to defend? What else is the end of Government, but the felicity of men; and why are some raised higher in Society than others, but that all may be happy? Has God ever interposed against the establishment of Society upon a good foot? If he has not, but wills the good of Society, and of men, how comes he to interpose against the defence of an Establishment which he nowhere forbids, and against that good which he is said to will? What more right had NERO to take away the lives of innocent men than any other Assassin; what more title to their fortune than any other Robber; what better right to spill their blood than any Tyger? And is it unlawful to resist Robbers, and Assassins, and Beasts of Prey? Did the Almighty ever say of that beastly Tyrant, “Touch not NERO my Anointed, nor do his Ruffians any harm?” Did NERO’s station lessen or abrogate his crimes?

WHAT idea does it give of God, the Father of mercies and of men, to represent him screening that enemy to God and man, as a person sacred and inviolable, and holding his authority from himself; the merciful and holy Jehovah protecting an inhuman Destroyer! What more relation could there be between God and NERO, than between God and an Earthquake, God and a Conflagration or Massacre? The very phrase is shocking to the soul! Is such representation likely to make the name and nature of God amiable to men, likely to excite them to love and reverence him? SATAN is said to be delighted with the miseries and calamities of men; and, to suppose that wicked Being concerned for the security of a Tyrant, whose office it is to debase [I-106] and afflict human race, is natural and consistent with his Character. But I wish men would not father upon the Author of all good such counsels and inclinations, as can only suit the father of cruelties and lies.

Sect. III. The danger of slavish Principles to such as trust in them, and the notorious insecurity of lawless Might.

NEITHER have Tyrants and Oppressors been much obliged to this enslaving Doctrine, which has generally filled them with false confidence and security; it has always made them worse, seldom safer; and, without doing any good, been the cause of much evil to their poor subjects. The Turks hold it as an Article of Faith, and it is one worthy of Turkish grossness and barbarity! yet where has the deposing and murdering of Princes been so common as in Turkey? The Monarch is told he may do what he pleases; their Religion tells him so, the holy Mufti, who explains it, tells him so, and from God he tells him so; but notwithstanding all these holy Authorities, this person so sacred, and guarded with securities human and divine, is often butchered with less form than a common male-factor, and even with the Mufti’s consent and assistance. Thus it has happened to several in a Century; had not their power been so great, their security would have been greater.

[a] AN absolute Prince is of all others the most insecure; as he proceeds by no rule of Law, he can have no rule of Safety. He acts by violence, and violence is the only remedy against him. Now violence which is confined to no rule, but as various and unlimited as the passions and devices of men, [I-107] can never be parried by any certain provision or

defence. His acts of cruelty upon particulars, whether done for revenge or prevention, do but alarm other particulars to save themselves by destroying him. Men who apprehend their lives to be in danger, will venture any thing to preserve them; or if they do more than apprehend and be already become desperate, we know to what lengths despair will push them. Thus CALIGULA, thus DOMITIAN and COMMODUS, were slaughtered by those whom they had doomed to slaughter. Nor Armies nor Guards can prevent the machinations and efforts of a secret enemy; even amongst his Armies and Guards such a one may be found, nay, in his Houshold, in his Bed-chamber, amongst his Kindred, nay, amongst his Children.

WHEN Princes act by Law, in case of hardship upon particulars, there is a remedy to be sought from the Law; and when the Law fairly administered will afford none, they will acquiesce; or, if they blame any thing, they will blame the Law, but a remedy they will be apt to seek; and, when they suffer not from Law, but from mere violence, they will have recourse to violence. Neither can a people be ever so sunk or deadened by Oppression, but much provocation, some management and a skilful leader, will find or raise some spirit in them, often enough to accomplish great Revolutions; witness Sicily under the French, Swisserland under the Yoke of Austria, and the Low Countries under that of Spain; nay, the most consummate and professed slaves, those of Turkey, often rouse themselves, and casting their proud rider to the earth, trample him to death.

INDEED slaves enraged are the most dangerous populace; because having no other resource against oppression, they repel violence with outrage; a little spark often raises a great flame; and a flame soon [I-108] spreads to a Conflagration, where materials are prepared, as they almost eternally are in Governments that are absolute or aiming to be so. The Commotions at Paris, during the Minority of the late King, were followed by others all over France, though the whole Kingdom had been for a great while before, by the Tyranny of the Administration, frightened, despairing, and even lethargic; but the resentment and convulsions that followed this false calm, had like to have overset the Monarchy. Nor can any public calm be certain, or any Government secure, where the people are pillaged and oppressed. People that are used like beasts, will act like beasts; and be mad and furious, when buffeted and starved.

Sect. IV. Princes of little and bad Minds, most greedy of Power. Princes of large and good Minds chuse to rule by Law and Limitations.

IT is poor and contemptible ambition in a Prince, that of swelling his Prerogative, and catching at advantages over his People; it is separating himself from the tender relation of a Father and Protector, a Character which constitutes the Glory of a King; and assuming that of a foe, and an ensnarer [b]. This is what a Prince of a great and benevolent spirit will consider; not himself as a lordly Tyrant, nor them as his Property and Slaves; but himself and them under the amiable and engaging ties of Magistrate and fellow Citizens. Such was the difference between a Queen ELIZABETH and a RICHARD the second; how glorious and prosperous the Reign of the one, how infamous and unhappy that of the other! what renown accompanies her memory, what scorn his! It is indeed apparent [I-109] from our History, that those of our Princes who thirsted most violently after arbitrary rule, were chiefly such as were remarkable for poor spirit, and small genius, Pedants, Bigots, the timorous and effeminate.

THE French Historians observe that the worst and weakest of their Kings were fondest of Dominion, and their best and wisest contented with stinted Power, and the rule of Laws. LEWIS the eleventh, says Cardinal DE RETZ, was more crafty than wise. He was in truth a genuine Tyrant; he trampled upon the Laws of the Kingdom, and the lives of his Subjects, pillaged and oppressed all manner of ways, and followed no Counsel but that of his Lust and Caprice. But what advantage or content, what security or fame did he draw from his

exorbitant encroachments and power? No man ever lived under a blacker series of fears, and cares, and suspicions, or died in greater misery and terrors; and in his life, and death, and memory he is equally detestable [c]. LEWIS the thirteenth, a man naturally harmless, but silly, was jealous of his authority, purely because he was ignorant about it; but HENRY the fourth, who was born with a Soul great and generous, never distrusted the Laws, because he trusted in the uprightness of his own Designs. *Il ne se defioit pas des loix, parce qu'il se fioit en lui même*, says DE RETZ. Another French Monarch of great name, loved and enjoyed unbridled Dominion, but had no greatness of mind or genius answerable to the measure of his ambition. He had a sort of stiffness and perseverance, by his flatterers stiled Fortitude and Firmness, but in reality arising from arrogance or obstinacy; qualities found in the weakest women, and eminently in his mother. In Religion he was a bigot; in Politics false, suspicious, [I-110] and timid; in Government insolent and oppressive; the property of his Mistresses, the Pupil of his Confessors, the Dupe of his Ministers; a sore Plague to his Neighbours; a sorer to his own People; vainly addicted to War without the talents of a Warrior; a dishonourable Enemy, a faithless Ally; and, with small Abilities, a great Troubler of the World.

It was natural to such an Imperial Wolf as CALIGULA, to delight in power as savage as his own bloody spirit, and to boast that he had an unlimited privilege to do whatever his will or fury suggested [d] ; but worthy of the benevolent and humane heart of TRAJAN, were the words by him used to his chief Officers, when he presented them with the sword. “This sword, this badge of Authority, you hold from me; but turn it, if I deserve it, against me [e].” Now, did the challenging and exercise of this monstrous power secure CALIGULA; or did the disavowing of it lessen the security of TRAJAN? quite otherwise; the former was abhorred and assassinated as a Tyrant; the latter was adored living, and died lamented, as a public Father and Guardian: TRAJAN knew no other purpose of Imperial Prerogative, but that of protecting the People; nor indeed is there any other use of Emperors and Prerogatives upon earth.

Cardinal DE RETZ says, that with all the arguments and pains he could use, he could never bring the Queen Regent to understand the meaning of these words, *the Public*. She thought that to consult the interest of the People was to be a Republican, and had no notion that the Government of a Prince was any thing else but Royal Will and Authority, rampant and without bounds. Was it any wonder, that the people of France gasped under Oppressions and Taxes, when the Government was [I-111] swayed by such a Woman, herself blindly governed by MAZARINE, a public Thief, if ever there was any; one convicted to have stollen from the Finances nine millions in a few years; one who had spent his younger years in low rogueries; who had no maxims of rule but such as were adapted to the severest Tyranny in Italy, that of the Pope; and one, who, in the highest post of first Minister, could never help shewing the base spirit of a little Sharper. *Le vilain cœur paroissoit toujours au travers*, says DE RETZ: the Duke of Orleans called him *un Scelerat, & Ministre incapable & abhorré du genre humain; un menteur fieffé*.

Sect. V. The Wisdom and Safety of ruling by standing Laws, to Prince and People.

IT was a fine answer of THEOPOMPUS King of Lacedæmon to his wife, who reproached him that he would leave the Kingship diminished to his sons, by creating the Ephori: *Yes*, says he, *I shall leave it smaller, but I shall leave it more permanent*. VALERIUS MAXIMUS explains this by a very just reflection;

“THEOPOMPUS’s reason was full of pertinency and force; for, in reality, that Authority which bounds itself, and offers no injuries, is exposed to none. The king therefore by restraining Royalty within the just limits of Laws, did as much endear it to the Affections of his Countrymen, as he pruned it of all Licentiousness and Terror [f].”

It is as rare for a Prince limited by Laws, and content with his power, to reign in sorrow, or to die tragically, as it is uncommon for those who have no bounds set them, or will suffer none, to escape a miserable [I-112] Reign, and unbloody end. The power of the Roman Kings was, from the first establishment, very short; they had no negative voice in the Senate, and could neither make War nor Peace. What TACITUS says of ROMULUS [g], can only mean his administering justice, as the chief Magistrate, between man and man, or perhaps his encroachments upon the Senate towards his latter end, for which, it is thought, he paid dear.

WHERE the Government is arbitrary and severe, the oppressed people will be apt to think that no change can make their condition worse; and therefore will be ready to wish for any, nay, to risque a Civil War, risque fresh evils and calamities, to get rid of the present, and to be revenged on their Oppressor. Such was the temper of the Romans upon the revolt of SACROVIR; they even rejoiced in it, and, in hatred to TIBERIUS, wished success to the public enemy [h]. People will be quiet and patient under burdens, however heavy, which Law lays on; for they suppose that laws are founded upon reason and necessity; but impositions the most reasonable will be apt to appear unreasonable and tyrannical, where they proceed from the will of one. Mere will is supposed to act without reason, and to be only the effect of wantonness; hence the acquiescence of a free people however taxed, and from their acquiescence, the safety of their Governors. Hence too the industry and wealth, and consequently the peaceableness of the country; for industry and wealth are things exceeding quiet and tame, and only aim at securing themselves; whereas idleness and indigence are uneasy, tumultuous, and desperate. Besides, he who pays twenty shillings in a free Government, and pays it cheerfully, would not perhaps, [I-113] were the Government changed, pay willingly ten, nay, perhaps be unable to pay it, though by the change no new taxes were added. While the Law requires it, he will imagine that no more than enough is required; and as the same Law leaves him all the rest to himself, he will be industrious to acquire more, and as much as he can; but when the quantity of his Tax depends upon the caprice or avarice of one; when the more he is worth, the more he will be taxed, or even fancies that he will be, he will grow idle, discontented and desponding, and rather live poor and lazy, than labour to make his Taxmaster rich. Not to mention the furious Monarchies of the East destructive of all Diligence and Arts; the COMTE DE BOULAINVILLIERS in his *Elat de la France*, says, that in some Provinces in France the soil is left uncultivated, and several trades and professions are disused; because the labour of the Husbandman, and the skill and application of the Artist, are rendered abortive by rigorous impositions. They chuse rather to starve in idleness, than to work and starve.

Sect. VI. The Condition of free States, how preferable to that of such as are not free.

NO arbitrary Prince upon earth could have raised from the States of Holland the fifth part of what they have, as a free State, paid to their own Magistrates, nor could have sound whence to have raised it. I will venture to say the same of England. Under a Monarchy of the late King JAMES's model, was it possible to have supported two wars so long and consuming as the two last, or to have raised sums so immense to carry them on? It would be madness to assert it. By this time numbers of our people would have been driven from their Country, much of our Soil been waste, many of our [I-114] Manufactures laid aside, our Trade sunk, our Wealth fled, and the condition of England have resembled that of France, as well as our Government theirs, and for the same reason. It is in vain boasted of the House of Medicis, that in a long course of years they had laid no new tax upon a country where their power was absolute; since the Cities and Territories, under their Sovereignty, are by it reduced from great wealth and populousness to such miserable desolation and poverty, that it is downright oppression to oblige them to pay any considerable part of the old, much more all.

To reason from experience and examples, is the best reasoning [i]. Compare any free State with any other that is not free. Compare the former and present condition of any State formerly free; or once enslaved, and now free. Compare England with France; Holland with Denmark; or the seven Provinces under the States, with the same seven Provinces under Philip the second; you will find in these and every other instance, that happiness and wretchedness are the exact tallies to Liberty and Bondage.

FLORENCE was a Commonwealth ill framed at first, and consequently subject to frequent convulsions, factions, parties, and subdivision of parties; yet by the mere blessing and vigour of Liberty, she flourished in people, riches and arms, till with her Liberty she lost all spirit and prosperity; and became languishing, little and contemptible under a small Prince with a great name. She has been long cured of all her former frolicks and tumults, by an effectual remedy, servitude; and beggary, the child of servitude; and by depopulation, the offspring of both [k]. All arguments for absolute Power, are confuted by facts; no Country governed by mere will [I-115] was ever governed well; passion governs the will, the will becomes the measure of right and wrong and of all things, and caprice the ballance of the will; and I know not but it may be maintained that a free State the worst constituted, as was that of Florence, is, with all its disorders, factions, and tumults, preferable to any absolute Monarchy, however calm [l].

Sect. VII. The Misery and Insecurity of the Cæsars from their overgrown Power.

THESE Emperors of Rome, who had sacrificed their country and all things to their supreme power, found little ease and security from its being supreme. From CÆSAR the Dictator, who had sacrificed public Liberty, and was himself sacrificed to her *manes*, till CHARLEMAIN, above thirty of them were murdered, and four of them murdered themselves; the soldiery were their masters, and upon every pique put them to death. If the Prince was chosen by the Senate, this was reason enough for shedding his blood by the Armies; or if the Armies chose him, this choice of their own never proved an obstacle against shedding it. It was the soldiers that dispatched the Emperor PERTINAX, after he had been forced to accept the Empire. These lofty Sovereigns having trodden under foot the Senate, People and Laws, the best supports of legitimate Power, held their scepter and their lives upon the courtesy of their masters the soldiers. He who swayed the Universe, was a slave to his own mercenaries.

Though AUGUSTUS had reigned so long, and so thoroughly enfeebled or extinguished the maxims of Liberty, and introduced and settled those of Monarchy; TIBERIUS his immediate Successor, [I-116] thought himself so little safe, that he lived in perpetual vassalage to his own fears. By making all men slaves, he could not make himself free, and was only the most overgrown and gaudy slave in the Empire; so much do Princes gain by being above Law! They who will be content with no terms of reigning, but such as make all men fear them, will find reasons to fear all men. TIBERIUS did so, and the many sacrifices which he made to his fear, far from lessening, did but encrease it, as such sacrifices did but multiply enemies and terrors.

FIRST he dreaded AGRIPPA POSTHUMUS, and murdered him; but the murder ensured not his repose, even from that quarter; for a slave of that Prince personated his master, and alarmed TIBERIUS more than AGRIPPA had done. He dreaded GERMANICUS, and when that excellent person was dead (by no fair means, it was supposed) he dreaded AGRIPPINA his wife, and her little children; and when by all manner of treachery and cruelty he had oppressed them, he was seized with new dread from SEJANUS, the greatest and justest of all; nor ceased his dread after the execution of SEJANUS; insomuch, that he commanded a general Massacre of all his Family, Friends, and Adherents. Next, his fears still continuing, he doomed to the most barbarous death his own grandsons by GERMANICUS; for their being already under miserable imprisonment and exile, did not suffice. And when the Family of GERMANICUS was destroyed;

he had remaining fears from the Friends and Dependants of that House; these were the next objects of his Vengeance, which he executed fiercely. Nor small was the Terror which he entertained of his own Mother; and when she was gone, he let loose his rage upon the Favourites and Adherents of his Mother.

[I-117]

Now after all these precautions, so many and so bloody, did his suspicions abate? No; they were rather whetted and inflamed [m]. Of the great Lords of the Senate he was under perpetual apprehensions, and making daily victims; their wealth and race, nay, their poverty, names, and qualities frightened him; he feared friends and enemies. Those who advised him in council, those who diverted him at his leisure hours; his Confidants, Counsellors, and Bottle-companions, were all Martyrs to his Jealousy and Fury. He was so afraid of considerable men, or giving them employments which made them so, that some who were appointed Governors of Provinces, were never permitted to go thither, and great Provinces, for a course of years, left destitute of their Governors; and though he dreaded stirs and innovations above all things [n] ; yet he suffered the loss and devastation of Provinces, the insults and invasion of enemies, rather than trust any one with the power of avenging the State, and repulsing the public foe. Thus he left Armenia to be seized by the Parthians, Mœsia by the Dacians and other barbarians, and both the Gauls to be ravaged by the Germans [o] , says SÜETONIUS.

Sect. VIII. A representation of the Torments and Horrors under which TIBERIUS lived.

WHAT joy, what tranquillity did TIBERIUS reap from his great and unaccountable Sovereignty? Did it exempt him from disquiet, or could all his efforts, all the terrors of his Power, prevent [I-118] or remove his own? Did his numerous Armies protect him from the assaults of fear and apprehension? Did he sleep the sounder for his Prætorian Bands? Did the Rocks of Capreæ, hardly accessible to men, keep off those horrors of mind which haunted him at Rome, and on the Continent? Or rather, with all the eclat of Empire, with all his Policy and all his Guards, was he not the most miserable Being in his Dominions? Doubtless he was; other particulars, the most obnoxious and threatened, had but some things and some persons to fear; TIBERIUS dreaded all men and every thing. Was his Power unlimited? so was his Misery; the more he made others suffer, the faster he multiplied his own torments. He himself confessed, that all the anger of the Deities could not doom him to more terrible anguish than that under which he felt himself perishing daily.

IMAGINE this great Prince, this Sovereign of Rome, in hourly fear of secret Assassins; daily dreading and expecting the news of Armies revolted, a new Emperor created, and himself deposed: imagine him fixed upon a high rock, and watching there from day to day, with a careful eye and an anxious and boding heart, for signals from the Continent, whether he must stay or fly: imagine him every moment ready to commit himself to the waves and tempests, and to escape whither he could for life and shelter: imagine him, even after a Conspiracy suppressed, lurking for nine months together in one lodge, under such terrors as not to dare to venture an airing even in his beloved Capreæ, however walled with Rocks and defended with Guards. In short, he feared every thing but to do evil, which yet was the sole cause of his fears. Such was his situation and life, and such the blessing of lawless might! "To TIBERIUS not his Imperial fortune, not his gloomy and inaccessible solitude could ensure [I-119] repose, nor keep him from feeling nor even from avowing the rack in his breast and the avenging furies that pursued him." His Death too, was, like his life and reign, tragical and bloody.

Sect. IX. The terrible Operation of lawless Power upon the minds of Princes; and how it changes them.

TIBERIUS was an able man; he had talents for Affairs; he had eminent sufficiency in War; during the Commonwealth he would have well supported the Dignity of a Senator; he would have filled the first Offices of the State; he would have probably been zealous for public Liberty. He had even under AUGUSTUS, while he was yet a Subject, acquired a signal name and estimation. Nay it is likely he might have left behind him a high reputation and applause; for he had Art enough to have hid or suppressed the ill qualities which were naturally in him; so that he might have lived happy and admired, and died in renown. But being, unhappily for himself and his Country, invested with Power without controul, he let loose all his Passions, and he, who might have proved an excellent and useful Member of a free State, became a Prince altogether merciless and pernicious; a terrible Tyrant, void of natural affection for his own Blood and Family, void of all regard and tenderness for his People, and possessed with intense hate towards the Senate and Nobility. One of his discernment was not to be deceived by Flattery; he knew that, whatever submissions and even prostrations were made him, the Yoke of Sovereignty was grating and grievous to the Romans, and he sought revenge upon their persons for hating his Usurpation. This conduct made him more hated, and this hatred enraged him so, that at last, renouncing all shame, and [I-120] throwing away his beloved Arts of Dissimulation, he commenced, as it were, an open Enemy to his People, surrendered himself over to every act of Cruelty, and to every abomination, even to Rapaciousness and Plunder, a vice to which for a long time he seemed to have no bias.

BUT what is not to be apprehended from Power without controul, and who is to be trusted with it, when a man of such strong parts and long experience as TIBERIUS, was so entirely mastered and perverted by it? It is a task too mighty for the soul of man, and fit for none but God, who cannot change, cannot act passionately, cannot be mistaken, and is omnipresent. There are few instances of men who have not been corrupted and intoxicated with it, and many, of whom the highest hopes were conceived, have degenerated notoriously under it. When men are once above fear of punishment, they soon grow to be above shame. Besides, the genius and abilities of men are limited, but their passions and vanity boundless; hence so few can be perfectly good, and so many are transcendently evil. They mistake good fortune for great merit, and are apt to rise in their own conceit as high at least as fortune can raise them. GALBA was, in the opinion of all men, worthy of Empire, and that opinion would have ever continued, had he never been tried; and VESPASIAN was, till then, the only instance of an Emperor by power changed for the better [p].

[I-121]

Sect. X. The wretched Fears accompanying the Possession of arbitrary Power, exemplified in CALIGULA and other Roman Emperors.

NOR was this anguish and these fears peculiar to TIBERIUS, his Successors felt them eminently; as did every one who reigned as he reigned. CALIGULA was so haunted by inward horrors, and his imagination so terrified, that he became almost a stranger to sleep, and used to roam about the palace while others slept, afraid of the night, and invoking the return of day. Upon an alarm from Germany, he prepared to run away from Rome; and was always provided with exquisite poison against an exigency. CLAUDIUS scarce lived a moment of his Reign free from affrights and suspicions; nor was there any accident so trivial, or any Man, Woman, or Slave, or Child so contemptible, as not to dismay him and set him upon sanguinary precautions and punishments; he was several times almost frightened out of his Sovereignty, and willing to creep away into safety and solitude. Even before the Senate, which upon the sight of a dagger, he had summoned in great haste and earnestness, the poor unmanly wretch burst into tears and howling, bewailed his perillous condition, that in no place or circumstance could he be out of the way of danger. His whole life was governed by fears, and his fears by his wives and freedmen; hence his excessive cruelty, according to the

measure of his own timidity, or of their ambition, vindictiveness, and rapacity. The Horrors of NERO'S guilt never forsook him; they were sometimes so violent, that every joint about him trembled; he dreaded his Mother's Ghost as much as he had her living Spirit, and made doleful complaints, that the Furies pursued him with [I-122] Stripes, and Rage, and burning Torches: and that he was alarmed with horrid shrieks and groans from his Mother's Tomb. What else did HELIOGABALUS apprehend but a violent death, when he went always provided with a silken halter and a golden poignard, as expedients to escape death by the hand of an enemy? For the like purpose CARACALLA made himself a copious provision of poisons. This barbarous Parricide was wont to complain that the Ghost of his Father, and that of his Brother by him murdered, terrified and pursued him with drawn swords. So sorely did the bloody Horrors of their Crimes and Infamy, haunt these men of Blood, and became their Executioners! What availed their Power and Armies against the alarms of their Conscience? Could all their Titles and Might, all the Guards at their gate, scare away reflection, or rescue them from the agonies and goreings of their own breasts?

Sect. XI. What it is that constitutes the Security and Glory of a Prince; and how a Prince and People become estranged from each other.

WHAT then is it that a Prince may rely on for the security of his Person, and the quiet of his Soul? Hear the opinion of a great and a good Prince, MARCUS ANTONINUS, delivered to his Friends and Counsellors just before he expired:

“Verily it is neither the influence of Revenue and Treasures, nor the multitude of Guards, that can uphold a Prince, or assure him of obedience, unless with the duty of obedience, the zeal and affections of his People do concur. Surely, only long and secure is the Reign of such a one as by actions of benignity stamps upon the hearts of his People the impressions of love; not those of [I-123] fear by acts of cruelty.” He adds, “that a Prince has nothing to fear from his People, as long as their obedience flows from Inclination, and is not constrained by Servitude; and that Subjects will never refuse obedience, when they are not treated with contumely and violence [q].

A man who means no ill would not seek the Power to do it, and he who seeks that Power, or has it, will be eternally suspected to mean no good. Now the only way to obviate such suspicion, is, to act by known rules of Law; he who rules by consent is obnoxious to no blame. Such restraint may probably at some times keep a just Prince from doing good, but it certainly withholds a bad one from doing much greater mischief. An arbitrary Prince who can do what he will, is for ever liable to be suspected of willing all that he can; hence his people mistrust him; hence his indignation for their mistrust, and hence the root of eternal jealousy and uneasiness between him and them.

THE People likewise expect complaisance from the Prince, expect to have their sentiments and humours considered; while the Prince probably thinks that they have no right to form any judgment of public matters, or to make any demands upon him; but, on the contrary, requires of them blind reverence and obedience to his Authority; and acquiescence in his superior Conduct and Skill; that all his doings should pass for just; himself for a person altogether sacred and unaccountable; and his words for Laws. If their behaviour towards him do not happen to square exactly with these his sovereign notions and high conceit of himself, he will be apt to think, or some officious flatterer will be ready to persuade him [r] , “his Royal Authority is set at nought, the [I-124] People are revolted; and what remains but that they take Arms?” To punish therefore their Disobedience, he proceeds to violence, and exercises real severity for imaginary guilt. Mischief is prolific; violence in him begets resentment in them; the People murmur and exclaim; the Prince is thence provoked, and studies vengeance; when one act of vengeance is resented and exposed, as it ever will be, more will follow. Thus things go on. Affection is not only lost, but irrecoverable on either

side; hatred is begun on both; and Prince and People consider themselves no longer as Magistrate and Subjects, but one another as Enemies. Hence perhaps CALIGULA'S inhuman wish, that he could murder all his People at a blow. The sequel of all this is easy to be guessed; he is continually destroying them; they are continually wishing him destroyed.

Sect. XII. How nearly it behoves a Prince to be beloved and esteemed by his Subjects. The terrible Consequences of their mutual Mistrust and Hatred.

HOW much does it import Princes to preserve the good opinion of their People! when it is once lost, it is scarce ever to be recalled. When once they come to believe ill of their Prince, there is nothing so ill that they will not believe; as in the instance of TIBERIUS, of whom things the most improbable and horrid were believed. It is hardly possible for any merit, the most genuine and exalted, to preserve popular favour for a long time; accidents and disasters will be falling in, to sour the spirits of the populace; or some fresh merit, more new or more glaring, may appear, and lessen or intercept their admiration of the other; or the same person may not always have the same opportunities to oblige them; so that the best care and conduct can [I-125] only serve to retain it to a certain degree; and this by good conduct is certainly and always to be done. But when the reputation of the Prince with his Subjects is entirely gone, something worse than the bare want of it will ensue. Between a Prince's forfeiting the public Affection and his incurring the public Hatred, there is scarce any medium, and even that medium is a terrible one, since to be scorned is not much better than to be hated, and often infers it.

WOULD a Prince live in security, ease and credit? let him live and rule by a standard certain and fixed, that of Laws, nor grasp at more than is given him. Many by seeking too much have lost all, and forfeited their Crown through the wantonness and folly of loading it with false and invidious ornaments. While nothing would serve them but lawless Power, even their legitimate Authority grew odious, and was rent from them. They set their People the example of assuming what was none of theirs, to do acts of violence in defense of violated Laws, to judge for themselves, and to sanctify by the title of Right whatever they could accomplish by force. Rather than live upon bad terms, people will be apt to make their own terms, and think no fealty is due where no saith is kept. Who would not rejoice more in a free gift than in plunder? for such is the difference between Power conferred and Power usurped. What new Prerogative acquired to the Crown, or what new Revenue can make amends for the Hearts of the People estranged and embittered? This is such a loss, as no acquisition, no pomp of Power whatsoever, can atone for. We have seen under what gloom, asfright, and despair the Cæsars lived and swayed, though their sway was without check and bounds. MACHIAVEL says, that when a Prince has once incurred the public hate, there is no person nor thing which he ought not to dread.

[I-126]

HE who does no ill, fears none; but such as are continually creating terrors and calamities to others, have abundant reason to be under continual apprehensions themselves. How much more desirable, how much more just, and easy, and safe is the condition of a Prince, who lives and rules by Laws over a free People by their own consent? both People and Laws are his guard, and what secures them, secures him. They see that he loves them; and he is conscious that they ought to love him. This is Government, and the effects of it; not the triumph of boundless arrogance or folly; not the insults of one over all, nor consequently his distrust of them, nor their slavish dread of him; but the equal administration of eternal Righteousness, and stated Laws; an endearing intercourse of fatherly care and protection, and of filial gratitude and duty. How amiable must it be, how refreshing to a generous Spirit, to oblige and solace a whole People, to have a whole People adore and bless him! What master of Slaves, even the highest and most unbounded master, can boast so much of himself and his

slaves? The Grandeur of such a Prince is all false and tinsel, painted and hollow; he is never secure, because he is not innocent; he is not innocent, because he is an Oppressor.

To rule by mere Will, is to rule by Violence, and violence is War. He who puts himself in a state of Hostility with his Subjects, invites Hostility from them, as did the late King JAMES, who having no Confidence in the Laws, which he had violated, nor in his People, whom he had oppressed, put himself in a posture of War against his Subjects; so that when they too had recourse to arms, they did but stand in their own defence. They had no quarrel to that King JAMES, who had taken an Oath to rule by Law; but when that King assumed another person, and, in spite of Oaths and Laws, would oppress [I-127] and spoil, they who owed this man of violence no Allegiance, opposed Might to Might, since he would abide by no Law. It was not their Prince therefore that they resisted, but their Enemy and Spoiler: he in truth, had no more Right to what the Law gave him not, than the great Turk had; they therefore opposed not an English Monarch, but an Invader and a Tyrant. Nor do I know of any People who threw off their Monarchy wantonly; and if they did it through Oppression, the Oppressor might blame himself [s]. Had he conquered his Subjects, what would he have gained, but the detestable Glory of a triumphant Oppressor; of seeing a rich Country reduced by servitude to poverty, and of bearing the curses of a free People oppressed? Whoever has beheld the condition of a great neighbouring Kingdom, naturally the finest in Europe, has seen in the condition of the Inhabitants, poor, pale, nasty, and naked, what genuine Glory their Princes have reaped, by reducing all the Laws of their Country into one short one, that of Royal Will and Pleasure.

Sect. XIII. Public Happiness only then certain, when the Laws are certain and inviolable.

IT is allowed that amongst the Roman Emperors, there were some excellent ones. But was not all this chance? They might have proved like the rest, who were incredibly mischievous and vile. They had nothing but their own Inclinations to restrain them; and is human Society to depend for security and happiness upon uncertain Inclinations and Will? They were good by conformity to the Laws, as Laws are the only defense against such as [I-128] are bad. The bad ones had almost sunk the Empire to a chaos, before there appeared one Prince of tolerable capacity and virtue to retrieve it. Insomuch that VESPASIAN declared it to be absolutely necessary to raise a fund of above three hundred millions of money (of our money) purely to save the State from absolute ruin, and dissolution [t]. After DOMITIAN there succeeded five good Reigns, during which Law and Righteousness prevailed, and the Emperors took nothing, neither power nor money, but what Laws long established gave them, and professed to derive every thing from the Law, and to occupy nothing in their own Name. But as the Emperor might still be a Tyrant if he would, that wild Prince COMMODUS resumed the old measures of violence, and, becoming a second CALIGULA, dissipated and overturned, in a few years, all the treasure, wise provisions and establishments, contrived and gathered by his Predecessors during the best part of a Century.

To conclude, if Princes would never encroach, Subjects would hardly ever rebel; and if the sormer knew that they would be resisted, they would not encroach. Every Subject knows that if he resist against Law, he will die by Law. It is certain mischief to both Prince and People, to assert slavish Doctrines, and no security to either; since nature oppressed will depart from passive principle. But to assert the reasonableness of vindicating violated Laws, is no more than asserting that Laws ought not to be violated, as they ever will be where there is no penalty annexed. The least attempt upon public Liberty is therefore alarming; if it is suffered once, it will be apt to be repeated often; a few repetitions create a habit; habit claims prescription and right. Such also is the nature of man, that [I-129] when public Affairs are once disconcerted, it is hard, sometimes impossible, to restore them to their first firmness; numbers become engaged in the corruption, and will be trying all their Arts and Power to support it. Where it grows extensive and general, the public Authority will probably espouse

and defend it; and even where that authority is against it, the torrent may be so strong as to bear down Authority itself. How many great and good men have fallen themselves while they strove to restore the State? attempts to reform the Soldiery, to reform the Clergy, to reform the Civil Administration, have often drawn down a tragical doom upon the authors of them. It is much easier to prevent than to cure.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of the old Law of Treason by the Emperors perverted and extended. ↩

Sect. I. The antient Purpose of that Law; the Politics of AUGUSTUS in stretching it.

I Proceed now to shew by what Arts and Supports the Tyranny was preserved and exerted; how the old Laws, especially that of Treason, were perverted, and to explain the *instrumenta regni*.

“This Law, says TACITUS, in the days of our Ancestors, had indeed the same Name, but implied different arraignments and crimes, namely those against the State; as when an army was betrayed abroad, when seditions were raised at home; in short, when the public was faithlesly [I-130] administered, and the Majesty of the Roman People was debased. These were Actions; and Actions were punished, but Words were free. AUGUSTUS was the first who brought Libels under the penalties of this wrested Law [a].”

IN that sense of this Law (and doubtless it is the true sense) the Emperors were the criminals; they who had enslaved Senate and People, usurped and destroyed the State. But they had got the Power of interpreting Laws, or of directing those who did, and consequently were become the Law-makers. As Laws observed had defended Liberty; Laws wrested secured the Usurpers. Hence the old Law of Treason was degraded and perverted to involve in its penalties the Authors of Lampoons and Pasquinades. This Law of Majesty was so much and so long prostituted and abused; so much bloodshed and oppression was committed by the succeeding Emperors under its name, that at last every sentence and punishment, however just, which was pronounced by virtue of it, was thought unlawful and cruel; so that out of detestation to this abused Law, many other good Laws perished.

DOUBTLESS Reputation is a tender thing, and ought no more to be violated than property or life; and they who attack and blacken it, are as vile Offenders as they who rob and steal. But there was no better pretence for making it treasonable, than for construing any other offence against particulars, to be an offence against the public. In truth, AUGUSTUS could have no other view in this, than the suppressing of that Freedom of Speech which [I-131] was an effect of the freedom of the antient Government, and inconsistent with his Usurpation. When words were made Treason, it was time to be wary of one's expressions; especially when the construction of them was merely arbitrary, and the Law that made them so, was utterly silent about them, there remained no sort of rule to know when they were otherwise; nor had he who was to be judge any rule but his own suspicion, anger and partiality. For every word, for every action, men were involved in process for Treason, provided there appeared but an informer to charge him, and call it so.

It is to no purpose to say that AUGUSTUS sometimes overlooked or pardoned invectives against himself. It was all grimace and false generosity; since, after this Law was so terribly inverted, there was little likelihood that men would run such capital risques. If contumelies upon private persons were high Treason, what must it be to meddle with the Prince or his Administration? He took care of himself without seeming to do so; he found his own sanctuary in providing one for others; and regulations made for his own defence and gratification, had an appearance of a spirit altogether public and disinterested. But it was a downright insult upon the sense of mankind, to convert a petulant imagination and a few wanton words, into a crime against the State. He who exposed the gallantries of a Lady of Quality, or the faults and foibles of a Patrician, was, forsooth, deemed to bear hostile purposes against the Commonwealth: for this is the construction of Treason by the Lawyers.

Yet AUGUSTUS himself had made obscene Libels, particularly upon FULVIA the wife of ANTHONY. This multiplying of Treasons from Words and Writings, had a melancholy aspect; for, besides that Treasons multiplied are the bulwarks and engines of Tyranny; looks at [I-132] last became treasonable, as did natural sympathy and sorrow, nay, sighs and silence.

AUGUSTUS was cunning enough to know the advantages of Treasons multiplied to his own domination, and wrested adultery also into a crime of State. His daughter and her daughter were prostitutes, and all their gallants, according to this merciful Monarch, were Traytors, and because these sort of Traytors were very numerous, as well as considerable for quality and credit, he had here a good pretence to get rid of many considerable Romans, who gave him uneasiness and jealousy. With death or banishment therefore he punished their gallants. For to a crime common between men and women, he gave the grievous name of Treason and Sacrilege, and trod upon the moderation of Antiquity. Nor was this sort of Treason limited to the Reigning House and the blood of the Cæsars; it was universal, and every Adulterer was a Traytor; by which he made himself the greatest Traytor in Rome, as he was the most universal Adulterer; nor were his own severe Laws any check upon him, no more than the sacred ties of friendship; for he spared not the wife of his own Favourite, and faithful Counsellor MÆCENAS. This was not extreme prudence in so great a Politician, to be daily violating institutions of his own making, especially when by the rigour of the penalties, and the formidable name which he had given to the crime, he had shewn how important and unpardonable he thought it; unless, like the Princes of Italy in MACHIAVEL'S time, he broke penal Laws, to encourage others to do so, on purpose to ensnare delinquents, and gain confiscations.

[I-133]

Sect. II. The Deification of the Emperors, what an engine of Tyranny, and snare to the Roman People.

THE Deification of AUGUSTUS and his usurping even in his life-time the Attributes and Prerogatives of a Deity, was another snare for Power and Crimes. Henceforth every offence offered to this new Deity was high Treason against the Gods; for he was a God as well as the best of them, and indeed more to be dreaded than all of them. It became a high crime to swear falsely by his name, the same as if the name of Jupiter had been falsified; nay, to sell his Statue in the sale of a house or gardens; and the citizens of Cyzicus, notwithstanding their faithful adherence and strenuous services to the Romans in the Mithridatic War, were bereft of their freedom for neglecting the worship of the deified AUGUSTUS. The name of APIDIUS MERULA was razed from the list of Senators, because he had not sworn upon the Acts of the deified AUGUSTUS. One of the articles charged against C. SILANUS, Proconsul of Asia, was, that he violated the Deity of AUGUSTUS. VARILIA, in the opinion of TIBERIUS, deserved to be condemned, if she had uttered aught irreligiously concerning the deified AUGUSTUS; for this was Treason and Blasphemy. Such was the awe and reverence paid to this fresh Deity; and such care had he taken to tie up the tongues of men from censuring him living or dead; he was *instar omnium deorum*; you might say what you would of other Gods, but beware of injuring a deified Emperor. He had done more mischief, committed higher oppressions, spilt more human blood than all the men in the world, and was made a Deity!

[I-134]

NOR was it out of any principle of Superstition, that TIBERIUS guarded the fame and Godhead of AUGUSTUS with such severe sanctions; for he little mattered the Gods and godly Rites, being himself a Fatalist, and only infatuated with notions of Astrology. Neither was it from any regard to AUGUSTUS (who was suspected to have been poisoned to make way for him) and whose Blood and Posterity he was daily destroying; a proceeding inconsistent with the adorations and sacrifices which he affected to offer him, as AGRIPPINA truly told him. But

he did it to promote Superstition in others, and rivet the public Slavery; since in religious devotion paid to a Prince, civil submission was included and enforced. It in truth imported him nearly to have all the Laws and doings of AUGUSTUS pass for sacred, and to set an example himself that he thought them so. AUGUSTUS had left him (as he pretended) his Successor, and it behoved him that AUGUSTUS should pass for a Prince of consummate wisdom; for had he erred in other great counsels and events, he might have erred in that; besides, AUGUSTUS was a popular Prince, and it would have been unpopular to have neglected him, or rescinded his deeds.

NERO too acquired the Sovereignty by the murder of CLAUDIUS, and, to keep it, murdered his Children and Kindred; yet he at first treated his memory with high regard, vindicated the Reign, and even extolled the parts and prudence of this deified fool; for CLAUDIUS too was listed amongst the Gods; he who had been the most stupid, cowardly, and bloody Idiot that could possibly wear and disgrace a Diadem. This strange animal or human monster, just begun by nature, but never finished, as his mother used to say, was utterly unfit for any Office in the Empire or private life, yet came to be an Emperor and a God. So that to [I-135] bear sovereign rule, or to be exalted to a God, no qualification at all was necessary. His grandmother LIVIA contemned him even to loathing; she could not bear to speak to him. His nephew CALIGULA, when he had butchered many of his kindred, saved CLAUDIUS purely to keep him for a laughing-stock. He was held in the same scorn by his sister LIVILLA, by AUGUSTUS and all his family. He was the jest of the Court [b]. The kindest word AUGUSTUS gave him was that of *misellus*, wretching.

Sect. III. The Images of the Emperors, how sacred they became, and how pernicious.

AS flattery begot servitude, so it was by servitude propagated, and whatever tended to sink and debase the spirit of the people, as sycophancy did, exalted the Tyrants; nay, their Images and Statues became sacred and revered; and any villain or profligate might offer what outrage he pleased to every worthy man, every slave insult his Lord, every criminal escape justice, by sheltering himself under the Emperor's Statue, or by carrying his Effigies about him. Nor could so considerable a man as a Senator of Rome, even in the face of the Tribunal, and in the very portal of the Senate, escape the insults and menaces of a profligate woman, who thus defended herself with the Image of TIBERIUS, though he had legally convicted her of forgery; so far was he from daring to bring her to judgment. So that in this impious reverence to a silent Stone, all Law, and punishment, and protection was swallowed up. This gives probability to what PHILOSTRATUS tells us in the life of APOLLONIUS TYANEUS, that a master was [I-136] condemned, as one sacrilegious and accursed, for having chastized a slave, who happened to have about him a small coin impressed with the Effigies of TIBERIUS. So vastly had servitude grown upon the Romans so early as the Reign of TIBERIUS, and in the best part of his Reign, even while he yet kept tolerable measures with Law and Liberty, and warily avoided all excesses of power and cruelty. Yet in his second year, GRANIUS MARCELLUS being arraigned of high Treason, it was one of the Articles, that the Statue of MARCELLUS stood higher than that of the Cæsars, and from that of AUGUSTUS the head had been taken off, and the head of TIBERIUS put on. At the recital of this TIBERIUS waxed into such a flame and fury, that, departing from his wonted caution and silence, he cried aloud, he would vote in this cause himself under the tie of an oath. He was excellently answered by CNEIUS PISO, who asked him; "In what place, CÆSAR, will you chuse to vote? if first, I shall have your example to follow; if last, I fear, through ignorance, I may happen to differ from you." Hence the reflection of TACITUS, that there even then remained some faint traces of expiring Liberty [c].

It is not strange, however hideous, to find afterwards these Statues, these dead representatives of the dead, invested with such extravagant and inviolable sanctity, that it was death without redemption for a master to chastize his slave near the picture or image of AUGUSTUS; death, to change one's garments there; death, to carry a coin or a ring with his

Image into the Privy or into the Stews; death, to drop a word that seemed to censure any action or any saying of his; and death was the portion of that unhappy man, who suffered some public [I-137] honour to be decreed him by his Colony, on the Anniversary of the same day, when AUGUSTUS had once public honours decreed to him.

THE execrable CALIGULA, who was a professed foe to the human race, a monster gorged with blood, and dyed in it, assumed Godhead as well as the rest, and claimed all the apparatus of Divinity, a Temple and Altars, Worship and choice Sacrifices. It is incredible what dreadful punishments he inflicted upon many even of principal fashion, for no other crime, than that they had never invoked his celestial Genius by an Oath. This was capital, it was Majesty violated; and for it the offenders, after they had been first torn and mangled with stripes, were doomed to the mines, or to the drudgery of mending the public roads, or to be thrown to wild beasts; and some were sawed asunder. A bloody Deity! Had he been omnipotent, the race of men must have been extinct. All his own murders, all the efforts of his malice and rage, were not able to accomplish it, and he wished to derive the Glory of his Reign from some signal Calamities happening in it; as if the monster himself had not been curse and calamity enough! He envied AUGUSTUS the happiness of an Army massacred, and TIBERIUS the sad disaster at Fidenæ, where fifty thousand souls were maimed, or perished outright by the fall of the Amphitheatre there. Hence he longed passionately for the blessing of some public Calamities great and dreadful, the Slaughter of great Armies, Famine, Pestilence, Conflagrations and Earthquakes. The acclamations of the crowd in the Theatre differing from his, he uttered a Godlike wish, "That the whole Roman People had but one common neck; for then one execution would have dispatched them all." To complete the Character of this benevolent Deity, he [I-138] boasted, that of all his great Qualities, none delighted him so much as his defiance of all shame [d].

THESE celestial Titles and Worship divine, were sometimes bestowed upon the wives of the Emperors, their sisters, harlots, and infants. CALIGULA was wont to swear by the Divinity of DRUSILLA his sister and concubine. CLAUDIUS had divine Honours decreed to LIVIA his grandmother. NERO'S daughter by POPPÆA was deified; Worship, Priest, and Chapel were assigned her; and it was one of the crimes imputed to THRASEA PÆTUS, that he did not believe POPPÆA herself to be a Divinity. Nay, it would seem as if NERO'S Voice had been created a Divinity, since I think, it was Treason never to have sacrificed to it; a crime imputed to the same THRASEA. DOMITIAN likewise adjudged himself a God, and proved much such another as CALIGULA.

Sect. IV. What a destructive Calamity the Law of Majesty grew, and how fast Treasons multiplied under its Name.

I Have said so much of this humour of deifying Princes living or dead, not so much to expose it, as to shew the wicked effects it had upon Liberty and the State. It opened a new Source of flattery, and accusations, and punishments, and strengthened the hand of Tyranny; of this I have given sufficient instances, and many more might be given, all manifestly proving with what impudence and cruelty the Law of Majesty was stretched and embittered. In this Law all Laws were swallowed up, and therefore all crimes brought under the article of Treason, [I-139] as Treason was the highest crime [e], as in the case of C. SILIUS, whose chief offence was overmuch service done to TIBERIUS; thence that refined observation of TACITUS; "That benefits are only so far acceptable, as it seems possible to discharge them; but when once they have exceeded all retaliation, hatred is returned for gratitude." Under TIBERIUS, says SÜETONIUS, every fault passed for Capital, even that of Words, however few and undesigning. When C. SILANUS was arraigned for male-administration in Asia, TACITUS says, that besides all the other methods of artifice and violence, manifold and barbarous, used to destroy him; that none of his relations might dare to aid him and plead for him in his trial, articles of Treason were subjoined, a sure bar to all assistance, and a seal upon their lips. One

of the great charges against LIBO DRUSUS was, that he asked the fortune-tellers, whether he should not one day be immensely rich. This too was the sin of Majesty violated, and for it he was pursued to death and his estate seized. Note, that these were two men of high quality, akin to the Cæsars, and obnoxious to TIBERIUS. This seems to have been their real crime. CESIUS CORDUS was accused of Rapine in his Government of Crete; but to make sure of the criminal, he was likewise charged with the crime of violated Majesty; a charge, says TACITUS, which in those days proved the sum and bulwark of all accusations whatsoever.

It was Treason in CREMUTIUS CORDUS to have inserted in his History the praises of BRUTUS; Treason, to have stiled CASSIUS the last of the Romans, though in doing it he only quoted the words of BRUTUS; Treason in TITIUS SABINUS [I-140] to have been a follower of GERMANICUS, and after his death, a faithful friend to his wife and children; Treason in POMPEIA MACRINA, Treason in her Father and Brother, the former an illustrious Roman Knight, the latter once Prætor, to have been descended from THEOPHANES of Mitylene, a noble Greek, in great confidence with POMPEY the Great; Treason in L. ENNIUS a Roman Knight, to have turned the Effigies of the Emperor into money; Treason in LUTORIUS PRISCUS, another Roman Knight, to have composed during the illness of DRUSUS, a Poem for an Elegy, in case he died; Treason in MAMERCUS SCAURUS, an illustrious Orator nobly born, that in a Tragedy by him composed, there were certain Verses capable of two meanings; Treason in TORQUATUS SILANUS, a Nobleman of the first rank in Rome, to live splendidly, and entertain several principal servants; another SILANUS his Nephew died soon after for the very same sort of Treason. In another Nobleman it was Treason, to have preserved the Image of CASSIUS amongst those of his Ancestors; Treason in the two brothers surnamed PETRÆ, both illustrious Roman Knights, to have dreamed something about CLAUDIUS; Treason in APPIUS SILANUS, that MESSALINA the Empress, and NARCISSUS the freedman, had forged a dream concerning him; and, to add no more, it was Treason, it was Majesty violated, for a poor distressed Lady to have bewailed the blood of her son, spilt to satiate an implacable Tyrant incensed by his gay raillery. This was FUSIUS GEMINUS lately Consul; and his ancient mother was murdered for bewailing the murder of her child [f].

DISCOURSE VII.

Of the Accusations, and Accusers under the Emperors. ↩

Sect. IV. The pestilent Employment of these Men, their Treachery and Encouragement.

FROM Law thus perverted there arose encouragement more than enough for Informers and Accusers, and a plentiful harvest: a sort of men, says TACITUS, born for the destruction of mankind, and by no terrors or penalties ever sufficiently restrained; yet by the Emperor such sons of perdition were sought out and invited by great rewards. TIBERIUS had the front to tell the Senate, that these insects, enemies to Law and Liberty, were the Guardians and Defenders of the Laws. They were his Defenders, if he pleased; the Champions of Imperial Violence and Lust; but the Pests of the Public; dogs of Prey thirsting after the blood and fortunes of every worthy and every wealthy man. That Prince who does not punish Informers, encourages them, said DOMITIAN; but this he said in the beginning of his Reign while he yet retained the appearances of benevolence and humanity; afterwards when the disguise was taken off, and he followed the bent of his brutal nature, it was enough to ruin, any man, if he were but charged to have done some deed, or spoke some word, no matter what, against the Majesty of the Prince. Men were then capitally arraigned, and the estates were seized of both the living and the dead, for any fault whatsoever, [I-142] upon the credit of any Accuser whatsoever; and inheritances, to which he could have no possible title or pretence upon earth, were usurped by him, if there was but one Person, one Informer, who could say, that he heard the deceased declare CÆSAR to be his heir. The same pretence served CALIGULA; nay, when people had out of fear named him amongst their heirs, he wondered at their impudence to keep him out of his share by living afterwards, and for that offence poisoned many such. In short the chief and most frequent incidents in the Reigns of almost all the Cæsars, were but the bloody efforts and success of the Accusers; and the groundwork and support of all accusations, was the perverted Law of violated Majesty, which came to signify every thing which the Accusers averred and the Emperors disliked.

IN the beginning of TIBERIUS'S Reign, L. Piso, one of the boldest men then surviving, owned himself so much intimidated by the merciless pursuits of the Impleaders, who breathed nothing but terror and accusations, that he threatned in open Senate to relinquish Rome and retire into some distant corner of the earth. He had reason for his complaint and fears, he was afterwards marked out as a victim and prey by one of the tribe, and arraigned for certain words secretly dropped against the Majesty of the Prince. These accusations were no other or better than the cruel Proscription continued; by the latter, Senators and Knights, Patriots obnoxious to the Usurpers, were butchered in the lump; afterwards, under the process of the Accusers, they perished piece-meal, but were incessantly perishing [a], often a great many at a time. Every Law [I-143] of the old free State, and every man who loved his Country and her Laws, were repugnant to the reigning Tyranny; hence as the Republic was swallowed up in the Sovereignty of the Cæsars, all her laws were made to center in that of Majesty, and all men who adhered or were suspected to adhere to the ancient Constitution, were either destroyed by this new Law (rather an old Law turned into a new snare) or at the mercy of its Guardians and Accusers. And all this new violence was committed under old names and constitutions [b]; so that the Commonwealth was made to cut her own throat; just as cruel and ambitious men justify Persecution and Oppression by the authority of the Gospel, which abhors it. The Church of Rome calls every thing that displeases her, Heresy and Blasphemy; this is the *Lex Majestatis* of some Churchmen, and by cruelties committed under that name they have more than vied with the NERO'S and DOMITIAN'S. Thus, after a

solemn murder committed by the Senate, to gratify TIBERIUS, he sent them a Letter of thanks, for punishing a person who was an enemy to the Commonwealth; as if the Republic had been then subsisting and vindicating her own wrongs.

THE Accusers were the agents and tools of Tyranny, and by the Tyrants upheld and animated with open countenance and high rewards; their business was to hunt down and destroy every man signal for blood, or wealth, or dignity, or virtue; because all such men were obnoxious to imperial Jealousy and Displeasure. Had a noble Roman sustained public Offices? he was a dangerous man; had another refused to bear them? he was equally dangerous; and for public Offices either exercised or declined, he was sure to be attacked as a criminal of State; [I-144] and if he were conspicuous for any notable ability or virtue, his doom was inevitable [c]. VALERIUS ASIATICUS perished because he had delightful Gardens, which tempted the avidity of MESSALINA; as did STATILIUS TAURUS, for the same reason, by the avarice and subornation of AGRIPPINA; so did SEXTUS MARIUS for his immense Wealth and gold Mines, under TIBERIUS. This gives one an idea of the terrible spirit of the Emperors as well as of the Accusers; how much the former feared and hated, and how fast they destroyed every thing that was noble, good, or amiable amongst men; and what a pestilent employment was that of an Accuser! Was it any wonder that to carry on so detestable a trade, they were to be tempted with lucrative earnings? In truth, their recompences were so public and ample, that they were detested not more for their Iniquities than for the Wages of their Iniquities.

THESE Pests of Rome were, for being so, frequently raised to the highest Offices in the Roman State; and that Imperial City, the Mistress of the Earth, saw her public Dignities, those of the Pontificate, and of the Consulship, bestowed as spoils upon Parricides for spilling her best blood, and tearing her vitals. With the Prince their credit was high, as their merit was infamous; some were preferred to be Governors of the Provinces, others taken to be his chief Confidants and Counsellors in the Palace. And thus, vested with credit and sway, exerting all their terrors, and pursuing their hate, they controuled and confounded all things [d]. After the tragical Death of LIBO DRUSUS, procured by execrable Artifices, Falshoods, Horrors and wrested Laws, [I-145] all the substance of that noble Patrician was divided amongst his Accusers; and such of them as were Senators were created Prætors, even without the regular method of election. The four Senators who ensnared TITIUS SABINUS, by trapanning, lurking, feigned friendship, and by a series of treachery the most infamous and cruel that could be practised amongst men, and afterwards accused him, engaged in all this meritorious villainy purely to gain the Consulship, to which there was no possible access but through SEJANUS, nor without villainy was the favour of SEJANUS to be sought or purchased.

BUT besides rewarding of the Accusers out of the fortune of the Accused, (for where they had not all, they still went shares with his children) they had frequently excessive sums out of the public Treasury; CAPITO COSSUTIANUS had near a hundred and thirty thousand Crowns, for accusing THRASEA PETUS; EPRIUS MARCELLUS had as much, for the same good service; for NERO, after he had long wallowed in the blood of eminent men, and butchered them without number, was in hopes by the murder of THRASEA and SORANUS, to extirpate Virtue, name and essence, from the face of the earth. OSTORIUS SABINUS, the Accuser of SORANUS, had indeed a less reward in money, that of thirty thousand Crowns; but the reward was enhanced by the ornaments of the Quæstorship presented with it.

“These Incendiaries were animated, and such crying calamities to the public were excited by the Minions of the Court, who, as it were, sounded the Trumpet to Arraignments and Confiscations; on purpose, that out of the fortunes of the condemned they might raise or increase their own;” says AM. MARCELLINUS.

AQUILIUS REGULUS, an upstart and a mischievous Accuser under NERO, was distinguished with two Consulships, and the dignity of Pontiff; [I-146] and had premiums in money to the value of more than two hundred thousand Crowns; as if he had been burying the Commonwealth, and for this merit had afterwards gathered her spoils, says TACITUS.

Sect. II. The traiterous Methods taken to circumvent and convict Innocence. The spirit of accusing how common, the dread of it how universal; and the misery of the Times.

AS upon these bloody occasions, it was necessary to find or feign some crime; so any crime served the turn, as I have largely shewn; witnesses also must be had; but any witnesses were good witnesses; and where they did not offer themselves, they were bought with money, or frightened with the torture. Slaves were suborned against the life of their Lords; clients and freedmen against their Patrons; and he who had no enemy, was betrayed and undone by his friends [e]. Now, because, by the old Roman laws, slaves could not be witnesses against their masters, the crafty TIBERIUS found a trick to evade that law without seeming to violate it; he contrived to have the slaves upon such occasion sold; and then they might be evidence against their late Lord. This perfidious subtilty was begun by AUGUSTUS, as is largely shewn by DION CASSIUS. Nay, when a man had no other to accuse him, he was accused by his own son. Dreadful times! even, all rewards and incitements apart, fear for themselves made men treacherous to others; falshood and cruelty reigned uncontrouled. If you would please the Prince, you must gratify his bloody spirit; to do that, you must offer victims and exercise the trade [I-147] of accusing; if you were ill with him, no man, no innocence could protect you; and to be well with him, you must make all other men detest you. To make your own fortune you must ruin that of others, and shed blood to get money.

To this vile employment men of the highest Quality descended, and those of the first note for Eloquence and Civil Accomplishments; such was COTTA MESSALINUS, a man nobly born, but the foremost in every sanguinary motion; such was PUBLIUS DOLABELLA, who sprung from Ancestors the most illustrious, yet debased his Nobility, and engaged in the occupation of an Accuser, even against those of his own blood. When men of such Quality set such example, what wonder if numbers followed it? Many pursued it for money; others because they would not become obnoxious by appearing slack. The question was not about right or wrong, Law or Magistracy; but how to please and humour, to satiate the Emperor, and to escape his suspicion and fury. It was the plea of the Accusers afterward, when they were brought to answer for their crimes, that they were obliged by the Emperors, or their wives, to undertake and prosecute accusations: this SUILIUS pleaded, and urged the imperious orders of MESSALINA. Nay, men of figure were sometimes called upon by the Emperor in person to undertake Accusations. This, says TACITUS, was one of the most baneful and deadly evils of those times, that the first Lords of the Senate degraded themselves to the office of the vilest Informers; some impudently in the face of the sun; others in the dark ways of treachery; no distinction of kindred from strangers, of friends from such as were unknown; none between things lately transacted, and such as were covered by a course of years in oblivion; for words spoken in the Forum, spoken at an entertainment, and about what subject soever [I-148] spoken, the speaker was accused; every one hastening to be foremost in the accusation, and to prevent his fellows; some for their own safety, many, as it were, struck with the contagion, and smitten with the disease of accusing.

THIS universal treachery begot apprehension in all men equally universal. When villainy was thus rewarded, or thus necessary, and thus every-where practised by high and low, every man was fearful of finding every man a villain. Hence the mournful anguish and terror which seized the City; people were afraid to converse, nay, afraid to meet; they distrusted all alike, their acquaintance as well as the unknown; even things mute and inanimate were dreaded; and roofs and walls created terror and circumspection; nay, they were apprehensive that guilt might be found in these their apprehensions, and thence came to dread this very thing, that

they had shewn dread [f].

Sect. III. Plots feigned or true, an ample field for Accusations and Cruelty; and upon what miserable Evidence Executions were decreed.

BUT the best market for Accusations, and the best opportunity for the Emperor to exert Tyranny, and consume men, was the detection of any Conspiracy forged or real. How prodigious and merciless was the slaughter committed by CONSTANTIUS after the death of MAGNENTIUS, and by his bloody instrument PAULUS, surnamed *Catena* from his dexterity in calumny and accusations! Thus too, upon the detection of the designs of SEJANUS against TIBERIUS, who at one time, for a course of years, had destroyed every man that [I-149] was obnoxious to this execrable Favourite of his, and afterwards destroyed every man who had been well with his Favourite; thus when those of PISO against NERO came to be discovered, the whole business of the State was that of accusing, imprisoning and executing. Rome was dyed, deformed, and filled with blood, and death, and funerals; and as many as were hated, or disliked, or worth destroying upon any account, were sure to have been Conspirators, and to be doomed to the pains annexed to Conspiracy. TIBERIUS caused a general slaughter to be made of all that were in prison, under accusation of intelligence with SEJANUS. Any thing upon earth, the lightest, the most fortuitous and foolish thing, served for proof of such intelligence. POMPONIUS SECUNDUS was arraigned of Treason, for that there were some signs (but not shewn by him neither) of friendship between him and AETIUS GALLUS, who was a friend to SEJANUS, who was a Traytor. GALLUS, upon the execution of SEJANUS, had retired into the Gardens of POMPONIUS: this was all; yet this was the doughty argument used by his Accuser, for proving this worthy and accomplished man a Traytor, one who had violated Majesty. Yet his Accuser CONSIDIUS was a man considerable enough to have been Prætor: it was thus, I suppose, he shewed how well he deserved Imperial Favour, and one of the highest Dignities in the State.

THE Emperor CONSTANTIUS was as cruel and as credulous: with him it was death to be accused, and every Accusation, however doubtful, or false, or even whispered, was convincing proof of guilt; nay, the least rumour, however groundless, the smallest hint, however spiteful, created Treason and death without redemption; and by no better proof men of the first quality and merit were doomed to confiscation, or banishment, or execution. The [I-150] bare saying that such a one was in the Conspiracy, or a friend to the Conspirators, was conviction in abundance for taking away Estates and Lives. NERO, whose chief and only purpose was to afflict and destroy, created guilt wheresoever he found distaste. His own hatred or fear was crime enough, and reason sufficient to destroy the object. Some were sacrificed without being once accused, or named; some punished ere they knew they were accused; and the least defamation was full conviction. Nothing was more common than to charge any great man, doomed beforehand to destruction, with designs against the State. This was the charge upon LIBO DRUSUS. All the guilt that could be proved upon him, though to prove it, and indeed to create it, the most villainous arts were used, was, that he had consulted the Fortune-tellers, and dealt in Charms. This was conspiring against the State, it was Treason; and because the Romans were much addicted to such sort of Superstition, this became a very convenient Treason, and very fertile; yet TIBERIUS himself was, as much as any, addicted to Astrology. In the accusations particularly against great Ladies, who for blood, or wealth, or beauty, merited Imperial Wrath, it was a constant article, that they had dealt with the Chaldeans, or practised the rites of Magic: and for this many great Ladies were doomed to death [g].

[I-151]

Sect. IV. What ridiculous Causes produced capital Guilt. The spirit of the Emperor CONSTANTIUS; with somewhat of his Father CONSTANTINE.

THIS humour of consulting the Astrologers, still encreasing with Superstition and Tyranny, administered an inexhaustible fund of crimes and accusations: the noise of a Mouse in a wall, or the sight of a Weasel, became matters of omen and consultation, and consequently matters of Treason and Blood: so did the use of an old Woman's Charm for aches: so did the counting the Vowels upon one's Fingers, as a remedy against the Colic: so did the wearing of an Amulet for an Ague: so did the casual dropping of any Word or Joke, that bore any analogy to the Empire, or the Emperor's name, or to any matter of State and Power: so did the frequenting of Sepulchres, and carrying away the bones or habiliments of the dead: so did any Dream dreamt about any such subject, or construed to be so dreamed.

Under CONSTANTIUS there was one MERCURIUS, a Persian, who was a favourite of the Emperor, and a spy for Dreams; insomuch that he had the title of *Somniorum comes*. This blessed instrument, a fellow of a malicious spirit, and fawning behaviour, used to creep into all companies and banquets, to fish out Dreams from particulars; and whatever he there learned of this kind, after he had, with all his invention, dressed it up in ugly and formidable colours, he carried instantly to the Emperor, whose ears were ever open wide to such mischievous infusions; and this Dreaming, thus represented, was a crime to be expiated only by the blood of the Criminal, I should say, Dreamer, and so a terrible process was formed. This terror spread so much, [I-152] that people, far from telling their Dreams, durst scarce own that they slept: nay, it was lamented by some, that they had not been born upon Mount Atlas, where, according to tradition, people never dream.

To complain too of the badness of the times, was high Treason; for this was arraigning the Government, and punished capitally. But Death itself, however unjust, was not always the most formidable woe. The accused were often not allowed the benefit of Death, till they were first barbarously racked and mangled by torture; and to gratify the inhuman Vengeance of the Prince, their Agonies were continued as long as life could continue under them [h]. This is testified by AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS of CONSTANTIUS the second Christian Emperor, more cruel than NERO and CALIGULA; a consideration which confirms what I have said before, that where the Government is bad, even the best Religion can do little good. CONSTANTIUS was a Christian, and even zealous in Church Matters, and Religious Disputes, and by fostering them did miserably afflict Christianity and the Empire. But he was so far from being improved or bettered by this zeal, that the most cruel Tyrants that went before him, such monsters as CALIGULA, DOMITIAN, and COMMODUS, were but babes to him in cruelty [i].

I wish much better things could be boasted of his Father, the first Emperor who embraced Christianity, and stiled CONSTANTINE THE GREAT. All the Princes, even the persecuting Princes who went before him, hurt not Religion so much as he did; [I-153] by blending it unnaturally with Politics and Power, by laying the foundations of a spiritual Tyranny, and enabling the Bishop of Rome, and other great Prelates, to exert the domineering spirit, which before they had but ill concealed; a spirit which has almost extinguished that of the Gospel. In his Civil Administration, he was rapacious, profuse, and oppressive; and in his Family barbarous and sanguinary; however his partial and flattering Historian, EUSEBIUS, has extolled him, and concealed the iniquities of his Reign. But, in barbarity, and the excesses of Power, his son and Successor CONSTANTIUS exceeded him. What just reason had AMMIANUS to say, that under the lying pretence of guarding Imperial Majesty, numerous and horrible were the butcheries then committed [k] !

Sect. V. The black and general carnage made under CONSTANTIUS, by his bloody Minister PAULUS CATENA, for certain Acts of Superstition and Curiosity.

CONSTANTIUS surrendered at one time a great part of the Roman World to the merciless hands of Accusers, Torturers and Executioners; and certain causes, in themselves frivolous and contemptible, but magnified with the swelling imputation of Majesty violated,

produced all the uproar and calamity attending a great Civil War. The trumpets sounded to try and slay [1].

AN Egyptian Deity, named *Besa*, was noted for uttering Oracles, and telling fortunes, and thence [I-154] much frequented, adored and consulted by all the Countries round about. As many consulted him in person, others did it in writing; this occasioned, that several of the billets thus sent, continued in the Temple after the answer was returned. Some of these were maliciously transmitted to the Emperor, a Prince of a poor spirit, suspicious, and bitter. He now waxed fierce and wrathful, and instantly dispatched his execrable instrument, PAULUS CATENA, into the East, armed with Powers equal to those given to some famous Captain for carrying on a mighty war. PAULUS was authorized to hear and determine discretionally, and proceeded to his charge, breathing nothing but rage, and bloody zeal. Universal accusation and calumny being thus licensed and encouraged, numbers of all degrees were dragged from far and near, as it were, out of the several quarters of the world, to this barbarous Tribunal, and exposed to the mercy of a butcher, who only pursued blood and prey. Some came with their joints excoriated with fetters, others crushed and spent in carts made for carrying criminals; no distinction made between the noble and vulgar. The process was long and tragical; in short, confiscations, exiles, tortures worse than death, death under tedious torments, and every evil painful or destructive to human nature, was there exerted and suffered. As for PAULUS, the lives, and fortunes, and fate of multitudes depended upon his nod, a man skilled in the Arts of cruelty, and openly professing them; a savage who made a market of the rack and the wheel; one, fed, as it were, with human carcasses mangled, and enriched by butchery and rapine; a fellow who avowed the trade of accusing and killing, and studied to ensnare and devour innocence, lives, and property. This was the man in high favour and trust under the pious CONSTANTIUS. It will be a relief to the Reader to know that this monster, [I-155] bloated with blood and crimes, was burnt alive under JULIAN, a Prince of very different parts and spirit.

Sect. VI. The Ravages of the Accusers continued; their Credit with the Emperors; yet generally meet their Fate. The Falsehood of these Princes. The melancholy State of those Times.

THE Reigns of these following Princes, CONSTANTIUS, CONSTANS, GALLUS, VALENTINIAN, VALENS, were spent in a continual war upon their people, under colour of their Majesties being violated.

CRYING and tragical were the ravages committed at Rome by that bloody man MAXIMINUS, where, under pretence of Majesty violated, poisonings, and acts of lewdness, some few real, more imputed, were used as a stale for killing, torturing, and destroying. Every man, or woman, that was obnoxious to him or the Accusers, was put to death; and to private malice or rapaciousness a sea of Roman blood was spilt. I think it was this MAXIMINUS, who persuaded certain persons accused to confess and discover others, and in that case promised they should undergo no punishment either by sword or fire. They did so, trusting to his faith, and confessed crimes never committed; he then, for a salvo, doomed them to die under leaden hammers. He was executed himself under GRATIAN.

AGAINST the defence of innocence accused, against the most evident truth and justice, and all honest information, the ears of the Emperor were eternally shut; but calumny whispered by any malighant, had equal weight with real crimes proved by authentic witnesses; says AMMIANUS. Falsehood [I-156] and flattery, envy and rapaciousness passed for evidence; justice was converted into cruelty, and judgment into rage; the Tribunals erected for justice, and preservation of life and property, were become shambles, and what had the names of pains and penalties, was in truth robbery and assassination.

As there was never any lack of Accusers, there was none of Criminals; and the accused, the more they were destroyed, the faster they multiplied; like witches in former days, daily executed, and daily increasing. They were the food and revenue of the Accusers, who while they could speak and lie, could never want occupation or wages, as long as there were Tyrants and men. MARCELLUS was charged with having uttered disaffected words concerning TIBERIUS, and the Accuser collecting every thing which was detestable in the manners of that Prince, alledged the same as the imputations of the accused. A large field for accusations, and well cultivated by the Accusers! you could say nothing of these Emperors that was true, but what was Treason; such bloody monsters were they all! and the worst you could have said being actually true, you were easily believed to have actually said it. What a blessed lot it must have been to have lived in those Reigns, under monsters unchained, and rogues let loose; when virtue and property were proscribed, villains caressed and guarded!

THE persons of Accusers came to be considered as sacred and inviolable; the more they were detested by the public, the more they were protected by the Emperor; and in proportion as they merited death and ignominy, had countenance and preferment. Their vilest forgeries, convicted and owned, against the lives and fortunes of the greatest men, drew down no doom or penalty upon them. The crimes charged upon FONTEIUS, late Proconsul of Asia, by SERENUS, were proved to have been [I-157] by him forged; yet he escaped punishment. Nay, the more the man was abhorred by all men, the more TIBERIUS considered and protected him. This SERENUS was a villain of exalted merit; he had falsely accused his own father of Treason, an old man, and already in exile: but TIBERIUS owed him a spite, and the son studied to oblige TIBERIUS, who had been offended with the elder SERENUS for once upbraiding him with some wicked service unrewarded; nor had an interval of eight years pacified the Prince. Yet it generally so happened, that their reign was but temporary; first or last most of them found the genuine wages of their fraud and iniquity, and suffered the same doom which they had made others suffer; a doom much more bitter, as it was just, accompanied also with universal hatred of their persons, and with a guilty and upbraiding conscience. This was the fate of SULLIUS, CASSIUS SEVERUS, and others.

NOW as it was the custom, to find high Treason in harmless words, impertinent vanities, and even in ridiculous follies, deserving rather pity than punishment, such as were those charged upon LIBO; so it was the purpose and policy of the Emperor never to prevent any guilt of this kind: on the contrary, he was glad of guilt, and when he knew it was begun, let it run on, till it was ripe, and evidence and Accusers were ready. TIBERIUS knew that LIBO dealt with the Astrologers, with every thing done or said by him; yet at no time had he caressed LIBO more, than at the time when he was meditating his destruction. He preferred him to the Prætorship; he entertained him at his table; shewed no strangeness in his countenance, no resentment in his words; so deeply had he smothered his vengeance! and when he might have restrained all the dangerous Speeches and Practices of LIBO, he chose rather to permit them, in order to punish him for them. [I-158] The crafty Tyrant did not only lull asleep his destined victim by these excessive civilities; but meant by them to deceive the world, as if LIBO's crimes were a surprize upon him, at a juncture when he would seem to have meant all kindness to LIBO. But he was mistaken, and his dissimulation only served to heighten the opinion of his malice; for craft discovered is worse than folly, as folly never creates hatred. Cunning is only then complete, when it cannot be detected, which seldom happens. NERO caressed and flattered SENECA, while he was devising all methods to destroy him. When he meant to murder his mother, never was there such a scene of false fondness as that which he played. He was formed by nature, says TACITUS, and by habit nurtured, to hide his hate under insidious blandishments. DOMITIAN used to treat with the utmost good humour and tenderness such as he intended to murder; nor was there any warning or interval between his caressing you and delivering you to the Executioner; nor a more certain sign that a tragical doom awaited you, than the Prince's gentle behaviour towards you. Well might SÜETONIUS say, that

his cruelty was not only excessive, but sly, and instantaneous.

Now under such a torrent of Accusations, under Laws perverted, Informers busy, employed, protected and rewarded, when all things were crimes, and all men were feared, nay, when fear itself was a crime, (for when CALIGULA murdered his brother, he gave it for a reason, that the youth was afraid of being murdered) when servants and neighbours, nay, acquaintance and kindred, were all justly to be suspected; we need not admire that all offices of friendship and compassion were suspended amongst men, and compassion itself, as it were, extinguished. When LIBO DRUSUS, so often already mentioned, upon his arraignment for Treason, went in mourning [I-159] from house to house to solicit the interposition of his relations (as all the great families in Rome were so) and to pray their aid, when his life and all was at stake; they all declined it to a man, each alledging a reason of his own, but every one in reality from the same cause, namely, their fear of the Emperor [m].

PEOPLE must not only shew no sorrow or sympathy for their murdered relations, but they must testify joy, unless they had a mind to be murdered themselves; as under NERO, many, whose nearest relations had been murdered by him, repaired to the Temples with thanksgiving and offerings, and when the City was filled with corps, so was the Capitol with victims. In that mighty carnage made by TIBERIUS of the friends and followers of SEJANUS at once; when the pavements were covered with single carcasses, or filled with carcasses in piles, those of every sex and age, many that were noble, many that were mean, all cast abroad promiscuously; neither their acquaintance nor kindred were allowed to approach them, or to bewail them, or even at last to behold them. About the coarses spies were placed, to watch countenances, and the signs of sorrow: and when, after they became putrified and noisome, and were thrown into the Tiber, whether they floated in the stream, or were cast upon the banks, none would touch them, none durst bury or burn them. The force of Fear had cut off all the commerce and offices of Humanity; and the more Tyranny raged, the more human compassion was extinguished [n]. Even the outrageous CALIGULA had so well learned to hide his heart, that when by [I-160] the cruelty of TIBERIUS, his mother and both his brothers were condemned and banished, not a word escaped him; nor a groan; though all arts were used to draw words and resentment from him. OCTAVIA too, the wife of NERO, when her little innocent brother was murdered before her face, by the direction of the Tyrant her husband, had even then learned, young as she was, to smother all symptoms of tenderness and sorrow, and every affection of the soul; nay, AGRIPPINA, with all her courage and high spirit, laboured to hide her surprize and dread, and every other emotion, upon that occasion.

Sect. VII. The increase of Tyranny. Innocence and Guilt not measured by the Law, but by the Emperor's Pleasure and Malice.

ONE would think that Tyranny had by this time gone as far as it could go, and that after this, human cruelty and terrors could be strained no higher. But this is a mistake, Flatterers and Accusers were ingenious villains, and Tyranny is a monster never glutted; it is still craving for new butchery and victims; its purveyors therefore are ever studying to humour and pamper it [o]. Who could have imagined any thing upon earth more intensely cruel than TIBERIUS? yet his Successors exceeded him and one another in cruelties, for number and quality; and DOMITIAN committed such as had escaped even the preceding monsters. Hence TACITUS says;

“As our fore-fathers had seen the ultimate point and last efforts of public Liberty; it was reserved to us of this generation to behold the utmost weight and severity of public Bondage; since by the terrors of State Inquisitors, [I-161] we were even bereft of the common intercourse of Civil Life, that of discoursing ourselves, and of listening to the discourse of others:” he adds, “we should have also lost the use of memory, as well as the habit of speaking, had it been equally in our power to forget as to be silent.”

THE trial of persons for Treason went on generally in the old form, but in effect, was all resolvable into the breast and good pleasure of the Prince. According to hints from him, persons were condemned or acquitted; sometimes by his interposing the Tribunitial Power, they were not admitted to be accused; sometimes Treason was found in one man's words and actions, which in another were not allowed to be criminal. Thus men were sentenced, or absolved, or not accused, not according to their guilt or innocence, but to their degree of grace or dislike with the Emperor, who had the Prerogative to coin guilt and innocence, and invert one into the other, as he pleased. Thus TIBERIUS pursued VESTILIUS to death, his brother's antient friend and his own, for suspicion of having lampooned his Nephew CALIGULA; but would not allow COTTA MESSALINUS to be a criminal for the same offence and for many more. But COTTA had merit, he was always foremost in every bloody Counsel; all his wickedness and crimes were so many services, and so much merit. In those days there was no sure guilt but that of worth and of virtue, and innocence; hence the security of all men egregiously mischievous. The known cruelty of the Prince, was no terror to those who took care to escape it, by the vileness of their lives; especially if they were active to feed his cruelty by noble sacrifices; like HATERIUS AGRIPPA, who meditated in the midst of his cups and harlots the destruction of illustrious men. The worst and [I-162] vilest men in the Empire, became the securest, and often the highest, by destroying the best.

Sect. VIII. What TACITUS means by Instrumenta regni.

BESIDES the Accusers, who were the Imperial Bloodhounds, to hunt men down for words, conjectures, signs, and appearances, by ridiculous pleas, forced constructions, and wrested Laws; the Emperors had other pestilent tools called by TACITUS *Instrumenta regni*, the Instruments of Imperial Rule. These were the Poisoners and Assassins. When there was no room or pretence to accuse a person signal for worth or opulence, or on any account obnoxious, and thence fit to be destroyed; or when it was unsafe to accuse him; recourse was had to a dose or dagger. Such were P. CELER, and ÆLIUS the Freedman, they who poisoned JULIUS SILANUS, by the appointment of AGRIPPINA: such was ANICETUS, who murdered NERO's Mother, by the direction of her son: such was LOCUSTA, who administered the poison to CLAUDIUS, a woman famous for many feats in poisoning, and long retained for this talent, amongst the implements of Court; it was she who prepared this poison as well as that which destroyed young BRITANNICUS: such was XENOPHON, Physician to CLAUDIUS; one who helped to dispatch his master: such were they who by the procurement of LIVIA, made away the descendants of AUGUSTUS. After the assassination of CALIGULA, in his apartment was found a chest filled with all sorts of poisons, so rapid, that when they were thrown into the sea, they proved baneful to the fish; and numbers were by the tide cast dead upon the shore. Such also were the Tribunes and Centurions, and even the Captain of the Prætorian Guards; who [I-163] whenever they were ordered to seize and kill, never failed to obey, without any reason but the word of command. Thus POSTHUMUS AGRIPPA was dispatched by a Centurion under TIBERIUS: thus GERELANUS the Tribune, was, at the head of a band of soldiers, by NERO employed to see the execution of VESTINUS the Consul, a man charged with no guilt; but NERO, who hated and feared him, having neither crime nor accuser against him, and being therefore unable to assume even the false guise of a Judge, betook himself to the violence of a Tyrant.

IN truth, the whole body of Prætorian Guards were kept by these Tyrants as their Assassins, to murder for them, or to secure others who did. The Turk too has his Mutes and Poisoners in the Seraglio, as well as soldiers, to execute his fury secretly, or openly. LEWIS the eleventh entertained other secret Ruffians to stab and drown, besides his trusty murderer the Provost TRISTAN. Queen KATHERINE and her son CHARLES the Ninth, kept an Assassin, to dispatch privately such men of rank as they could find no other means to destroy; and as dark as the proceedings in the Bastile are kept, it is known what helps have been administered to

the miserable prisoners there, to get rid of life, besides that of nature. Under the Reign of LEWIS the fourteenth the trade of poisoning was brought to great perfection; and was suspected, with too much appearance, to have been part of the Politics of some French Ministers, as well as the bane of others.

[I-164]

Sect. IX. How much these Emperors hated, and how fast they destroyed all great and worthy Men. Their dread of every Man for any Reason.

THE destruction of every man who was great or good, was so common and almost certain in those tragical Reigns, that TACITUS reckons as a wonder the natural death of L. PISO, chief Pontiff [p]. Eminent men, and eminent merit, are the dread of Tyrants. That merit and those talents which, during the old Republic, would have certainly recommended a man to public Favour and public Honours, did afterwards expose him as certainly, to Imperial jealousy and persecution, generally to ruin and death; and those pestilent Accusers, Instruments of public Servitude, the sons of rapine and blood, who were now the men of fashion and favour, and cloathed with the spoils of their Country, for afflicting and mangling her, and devouring her vitals, would have been then treated as public Enemies and Beasts of prey, and doomed to the pains of Murder and Treason, with universal consent and abhorrence.

SUCH a barbarous and unnatural inversion of all Order, Law, and Righteousness, accompanied the Sovereignty of the Cæsars. AUGUSTUS, reckoned the best and wisest of them, though he affected to love and countenance men of parts and accomplishments, yet limited his favours to such of them as were devoted to Flattery and the Usurpation. Hence the public Honours conferred by him upon ATEIUS CAPITO, a new man, one of signal Abilities, but a notorious Flatterer; nay, the Emperor [I-165] raised him in opposition to ANTISTIUS LABEO, one who excelled in the same acquirements; one who never departed from a laudable freedom of speech and spirit, and thence more applauded than the other, by the public voice: whereas, the suppleness and submission of CAPITO rendered him more acceptable to those who bore rule. The latter by this merit gained the dignity of Consul; the other, for having too much, was never suffered to rise higher than that of Prætor. How much must the spirit of Imperial Jealousy encrease afterwards?

EVERY thing gave these Tyrants fear and offence. Was a man nobly born and popular? He withdrew the affections of the People, rivalled the Prince, and threatened a Civil War [q]. Was he akin to AUGUSTUS? He had his eye upon the Sovereignty [r]. Had he a reputation for Arms? He was a living terror to the Prince [s]. Was a great man afraid of popularity, and lived retired? He gained fame by shunning it, and still was an eyesore [t]; and his best fate was to leave his Country [u]; but where the exile was a considerable man, the executioner generally followed. Was he virtuous, and his life and morals exact? He was another BRUTUS, and by the purity of his manners, upbraided the vitious behaviour of the Emperor [w]. Was a man sad? It was because the administration prospered [x]. [I-166] Did he indulge himself in gayety and feasting? It was because the Emperor was ill, and his end thought to be near [y]. Was he rich? He was too wealthy for a subject, and great wealth in private hands boded ill to Princes [z]. Was he poor? He was thence the more enterprising and desperate [a]. Was he a dull man, and unactive; He only put on the guise of stupidity and sloth, till he found room for some bloody purpose [b]. Or had he a different character, and was a lively and active man? Then it was plain he did not so much as feign a desire of private life and recess, but avowed a bustling Republican Spirit, and to be meddling with the State [c]. Did he live in pomp and magnificence? He studied to overshadow the Emperor in seats and grandeur [d]. Was he accomplished in science, a Philosopher, or master of Eloquence, and thence esteemed? The lustre of his Fame gave umbrage to the Prince [e].

In short, no man could possess any advantage or quality that rendered him acceptable to God or man, a blessing to his Country, to his friends, or to himself, but such quality and advantage was sure to [I-167] awaken the jealousy and vengeance of these Tyrants, and procure his doom [f].

Sect. X. Reflections upon the Spirit of a Tyrant. With what Wantonness the Roman Emperors shed the blood of the Roman People. The blindness of such as assisted the Usurpation of CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS.

HOW miserable must be the reflections of a Tyrant, if he has any reflections, that numbers must be wretched (for what wretchedness is not produced by Tyranny?) that he may make a hideous figure, unsafe and detested? Every step he takes for his grandeur and security, renders him more contemptible or abhorred, and therefore more insecure; and the bloody end of most, abundantly shews, that numerous Guards and Armies are so far from securing him, that from them his greatest dread accrues. What a curse it is upon a thinking Being, to consider himself as an obstacle to every thing lovely and desirable amongst men: to the Virtue, Liberty and Happiness of all men, to his own peace and stability, to his own innocence and true glory: that for every chain he puts upon his People, he multiplies terrors and contempt upon his own head; and having forfeited their affections, and living in distrust of those whom he ought chiefly to confide in, relies for his life upon hirelings, the sons of vice and idleness, or forced from their honest labour to be made so, and often picked out of streets and gaols? He dreads every man who is great and brave; and one who fights for him, conquers for him, and saves him, does but expose himself to jealousy, indignity and martyrdom. His own slaves, spiritless and cowardly, [I-168] cannot serve him, and a man truly valiant is undone by serving him. The people are apt to admire and magnify military virtue, and thence the Tyrant hates and dreads such as have it. CHARLES the fifth held it a greater honour, to be Count of CATALONIA, than King of the Romans: he had reason; the CATALANS were free men and valiant; the Romans poor monk-ridden slaves.

BUT I shall find another place in the course of these Observations to discourse more sully of Armies and Conquests: I shall here only observe with what wantonness these Tyrants shed the blood of Roman Citizens; Citizens whose lives were once so valuable, fenced and secured by Laws so numerous, so sacred, and strong; lives so precious that nothing against the life and fortune of the meanest Roman could be determined, but by the Romans in general, assembled in Centuries. These Romans who, while free, became the masters of mankind, were, by losing their Liberty, become daily victims to their own domestic Traitors, and miserable Traitors they were; to a CLAUDIUS, a CALIGULA, a NERO. By the ancient Constitution and Laws of Rome, these Usurpers were the only persons liable to be put to death, without process, or form, or penalty. See the *Lex Valeria* in LIVY, and CICERO *Pro domo sua*.

HAD such as were Champions for the exaltation of CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS, foreseen what their race and descendants were to suffer under the Successors of these Usurpers, would it not have quenched their zeal, would it not have struck them with horror? Had they foreseen their offspring stooping and groaning under a beastly bondage, not to the Emperor only, but to his slaves and strumpets; living a precarious life at the mercy of sycophants; under continual terrors of the Accusers, or themselves exercising the execrable occupation of such; some endangered [I-169] by the lustre of their name; some by that of their virtue and capacity, others from that of their wealth; many become Pimps, Pathics, and Parasites to the Prince; several, upon his authority, prostituting their persons and quality upon the public Stage; numbers doomed to exile upon desolate rocks and islands; numbers slain outright, their carcasses exposed and denied the privilege of burial, their fortunes seized from their families; and all of them liable to the like tragical fate; their wives withal daily exposed to the lust of the Tyrant, and afterwards made the subject of his Imperial Sport and Drollery, even

before their injured and blushing husbands, nay, prostituted in the Palace as in the public Stews, and such as passed by invited in to lie with these illustrious Ladies, as with common harlots, for money.

HAD the Partizans of Usurpation foreseen these woful consequences to their families from it, would it not have changed their hearts and their conduct? Yet what was easier to be foreseen than the fury and ravages of a madman or fool unlimited, where chance, and not law, directed the blind Succession; as did blind will, and not reason, the Administration? But with the heat of party and present impulse, cool reflection and foresight are incompatible: it scarce ever happens, that, for future considerations, however wise, the instant passion, however foolish, is smothered. The Adherents of CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS had an immediate view of greatness, and would not disturb so pleasing an imagination by anxious care or fear for things future. All the world goes well with those that are well; and before men can be brought to believe prophecies of misery, they must begin to feel it. What a child is Man! what a name is Reason! The most frequent use we make of it, is to reason ourselves out of it, and from it to borrow arms against itself: just as we have seen [I-170] Laws quoted to vindicate the subversion of Law, and the Holy Gospel of Peace and Love urged in defence of Persecution and Enmity.

Sect. XI. Why under such Tyrants, the Senate continued to subsist.

IT may be inquired why Tyrants so jealous and precipitate, did not abolish the Senate; and it was once the purpose of CALIGULA, as it was afterwards that of NERO, to have murdered all the Senators: but in truth it would have been an enterprize of infinite difficulty and danger, to have attempted the suppression of that body. It is incredible what stubbornness and force there is in established Names, Customs and Forms, which often are harder to destroy than realities and substances; and signs and titles frequently remain, when the things signified and denominated by them are gone. Thus Popery has extirpated Christianity, and is called Christianity; and Evangelical Humility and Forbearance are preached and extolled in the midst of Pride and Flames.

As the Popes pretend to derive all power from the Gospel, which they pervert and suppress, so did the other Roman Tyrants theirs from the Senate; as if the ancient free State had still subsisted, and to have destroyed the Senate, would have been to have abrogated their own title to Sovereignty. They must likewise have destroyed the Consulship, which was still reckoned *summum Imperium*, the supreme Magistracy: with the Office of Prætor, and every Office, great and small, in the State, with the title and stile of every Law of Rome, and every Tribunal of Justice there: for, every Law and every Office depended upon the Senate, or upon the Senate and People. They must have abolished Learning, History, Records, all Process and Memory; [I-171] nay, the very Military Titles, and Laws of War and Negotiation; those about the Colonies and Provinces, Customs and Trade; and have introduced absolute Oblivion, a new Language, and a new Creation.

Now what Power, what Genius upon earth, was equal to such a prodigious design, that of vacating at once regulations and usages so infinitely numerous, so long established, become a great part of the public Language, grown, as it were, to the minds and memories of men, and essential to Speech and Conversation, as well as to business and protection; and then to supply such an immense void, with Ordinances, Offices, Terms and manner of Process, so as to answer all the ends of Society in so vast an Empire? This was not to be done, nor was it needful: they found their account sufficiently in breaking the Power and Spirit of the Senate, in reducing it to a skeleton and a name, and in exercising under that name all their own violences and exorbitances. The Senate and the People had a venerable sound, and served as a cloak for power when they themselves had none, and the Emperor had all [g]. The registering of Edicts by the Parliament of Paris is become a matter of form; but without that

form, the Court, as uncontrouled as it is, does not care to execute an Edict. The Romans still preserved a veneration for their Senate and Magistrates, and the same was often found in the Armies; insomuch that as late as the Reign of COMMODUS, the soldiers were so enraged at the insolence of PERENNIS, his Favourite and Minister, for discharging from their military commands such as were Patricians and Senators, and for placing in their room others of Equestrian Rank, that they cut him in pieces.

[I-172]

TIME, however, with the continuance of Tyranny, and Barbarity its inseparable companion, cancelled by degrees the old names and forms, after the essence had been long cancelled; and introduced a cloud of offices and words, of rumbling sounds, and swelling titles, suitable to the genius of absolute Rule, and as different from the purity of the old Republican Language, as are Liberty and Politeness from grossness and bondage.

Sect. XII. How the unrelenting Cruelty of the Emperors hastened the Dissolution of the Empire. The bad Reigns of CONSTANTINE and CONSTANTIUS. The good Reign of JULIAN. The indiscreet behaviour of the Christians. Continued Tyranny; and end of the Empire.

TO resume once more the subject of Accusations and the abused Law of Majesty; They were cankers in the heart of the Empire, which at last hastened its Dissolution. The Emperors, to gratify their own cruelty, were continually wasting the public Strength by sacrifices noble and many; and, to satiate their avarice or that of their creatures, encouraged endless seizures and confiscations. This crying Oppression was by the Emperor CONSTANTINE, before mentioned, carried higher than any of the Pagan Emperors had ever carried it. Besides his own rapine, which was merciless and excessive, he glutted his Favourites and Grandees with the spoil and fortunes of others; as MARCELLINUS witnesses [h]. His son CONSTANTIUS followed his example, and was a more consuming Tyrant than the Father. I have already said something of his Character and Reign, which was chiefly conducted [I-173] by inhuman villains, whose heads and hands were eternally engaged in the plunder and blood of his People. Such were his Counsellors, such his Governors of Provinces, which were sucked and devoured to the bone, and might say with truth, what a noble Dalmatian once told TIBERIUS; "Instead of sending us Shepherds to protect our flocks, you send us Wolves to devour them." How many Governors in all Countries have deserved to be hanged, before they reached their Governments, because they went with design to rob and oppress?

THESE depredations were restrained during the Reign of JULIAN, who had as much capacity, as many virtues and accomplishments, as could well adorn private life, or a crown: he was brave, generous, wise, and humane; a Hero, a Philosopher, a Politician, a Friend and Father to mankind. It is pity such an amiable Character should have any blots; his had two; he was superstitious even to weakness, and had conceived an aversion to the Christians altogether unsuitable to his remarkable candor and equity; an aversion which they themselves improved too much, by a behaviour unworthy of so great a Prince, much more unworthy of so meek a Religion. They indeed treated him with eminent spite and outrage, traduced him, libelled him, and even mobbed him. Nothing could be a sharper Satire upon them, for such brutish conduct, than the singular meekness with which he bore it. The truth is, the Christians were then strangely degenerated from the primitive peaceableness and purity, become licentious and turbulent to the last degree, and perpetually instigated by the arrogance and ambition of the Bishops, who were come to contend with arms as well as curses, for the possession of opulent Churches. It was not uncommon with these ambitious men, to affront and revile the Emperors to their faces, to publish Invectives against [I-174] them, to break the public Peace and to raise frequent Tumults and Seditions. As they were the most complaisant Courtiers when pleased; so they were the most implacable Incendiaries when disgusted. All this was enough to alarm any Prince, and to awaken resentment in the most

flegmatic. Moreover a great part of the wealth and revenue, which used to go towards the public Charge, particularly to defend the Frontiers against the Barbarians, was diverted and appropriated to maintain the grandeur and pomp of the great Prelates; *sacerdotes specie religionis fortunas omnes effundebant*, as TACITUS says, upon another occasion.

As some parts of the behaviour of that great Prince, one wise and good in most things, but mistaken and even unjust in others, chiefly towards the Christians, ought to be censured and condemned; the behaviour of the Christians towards him can never be justified. They insulted him intolerably, with all the excesses of bitterness and ill-breeding, while he lived, and slandered and blackened him shamefully when dead; as much as some of them basely flattered and extolled other Emperors, who, though complaisant and liberal to the Ecclesiastics, were consuming Tyrants.

It is the business of Truth and of true Religion, to give even enemies their due, and friends no more than their due. To give JULIAN his; if we lay aside his Religion, I doubt whether we can find upon record one Prince that excelled him, or three that equalled him. He is indeed a pattern to princes, in spite of the anger and obloquy of Writers who were apparently animated by a spirit then too common, a spirit altogether narrow, monkish, and vindictive; such a one as the charitable Religion of JESUS disclaims, and wants not. To his benevolent Gospel and Precepts I sincerely wish all men to conform; [I-175] but fewer signs of such conformity, or rather greater signs of the want of it, have I no where seen, than in the Conduct, Discourses, and Writings of such as have railed at others for their religious sentiments, real or imputed. I wish too that a temper so barbarous and Antichristian had been entirely confined to the Days of that Emperor, whose Administration will for ever recommend him to all calm and impartial men, as an astonishing example of virtue and parts.

THE Reign of JOVIAN, whose intention seems to have been honest and good, was but short, and followed by those of VALENTINIAN and VALENS; Princes exceeding furious, suspicious and sanguinary. Under them the old Accusations, Confiscations and Carnage were revived without mercy, and continued thenceforward, with few intervals, till the Roman Empire was quite overthrown. The people in every part of it being quite harrassed and consumed, finding no relaxation from Oppressors and Accusations, no protection from Law, no refuge in the Clemency of the Emperors, grew desperate, and revolted to the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and other Invaders.

Sect. XIII. The Excellency of a limited Monarchy, especially of our own.

I Think it is MACHIAVEL who observes, that two or three weak and bad Princes succeeding each other, are sufficient to ruin a State, where they govern by mere Will; but it may survive a long succession of foolish Princes limited by good Laws. VESPASIAN found three hundred millions (of our money) wanting to restore the Empire to a condition of subsisting. Monarchy, according to PLATO, is the best Government, or the worst: to which opinion I subscribe; as I do to that of PHILIP DE [I-176] COMINES, that England is the place in the world, where the Public is most equally administered, and where the people suffer the least violence. We are blessed with that form of Government which TACITUS mentions as the most perfect, and thinks the hardest to be framed; that happy ballance and mixture of interests which comprehends every interest [i].

AN English Monarch has one advantage which sets him above any arbitrary Monarch upon earth; he obliges his subjects by being obliged to them. As he protects them by defending their Property and Laws; so they, by supporting him, enable him to do it: while they give by choice, and not by force, they give chearfully. Princes who take all themselves, and leave nothing to their people to give, can never be beloved by their people. If it be true that we hate those whom we have hurt, it is equally true, that we are apt to love those whom

we have obliged. Hence God is said, not only to love doing good, but to love the good that he does.

ARBITRARY Princes would doubtless chuse to have the love and affections of their people, were the same to be acquired by furious and unaccountable Rule; but this is impossible. Hence dread of their power is all the share they can expect in the hearts of their subjects; and this is a compliment which their subjects pay to things the most hideous and vile; to Serpents; to mad and wild Beasts; to Plagues and Satan; to Pain and Poverty. But even this miserable compliment is not always paid to such princes: they are not always dreaded. When their terrors are become habitual, they cease, in a good measure, to be terrors; the people grow hardened [I-177] and desperate; they themselves become scorned; and contempt, the most abject lot in life, becomes the portion of those who possess the highest. When NERO asked SUBRIUS FLAVIUS, one of the Conspirators against his life, from what motives he had renounced his Allegiance; “It was because I abhorred thee,” said he. The Consul VESTINIUS too was known to NERO, to despise his vile and unmanly spirit; and in the whole detection of that Conspiracy, and the punishment of the conspirators, nothing was so signal as the series of contempt poured upon that brutal Tyrant, in the height of his Power, and amidst the terrors of his Tyranny. Nothing, says TACITUS, mortified him so much. But when the Monster was deposed, he incurred such sovereign scorn, that he was doomed to be stripped naked, and scourged to death like a slave, with his head fastened in a pillory; his carcass to be cast afterwards from the Tarpeian Rock, and with a hook in his nose to be dragged to the Tiber.

NOR could the great reputation of JULIUS CÆSAR, or that of AUGUSTUS, and all their Power, secure them from popular insults and despight. The *mæchum calvum*, and *videsne ut cinædus orbem digito temperet*; were contumelies which even their greatness could not escape. MITHRIDATES King of Armenia, when despoiled of his Kingdom, experienced by the behaviour of his People, how much they revered him; they even assaulted him with reproaches and blows [k]. When the Emperor VITELLIUS was led along to the slaughter, with his hands bound behind him, his habit all torn, and himself a filthy spectacle; he found much the like usage. Numbers wounded him with reproaches; but none was found to bewail him; and the populace railed at him when dead, with the [I-178] same baseness of heart, with which they had flattered him living [l].

DISCOURSE VIII.

Of the general Debasement of Spirit and Adulation which accompany Power unlimited.↩

Sect. I. The motives of Flattery considered. Its vileness, and whence it begins.

I SHALL now say something of the extreme Debasement of the Romans under the Emperors. Flattery ever rises in proportion to Power and Fear. Where Law and Liberty reign, and men hold not their Property and Lives at the mercy of one or a few; this security begets in them a pride and stubbornness inconsistent with Servility and Adulation. Men do not flatter such as they dare own to be no better than themselves, or such as have no power to hurt them; nor will they pay over-much reverence to great Titles which are not accompanied with great Power, nor supported by Superstition. For Superstition enslaves as effectually as real Power, and therefore confers it; nor is Tyranny ever so complete as when the chief Magistrate is chief Pontiff, as were the Soldans of Egypt and Bagdat; or, which is the next thing, can create and depose him, as do the Turkish Emperors. But where men hold their fortunes and lives at the mere mercy of another, they will fear him as much as they love themselves, [I-179] and flatter him, as much as they fear him [a]. If his Power be limited, their Flattery will be limited; but boundless, if his Authority be so. Thus court and sycophancy prevail less under a mixed Monarchy, than under one that is despotic; in an Aristocracy less than there; and less still in a popular State. Perfect equality quite destroys it; complete Sovereignty raises it to the highest.

THE more foolish and wicked a Prince is, the more Incense he will have; it is the surest way of pleasing a Tyrant, as it sanctifies his Iniquities, and represents him to himself as worthy of all his Grandeur and equal to all the highest Offices of Empire. TIBERIUS, who was a Prince of great penetration, hated Flattery, because he knew it to be so; as he knew that they who paid him most, the Senate and Grandees, dreaded, and therefore hated his Power; as he, who understood perfectly the nature and blessing of Liberty, would have dreaded and hated any man in his place, had he been in theirs. He knew that Flattery and Hate often go together; so that they who possess the greatest Hate, profess the greatest Affection. It is as much as their lives are worth, to manifest any tokens of Aversion; and the stronger it is, it will require the more Art and Assiduity to hide it. JULIUS CÆSAR was loaded with all sorts and every excess of Honours, some that were divine, with design to make him odious, while they who conferred them abhorred him, and were concerting schemes to destroy him. With the same view the like artifices were practised by the Senate towards his Successor OCTAVIUS, afterwards AUGUSTUS, concerning whom the equivocal saying of CICERO, could not but be remembered by TIBERIUS [b], “they should extol the [I-180] Youth, and take him off.” Hence though TIBERIUS was irreconcilable to public Liberty, he abominated Flattery [c]. He saw that Flattery was the mere effect of Bondage, and suiting only with the spirit of Slaves; and though he would not part with the Sovereignty (notwithstanding he often talked of it, as well as pretended great backwardness to accept it) yet he was ashamed of the vile and slavish abjectness of the Romans [d].

BUT neither under TIBERIUS was there any security in abstaining from Flattery; he was a Prince infinitely jealous, and could brook no sort of opposition, nor even independence; and it was both necessary and dangerous to flatter him; but, in my opinion, not so dangerous as necessary: I mean, to such as purely consulted their own safety, and to escape the rage of the Tyrant. It is true, he despised Flatterers; but he hurt them not; and it was natural for him to think (suspicious as he was) that such as would not flatter him, scorned him. It is certain he never forgave free speakers, never could endure men of bold spirit, but, first or last, pursued

them to destruction. It was perillous, says TACITUS, to practise no Flattery, and perillous to practise too much [e]. L. PISO had inveighed against the corruptions of the State, particularly against the pestilent pursuits of the Impleaders, who were daily arrainging, and circumventing, and menacing all men; he even threatened to quit Rome. TIBERIUS bore this calmly, nay, he descended to mollify him with kind words. But in a soul like his, brooding over Vengeance, though he had suppressed the sallies of Wrath, the deep impressions remained; PISO was a [I-181] good while afterwards charged with Treason, and, but for a natural death, which opportunely intervened, must have suffered the pains of Treason. ASINIUS GALLUS incurred his rage for a motion in Senate which had really a compliment in it. TIBERIUS had in a Letter to the Fathers complained, that from the plots and snares of his enemies, he led a life full of dread and apprehensions. GALLUS proposed to address the Prince, that he would explain his fears to the Senate, and permit them to remove the causes; this incensed him. GALLUS too had piqued him before, and was suspected by him of aspiring views; and though he had notoriously flattered him, he could not by it redeem his life.

As all Corruptions in a State begin commonly from the Grandees (or rather they are beginners of all Corruption) so the Grandees are the most signal Flatterers; they are most in the eye of a Prince, they are the most obnoxious to his jealousy, and thence the most prone to flatter him [f]. A Prince who governs or would govern by mere Will, must countenance and employ such as ask no reasons for what he does; but commend all he does; and the more they have to get or lose, the lower they must stoop, the more they must praise [g]. For this vile servitude of theirs they make reprisals upon the people, and are as terrible to those below them, as fawning to those above them; for the most prostitute Slaves, are the most insolent Tyrants, and it is from the same baseness of spirit that men oppress and flatter; it was truly said of CALIGULA, “that there never lived a more complaisant Slave, nor a more cruel and detestable Master.” Thus [I-182] Flattery is propagated, and infects all degrees of men. The Prince awes the Grandees, and by the Grandees is flattered; the Grandees oppress and terrify the people; and thence the people dread and adore the Grandees. The Bashaws are slaves to the great Turk; the people slaves to the Bashaws.

THE insolence of slavish spirits is by TACITUS exemplified in VITELLIUS, among many other instances. He was always the foremost in Flattery; ever assaulting every worthy Patriot with reproaches, and ever struck silent when repulsed; agreeably to the genius of Sycophants, to be both insulting and cowardly. This man, however, prospered by Prostitution. He had great employments under TIBERIUS, he was a great Favourite in the two succeeding Reigns, he was thrice Consul and once Censor. Nor did the man want good talents and qualifications; in the Government of Provinces, says TACITUS, he exercised the integrity of a primitive Roman. But his dread of CALIGULA, and complaisance to CLAUDIUS, changed him into a filthy Slave, and he is handed down to posterity as a pattern of the most infamous Flattery: The just reward of his servile submission. His first and best actions were forgot; his last and worst remembered; and the excellencies of his younger years obliterated by an old age drenched in servitude and iniquity. Besides his adoring CLAUDIUS as a God, he carried one of MESSALINA’s sandals in his bosom continually, frequently kissed it; and amongst his household Gods placed golden Statues of PALLAS and NARCISSUS, the Emperor’s freed slaves. This man was, I think, farther to VITELLIUS afterwards Emperor. Such men such Princes delight in; *regibus boni quam mali suspectiores sunt, semperque his aliena virtus formidolosa est:* says SALLUST.

[I-183]

Sect. II. Men of elevated Minds irreconcilable to Arbitrary Power, and thence suspected by it. The Court paid to it always insincere, sometimes expedient, but seldom observes any bounds.

AGRIPPA told AUGUSTUS, according to DION CASSIUS, that it was impossible for a man of great spirit and resolution, to be other than a lover of Liberty, and an enemy in his heart to an absolute master. AGRIPPA himself was that sort of man; he had courage enough to advise that Prince to resign the Sovereignty, and restore public Liberty; such in truth was his credit and bravery, that AUGUSTUS thought himself no otherwise safe, than either by killing him, or taking him for his son-in-law. The Emperor did more than give him his daughter; he assumed him partner in the Tribunitial Power, which, as that Usurper and his Successors managed it, was, in effect, the Dictatorial Power. The other great men of Rome he suspected and hated; though in vanity and for the praise of Posterity, he left them his heirs in the third degree [h] ; AUGUSTUS and TIBERIUS judged too well, to imagine that the illustrious Senators and Chiefs of Rome, men who had scorned the alliance and affinity of Kings, nay, treated Kings as their creatures and dependents, could like a blind dependence upon one of their own Citizens, who by usurpation and violence had made himself an enemy to all. Even in the Reign of TIBERIUS there were Romans who thought themselves as good as him; CNEIUS PISO, for example, scarce gave place to him, and despised his sons, as men far beneath himself. But [I-184] his haughty spirit cost him his life; for though TIBERIUS used him as a proper instrument to thwart and overthrow GERMANICUS, he afterwards turned that very service to the destruction of PISO.

AFFECTION can never accompany a submission which is forced, nor men submit willingly to a Power which they think they have themselves a right to exercise. Hence the compliments and praises of these eminent Romans towards the Emperors, are generally by TACITUS derived from Flattery; though sometimes necessary, and sometimes well intended; necessary, when used for their own preservation; and well intended, when employed to instil into the Prince virtuous lessons of Government. MARCUS TERENTIUS was perhaps justifiable, when in defence of his life, which was at stake, he made that high-flown compliment to TIBERIUS; “To thee the Gods have granted the supreme disposal of things, and to us have left the glory of obedience.” The Senators also did well in magnifying some popular Acts of NERO, that his youthful mind being thus incited by the Glory arising from light things, might court it in things which were greater. And THRASEA PETUS was justifiable, when in his speech about ANTISTIUS the Prætor, arraigned for Treason for lampooning the Emperor, he extolled that Prince’s mercy, in order to make him merciful.

BUT as that which is only good in some certain degrees and exigences, seldom stops there; so this same Flattery, no wise blameable under some circumstances, grew scandalous and excessive; it kept pace with all the phrenzy and cruelties of these outrageous and inhuman Tyrants; and by it their cruelties and phrenzy were encouraged. The more mischievous and vile they were, the more they were adored. Dread of their fury had seized the souls of men; nor was any remedy sought against their fury [I-185] but that of Flattery. Men of slavish minds always began the detestable rout; their example drew others after them; the lovers of liberty found it impossible to resist the many, and unsafe to distinguish themselves by opposition. Interest swayed some, example others, fear all, and at last it became a common strife who should be foremost in the race to Servitude. All public spirit, all regard to the glory and good of Rome, the inseparable characteristic of the old free Romans, was now lost and forgot; it was converted into fear and anxiety of every man for himself. This will ever be the case when a Prince, armed with sufficient Powers, sets up his own interest against that of the State; particulars having no longer any thing to do with the public, will study only to secure themselves.

Sect. III. The excessive Power of the Imperial freed Slaves; with the scandalous Submission and Honours paid them by the Romans.

AS Tyranny produces abject fear and anxiety in particulars for themselves, so from this selfish fear and anxiety come the beginning and progress of universal Servitude, the extinction of all Patriotism and honest zeal, the power of corruption, and the symptoms of a

State hastening to ruin and desolation. All the good or evil which could befall any Roman, lay wholly in the breast and option of the Prince; and hence the study of every man to humour the Prince, or the Slaves who governed him; for governed he generally was by slaves the vilest and most pestilent; yes, the whole Empire, that Empire that contained a great share of the Globe, and terrified almost the whole, was swayed, sold, oppressed, and exhausted by slaves bought from the chain and the oar. CLAUDIUS not only declared that affairs [I-186] adjudged by his Receivers should be held equally valid with those adjudged by himself, but got the same established by a solemn Decree of Senate. Now these Receivers of the Emperors were his manumized Slaves, who under that title often governed Provinces; he raised the authority of these vermin to a pitch equal with that of the Sovereign and the Laws. FELIX Governor of Judea was a freed slave, the husband of three Queens, and the brother of PALLAS another freed slave, who controlled the Emperor, lay with the Empress, and was master of the Empire; so that NERO said pertinently of him, when he turned him out of office, “that PALLAS went to abdicate the Sovereignty.”

BEHOLD the debasement of the great and venerable Roman Senate! It is not enough that they flatter the Emperor, and heap upon him Powers and Honours so great and manifold, that at last they have none for themselves, hardly any for him; they must likewise adore, and enrich, and exalt the fugitives and off-scourings of the earth, insects naturally doomed to the vilest offices of the kitchen, stable, and privies. The Romans, Lords of the World, must put their necks under the feet of the dregs of human race. For a contemptible project of that same PALLAS, about punishing Ladies who married slaves, BAREAS SORANUS Consul elect, the first Magistrate in the Roman world, moved the Senate to reward him with the ornaments of Prætor, the next Civil Office in the State, and a present of near an hundred thousand pounds. To this motion it was added by CORNELIUS SCIPIO, that PALLAS should have public thanks, that he who was descended from the old Kings of Arcadia, should to the service of the public thus postpone that his ancient Nobility, and deign to be reckoned amongst the Emperor’s Ministers. But CLAUDIUS averred, [I-187] that PALLAS would rest content with the honours of the Prætorship, and, rejecting the present, chuse to live in his usual poverty. The Decree passed, was engraved in brass, and publicly hung up; a pompous Decree, in which a fellow, lately a baresooted slave, now worth near eight millions, was magnified for observing the laudable self-denial and parcimony of the primitive ages. Observe the strange inversion of all order and sense! dignity debased; infamy exalted; how low the awful authority of the Senate descended! how vilely the function of a Consul prostituted! how ignominiously the glorious name of SCIPIO employed! how abominably the ornaments of Magistracy defiled! an ordinance of State, big with servitude and lies! what stupidity in the Emperor, what insolence in the slave, and what a melancholy failure of all Virtue, Truth, and Liberty amongst all degrees of men! It was, in truth, a compliment made to a slave by a body of slaves, as PLINY well observes. We may guess at the villainy and evil deeds of the man by the enormous Honours that were paid him, though we had no other rule or proof, as we have proofs enough. No such violent court was ever paid to SENECA; and TIGELLINUS had much more weight and authority than BURRUS.

REAL goodness and merit beget in all good men real friendship and affection; and real affection is never so loud nor shewy as affection assumed. Where we sincerely like and esteem, we are not afraid of suspicion in the person esteemed, nor spend much breath and ceremony to convince him. But where we are conscious of our own insincerity, our professions are pompous and wordy. It was absolutely impossible that these vile Upstarts should love the Senate, or any great men, great in blood, or fortune, or virtue; or the Senate or any great Roman could love such vile Upstarts; but we see what disguises [I-188] fear and falshood can put on! Impartial posterity, which neither fears the Senate nor PALLAS, can perceive nothing in the Honours by them conferred upon him, but the infamy of both perpetuated. Nor was CLAUDIUS the only Emperor who was thus led in bondage by his

franchised bondmen; others submitted to the same vassalage, to the same infamous Counsellors; *Plerique principes* (says PLINY) *libertorum erant servi; borum consiliis, borum nutu regebantur*. Was not the world finely governed, and humankind completely happy; when the universal Lord was swayed by the lust and nod of creatures just redeemed from the infamy of whips and fetters? The mighty CÆSAR, to whom the Romans owed all their ensuing misery and bondage, began the exaltation of such sons of earth; and, in contempt of censure, declared, that, “if he had employed Highwaymen and Assassins to support his grandeur, he would in return have honoured them with the same favour.” A true confession, but methinks not very politic; we have seen already whether his worthy Successors did not actually do so, and what were the *Instrumenta regni*, the bloody tools and machinery of absolute Rule. POLYCLETUS, a manumized slave of NERO’s, when sent by his master to inspect the State of Britain, travelled with such an immense train, that he was a burden to great nations, even those of Italy and Gaul.

Sect. IV. The excessive Flattery of the Senate, how ill judged.

THERE was no mean in the Flattery of the Senate. They might have been good Courtiers, without being so abandoned Courtiers. There are instances of their carrying questions against the spirit of the Court and the efforts of Favourites, in [I-189] the worst Reigns. Thus, in spite of all the power and caballing of AGRIPPINA, they expelled TARQUITIUS PRISCUS, a creature of hers, from the Senate, in detestation of his base attack upon the life of STATILIUS TAURUS, in subserviency to the Empress, who yearned after the Wealth and fine Gardens of that illustrious Senator. Thus too in the case of ANTISTIUS the Prætor, who had composed some virulent Verses against NERO, and exposed them at a great entertainment; though he was impealed of Treason by COSSUTIANUS CAPITO son-in-law to that powerful minion TIGELLINUS, and though JUNIUS MARULLUS, the Consul elect, moved that he might be doomed to die after the rigorous manner of antiquity; the Senate followed the milder motion of THRASEA PETUS for confiscation and exile. Nor would they depart from the sentence even after they had received NERO’s Letter about it, though in it he manifested high indignation.

THEY might have made some other efforts of this kind, where they made none; on the contrary, they gave away their Liberties and Voices faster than they could have been taken. But the honest boldness of THRASEA broke the bondage which hung upon the minds of others; so much can the example of one worthy man do even in an assembly devoted to corruption and servitude! It is true, THRASEA paid a severe after-reckoning, and it was the apprehension of that which stopped the mouths of others, or opened them only to fawn. But who would not chuse the reputation, and integrity of a Patriot, that of a THRASEA, even at the expence of his fate; rather than the fortune and favour of the sycophant VITELLIUS, with the abjectness of his life, and infamy of his name?

[I-190]

Sect. V. The free Judgment of Posterity a powerful warning to Princes, to reign with moderation and to detest Flatterers. The Name and Memory of the Roman Tyrants how treated.

ALL men have some vanity, and thence some fondness for fame; if they would acquire it, and avoid infamy, they must square their actions to the judgment of Posterity. With Posterity, little evasions, false colourings, and chicane will not pass for reasons, though they may with our cotemporaries, who are often influenced by friendships, often engaged in parties, often warmed and misled by passion and partiality. Death and Time destroy all artifices, dissipate all mists, and unveil mysteries; the intentions of men with all their motives and pursuits are then scanned and laid open. The flights of Flattery, will not then be termed fondness for the Prince, nor the efforts of Ambition miscalled public zeal. CLAUDIUS and PALLAS, TIBERIUS and SEJANUS, NERO and TIGELLINUS; men so caressed, applauded and worshipped during their life

and power, men who then employed all tongues in their praises, do now fill, and have long filled the mouths of all men with detestation, and their hearts with abhorrence. What avail now their craft and subornations, their power and high posts? Does the awe of purple, or the violence of the sword, do Prætorian Guards and perverted Laws, secure their memory, as they did their persons? Do I, for example, fear their charges of Treason, or the vile breath of their Informers, while I treat them as sanguinary Monsters, as the Tyrants, Pests and Oppressors of the earth, as public Curses, and Murderers in cold blood?

[I-191]

THESE Tyrants and their Flatterers, though they pushed both Tyranny and Flattery as far as they would go, have not been able, with all their Arts and Terrors, to stifle the memory of men, nor restrain the speech. They are handed down to us under their proper titles. The *Emperor* NERO we seldom say; but the *Tyrant* NERO is in every one's mouth; and the idea of a sycophant ever accompanies the name of VITELLIUS. His great credit and offices are forgot, or remembered only to his infamy. What a check must History and the Censure of Posterity be to a Prince that has any reflection! Had TIBERIUS, CLAUDIUS, CALIGULA, and other Imperial Monsters considered what frightful lights they were like to be drawn in to future times, it would have spoiled their pleasure in tyrannizing, and made them hate their Flatterers, who persuaded them that all men, at least the best men, spoke of them as they themselves spoke. With regard to Fame and Posterity it had been better for these wretches that they had never been born, as well as happy for human-kind; yet no man was ever a greater drudge for Fame than NERO; *Erat illi aeternitatis perpetuæque famæ cupido, sed inconsulia*, says SÜETONIUS. Witness his laborious fatigues in the Theatre and Circus, continued day after day, and often nights and days, for the reputation of a good Singer, Harper, and Coachman. CALIGULA aspired to the like glory, and was a notable Fencer and assiduous Dancer, as well as a Charioteer [i]. Laudable Ambition for a Prince, and as just and high as that of many others!

TIBERIUS also wished and prayed for the praises and affectionate remembrance of posterity [k]. How [I-192] well he succeeded, we all know. He is detested as one of the most dangerous, false, and deliberate Tyrants that ever afflicted men; nay, he was no sooner known to be dead, than the people broke forth into joy and execrations; some cried, "Into the Tiber with TIBERIUS: others besought mother earth and the infernal Gods to allot him no mansion but amongst the damned and accursed:" others threatened to drag his body with hooks to the charnel of malefactors. And when his corps was going to be removed from Misenum to Rome, every one cried aloud, that it should rather be carried to the town of Atella, to be in the Amphitheatre there thrown into a fire, till it were half burned. Such were the marks of remembrance he had, and deserved, from the people! The other two are treated as frantic butchers, or rather as two mad dogs delighted with carnage and worrying, bent and active to kill and destroy. What is it to us that they were Princes and Emperors? Men of sense find no magic in names, but regard Monsters as Monsters, whatever titles Fortune or Flatterers gave them, or they themselves took.

It is thus Tyrants suffer the vengeance of afterages; and terrible vengeance it is to such as are tender of their Renown, and seek Immortality, as most Princes do; and indeed have it forced upon them, since they stand too high, and do too much not to be remembered. Hence they ought to be more afraid of future censure, which is generally well grounded and will certainly last, than of temporary praise, which is often false, consequently fleeting, at best to be suspected.

[I-193]

Sect. VI. How lamentably Princes are debauched and misled by Flatterers.

NOW if Tyrants are abhorred, how much abhorrence is due to Flatterers, who often change Princes into Tyrants, and make Tyrants worse than they would be? TIBERIUS assumed the Sovereignty with great diffidence; and his natural wariness would have probably made him mild against his nature, had not the Romans so readily offered him their necks and their persons to bondage. But when he found them devoted to Slavery, he used them like Slaves, and having nothing to fear from them, he only followed the vile bent of his own spirit [1].

DOMITIAN rejoiced when he found that AGRICOLA had left him coheir with his wife and daughter; he vainly thought it done out of judgment and choice, and in pure regard to his person. So much was he corrupted and blinded by continual Flattery, as to be utterly ignorant, that no Prince, but a bad one, was ever by a father tender of his issue and family, assumed into heirship with them, as PLINY the younger well observes.

NERO was in terrible agonies after he had murdered his Mother; he dreaded the soldiery, the Senate, and the people; but when, instead of danger and resentment, he met with flattering speeches from the Officers, flattering Decrees from the Senate, popular Processions, Applauses, public Devotions paid to all the Deities, and universal acquiescence; his native insolence became more swelled; and, from this general Servitude, assuming the pride of victory, he ascended the Capitol, offered sacrifices, and thenceforth surrendered himself to the full sway of all his exorbitant lusts. When he had caused these [I-194] two noble Romans, PLAUTUS and SYLLA, to be assassinated, he wrote to the Senate without mentioning the execution, only that they were two men of turbulent spirits, and what mighty care it cost him to secure the State. Instantly the obsequious fathers degraded from the Senate these dead Senators, and ordained public Prayers and Sacrifices. NERO, upon the receiving of this Decree, and finding that all his brutal iniquities and acts of blood passed for so many feats of renown, grew emboldened to do a thing which even NERO till then durst not do, and turned away the virtuous OCTAVIA his wife, her by whom he held the Empire [m]. Nay, when soon after the Imperial butcher had ordered the blood of that illustrious Innocent to be shed, thanks and oblations were again presented to the Deities, by an ordinance of Senate. A particular, says TACITUS, which with this view I recount, that whoever reads the events of those times in this or any other History, may take it for granted, that as often as the Emperors commanded acts of cruelty, banishments and assassinations, so often thanks and sacrifices were decreed to the Gods; and those Solemnities which were of old the marks and consequences of public victories and public felicity, were now so many sad marks of public slaughter and desolation [n].

THIS was remarkably verified afterwards as well as now; when NERO, upon the discovery of PISO's conspiracy, had spilt rivers of blood, and slain men by heaps; the fuller the city was of executions and funerals, the fuller too were the Temples of sacrifices. One had lost a son, one a brother, [I-195] or kinsman, or friend in this general butchery; and the greater their loss, the more gayety they shewed, adorned their houses with Laurel, frequented Temples with Thanksgiving, embraced the knees of the Tyrant, and worried his hand with kisses. NERO took all this for so many sincere tokens of affection and joy; when, in truth, their Congratulations and Flattery were just in proportion to their severe sorrow.

Sect. VII. The pestilent tendency of flattering Counsels, and the Glory of such as are sincere.

WHAT a poisonous thing is Flattery? By it Princes are misled into a persuasion that all their measures of Oppression, all their acts of Frenzy and Rage, are just measures of Government, that forced praise is real affection, that they themselves are popular when they are abhorred; and thus they are kept from repenting or amending, because, relying upon the assurances of Flatterers, they cannot find that they have done amiss, or see any thing to be mended. The Flatterers of NERO ridiculed SENECA, and railed at him, and persuaded that

Prince he wanted no Tutors. The same did the Flatterers of COMMODUS in relation to the old Counsellors; which had been his father's. NERO and COMMODUS followed the advice of their Flatterers, and reigned mischievously, and died tragically, and their memories are abhorred. Thus they are kept hoodwinked and secure, till the first thing they open their eyes upon, is their Throne tottering or overturned, and perhaps an executioner's knife at their breast; and even when things are come to that extremity, there will be those to misrepresent and flatter, as in the case of GALBA; a few moments before he was massacred, he was soothed with false assurances of security [o].

[I-196]

How pernicious too is such falsification even to those that practise it; since though they mean it out of selfishness and for security, yet by sanctifying upon all occasions the Oppression and Destruction of others, they do but invite their own! Whereas were matters laid honestly before Princes, that this measure is a Grievance, that an Oppression, and that whatever is unjust to others is dangerous to themselves, they would prefer caution with safety, to humour and wilfulness accompanied with peril; they would grow into a habit of doubting, deliberateing and enquiring; of submitting their own judgment to that of others; of remembering that they are what they are for the sake of their People, and that they ought to have no Will, nor Interest, but the public Will and the public Interest.

Had NERO pursued the good Rules of Government dictated by SENECA and BURRUS, and proposed by himself in his first Speech to the Senate; had he avoided the counsels of that bloody and detestable sycophant TIGELLINUS, and of others like him, he might have ended his reign with as much renown as he began it, and left a memory revered as much as it is now detested. And would the Confidants of Princes, instead of debasing themselves into the characters of Parasites, instead of abusing their trust, and bringing infamy upon their masters and themselves; would they, instead of this, give upright counsel, such as conduced to the good of all men, they would, besides the praise of well-doing, take the best method to secure themselves, their fortunes and families in the general security: or, should they be rewarded with disgrace, or even with death, they would have the approbation of their own Consciences, the applauses of the Living, and the praises of Posterity. But while they sooth the Prince in his jealousies and violence, and encourage him in destroying such as he, or such as they fear or dislike, they set him a lesson and example [I-197] for turning the edge of his fury upon themselves, whenever he becomes prompted by his humour or caprice; a case often happening, and always to be apprehended. The Courtiers and Flatterers of the Emperor CARACALLA, to humour him, concurred with him in the murder of his brother GETA; and, after that murder, though committed by his own hand, were themselves murdered for their wicked complaisance, and amongst them LETUS his Favourite and Confident. Yet he was so far from remorse for shedding his brother's blood, that he massacred every friend and adherent to his brother, to the number of twenty thousand, in a short time. TIBERIUS, of all his Friends, Confidants and Counsellors, scarce let one escape a violent end, unless where by a natural death they prevented it: and they who had been the Ministers of his Tyranny, hardly ever failed to fall by it. He indeed protected them from the resentment and prosecution of others; but he generally poured vengeance upon them himself [p]. VESULARIUS ATTICUS and JULIUS MARINUS, were two of his most ancient intimates; they had accompanied him during his retirement at Rhodes, and never forsook him in his retreat at Capreae; they had abetted his Tyranny, and assisted him in his cruel Counsels, nor does it appear that they had ever offended him by any good Counsel. VESULARIUS was his manager and inter-agent in the perfidious plot to destroy that noble Roman LIBO DRUSUS; and by the co-operation of MARINUS, SEJANUS had worked the overthrow of CURTIUS ATTICUS. Was not all this merit enough, at least, to have redeemed their own lives? It was not; they fell themselves victims to his cruelty, as to satiate his cruelty they had made others fall: *ad [I-198] mortem aguntur*:

quo lætius acceptum, says TACITUS, *sua exempla in consultores recidissee*; their tragical end was followed with the more joy, for that upon their own heads had thus recoiled the precedents of their own traiterous devising. In truth, these instruments of cruelty are generally abhorred by the Princes that use them. ANICETUS Admiral of the Gallies to NERO, conducted and perpetrated the murder of his mother AGRIPPINA, and for a short space continued in some small favour with the Prince; but was afterwards held in greater aversion; for, says TACITUS, the Ministers of evil Counsels are by Princes beheld as men whose looks continually upbraid them [q]. Such too was the fate of CLEANDER under COMMODUS, who loved him, was governed by him, and cut off his head. How differently related is the fate of BURRUS, suspected to have been poisoned by NERO [r] : Mighty and lasting was the sorrow of Rome for his death, for the Romans remembered his virtues; and a little before [s] , While the calamities of the Public were growing daily more heavy and bitter, the resources of the Public were diminished, and BURRUS died. How nobly too is the tragedy of SENECA recounted! it is too long to find room here.

I shall end this Discourse with observing, that as Flattery is the effect of dread and falshood; as the most tyrannical Princes are most flattered, and men of the falsest minds are the greatest Flatterers; this consideration should be a lesson to Princes and great men, to weigh the actions they do against the praises they receive; and if they find themselves righteous, they may conclude their panegyrics to be sincere. Let them reflect upon their acts of benevolence or oppression, and how they have used their people. [I-199] They would also do well to examine what sort of men they are who praise them; whether men of virtue and honour, lovers of truth, lovers of their Country, and of human-kind; or whether they are those unlimited Sycophants, whose custom and rule it is to extol at random all the sayings and doings of Princes, worthy and unworthy [t].

DISCOURSE IX.

Upon COURTS. ↩

Sect. I. Of Freedom of Speech; and how reasonable it is.

TO the foregoing Discourse upon Flattery, I thought it might not be unsuitable to subjoin another upon Courts, the place where that pestilent and unmanly practice is wont chiefly to prevail.

DURING those Reigns which I have been describing, when Power was established in Terrors, and Subjection converted into Abasement, small was the wonder that restraint upon speech was no inconsiderable link in the public chain, and care taken that such as presumed to breathe aught but vassalage, should not breathe at all. This was wretched policy, barbarous, and impossible to be practised. The passions are not to be extinguished but with life; and to forbid people, especially a suffering people, to speak, is to forbid them to feel.

It is not indeed to be expected that men should be suffered to meet together tumultuously, in order to publish their mutual Discontents and Wrongs, and to inflame one another; but complaints uttered in their families, or dropped occasionally, or communicated [I-200] to a friend, can never affect Authority. The more men express of their hate and resentment, perhaps the less they retain; and sometimes they vent the whole that way; but these passions, where they are smothered, will be apt to fester, to grow venomous, and to discharge themselves by a more dangerous organ than the mouth, even by an armed and vindictive hand. Less dangerous is a railing mouth, than a heart filled and enflamed with bitterness and curses; and more terrible to a Prince ought to be the secret execrations of his people than their open revilings, or than even the assaults of his enemies. Of all the blood spilt under TIBERIUS and the following Tyrants for Words (and for no greater cause a deluge was spilt) how small a part conduced to their security? none that I remember; but every drop was an indelible stain upon their persons and upon their Government; every drop derived hatred, and consequently weakness and danger, upon it. Rigorous punishment for small faults, or for such as in the common opinion pass for none, is a mark of ill politics; it makes the spirit of the Administration look hideous and dreadful, and it renders every man who finds himself liable to the like faults, a capital enemy. Surely it ought to be a maxim in Government, that errors which can have no consequences, ought to have no punishment.

OLIVER CROMWELL, who seems to have seen far into the heart of man, was little affected with the hard words and invectives of particulars, and as high as he carried Authority, left people to talk and rail. The same is true of the late Regent of France, one who well knew human nature, and the nature of power; it was then common to see Frenchmen swagger and storm as freely as an old Roman would have done against an unpopular Magistrate. In truth, where no liberty is allowed to speak of Governors, besides that of praising them, their praises will be little believed. Their tenderness [I-201] and aversion to have their conduct examined, will be apt to prompt people to think their conduct guilty or weak, to suspect their management and designs to be worse than perhaps they are, and to become turbulent and seditious, rather than be forced to be silent. When nothing but incense and applause will be accepted or borne; all plain dealing, all honest counsel and true information, will be at an end, and banished, to make room for deceitful adorations, for pleasing and pernicious falshoods. If Princes whose memory is disliked, had allowed their subjects and contemporaries to have spoken truth to them, or of them, probably Posterity would not have spoke so much ill, as it is probable they would not then have deserved it; and I am apt to believe, that it had been better for all of them to have permitted all that could have been said, than to have missed hearing what it imported them to have heard; better to have heard the

disgusts and railings of their people, than that their people were armed against them, or revolted from them; a fate which has befallen some of them, who, having had Courtiers over-complaisant, or ears over-tender, learnt that they were dethroned before they had learnt that they were not beloved; and found scarce any interval between the acclamations of Flatterers and the strokes of an Executioner. Such is the genius of Courts, where ill tidings are generally concealed or disguised; such too often the silence and soothings of Courtiers, who tell only or chiefly what is pleasing; and such sometimes the pride and impatience of Princes, that they will suffer nothing which ruffles their passions, to approach their understanding.

Sect. II. The Spirit of Courtiers what; some good ones.

IT is something else than zeal for telling truth, that carries men to Court, and keeps them in it; to raise an interest, or to preserve it, is the more [I-202] prevailing passion. And because whoever sets his foot there with any view to place and favour, is always sure of competitors, be his person or pretences what they will, ever so considerable or inconsiderable; his chief care will be to conquer opposers, and secure himself; and as there ever will be some opposition, real or apprehended, that care will be constant. Hence the spirit of a Court, selfish, suspicious and unfriendly; and hence the supple spirit of Courtiers, to love and hate, court and avoid, praise and persecute the same person with notable suddenness, just as he is promoted or disgraced, and can help or hurt, or is to be deprived of all capacity to do either. To be well with the subsisting Power, with him who holds the reins of Authority, and distributes, or causes to be distributed the blessings and terrors of Power, is the main pursuit; his motions are chiefly watched, his affections and aversions are studied and adopted; and thus a smile or a frown from the Throne, or from one who is next the Throne, is eagerly caught up, seizes the faces of a whole drawing-room in an instant, and is handed down, with signal uniformity, through all classes of men, from a Grandee to the lowest Clerk in an Office.

A Court is a great Exchange, where one or a few have favours to dispose of, where many resort to procure them, and where all therefore strive to outgo in the ways of pleasing every one who has the same aim, and study every method to render themselves acceptable. Hence their obsequious Countenances, Flattery, Insinuations, and Zeal, some passions concealed, some disguised, and others personated; hence too their attachment to such as can help to promote them, and their neglect of such as cannot; hence with them good fortune, however unworthily placed, always passes for merit, and abilities ever sink with power; and hence their falsehood, ingratitude and courteous behaviour.

[I-203]

THAT this is true of the herd of Courtiers, I believe will be allowed. Without doubt there are exceptions, and men of great honour, disinterestedness and friendship are often to be found there; men who scorn treachery and baseness, and would risk all, rather than do a mean thing. Such were MANIUS LEPIDUS, SENECA, and BURRUS; such COCCEIUS NERVA and JULIUS AGRICOLA, and such were the Chancellor DE L'HOSPITAL, Chancellor HYDE, and the Earl of SOUTHAMPTON; all these great men were Courtiers, and lived in Courts full of corruption and dangerous designs; all practised some degrees of suppleness, submitted their opinions to the necessity of the times, and, by defeating many evil measures, were the Authors of much good, though not of all that they would.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU makes heavy complaints of the opposition which he found to his best designs from the credit and intrigues of Women, and the whispers and ill offices of malevolent Courtiers. These great men abovementioned were likewise often wronged; bad counsels which they had heartily opposed, were imputed to them; and, when they concurred with some excesses to obviate much greater, just allowances were not made, and their

motives were spitefully construed. Thus the Chancellor DE L'HOSPITAL was severely censured by the Hugonots for passing the Edict of Romorantin, which bore hard upon them; though by that Edict he prevented their utter extirpation, and the misery of all France, by hindering the introduction and establishment of that monstrous and bloody Tribunal the Inquisition; in which design the Court and Parliament were already agreed, and I think the Edict for that detestable purpose was ready. For such signal and glorious service the Protestants first railed at him, and the Papists afterwards cursed him. Lord CLARENDON too was reproached [I-204] with the sale of Dunkirk, and for many other exorbitancies which the sincere heart of that upright Minister abhorred. Nor could the good counsels of SENECA secure him from much envy and defamation; and many great Ministers, thought to be the Authors of evil counsels, have fallen into disgrace, or perished, for daring to offer such as were benevolent and upright [a].

Sect. III. The Arts of Courtiers; their Cautiousness, and its Causes.

PLausibleness and guises are inseparable from Courts; men must not seem to understand all that they apprehend or know, no more than they must speak all that they think or feel [b]. Princes often dissemble with their Subjects, their Ministers with them, and all with one another; and every one talks, as he appears, to the best advantage. Some dissimulation there, is absolutely necessary, and therefore lawful. Men are not obliged upon all occasions to speak the truth, though whatever they speak upon any occasion ought to be true. Nor ought any one to be blamed for hiding his passions and sentiments, when the discovery would only serve to hurt himself. But few people in private life can be trusted with secrets, which published would lessen one's peace or same; and in Courts there are much fewer, perhaps none. Particular interests and passions are often shifting there; men who were once close united, become widely divided; friendships old and long, are turned into bitter and vindictive enmity; and he who would once have risked his life for the preferment of his friend, would venture as much, upon a disgust, to bring him to a scaffold. This might be exemplified by a thousand instances in all Times [I-205] and Histories. Nothing keeps the passions more awake than the pursuit of power; nothing touches the pride of man more sensibly, than neglect or disappointment in that pursuit, and nothing is more tender and suspicious than pride. Few have got so much as not to aim at more, or have had ever so much assistance but they expect further, even where the same is unreasonable or perhaps impossible; and from disappointment ensues disgust. Too rarely seen is that Gratitude which looks backward, and generously subsists upon favours past, without fresh claims and aliment; how much more common is that which must be kept up by daily benefits, and, when bereft of such food, expires? Nor is the ceasing of gratitude the worst that is to be apprehended from selfish and ungenerous men; the room of it is too often supplied by spite and revenge; and if it be natural to hate such as we have injured, this hate must be great in proportion to the injury done; and what injury can be greater than that of being barbarous to benefactors?

THESE considerations are sufficient to make such as frequent Courts and know men, slow and wary in confiding, and to put them under considerable reserves even where they confide most. No one cares to be at the mercy of a friend, that may be an enemy; hence, in the making of friendship any where, it ought to be one of the first considerations, whether there be any probable causes which threaten a rupture; whether the business of love, or power, or fame, or anger, or interest, be never likely to interfere, and produce the most bitter of all enmities, that of friends.

THIS wariness at Court extends even to words and looks. The conversing with great men and great affairs, naturally produces secrecy and silence; for, since such is the folly of the world, that whatever a great man says, however light or accidental, shall be deemed deep and mysterious, if it has [I-206] the least allusion to the transactions of the times, and since they who hear it will be apt, through vanity, to quote it; great men seldom say any thing upon such

subjects; and even when they hear the talk and sentiments of others, they take care that neither their answers, nor their countenance, shall betray their own. Sometimes a word thoughtlessly dropped, or an unseasonable smile, or some mark of surprize, has given light into an important design, and marred it intirely. The like circumspection they observe in their discourse upon particulars, because their discourse may be easily altered and poisoned by the malice or folly of such as hear it; a practice as usual at Court, as in any country village; and many a man has been disgraced by his own words, whispered and altered by a virulent breath; nay, the very same thing reported with a different tone and action, has had the same effect; and where the alteration of the words was considerable, those of them which were forged and criminal have been believed, because the rest that were true and innocent, were well attested.

I shall illustrate this by the story of young NERO (the son of GERMANICUS) in the Court of TIBERIUS. It excellently shews the jealousies of Princes, and the spirit of Courts. That young Prince was intirely beloved of the Roman People, who had adored his father; hence the distaste and dark suspicions of the Emperor, his great uncle and grandfather by adoption. SEJANUS, who had already poisoned the Emperor's son DRUSUS, and was plotting the overthrow of the whole reigning House, fed the hate and apprehensions of the old Prince, by malignant reports and infusions concerning the young, now the next in Succession. This he did by the inter-agency of hollow whispers and tale-bearers, who related and blackened every thing that escaped NERO, who was also hard used and brow-beaten, on purpose to extort from him severe and unwary complaints, such as might fill up the charge against [I-207] him. Moreover his domestics and retainers, impatient to see him in power that they might shine in its trappings, were continually exciting him to rouse his courage and exert himself, to meet the zeal of the people, to gratify the passionate wishes of the army; as the only expedients to daunt and repulse the insolence of SEJANUS, who now despised him as a boy, and his grandfather as superannuated.

THE young Prince, however naturally modest, was yet by so many instigations transported beyond the circumspection which the station that he was in, and the many eyes that were upon him, required; and thence gave vent to words, which, though they betrayed no sign of any treasonable purpose, yet, being ill-guarded and savouring of contumacy, were, by the spies purposely placed about him, carried instantly, well heightened and imbittered, to TIBERIUS. Nor, under all these imputations and aspersions, was he warned or admitted to vindicate himself, but beset, on the contrary, with several melancholy and boding appearances. Some of the Court carefully shunned to meet him; others just greeted him, and then instantly left him; many with whom he had begun a conversation, broke it off abruptly; while the creatures and adherents of SEJANUS looked on with a malicious laugh. TIBERIUS too always received him sternly, or with a hollow and upbraiding smile; and, whether the youth spoke, or said nothing, there were crimes in his words, crimes in his silence. Neither did his bed-chamber and the shades of night secure him from his Enemies and Accusers, for even his restlessness and watchings, nay, his sighs and dreams, were by his wife divulged to her mother LIVIA, and by her to her adulterer SEJANUS. DRUSUS also, his younger brother, was, by this wicked politician, drawn to combine against him as one who stood between himself and the Empire, and was better beloved by their common mother AGRIPPINA; a fresh cause of emulation and prejudice. Yet at that [I-208] very time was SEJANUS laying a design against the life of this same DRUSUS, whom he knew to be of a spirit tempestuous and fiery, and thence the more obnoxious to snares. Thus he began the Tragedy of these two youths, and that of their mother; but before he had finished theirs, suffered his own, which was abundantly bloody, but abundantly just. Their brother CALIGULA was a better Courtier; he studied the temper and manner of TIBERIUS, and in all things conformed to it; but was particularly a complete scholar of his in dissimulation [c]. Upon the condemnation of his mother, upon the exile of his brothers, not a word, not a groan escaped him, nor any symptom of resentment or

pity. The passions are no where more agitated than at Court; yet no where are the signs of perturbation more suppressed.

Sect. IV. Of Slanderers and Tale-bearers in Courts. The Folly of Craft.

THE occupation of slander and whispering, will, like other occupations, always thrive according to the encouragement given to it, and being easily exercised, will be ever engaging fresh adventurers. What requires less labour and conscience than to find out, or frame, or invenom a story to the prejudice of another, especially when he is not to be heard in his own defence, nor suffered to confront his Accuser, nor perhaps even knows that he has one? There is an endless appetite in mankind for Intelligence and secret History; and in proportion to that appetite, they who feed it are well received and encouraged. But of all places they fare best in Courts. Great men are in the power of such people much more than they themselves imagine or mean; these assiduous shadows of theirs, who have their ear, and know their tempers, watch their unwary moments, and observe when they are gay and [I-209] open, when disobliged and angry, when full of thought and business; and will be sure to improve the present temper and opportunity. They know the Characters of men; know whom their Patron loves, whom he dislikes, to whom he is altogether indifferent, with what is likely to be believed of each. They extoll some, decry others, flatter him, misrepresent all; and sooth, or alarm, or divert him, just as his humour and their drift requires. If with this they can play the droll, and make dry and malicious jests, they are accomplished in their way; but most villainous is that talent which is good for nothing but to do hurt; it is like death and poison, fit only to take away life. VATINIUS was a buffoon of this pestilent cast, and, from working in a stall, taken to Court, at first for jest and diversion; but having a malicious spirit and a sarcastical turn, soon became a terror to every worthy and illustrious man; insomuch that in wealth and favour, and in power to do mischief, he grew to exceed all the other Ministers of iniquity in NERO'S Court.

IN all Courts there are many who rise into notice and preferment for no greater merit than that of officiousness, buffoonery and tale-bearing; and Courts are the places in the world where bad and worthless people can do the most harm; a Barber, a Porter, a Valet de Chambre, and even a Child, are all capable of doing notable mischief there. Those instruments, let them be ever so mean, will find some or other to hear them; these will find others; and a story that has run through a hundred hands, and can be traced to no original, or to a very low one, perhaps the idle Prattle of a Chambermaid, may, for all that, have no mean influence.

BUT whatever reason men have, upon all these accounts, to keep a guard upon their lips and behaviour at Court; there is still room for great frankness and candour, and no necessity of illusion and [I-210] deceiving, though it be often necessary to let people deceive themselves, and would be often imprudent and dangerous to undeceive them. It is certain, that in the transacting of great Affairs, the rules of morality admit of some relaxation; this is to be lamented, but not to be helped. Such frequently are the exigencies of a State, and such always the crookedness and depravity of the heart of man, that were you to deal openly, to tell all that you mean, all that you know, and all that you aim at, you would expose your Country to ruin, and yourself to scorn, perhaps to the block. The most that can be done is to save appearances, and be wary of what expressions are used; for, upon these occasions, and many others, men are not to be upbraided for their silence. I know some who have gone through nice Embassies, some who have concluded intricate Negotiations, others who have administered the highest Offices, and still preserved the character of high Honour, and untainted Veracity. This shews the thing to be possible; and a promise or assurance, just given to serve a turn, and therefore not observed afterwards, does often more injury to him who made it, than the serving that turn did good. Cardinal RICHELIEU was not liberal of money nor promises; but he always performed more than he undertook; hence the zeal and firm

adherence of all who depended upon him. Cardinal MAZARIN denied nothing, performed nothing, was believed in nothing, and his ill faith was become proverbial; hence no man was ever more hated, no man in his station more despised; he could never rely upon any party, for he deceived all parties and all particulars; and nothing could support him but the blind obstinacy of the Queen Regent, and the mere weight of Royal Power armed in his defence; but in spite of the Queen and the Authority Royal, he was forced to run and sculk for his life. The Parliament set a price [I-211] upon his head, and issued ordinances to the people to fall upon him as a public Enemy. Yet he had never carried Sovereign Power so high as his Predecessor, nor ever exerted it so terribly; but he had no faith nor honour, and therefore no personal friends. To this hour, RICHELIEU is considered as a Minister, who, though arbitrary and severe, was yet an elevated genius, and a man of veracity to particulars; MAZARIN, as a man not rigorous indeed, nor vindictive, but sordid, addicted to low cunning and lyes, and with all the eclat of a great Minister unable to hide the little tricking Italian.

CRAFTINESS is a despicable quality, and undoes itself; he who has it, and acts by it, can never disguise it long; and when it becomes apparent, it becomes impotent, arms every body against it, brings hatred or ridicule, at best is perfectly useless; and the man, even when he deals uprightly, is suspected to mean knavishly. What gained TIBERIUS by all his profound subtlety and wiles, but to have his best actions ill construed, and his sincerest professions to be disbelieved [d] ? What gained PHILIP the second of Spain by that strange and intricate scene of false Politics, concerted to transfer his own guilt upon the head of his Minister ANTONIO PEREZ; but to bring home the just imputation of that guilt to his own door, and to produce full proof, where before there was only suspicion? Sincerity is very consistent with human prudence, and often a part of it, considering the reputation that always attends it; and men even in Courts may be very upright, without being unguarded; nor can Courtiers ever do business with one another without some openness and candour. I have seen it asserted somewhere, that people are oftner deceived by distrust than by [I-212] acts of confidence. I have observed as plain dealing in Courtiers as in any other sort of men in the world. It is ridiculous to carry reserve and deepness into every thing. I know not a more contemptible sort of men than such as mimic business and mystery; I have seen some subaltern Courtiers look as important, demure and wary, as if they had carried great matters, and even the weight of the State upon their shoulders. This affectation serves to raise their credit amongst their servants and artificers in town, and in the country amongst their tenants and neighbours, and diverts better judges. There are others who really believe themselves to be in secrets; who take shrugs and nods, mere words and shadows for real confidence and communication; and live in happy ignorance, under the conceit of high trust and intelligence. Some few too there are, who, besides despising the foppery of being thought trusted where they are not, are careful to hide it from the world when they are. 'Tis men of this turn who chiefly do credit to a Court; and whoever does it credit, does it service.

Sect. V. How much worthless People abound in Courts, and why.

AS in a great family, where there are numerous domestics, in spite of all the care that can be taken to examine the Characters of servants when they are admitted, or to regulate and watch their behaviour afterwards, there will be some still unworthy of their places, and a discredit to their master; how much more so must it be in a Court, where not only the officers, but even the offices are so numerous; where so many have a right to prefer or recommend, and where so many do both from strange, wretched, and selfish motives, nay, often for considerations altogether dishonourable and scandalous? It is therefore [I-213] no wonder, that though the politest men are always found at Court, so likewise are always a strange rabble of creatures, ignorant, mercenary, ridiculous and disagreeable, who owe their preferment to chance, whim, money, dirty services, to names, affinities, nay, to impudence and folly; and one who has no pretences to any thing else, neither to education, nor capacity,

nor honour, nor spirit, nor even to good looks and common sense, shall find pretences to a place, and probably get one. Nor is this to be remedied; since he who gives it does not chuse, but take, and has often stronger reasons to oblige the recommender, than to reject the recommended. I have known a friend, nay, a relation of a great Minister, disappointed twice of an Office which was even intended for him, but by potent intercession was bestowed elsewhere; the first time, upon one whom the Minister knew not, whom the Recommender knew not, nor whom even the Lady who spoke for him knew; but one who for a sum of money engaged a Gentleman's Valet de Chambre to engage the Lady's Woman whom the Valet courted, to engage her Lady whom she governed, to engage the last Recommender, who undertook it, and succeeded. He who had the first pretences was again put by upon a vacancy, and a creature put in, whom the Minister was known to despise, and almost to loath; but sacrificed his opinion, his aversion, and his friend to mediation not more honourably obtained. At so critical a juncture as that of a Rebellion, I have heard of one who by a Letter written with the same pen which he had used in corresponding with the Rebels, procured a handsome provision for his brother, who wished the Rebels as well as he, and had distinguished himself in a very public place by acts of disaffection, and disloyal healths. Nor in this instance was there any money or intrigue at all; the Recommender had only once told a hearty lye for a [I-214] great man in a nice case, and sworn to it; hence his merit and influence. For an act of honour or spirit, done to serve the Public, he might perhaps have found less regard, perhaps not so much as access; as befel some who did.

It is certain, great men often prefer such as they dislike, and such as do them no credit, sometimes with their eyes open, frequently through misinformation, and in both cases through solicitation and importunity. Men of merit often want interest, often application and boldness; whereas one who has no one worthy qualification, is the more likely to have importunity and shamelessness. It has indeed been often a notable advantage to a man, that he had not sense enough to be ashamed nor balked; nay, I have known such a negative accomplishment to be the making of his fortune. A rational man will take a rational answer, or even a trifling one, when he sees it meant for a rebuke or a refusal; or perhaps he has too much pride to press and beseech, or to ask above once; but he who has no understanding to mislead him from his interest; or to apprehend what is said to him; he who is incapable of a repulse, or to be ashamed of begging and teasing; but has an unchangeable front and unwearied nonsense, stands in a fair light to have his pretences considered. Though he cannot persuade, he can tire; and he finds the fruit and advantage of talents in the absolute want of them; he is despised and promoted; a little share of good sense and modesty, would have ruined him, and he might then have been neither disliked nor minded.

SUCH is the force of recommendation without reason, or against it; and such too the power of assiduity unincumbered with parts! There are strange inconsistencies in the make, and turn, and education of men. There are those who can calmly encounter death and terrors in any shape, yet shall tremble in [I-215] speaking two or three words to a Secretary of State; a task which would not balk a common Footman. Others can harangue readily and boldly before a great Assembly, yet are struck dumb in the company of Women, a place where a Page, or an ignorant Beau, can be entertaining and eloquent. Some have talents, but not the use of them. Many have capacity, but want application; many are hurt by too much application not directed by capacity; several have good sense and activity, and can apply both to serve a friend, but neither to do good to themselves. In some you find excellent parts frustrated by predominant passions; in others eminent courage and spirit drowned and depreciated by a modesty almost childish; and numbers there are who, under a notorious defect of ability, acquirements, and every amiable quality, are pushed up as high as any of these could have pushed them, perhaps much higher than all of them would. So that, in the odd assortment of human things, Fortune would seem to correspond with the caprice and wantonness of Nature.

I have already owned that it is impossible to keep many worthless people out of a Court, considering how many ways there are to get in; but owing to such is a good measure of the obloquy usually thrown upon Courts and ministers; as the falshood, the low tricks and spirit of these Underlings, are all ascribed to the genius of the place and of power; and under the character of insincerity and ingratitude, it is usual in popular discourse and opinion, though it is really very unjust, to throw all Courtiers together. I even believe that there are some of them foolish and base enough to like the reputation of slipperiness and deceiving, for the sake of being thought good Courtiers. From the numbers too and little minds of such, we may account for the general outcry and reproach which from that quarter usually follow any worthy Minister fallen into disgrace. They are for [I-216] the Powers that be; and though they be the work of his hands, were thrust into place by his late might, and are still basking in the Sun-shine which he let in upon them; yet they are ready not only to leave a falling house, but to help pull it down. It is the temper of Renegadoes. The celebrated SANCHO was first warmly in the interest of the injured BASIL, one who had lost his Mistress for no want of merit, but through the superior wealth of his rival GAMACHO; yet the savory skimmings and loaded ladles out of GAMACHO'S kettles, so effectually turned the supple spirit of that courtly Squire, that, without more ceremony, he began to justify and extol the happy supplanter, and to rail plentifully at poor BASIL under misfortune and disgrace.

WHAT can Ministers expect, when they have raised such dust, but that with the first contrary wind, it will be blown into their eyes? Mean spirits, selfish and impudent, can never take the impressions of gratitude and honour; no more than such as are modest and generous can ever be ungrateful or base. Yet hard is the task to weed a Court of such; not only because the same interest that recommends, does likewise protect; but because there are so many Candidates ready to fill their places, and supported by so many Patrons and Intercessors, that more will be disobliged than can be gratified by the change; and after all perhaps the fresh comer may not prove the more deserving man. Neither can the great Officers easily cure the exorbitances and exactions of the inferior; especially when the same are become common and inveterate. All men, even the greatest men desire to live easy with those they have daily to do with, and will not care to incur the clamour and curses of Subalterns; who, though they are but small men, yet being numerous, and supported by all who are interested in corruption, are able by continual complaints [I-217] and noise, to weaken the credit of the most puissant Minister, and to make him very uneasy.

Sect. VI. The remarkable Fickleness and Insincerity of Courtiers.

I Had once an opportunity of seeing the steadiness and gratitude of Courtiers put to trial, upon an apprehension of a change in the ministry. I was strictly curious in my observations and inquiries; and my discoveries were such, as have fully confirmed me in all my former and present sentiments of these people. There were some who gave proofs of signal friendship and constancy to the standing Ministry; several were wary and silent, but many made preposterous haste to shew their levity and selfishness; and, from the behaviour of most, there arose warning enough, even to greatness itself, to rely for its best security upon wisdom and innocence.

A little before the death of TIBERIUS, then past hopes, he was reported to be dead. Instantly the Courtiers crowded about CALIGULA the next heir, with a torrent of congratulations and zeal; and he was going forth, thus attended, to assume the pomp and exercise of Sovereignty, when sudden tideings came, that the Emperor, who had lain some time in a swoon, was revived, and calling for some refreshment to strengthen his spirits. Instant terror seized all; most of them dispersed and fled; some assumed an air of mourning; many feigned utter ignorance. CALIGULA was struck speechless, and, from the highest hopes, expecting his last doom. MACRO only remained undaunted; he commanded the ancient Emperor to be smothered with a great weight of coverings, having first ordered every body to

quit the chamber.

[I-218]

AMONGST the many good things, and excellent sense in the Memoirs of Cardinal DE RETZ, there occur frequent pictures of the Court, particularly upon the beginning of the Commotions in Paris. At the Palace Royal, and especially in the Cabinet, upon that occasion, every individual assumed a person, and acted a part. The Coadjutor acted the innocent and the dupe, but was not so. MAZARIN affected to appear resolute, but appeared more so than he was. By starts and intervals the Queen counterfeited great temper and gentleness; yet had been at no time more bitter and enraged. The Duke DE LONGUEVILLE feigned extreme affliction, yet felt a sensible joy, as he was the man in the world the most delighted with the beginnings of all affairs. The Duke of ORLEANS, in speaking to the Queen, shewed great warmth and vehemence, but presently after fell a whistling (a usual habit of his) with all the indolence in the world. The Marshal DE VILLEROY displayed gayety and unconcern, to make his Court to MAZARIN; but to the Coadjutor he owned, with tears in his eyes, that the State was upon the brink of a precipice. Mr. DE BEAUTRU and Mr. DE NOGENT, played the buffoons, to humour the Queen, and drolled upon the commotion; though both these men knew well, that, in all probability, this farce of theirs would too soon be followed by a Tragedy. The Abbé DE LA RIVIERE only, though the most notorious poltron of the age, was persuaded that this popular insurrection was but smoke; this he maintained stiffly to the Queen, and this pleased her. To fill up the complement of Actors, the Marshal DE LA MEILLERAIE, who had hitherto joined with the Coadjutor in representing the terrors and consequences of the tumult, all on a sudden changed his past part, and took that of the Champion, with a different tone and other sentiments; in an instant [I-219] he was all rage, and contempt, and defiance. *Mem. DE RETZ*, vol. 1. p. 122.

IN short, the Queen and the Cardinal took every one who told them truth, for a certain enemy to themselves, and for a promoter, at least a secret wellwisher, of the revolt. When this was the reward of plain-dealing, who would venture his place and favour by dealing plainly? Thus, for want of honest information, and sincere advisers, and by suspecting or disbelieving such as were so, the State had nigh perished. The whole detail in DE RETZ is full of curious incidents, full of strong and just reflections; as is almost the whole Book.

DISCOURSE X.

Of Armies and Conquest.↵

Sect. I. The Burden and Danger of maintaining great Armies.

TOO many Princes are infatuated with false notions of Glory, and thence delight in War. Without doubt it is true Glory to excel in war, where war is necessary; but in the whole course of History, where one has been so, twenty have been otherwise; and to engage in it from the wantonness of ambition, or for the sake of Laurel, or through peevishness and humour, is to risque the blood, and treasure, and people, and being of a State, for the foppery of false Heroism: or to sacrifice the same to the selfish and inglorious view of making a Country (either that which conquers, or that which is conquered, or both) the prey of the Hero. For such has been generally the logic of the Sword, that because it has saved, it may [I-220] therefore oppress and enthral, and for defending a part, take the whole. Wars beget great Armies; Armies beget great Taxes; heavy Taxes waste and impoverish the Country, even where Armies commit no violences; a case seldom to be supposed, because it has seldom happened. But where great Armies are, they must be employed, and do mischief abroad, to keep them from doing it at home; so that the people must be exhausted and oppressed to keep the men of the sword in exercise.

THE great Turk, to keep the swords of the Janizaries from his own throat, is forced to plague his neighbours, even where he earns nothing but blows and disgrace; and thence increases the danger which he would avert; for, as by his Armies he makes all men slaves, he himself is a slave to his Armies, and often their victim; or, to escape himself, is frequently forced to satiate their fury by the blood of his bravest Officers, and best Counsellors. If it be the Glory of his Monarchy, that he can put the greatest men and all men to death, without reason, or form, or process; he is subject in his own person to the same lawless and expeditious butchery, from his own outrageous slaves, who being not accustomed to receive any Law from him, give him none, whenever he is in their power, which is as often as they think fit; and he who is a Prince of slaves, is adjudged by slaves, and dies like the meanest slave. What is there to save him? His people who are oppressed, want the inclination, and being unarmed, the power. So that he lives in personal servitude to those who are the instruments of public Servitude; and as others must die to please him, so must he to please them. It is the Law of retaliation, and operates as often as its causes operate, namely, caprice, or rage, or fear. This is the blessing of being absolute, and unfettered by human constitutions; the same sword which is lifted up for you [I-221] at the command of whim or passion, is with the like wantonness lifted up against you; and if you reign in blood, you must not think it strange to die in it.

Sect. II. Great Armies the best disciplined, whether thence the less formidable to a Country. Their Temper and Views.

IN regard to public Liberty, Armies the best disciplined are not less to be dreaded than the worst, but I think, more; since their relaxation of discipline takes away from their union and sufficiency; it renders them weaker and less equal to mighty mischief; but where they are strict and united, the highest iniquities are not too big for them. Disorderly Troops may rob particulars, ravage towns, and harass a Country; but if you would subdue Nations, commit universal spoil, and enslave Empires, your forces must be under the best regulations. It was with an Army victorious and brave, and consequently well disciplined, that AGATHOCLES slaughtered all the Nobles of Syracuse, and brought that illustrious State (the noblest of all the Greek Cities) under bondage. CROMWELL'S conquest of his Country was made by Troops the most sober and best disciplined that this, or perhaps any other nation, had ever seen. And

it was with the best of all the Roman Armies, that CÆSAR established himself Tyrant of Rome.

SOLDIERS know little else but booty, and blind obedience; whatever their interest, or rapacity dictates, they generally will do; and whatever their officers command, they must do. It is their profession to dispute by force, and the sword; they too soon learn their own power, and where it is an overbalance for the Civil Power, it will always controul [I-222] the Civil Power, and all things [a]. They find readily somewhat to say; the strongest is ever the best disputant, when he carries his reasons upon the point of his sword [b]. They have done great services, they have suffered great wrongs, and will therefore reward and redress themselves. It is the reasoning of CÆSAR [c]. It is nothing to the purpose to say, that an Army listed amongst the natives, especially the officers being natives, and many of them men of fortune, will never hurt or oppress their Country; for such were CROMWELL'S Army, such were CÆSAR'S, and many other enslaving Armies; besides Armies are soon modelled, and Officers who are obnoxious, are soon changed.

NO Government can subsist but by force, and where-ever that force lies, there it is that Government is or soon will be. Free States therefore have preserved themselves, and their Liberties, by arming all their people, because all the people are interested in preserving those Liberties; by drawing out numbers of them thus armed, to serve their Country occasionally, and by dissolving them (when that occasion was over) into the mass of the people again; by often changing the chief Officers, or, if they continued the same, by letting their commissions be temporary, and always subject to the controul of the supreme Power, often to that of other co-ordinate Power, as the Dutch Generals are to the Deputies. It is indeed but rare, that States who have not taken such precaution, have not lost their Liberties; their Generals have set up for themselves, and turned [I-223] the Arms put into their hands against their Masters. This did MARIUS, SYLLA, CÆSAR, DIONYSIUS, AGATHOCLES, CHARLES MARTEL, OLIVER CROMWELL, and many others; and this they all did by the same means: it is still frequently done in the Eastern Monarchies; and by the same means all the Christian Princes of Europe, who were arbitrary, became so. For as the experience of all ages shews us, that all men's views are to attain dominion and riches, it is ridiculous to hope, that they will not use the means in their power to attain them, and madness to trust them with those means. They will never want pretences, either from their own safety, or the public Good, to justify the measures which have succeeded; and they know well, that the success will always justify itself; that great numbers will be found to sanctify their power; most of the rest will submit to it, and in time will think it just and necessary; perhaps at last believe it to be obtained miraculously, and to have been the immediate act of Heaven.

Sect. III. Princes ruling by military Power, ever at the Mercy of military Men.

AS by these means private men often come at Sovereign Power; so limited Princes often become arbitrary; but one mischief is inseparable from this sort of Government; they generally lose their Authority by the same method they get it. For, having attained it by violence, they are obliged to keep it by violence; and that cannot be done but by engaging in the interest of their Oppression a body of men, strong enough to maintain it; and it will for the most part happen, that as these men have no interest but their own in serving a Tyrant, so when that interest ceases, and they can serve themselves better in destroying him, they seldom fail of [I-224] doing it. In fact we find, that in all the great despotic Governments in the world the Monarchs are slaves to their soldiery, and they murder and depose their Princes just according to their caprices. The General sets up any of the Princes of the blood, whom he thinks most for his interest, and often-times upon the death of the Possessor they are all set up, by one part of the Army or other, (if one cannot get all the rest into his power, and murder them) and the Civil War continues, till one has slaughtered all his rivals.

If this is not done in the modern absolute Governments of Europe, it is because despotic Power is not so thoroughly established there, and the people have yet some share of Property, and consequently of Power; but still they do it as much as they dare; in some instances they have set up themselves, and in almost all have been the principal engines and instruments in working about Revolutions, according to their own inclinations and disgusts. Of this we had many instances in our own Country, within the compass of not many years.

How much easier is it to corrupt a few leading Officers, often necessitous, generally ambitious, than to persuade a whole Kingdom, if they are well governed, to destroy themselves? Some will be disobliged, because not preferred to their wishes, or because others are preferred before them; they will differ according to their countries or their interests about the person to be their General, and to have the power of preferring or recommending Officers; and that part which is disappointed shall be a faction against that which succeeds. Where-ever Commissions are venal, there will be no difficulty of buying those, who are disaffected, into them, if they can disguise their disaffection till a proper opportunity. In a Country where factions abound, and those at the helm can find any account in keeping measures [I-225] with a contrary faction, Officers will be put in to oblige that faction, sometimes to gratify friends or favourites; at different times, others will be discarded, to oblige one party, or to mortify the other. New men, by private recommendation or money, shall supercede old Officers; this will create new dissatisfactions and disgusts, as soon as they dare shew them. When the Administration is changed, and another party gets uppermost, all those things shall be done over again; so that at last an Army shall be a medley of all the factions of a Kingdom; and all their preferments and expectations depending upon the success of those factions; each individual will take every safe opportunity to advance his own; and for the most part one or other of these factions, sometimes all, are ready to join in shuffling the cards anew; the sure prelude of a Civil War.

THIS is and ever must be the case of all Countries which subsist by standing Armies. For there are few instances in History, to be given of Armies who did not play their own game, in times of distress; few instances of disobliged or unpreferred Officers, who did not change sides; too many have made their peace by some remarkable act of treachery; very often they have done it only from the motives of ambition and avarice. I wish that we never had had instances amongst ourselves of any who have done the same; or even of Generals who played a double game. What OLIVER CROMWELL, MONK, and very many both of the King's and of the Parliament Officers did in the Civil War, we all know, as well as what King JAMES's Army did more lately: I wish we equally knew what intrigues of this kind have been carrying on since. In Civil Wars amongst men of the same Country, the communication is so easy between friends, relations and former acquaintance, that there is a very ready transition from one side to another; [I-226] and a little success, small intrigues, and a few advantages generally make that transition.

Sect. IV. Instances of the Boldness and Fury of the Roman Soldiery.

IT is astonishing from what light and wanton motives, by what vile and contemptible instruments, Armies are often instigated to violence and ravages. The sedition of that in Pannonia, after the death of AUGUSTUS, was raised by one common soldier, inflamed by another; rapine and massacres were committed or defended by almost all; they murdered their Officers; even their General had like to have been murdered, upon the credit of an impudent lie told by one of these vile incendiaries, who yet could scarce alledge any other grievance than that they had not too much pay, and too little discipline. Nor was the insurrection, excited by these two fellows, restrained to the Pannonian Legions only, but extended to those in Germany, who waxed into fury rather greater, and outraged all things human and divine.

It was one common soldier who gave the Empire to CLAUDIUS, by saluting him Emperor, while the poor dastardly wretch was lurking in a corner, and expecting death instead of Sovereignty. Under GALBA two private Centinels undertook to transfer the Empire to another, and actually transferred it. It is shocking to reflect with what eagerness these blood-thirsty assassins hastened to murder that good old Prince, for no charge of misgovernment, nor for defrauding them of their pay; but because he would not exhaust the Public to glut them with bounties. They were such abandoned Russians, that they sought to kill MARIUS CELSUS, purely because as he was an able and virtuous man, [I-227] they judged him an enemy to themselves who delighted only in blood, and wickedness, and spoil. It would require a volume to recount the behaviour, the treacherous and inhuman exploits of these sons of violence thenceforward; their murdering and promoting of Emperors, sometimes two or three, sometimes more, once thirty at a time; their selling the Empire for money; their besieging and threatning to massacre the Senate; their burning the Capitol, setting fire to the Imperial City, pillaging and butchering its inhabitants, and using them like slaves and captives; with other instances of their insolence, barbarity, and misrule. In the third and fourth Volumes of this Work much of this will be seen, recounted by TACITUS.

THE Gothic Governments were military in their first settlement; the General was King, the Officers were the Nobles, and the Soldiers their Tenants; but by the nature of the settlement, out of an Army a Country Militia was produced. The Prince had many occasional troops, but no standing troops; hence he grew not absolute, like the Great Turk; who having cantoned out the conquered Countries amongst his horsemen, must by doing it have lost his arbitrary Power, but that he kept a large body of men in arms, called the Janizaries.

GREAT BRITAIN has preserved its Liberties so long, because it has preserved itself from great standing Armies; which, where-ever they are strong enough to master their Country, will certainly first or last master it. Some troops we must have for guards and garisons, enough to prevent sudden Insurrections, and sudden Revolutions. What numbers are sufficient for this, the experience of past times, and the sense of our Parliaments, have shewn.

[I-228]

Sect. V. The Humour of conquering, how injudicious, vain, and destructive.

THE Athenians began the ruin of their State, by a mad and expensive War upon Sicily; and from an ambition of conquering a people who had never offended them, exposed themselves to the attacks of the Lacedemonians, to the revolt of their own subjects, to domestic disorders, and the change of their Government. And though upon the recalling of ALCIBIADES, they won some victories, and for a while made some figure; they were at last conquered intirely by LYSANDER, their walls thrown down, the States subject to them set at liberty, and they themselves subjected to the domination of thirty Tyrants. They never after recovered their former Glory. The Lacedemonians fell afterwards into the same warlike folly, and their folly had the same fate. By lording over Greece they drew upon themselves a combination of Greek Cities, which together (especially the Thebans under the famous EPAMINONDAS) despoiled them of their Authority, soon after their triumph over Athens. The Thebans too abused their good fortune; they were equally fond of fighting and conquest, and by it drew another confederacy against them. In truth, everyone of these States had been so long weakening themselves, and one another, by their propensity to War, that at last they fell under servitude to the Kings of Macedon, a Country formerly depending upon, or rather under vassalage to Athens and Sparta.

THESE States acted like some of the Princes of our time; by trusting to their own superior Prowess, they invaded their neighbours, and taught them Art enough to beat themselves. Thus the Muscovite, [I-229] by falling upon the late King of Sweden, yet in his minority,

roused a tempest that had well nigh overturned his Throne; and thus that King, by refusing the most honourable conditions of peace, and by urging his fate and revenge too far, taught the Russians that bravery and discipline which nothing could ever teach them before; saw his own brave Army utterly routed by forces that he despised; himself driven from his dominions, and a fugitive in a Country of Infidels; and his Provinces cantoned out amongst enemies, who, before he had tempted his good fortune to leave him, would have been glad to have compounded with him for a moiety of their own dominions.

CHARLES Duke of Burgundy had his head so turned with gaining the battel of Montl'hery, that he never listened afterwards to any counsel, but that of his own headstrong humour; nor ceased plunging himself into Wars, till in that against the Switzers, who had given him no just provocation, he lost his Army, his dominions, and his life. If PHILIP the second had kept his oath with the Low Countries, he might have preserved his Authority over them all. But nothing less would humour his pride than the subduing of their Liberties and Conscience; and in defence of their Conscience and Property, he drove them to the use of Arms, which a people employed in trade and manufacture, as they were, had no list to, nor skill in. Every body knows the issue; he lost the seven Provinces and their Revenue for ever, with many millions of money, and almost half a million of lives thrown away to recover them. By his mighty and boasted Armada designed to conquer England, what else did he conquer but his own Power at sea? He had prepared, he had been for some years preparing, a naval force mighty as his own arrogance; but it all proved to be only measures taken for baffling his arrogance, and for destroying [I-230] the maritime force of Spain; and all the while that he was vainly meditating the destruction of England, he was in reality taking the part of England against himself, and, with all his might, weakening its greatest enemy. Had he husbanded that mighty strength; had he employed it at times, and in parcels, against these dominions, he might have had some success; but he combined against his own hopes.

How foolish is the reasoning of passion! It leads men to throw away strength to gain weakness. Even where these sons of violence succeed, they may be justly said to acquire nothing, beyond the praise of mischief. What is the occupation and end of Princes and Governors, but to rule men for their good, and to keep them from hurting one another? Now what Conqueror is there who mends the condition of the conquered? ALEXANDER the Great, though he well knew the difference between a limited and a lawless Monarchy, did not pretend, that his invasion of Persia was to mend the condition of the Persians. It was a pure struggle for dominion; when he had gained it, he assumed the Throne upon the same arbitrary terms upon which their own Monarchs had held it, nor knew any Law but his will. The subject only felt the violence of the change, without any benefit or relaxation from slavery. His Glory therefore is all false and deceitful, as is all Glory which is gained by the blood of men, without mending the state of mankind. This spirit of fighting and conquering continued in his Successors, who plagued the earth as he had done, and weltered in the blood of one another, till they were almost all destroyed by the sword or poison, with the whole family of ALEXANDER. It was no part of the dispute amongst them, which of them could bestow most happiness upon the afflicted world, about which [I-231] they strove, but who should best exalt himself, and enslave all.

THE State of Carthage after many Countries conquered, but not bettered by her Arms, was almost dissolved by her own barbarous Mercenaries, and at last conquered and destroyed by the Romans; who were in truth the most generous conquerors that the world has known: and most Countries found the Roman Government better than their own. This continued for some time, till their Provincial Magistrates grew rapacious, and turned the Provinces into spoil. Rome itself perished by her conquests, which being made by great Armies, occasioned such power and insolence in their Commanders, and set some Citizens so high above the rest, an inequality pernicious to free States, that she was enslaved by ingrates whom she had

employed to defend her. Rome vanquished foreign nations; foreign luxury debauched Rome, and traitorous Citizens seized upon their mother with all her acquisitions. All her great blaze and grandeur, served only to make her wretchedness more conspicuous, and her chains more intensely felt. Upon her thralldom there ensued such a series of Tyranny and misery, treachery, oppression, cruelty, death and affliction, in all shapes; that her agonies were scarce ever suspended till she finally expired. When her own Tyrants, become through Tyranny impotent, could no longer afflict her, for protection was none of their business; a host of Barbarians, only known for ravages, and acts of inhumanity, finished the work of desolation, and closed her civil doom. She has been since racked under a Tyranny more painful, as it is more slow; and more base, as it is scarce a domination of men; I mean her vassalage to a sort of beings of all others the most merciless and contemptible, Monks and Spectres.

[I-232]

Sect. VI. The Folly of conquering further urged and exemplified.

THE Turks, like other Conquerors, know not when to leave off. They sacrifice the people to gain more territories; and the more they conquer, the greater is their loss. They lavish men and treasure, to gain waste ground. What is the use of earth and water, where there are no Inhabitants for these elements to support? The strength of a Government consists in numerous subjects industrious and happy; not in extent of territory desolate or ill peopled, or peopled with inhabitants poor and idle. It is incredible what a profusion of wealth and lives their attempts upon Persia have cost them, always with fatal success, even under their wisest and most warlike Princes; and at a time when their Empire flourished most. Yet these attempts are continued, at a season when their Affairs are at the lowest; their Provinces exhausted, their people and revenue decayed, their soldiery disorderly, and all things conspiring to the final dissolution of their Empire.

THOSE who will be continually exerting their whole strength, whether they be societies or particular men, will at last have none to exert. The Turks have been for ages wasting their vitals to widen their extremities, and to extend their limbs; which, by being unnaturally stretched, are quite disjointed and benumbed for want of nourishment from the seat of life; and must therefore, like mortified members, soon drop off; they have been long spinning out their own vitals. Now if they had conquered Persia, what benefit would the conquest have derived to the Persians? None at all; but on the contrary, fresh oppression, and probably persecution; since the Turks deem them Heretics for the colour of their caps, and for their obstinate [I-233] refusal to change one name for another in the list of Mahomet's Successors.

THUS these Barbarians destroy themselves to destroy others; and Christian Princes imitate these Barbarians. The Spaniard, to secure to himself the possession of America, destroyed more lives than he had subjects in Europe; and his mighty Empire there, with his mountains of treasure, bears indeed an awful sound; yet it is allowed that he has lost much more than he got, besides the crying guilt of murdering a large part of the globe. His conquests there, together with his expulsion of the Moors at home, have dispeopled Spain; and the inhabitants who remain trusting to their American wealth, are too proud and lazy to be industrious; so that most of their gold goes to other nations for the manufactures wanted in the Spanish West-Indies. Hence multitudes and diligence (and diligence often creates multitudes, as by multitudes diligence is created) are better than mountains of gold, and will certainly attract such mountains; though others have the name and first property. Had he kept the industrious Moors, and expelled the barbarous Inquisitors; encouraged Liberty and Trade, and consequently Liberty of Conscience, Spain would have been a more powerful nation, and he consequently a greater King, than all his wide and guilty conquests have made him. Sir WALTER RALEIGH says, that the Low Countries alone did, for revenue, equal his West-Indies. Notwithstanding his many Kingdoms, his Empire in both Hemispheres, and that the sun

never sets upon all his dominions at once, the small Republic of Holland, small in compass of territory, has been an overmatch for him.

A late neighbouring Prince was a busy Conqueror. But did his People and Country gain by his conquests? He drained them of men and money by [I-234] millions, only to add to their poverty servitude and wretchedness, and from their chains and misery derived his own Glory. Nor do I know any reason why a Prince, who reduces his People, his Nobles, and all degrees of men in his Dominions, to poverty and littleness, should have the title of Great, unless for the greatness of the evils which he brought upon his own Kingdom and all Europe. Let the late and present condition of that Monarchy declare, what advantages that noble Country owes to his Glory and Victories. Had it not been for his wanton Wars and oppressive Taxes, there is no pitch of felicity which the goodness of their soil and climate, the number and industry of the natives, their many manufactures, and the advantage of their situation, might not have raised them to. But all was sacrificed to the Ambition and Bigotry of one. How many resources that Kingdom has within itself; and to what happiness it is capable of rising under a just and gentle Administration, is manifest from the suddenness with which it recovered itself under the good Government of HENRY the fourth; how many millions it paid, how many put into the Exchequer; and what a flourishing condition it was arrived to, after so fierce, so long, and so consuming a Civil War, and after two such profuse and profligate Reigns, as that of CHARLES the Ninth, and that of HENRY the Third. But what avails all this, when one short Edict, and the maggot of a minute, can dissipate all its wealth and all its happiness?

I might here display what ridiculous causes do often pique and awaken the vanity and ambition of Princes, and prompt them to lavish lives and treasure, and utterly undo those whom they should tenderly protect. For a beast of burden, or even for the tooth of a beast; for a mistress, for a river, for a senseless word hastily spoken, for words that had [I-235] a foolish meaning, or no meaning at all; for an empty sepulchre or an empty title; to dry the tears of a coquette, to comply with the whims of a pedant, or to execute the curses of a bigot; important Wars have sometimes been waged, and nations animated to destroy one another; nor is there any security against such destructive follies, where the sense of every man must acquiesce in the wild passion of one; and where the interest and peace, and preservation of a State, are found too light to ballance his rage or caprice. Hence the policy of the Romans to tame a people not easy to be subdued; they committed such to the domination of Tyrants. Thus they did in Armenia, and thus in Britain [e]. And these instruments did not only enslave their subjects, but by continual fighting with one another, consume them.

NECESSARY Wars are accompanied with evils more than enough; and who can bear or forgive calamities courted and sought? The Roman State owed her greatness in a good measure to a misfortune; it was founded in War, and nourished by it. The same may be said of the Turkish Monarchy. But States formed for peace, though they do not arrive to such immensity and grandeur, are more lasting and secure; witness Sparta and Venice. The former lasted eight hundred years, and the other has lasted twelve hundred, without any Revolution; what errors they both committed, were owing to their attempts to conquer, for which they were not formed; though the Spartans were exceeding brave and victorious; but they wanted the *Plebs ingenua*, which formed the strength of the [I-236] Roman Armies; as the Janizaries, a militia formerly excellently trained and disciplined, formed those of the Turk. With the latter, fighting and extending their dominions, is an article of their Religion, as false and barbarous in this as in many of its other principles, and as little calculated for the good of men.

Endnotes to Part 1

- [a] Vinolentiam & libidines usurpans, c. 16.
- [b] Frustra Arminium præscribi, c. 16.
- [c] Auctum pecunia, c. 16
- [d] Jam longius clarescere, c. 16.
- [e] Unam omnino anguem visam.
- [f] Atrociorem quam novo regno conduceret, c. 9.
- [g] Obstrepentibus his, c. 6.
- [h] Unde tenuis fructus, c. 20.
- [i] Non eo ventum, c. 26.
- [k] Insontibus innoxia consilia, ib.
- [l] Flagitiis manifestis, subsidium ab audacia petendum, ib.
- [m] Adesse conscios, ib.
- [n] Claudium, ut insidiis incautum, ita iræ properum, ib.
- [o] Nomen matrimonii cupivit, ob magnitudinem insamiæ, cujus apud prodigos novissima voluptas est, ib.
- [p] Codicillos libidinum indices, c. 34.
- [q] Quicquid habitum Neronibus & Drusis in precium probri cessisse, c. 35.
- [r] Cæterum infracta paulatim potentia matris, delapso Nerone in amorem libertæ, cui vocabulum Acte fuit: simul adsumptis in conscientiam Othone & Claudio Senecione adolescentulis decoris, quorum Otho familia Consulari, Senecio liberto Cæsaris patre genitus, ignara matre, dein frustra obnitente, penitus inreperant per luxum & ambigua secreta. Ne severioribus quidem Principis amicis adversantibus, muliercula, nulla cujusquam injuriâ, cupidines principis explente: quando uxore ab Octavia, nobili quidem & probitatis spectatæ, fato quodam, an quia prævalent illicita, abhorrebat: metuebaturque, ne in supra feminarum inlustrum prorumperet, si illa libidine prohiberetur. Sed Agrippina libertam æmulam, &c. *An.* 13. *C.* 12. & 13.
- [s] Inter quæ refertur ad patres, de pœna feminarum, quæ servis conjungerentur. Statuiturque, ut ignaro domino ad id prolapsa, in servitutem, sin consensisset, pro liberto haberetur. Pallanti, quem repertorem ejus relationis ediderat Cæsar, prætoria insignia, & centies quinquagesies sestercium censuit consul designatus Barea Soranus: additum à Scipione Cornelio, grates publice agendas, quod regibus Arcadiæ ortus, veterrimam nobilitatem usui publico postponeret, seque inter ministros Principis haberi sineret. Asseveravit Claudius, contentum honore Pallantem, intra priorem paupertatem subsistere. Et fixum est ære publico Senatus Consultum, &c. *An.* 12. *C.* 53.
- [t] The old Translation has it, *At Rome he cosetted men of their legacies such as died without children, as if he had laid a snare to entrap them.* This is foolish, but wiser than the other.

- [a] Accitis quæ usquam egregia.
- [b] Nihil non ausurum eum in summo magistratu.
- [c] Ne Catone quidem abnuente eam largitionem e Rep. fieri.
- [d] Nihil esse Rempublicam; appellationem modo sine corpore ac specie.
- [e] Nullos non honores ad libidinem cœpit & dedit, spreto Patriæ more.
- [f] Debere homines pro Legibus habere quæ dicat.
- [g] Eum jus fasque esset occidi, neve ea cædes capitalis noxæ haberetur.
- [h] Retinuit famam sine experimento.
- [i] Nemo enim unquam imperium flagitio quæsitum bonis artibus exercuit.
- [k] Nihil abnuentem, dum dominationis adipisceretur.
- [l] Cunctis affectibus flagrantiolem dominandi libidinem.
- [m] *See CATO'S Letters, Vol. II.*
- [n] Epist. ad nepot.
- [o] Abusus dominatione & jure cæsus existimaretur. (Sueton.)
- [a] Libertate improspere repetita.
- [b] In splendidissimum quemque captivorum non sine verborum contumelio sæviit.
- [c] Moriendum esse.
- [d] Cuncta discordiis civilibus fessa, sub imperium accepit.
- [e] Juniores post Actiacam victoriam, etiam senes plerique inter bella civium nati.
- [f] Quotusquisque reliquus qui Rempublicam vidisset?
- [g] Eadem magistratuum vocabula: sua consulibus, sua prætoribus species.
- [h] Vernacula multitudo, nuper acto in urbe delectu, lasciviæ sueta, laborum intolerans, implere ceterorum rudes animos; venisse tempus, &c. An. 1. C. 31.
- [k] Ubi militem donis, populum annona, cunctos dulcedine pacis pellexit, insurgere paulatim, munia Senatus, Magistratum, Legum, in se trahere.
- [l] Bruto & Cassio cæsis, nulla jam publica arma.
- [m] Patres & plebem, invalida & inermia.
- [n] Quanto quis servitio promptior, opibus & honoribus extollerentur.
- [o] — Nihil est quod credere de se
Non possit cum laudatur Diis æqua potestas.
- [p] Semper magnæ fortunæ comes adest adulatio.
- [q] Gliscente adulatione deterrerentur.

- [r] Comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quæsivisse.
- [s] Provisis etiam hæredum in Rempublicam opibus.
- [t] Ne successor in incerto solet.
- [u] Subsidia dominationis.
- [w] Quippe illi non perinde curæ gratia presentium, quam in posteros ambitio.
- [x] Verso civitatis statu, nihil usquam prisci & integri moris.
- [y] Omnis exuta æqualitate jussa principis aspectare.
- [a] Nunquam satis fida potentia, ubi nimia.
- [b] Non dominationem & servos, sed rectorem & cives cogitaret.
- [c] *Vid. PHIL. DE COMINES and MEZERAY.*
- [d] Omnia sibi in homines licere.
- [e] Pro me; si merear, in me.
- [f] Optime quidem; ea demum tuta est potentia, quæ viribus suis modum imponit. Theopompus i iur legitimis regnum vinculis constringendo, quo longius a licentia retraxit, hoc propius ad benevolentiam civium admovit. Val. Max L. 4. C. 1.
- [g] Nobis Romulus ad libitum imperitaverat.
- [h] Multi odio præsentium, & cupidine mutationis, suis quisque periculis lætabantur.
- [i] Quia pauci prudentia, honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt; plures aliorum eventis docentur.
- [k] Instrumenta servitutis & reges habuere.
- [l] Solitudinem faciunt, pacem vocant.
- [m] Irritatus suppliciiis.
- [n] Nihil æque Tiberium anxium habebat, quam ne composita turbarentur.
- [o] Magno dedecore Imperii, nec minore discrimine.
- [p] Solusque omnium ante se Principum in melius mutatus est.
- [q] *See Herodian in Marc. Antonin.*
- [r] Spretam voluntatem Principis, descivisse populum: quid reliquum nisi ut caperent ferium?
- [s] Quidam, postquam regum pertæsum, leges maluerunt.
- [t] Ut Respublica stare possit.
- [a] Legem Majestatis reduxerat (Tiberius); cui nomen apud veteres idem, sed alia in iudicium veniebant: si quis prodicione exercitum, aut plebem seditionibus, denique male gesta Repub. Majestatem populi Romani minuisset. Facta arguebantur, dicta impune erant. Primus Augustus cognitionem de famosis libellis, specie legis ejus tractavit.
- [b] Tum Claudius inter ludibria aulæ erat.

- [c] Manebant etiam tum vestigia morientis libertatis.
- [d] Nihil majus in natura sua laudare se ac probare quam ἀδιατρεψιαί.
- [e] Cuncta quæstione majestatis exercita.
- [f] Fœminæ ob lacrymas incusabantur; necataque est Vitia Fusii Gemini mater, quod filii necem flevisset.
- [a] Quem diem vacuum pœna ubi inter sacra & vota, vincla & laqueus inducantur.
- [b] Proprium id Tiberio fuit, scelera nuper reperta priscis verbis obtegere.
- [c] Nobilitas, opes, omissi gestique honores, pro crimine; & ob virtutes certissimum exitium.
- [d] Agerent, verterent cuncta, odio & terrore.
- [e] Corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti, & quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi.
- [f] Id ipsum paventes, quod timuissent.
- [g] Ob hæc mors indicta.
- [h] Mortemque longius in puniendis quibusdam, si natura permitteret, conabatur extendi.
- [i] Caligulæ, & Domitiani, & Commodi immanitatem facile superabta, *says the same* Ammianus.
- [k] Per simulationem tuendæ Majestatis imperatoriæ multa & nefanda perpetrabantur.
- [l] Ad vicem bellorum civilium inflabant litui quædam coloratæ læsæ Majestatis crimina— materiam autem in infinitum quæstionibus extendendis dedit occasio vilis & parva.
- [m] Abnuentibus cunctis, cum diversa prætenderent, eadem, formidine.
- [n] Interciderat sortis humanæ commercium vi metus; quantumque sævitia glisceret, miseratio arcebatur.
- [o] Metus principis rimantur, & sævitia adrepunt.
- [p] Per idem tempus L. Piso Pontifex, rarum in tanta claritudine, fato obiit.
- [q] Studia civium in se verteret; secessionem jam & partes, & si multi idem audeant, bellum esse.
- [r] Nobilem, & quod tunc spectaretur, è Cæsarum posteris.
- [s] Ostorius multa militari fama—metum Neroni fecerat, ne invaderet pavidum semper — missus Centurio qui cædem ejus maturaret.
- [t] Quanto metu occultior, tanto plus famæ adeptus.
- [u] Consuleret quieti urbis; esse illi per Asiam avitos agros.
- [w] Gliscere ac vigere Brutorum æmulos — rigidi & tristic, quo tibi lascivium exprobrent.
- [x] Hominem bonis publicis mœstum.
- [y] Reddendam pro intempestiva lætitia mœstam & funebrem noctem, qua sentiat vivere Vitellium & imperare.

- [z] Plautum magnis opibus — auri vim atque opes principibus infensas.
- [a] Syllam inopem, unde præcipuam audaciam.
- [b] Simulatorem segnitæ, dum temeritati locum reperiret.
- [c] Plautum ne fingere quidem cupidinem otii, sed veterum Romanorum incitamenta præferre; assumpta etiam Stoicorum arrongantia sectaque, quæ turbidos & negotiorum appetentes faciat.
- [d] Hortorum amœnitate & villarum magnificentia quasi principem supergrederetur.
- [e] Verginium & Rufum claritudo nominis expulit; name Verginius studia juvenum eloquentia, Musonius præceptis sapientiæ fovebat.
- [f] Omni bonâ arte in exsilium actâ, ne quid usquam honestum occurreret.
- [g] Cuncta Legum & Magistratum in se trahens Princeps.
- [h] Proximorum fauces aperuit primus Constantinus.
- [i] Cunctas nationes & urbes populus, aut primores, aut singuli regunt. Delecta ex his & constituta Reipub. forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel, si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest.
- [k] Vulgus duro imperio habitum, probra ac verbera intentabat.
- [l] Vulgus eadem pravitate insectabatur interfectum, qua foverat viventem.
- [a] Omnis exuta æqualitate, jussa Principis aspectare.
- [b] Ut juvenem laudarent, & tollerent.
- [c] Libertatem metuebat, adulationem oderat.
- [d] Etiam illum, qui libertatem publicam nollet, tam projectæ servientium patientiæ tædebat.
- [e] Adulatione, quæ moribus corruptis, perinde anceps si nulla, & ubi nimia est.
- [f] Ruere in servitium consules, patres, eques; quanto quis inlustrior, tanto magis falsi ac festinantes.
- [g] Primores civitatis quorum claritudo sua obsequiis protegenda erat.
- [h] Tertio gradu primores civitatis scripserat; plerique invisos sibi, sed jactantia gloriaque apud posteros.
- [i] Scenicas saltandi canendique artes studiosissime appetere — Thrax & auriga.
- [k] Ut quodcumque concessero, cum laude & bonis recordationibus facta atque famam nominis mei prosequantur.
- [l] Rupto pudore & metu, suo tantum ingenio utebatur.
- [m] Igitur accepto patrum consulto, postquam cuncta scelerum suorum pro egregiis accipi videt, exturbat Octaviam.
- [n] Quod ad eum finem memoravimus, ut quicumque casus temporum illorum nobis vel aliis auctoribus noscent, præsumptum habeant, quotiens fugas & cædes jussit princeps, totiens grates deis actas; quæque rerum secundarum olim, tum publicæ cladis insignia fuisse.

- [o] Quidam minora vero, ne tum quidem obliti adulationis.
- [p] Scelerum ministros, ut perverti ab aliis nolebat; ita plerumque satiatus, & oblati in eandem operam recentibus, veteres & prægraves adflixit.
- [q] Ut exprobrantes aspiciuntur.
- [r] Civitati grande desiderium ejus manfit per memoriam virtutis.
- [s] Gravescentibus in dies publicis malis, subsidia minuebantur, concessitque vita Burrus.
- [t] Quibus omnia principis, honesta atque inhonesta laudare mos est.
- [a] Est vulgus ad deteriora promptum.
- [b] Intelligebantur artes, sed pars obsequii in eo ne deprehenderentur.
- [c] Simulationum falsa in sinu avi perdidicerat.
- [d] Ad vana & totiens inrisa revolutus, de reddendâ Repub. &c. vero quoque & hopesto fidem dempsit.
- [a] Suâ in manu sitam rem Romanam; suis victoriis augeri Rempubicam.
- [b] Preces erant, sed quibus contradici non posset.
- [c] Hæc voluerunt: tantis rebus gestic, C. Cæsar condemnatus essem, nisi ab exercitu auxilium petissem.
- [e] Quædam civitates regi Cogiduno donatæ; vetere ac jampridem recepta populi Romani consuetudine, ut haberet instrumenta servitutis & reges.



DISCOURSES UPON TACITUS (PART 2)

[III-iii]

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, FREDERIC PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

IN presuming to lay the following Work before Your Royal Highness, I am encouraged by the dignity of the subject, by the great name of TACITUS, and, by the sincerity of my own heart, conscious of honest and loyal intentions, and sincerely attached to the interest of Your Illustrious Family, as well as unfeignedly [III-iv] devoted to that of Your Person. But what gives me higher assurance, is a persuasion, that no attempt to serve and vindicate the cause of Liberty can fail of being countenanced by Your Royal Highness. Such countenance is worthy of a Prince of the House of Hanover, worthy of an Heir Apparent to the British Crown. Since this Cause is the noble foundation of Your Royal Father's Government, as we firmly hope it will be the glory of Yours, and as it is indeed the genuine glory of all Princes, glory arising from a true, a god-like source, even the well-being of Society and the general good of man. It is what all good and wise Princes will pursue, as the surest bulwark of their Throne, as the brightest ornament in their Crown, and the best warrant for future praise.

INDEED ever suitable to the spirit and reign of a Prince will be his fame when he ceases to reign. After his death, men will use him as he in his life-time used [III-v] them, with resentment or applause, with honour or reproach. A living Prince who is hated may be flattered, perhaps the more flattered for being hated, as flattery is often no more than a disguise for aversion, at least for the want of affection; and, the grosser it is, the more it answers the end. Nay, every Prince in the world would surely abhor all flatterers, if he considered that whoever flatters him must needs also condemn him: Since it can never be supposed, that any would venture to mislead him by vile arts to gain selfish ends, unless they entertained withal a very mean opinion of his understanding. But when death, which flatters no man, has bereft him of his power and lustre, when he is laid low, and can no longer terrify or prefer, flattery which only followed his fortune, and studied to deceive him for interest, will, like all false friends, desert his memory. Then, though perhaps he was never told that he had any faults (whereas from some no man was [III-vi] ever exempt) a thousand will probably be objected to him, perhaps with many invidious aggravations. Even they who had fed him with constant incense, and long blinded him with the smoke of it, instead of now vindicating one whom so lately they adored, will perhaps join in the cry against him, and be foremost in upbraiding him with errors which they would never suffer him to see, probably caused him to commit.

SUCH, Sir, is the experience to be learned from History, such the useful lessons which it affords to Princes. They will there see that, where fear or interest governs the hearts of men, guile will be apt to guide their tongues, and that, as it is in the power of Princes to hurt or oblige numbers, there will always be numbers ready to deceive them; and they can hope to hear plain truth but from very few; that there have been some, indeed too many, who seem never to have heard any truth at all, at least, where it was of any importance to their [III-vii] duty and government, though it so nearly concerned them; because from their hearing or not hearing it, infinite good or infinite evil was to redound to their people, as well as to their own quiet and fame.

HENCE History is to be carefully consulted as a faithful Monitor, upon which nor awe nor hopes have any influence; a Monitor which nakedly represents the actions of Princes and the result of those actions, what measures tended to their credit and ease, what to their anguish and dishonour; how liable they are to be deceived, how readily abandoned by deceivers; how several very good men proved very bad Princes, by being misled by evil servants, such as carefully deprived them of the counsel and assistance of the best; and how differently men speak of Princes and to Princes, how differently of the living and of the dead. And hence may be seen the apparent, the precious value of truth, how many have been undone for want [III-viii] of hearing it, how many might have prospered better had they known it.

FROM History a Prince will discern, that a Country well governed does well reward and secure its Governor, but that by evil Government he is precluded from all tranquillity here, and from any honourable name hereafter: That whatever destroys his people is destructive to himself, for they are his glory and strength. So that in taking an affectionate care of his people he does but fortify his Throne, of which they are the best guards; does but procure his own ease and stability, and purchase an excellent and unperishing name.

It will be there learned that he may indeed find men to serve him even where his commands are unjust; but, besides that services which are disliked are seldom cheerfully performed, they who perform them will first or last, to excuse themselves, throw all the blame and scandal upon him. He will find that of just commands only no Prince [III-ix] has any cause to be ashamed; and that all honest services every honest man will be forward to execute, all men ready to justify: That between the interest of a Prince who acts justly, and the interest of his people, there can never be any competition or disagreement: That whatever he gains from them unjustly, will yield him bitter fruits; that though many will be ready to humour him at all adventures, none are fit, none worthy to serve him, but such as in serving him study also the happiness of his subjects; that to exhaust or oppress them, to vitiate and debase them, can never be for his interest, nor such as do it for him or advise him to do it, his real friends: That whatever measures of his injure the Public, must be injurious to him, and that nothing which is unjust can bring him any real advantage.

HE will see that, in the nature and ordinary course of things, evil counsels are followed by painful consequences, and that no pursuits whatever which are [III-x] not worthy and upright, can secure rest and comfort to the human soul: That the most successful conquerors, the most fortunate wicked men, have by their wicked counsels been bereft of all calmness and internal felicity (for, other than internal there is none) and lived under perpetual insecurity, or perpetual struggles and anxiety: That the great, the able and accomplished CAESAR was often pressed by distress and despair, ready to fly his Country, threatened with being tried and condemned as a Public Criminal, ready to fall upon his own sword; and that after a restless life, full of hurry and perplexity, full of fears and cares, he perished just as he had established his Tyranny, though with it he could not establish his own happiness: That whoever makes numbers unhappy and discontented, cannot expect to be easy and happy himself: That happy, truly happy, is he who does good to all men, who causes whole Nations to rejoice and to bless him: [III-xi] That had CAESAR, in order to preserve and secure Public Liberty, done what he did to destroy it, had he for this glorious end exerted the same industry and admirable talents, what an amiable character he had been, in what security he might have lived! or that he had certainly died in renown, however he had died.

HISTORY will shew, that the most powerful Princes in the world grow insecure as soon as they grow oppressive; when so great a Monarch as JOHN BASILOWITZ of Muscovy, he who held States so vast in extent, and authority without bounds, could negotiate as he did, with the Ambassador of our greater Queen ELIZABETH (greater because beloved, and observing the Laws) for a retreat and protection in England under an apprehension of being expelled from his own Kingdom; a fate which he daily dreaded, though he had many flatterers who

applauded all his oppressions and errors, especially his extreme bigotry [III-xii] to Saints and Masses: That thus insecure, thus miserable and fearful did the rigor of his Government and overmuch Power render him; and in such safety and credit did that excellent Queen reign, because her Throne was established in Liberty and Righteousness. She might have said with the renowned Emperor CYRUS, that she could not conceive how a Prince could fail of being beloved, if he seriously endeavoured to be so.

AS IN HISTORY A PRINCE WILL SEE CAUSE FOR NOT DISTRUSTING HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS, SINCE FROM OVERMUCH DIFFIDENCE, AS WELL AS FROM OVERMUCH CONFIDENCE, HE MAY ALIKE HURT HIMSELF; HE WILL LIKewise PERCEIVE THE NECESSITY OF INSPECTING HIS OWN AFFAIRS, AND OF NOT TRUSTING BLINDLY TO OTHERS: HE WILL SEE WHAT A MEAN FIGURE SUCH PRINCES MADE, WHO LAZILY TRANSFERRED THEIR GREAT OFFICE TO FAVOURITES, WILL SEE THEIR UNEASY AND UNFORTUNATE REIGNS. FROM HENCE HE WILL MAKE THE SAME OBSERVATION WHICH SCHAH ABBAS [III-xiii] THE EMPEROR OF PERSIA MADE TO A CREATURE OF HIS, WHO TOLD HIM, THAT HE DEGRADED THE ROYAL MAJESTY BY BEING SEEN TOO MUCH BY HIS PEOPLE. "NO, SAID THAT ABLE PRINCE: IT IS OWING TO THE TRICKS AND FRAUDS OF FLATTERERS, THAT A PRINCE IS SHUT UP IN SOLITUDE, WHENCE THEY THEMSELVES MAY HAVE THE MORE SCOPE TO TYRANNIZE IN HIS NAME. HE WHO WOULD TRULY REIGN, MUST SEE ALL, AND DIRECT ALL." HE WILL FIND CAUSE FOR GIVING UP GUILTY MINISTERS TO THE JUST COMPLAINTS OF HIS SUBJECTS, AND FOR SUPPORTING THE INNOCENT AGAINST ALL THE CLAMOURS OF FACTION, SINCE THE BEST MAY BE TRADUCED, AND THE BAD, TO SAVE THEMSELVES, MAY RUIN HIM.

HE will there learn, that all the doings of a Prince, however studiously concealed, are in danger of being commonly known; that all his pursuits, counsels, and pleasures are likely in time to be published and canvassed, probably misconstrued, and judged with rigor: That to all his actions, to all his [III-xiv] words, there will be many officious witnesses, many greedy, perhaps unfaithful listeners: That this is a lot unseparably annexed to an elevated state; and thence he will be convinced how much it concerns him to do and to say nothing unworthy of himself, nothing justly to offend his People.

HE will find the noblest designs for the Public Good often marred by malignant spirits, through private pique and the gratification of a particular passion; find one man, or party of men, frequently combining to distress, perhaps to destroy their Country. because another man, or party of men, was employed to serve it or to save it. He will find personal and domestic feuds often producing popular factions, and even convulsions in the State, such as have threatened its downfall; like the first quarrel between LIVIUS DRUSUS and SERVILIUS CAEPIO at Rome, in the time of the Commonwealth, a quarrel that rent all the City into angry Parties. [III-xv] Yet from what mighty cause did it begin? From no other than that the two families happened to bid upon one another for a Gold Ring at an Auction. Hence he will learn to stifle betimes the beginning of faction in the State.

HE will find that a Prince trusting to flattery and surrounded with flatterers, is often long hated before he knows that he is not beloved, nay, whilst he is persuaded that he is. Hence he will resolve to beware of such as are always soothing him, resolve, in order to gain the love of his People, to do things which shall convince them that he loves them, as the surest way of making them love him, and of knowing that they do.

HE will perceive that all the goods of Fortune are transient and perishing, that Fortune, even when she smiles most, may prove untoward and desert him, like that of the great Kings of Babylon, NEBUCHADNEZZAR and BELSHAZZAR, who, whilst secure of their power, boasting in their might, and resigned to [III-xvi] luxury and banquetting, felt a terrible reverse, the one degraded, the other slain. He will find, that of all the felicities of this world, and amongst all its possessions, Virtue alone is that which can never perish, never forsake him. Nor power nor youth, nor pleasure can be stayed or secured against malice, and time, and accidents. But Virtue is a sure support, always present and unchangeable, above envy, above rage and fate.

Even he who perishes for his Virtue, is happier than one who by oppressing Virtue acquires Empires.

BY Virtue Your Royal Highness will easily conceive to be here understood the solid and extensive Virtue of a Prince, such as prompts him to do good to all men, such as restrains him from injuring any, and not an unmanly fondness for fanciful observances and forms, nor a propensity to monkish devotions, nor his fostering and enriching Hypocrites and Bigots; things which such men generally [III-xvii] miscall by that venerable name, or at least consider as equivalents for the want of it in other and more important instances, to the notable misguidance, and sometimes to the ruin of Kings, such especially as were devout, but tyrannical, and by humouring Bigots, were encouraged in their Tyranny.

HE will find, that as true Valour is a glorious quality, which has no other aim than the welfare of Society, and the chastisement of such as disturb it; so a wanton Spirit of fighting and conquering is always mischievous to the world, without bringing him who has it any solid advantages, but always much guilt, danger and disquiet; that it proves generally pernicious to himself, almost ever destructive to the conquered: That such diffusive mischief is but diffusive infamy, though he may judge so ill as to aim at public adoration and fame; and that it were desirable, for the quiet and welfare of human-kind, that such romantic Destroyers, such sanguinary [III-xviii] Lunatics, were locked up in Mad-houses, or in Dens, with their less mischievous brethren, possessed with humbler distraction, and satiated with less blood.

HE will see much ground for approving the advice of ISOCRATES, not to envy Princes who possess vast territories, but only to emulate such as know how to preserve and improve their own. He will be convinced, that Princes who have the smallest Dominions, have enough to do, if they will do it well; and that vast Empires, instead of growing more flourishing and populous, grow generally Desarts. He will perceive the unspeakable advantages of public Liberty, the singular prosperity of Free States, how superior to such as are not free, in Strength, People, and Wealth; that all these advantages accrue to the Prince, whenever he wants them for public ends; and that no other ends can he have, if he consult his duty and glory, since in promoting the felicity of his State both his glory and his duty are [III-xix] found: That he who separates himself from his People, can only earn insecurity and reproach; nor aught else can he expect but reproach, and the severest, if he strive against the happiness of his Subjects, and bring misery upon those whom he is bound to cherish and protect. He will consider what anguish it must be to a Prince whose Subjects are oppressed and enslaved, to see how infinitely such as are free surpass his, to compare their plenty and ease with the poverty and meanness of his own. He will find small Free States contending against great Empires with superior Prowess and Might; find a single City baffling the efforts of mighty absolute Kings, like that of Seleucia, which for several years together repulsed the whole power of Parthia; and that TACITUS had reason to say, that the Romans had always found the Germans, who were ever a free People, a much more terrible enemy than the mighty Parthian Monarchy.

[III-xx]

YOUR Royal Highness is born to govern a People the most free upon earth, a People always free, yet always obedient to Royal Authority tempered by Laws, but ever impatient of encroachments and oppression. This is the character given them by TACITUS sixteen hundred years ago,

“That they cheerfully complied with the levies of men, with the imposition of Tribute, and with all the duties of Government, provided they received no illegal treatment or insults from their Governors: for, those they bore with impatience; nor had they been any further subdued by the Romans, than only to obey just Laws, but never to submit to be Slaves.”

SUCH, Sir, was the Genius of the British People then, such it has continued, and such it remains: They were always peaceable Subjects to Princes who observed the Laws, very uneasy and discontented under such as set themselves above Law, and therefore lost all by [III-xxi] grasping at too much. As long as the chief Ruler kept his Oath, the people kept their Allegiance, generally longer. They have been always fond of Monarchy modelled and limited by Laws. Nor does such limitation infer any insufficiency or defect in this sort of Government, but only that the Monarch is secured against committing errors, and suffering for them, from hurting himself and his people. It is undoubtedly the most desirable and complete form that the good fortune of men has hitherto produced, or their wit been capable of contriving, and allows all the Liberty and Protection which Subjects can want from Government, all the true Grandeur and Dignity which Princes can desire from Empire, even the unlimited Power of doing good. Of more Liberty than it affords us we are hardly capable, and an endeavour to extend it much further might break it: As indeed Liberty, as well as Power, then always ceases to be secure, whenever it is turned into licentiousness. No civilized Nation [III-xxii] in the World enjoys so much; nor is there any Government existing, where the malice of men in Power has less scope than here, or fewer opportunities of distressing or destroying such as they dislike.

THIS Constitution has indeed been often shaken, sometimes oppressed; but having its foundations very deep and strong, it still recovered its ancient frame and vigour, to its own honour, and to the lasting contumely, often to the ruin, of such as had crushed it. The power of the Crown, and the privileges of the Subjects, are fortunately proportioned. They have Liberty enough to make them happy: The Crown has authority enough to maintain and increase that happiness, and therefore possesses all the glory which can adorn a Crown. This is the true and substantial renown of Princes. Any other renown than this is all adulterate and forged; nor could there be greater vanity than that of a late enterprizing Monarch, who pretended to high glory, though to gain it he [III-xxiii] was beggaring and oppressing his Subjects. A Prince can then truly boast his glory, when his People can boast their freedom and ease. This, Sir, is the lot with which we are now blessed under the mild and just Government of Your Royal Father; and, when he has finished his Reign with great renown, and length of days, we see much cause for presuming upon the same happy lot from the Reign of Your Royal Highness.

As in the following History, composed by a man of extraordinary wisdom, there are found many excellent rules and lessons for the conduct of Princes, with many affecting warnings taken from the ill fate of such as observed not these rules, I humbly present it to Your Royal Highness. This I do with very affectionate zeal for your interest and honour, and am utterly unbiassed by any such motives as usually produce Dedications to Princes. The whole of my request and ambition is, that this Address, and the following History and Discourses, may [III-xxiv] be graciously accepted, and that to myself may be allowed the honour of being ever esteemed, what I sincerely am, with intire duty, submission and respect,

SIR,
Your ROYAL HIGHNESS

*'s Most Humble,
Most Dutiful, and
Most Obedient Servant,*

T. GORDON.

THE INTRODUCTION.

I NOW acquit myself of my engagement to the Public, by sending abroad the remaining Works of TACITUS translated into English. In this second Volume I have followed the same method as in the first, allowing for the difference of stile in the Original; for that of the History is more eloquent and sounding than that of the Annals; though both Works are equally grave, equally abounding in strong sense and beautiful reflections, such as at once convince the understanding, affect the heart, and please the imagination: Proofs of the power of good writing, and indeed of its utmost perfection. A very fine stile may be very languid; very lively expression may have very little force; very grave reasonings may be far short of persuading. But when a writer at the same time delights, and animates and instructs, when his sentences are brilliant, his propositions self-evident, his arguments irresistible, his manner charming, and when his heart withal is benevolent and sincere, he is an accomplished, he is a perfect writer. Such a writer is TACITUS, as I have already largely shewn. Nor do I mean or want to add further to the character or defence of that extraordinary Author. I hope I need not. I have already amply displayed and defended it, and the more I study him, the more cause I find to admire and justify him, and to wonder at [III-2] the objections usually made to him, as fantastical and groundless.

The following History is one of the most entertaining that can possibly be read, full of surprising events and revolutions, recounted with great spirit and judgment, in a stile more free and flowing than that of the Annals, and every where enriched with curious observations, all charming and wise. Equally noble and delightful are his two Treatises subjoined, his Account of Germany, and the Life of AGRICOLA, both very curious, both very instructive, and only worthy of the masterly hand of TACITUS.

IN the beginning of the former Volume, I have shewn how ill he had been used by former Translators. His History has hardly fared better than his Annals. Sir HENRY SAVIL who translated it first, has taken great pains and is very exact; but his expression is mean, lifeless and perplexed, void of all force and beauty. He grovels from sentence to sentence, labouring after the meaning of words and particular phrases, and quite loses, or quite starves the noble and nervous thoughts of TACITUS. He is a cold dealer in dry grammar, untouched with the vivacity of his Author, and without feeling, much less possessing, any part of his strength and fire. His Notes are learned, but insipid, and shew great diligence and memory, but a barren genius, and very short discernment. His censures of TACITUS are pitiful, and in them he chiefly betrays his own peevishness, his vanity and carping temper.

SINCE him there has been another Translation still worse, by several hands, most of them beholden to him for the sense of TACITUS, and guilty of enfeebling even the weak expression of Sir H. SAVIL. He translated four books of the History, with the Life of AGRICOLA (I presume he omitted the fifth book in tenderness to the Jews) and they who [III-3] translated these over again have sadly maimed them to make them modern English, that is to say, to make TACITUS prate pertly and familiarly. Were it not for fear of tiring my reader I could largely shew the many and continual defects of both Translations as I did those in the Translations of the Annals. But to such as have any doubt or curiosity about it, I refer that task.

IN defence of my own Translation, I have little else to say than that it wanted no care of mine to make it exact, to make it resemble the Original, and yet not to read like a Translation. It is my opinion, that it is possible for an English writer to imitate the Ancients very nearly in phraseology and stile. As our Language is capable of many variations of phrase, there is great room to improve it by the transposition of words from the common way of marshalling them; and in solemn works of prose well as in poetry, it must be frequently done in order to

preserve a decent dignity of expression, and to avoid the lightness and familiarity of ordinary conversation: Whatever is intended to convince the understanding, and to move the heart, must be noble and grave, free from all trite words, from all light and trivial sounds. And because we want variety of words, and our words often want force, it will be found necessary to give them some advantage in the Ranging and Cadence; a thing which may easily be done. Of this a thousand instances might be produced, especially from MILTON and other of our Poets. But I shall illustrate what I mean by a quotation or two from the old Testament, The Prophet speaking of *Tophet*, says, “Wide and deep it was made: For the King it was made.” This seems to me more noble and sounding than if it had been expressed a different and the usual way, though the very same words had been employed: “It was made wide and deep: It was made for the King.” [III-4] Another example I shall take from the Book of Job. “By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed.” This manner of expression is far from being stiff. I think it more flowing as well as more forcible than the common manner. Here both periods close with the strongest ideas, those conveyed by the words *perish*, and *consumed*; and the vigour of the sentence is found where it should be, in the end of it.

ANOTHER improvement would arise from reviving some of our old words, such as have significancy and sound: For many such there are, and many such we eminently want. I have ventured upon doing this in a few instances; and it may be done in abundance with success.

I HAVE not yet found any cause for wishing that I had taken another method in translating TACITUS. Whoever would do him justice must endeavour to preserve his brevity and fire, and, instead of bringing him down to common language, endeavour to raise the language up to him, or as near him as the idiom will permit. Such transformation is for its advantage, may be made without hurting perspicuity or the ear, and will prove more beautiful as well as more lively. I mean not a verbal translation, which is generally no language, but only harshness and jargon. What I mean is Pruning and Ranging, the Rejecting all waste words, all faint phrases, and the Consolidating spirit and sound. These variations from the usual and familiar form, are by some called *Latinisms*, and under that name condemned. But if they be clear and strong, and read well, they are just, whatever they be called. I wish our Language resembled Latin more. I own that an exact imitation of the Latin will never do, witness the old Translation of TACITUS, which creeps after every word with equal insipidness and obscurity. I shall only produce one example. [III-5] That Writer speaking of the Germans, says, *Argentum & aurum propitii an irati Dii negaverint, dubito*. The Translator renders it thus: “Silver and Gold whether the angry or favourable Gods have denied them, I doubt.” This is nonsense. The man perhaps knew what TACITUS meant; but no English reader can know what he himself means, though he has adhered literally to the Latin. In my own Translation of this passage, I have preserved something of the Latin manner, I hope without injuring the English. “Silver and Gold the Gods have denied them, whether in kindness or in anger, I am unable to decide.” Sir WALTER RALEIGH, Mr. HOBBS, MILTON and SHAKESPEAR, are all great masters of language; and their language resembles that of the Ancients.

WHATEVER objections to this performance come from men of capacity and candour, I have ever regarded, I ever shall regard, with due submission to them, with due distrust of my self, and be ready to own my conviction, or to convince them that I cannot see cause. There may be very just and unanswerable exceptions, which have not been communicated to me. Whenever they are, I shall be forward and glad to make suitable alterations.

IN reviewing my Translation of the Annals I have discovered some mistakes, which though they be of little importance, I shall rectify in the next edition. The like care I shall take of the present Volume, where I hope very few will be sound.

THE following Discourses, like the former, were composed for the interest of public Liberty, against public violence and the iniquities of power. Nor can one who reads TACITUS attentively, fail of starting a thousand reflections, such as must fill his heart with anguish for the deplorable lot of a people enslaved and oppressed, and with bitterness against their tyrants and oppressors. Unless he have hardened [III-6] his heart against all the impulses of humanity and compassion, unless he have lost all regard for right and wrong, all sense of liberty and truth, he must be struck with the sad scenes before him, innocence suffering, cruelty devouring, iniquity exalted and powerful, virtue persecuted and perishing. He must rejoice in his own happier lot and that of his country; must abhor all practices and principles repugnant to liberty, and productive of servitude, abhor the men who broach such principles, and advance such practices. He must find proportionable delight from seeing the cause of Liberty flourish, from seeing it well explained, asserted and recommended.

THE advantages and blessings of Liberty are there most palpably to be discerned, where Tyranny is most heavily felt; and from this very History the reader will see, that whatever is good or amiable in the world is by Tyranny destroyed and extinguished; that whatever is evil, mischievous and detestable, is by Tyrants introduced, nurtured and propagated. From hence he will reason and recollect that every thing dear and desirable to society must result from a state of liberty; that there only property and life are not precarious, nor conscience and the faculties of the soul bound in chains: That even Religion, in order to do good, must be left entirely free, and that in countries enslaved, it is converted, even the sacred alliance between the soul of man and its Creator, is converted, into an apparent engine of tyranny and delusion, into a manifest market and commodity for deluders, who whilst they are openly engaged in nothing but gain, and fraud and domineering, and the like selfish pursuits, all very worldly, many very wicked, have the confidence to preach up self-denial, to preach against the world, and to claim successorship to the poor, wandering, holy and disinterested Apostles. A sort of [III-7] hypocrisy and assurance more insulting than all the rest of their unhallowed contradictions and doings, that such men as they, the tools of Tyranny, and themselves Tyrants, dare thus cover their pride and passions with the name and commission of the meek and merciful JESUS; dare pretend to reasoning, yet forbid all enquiry, talk of learning, and promote ignorance, demand vast reverence from the people for keeping them in a condition of savageness and slavery, and take great revenues for deceiving and oppressing them.

BY such considerations upon nations under servitude, especially under popish servitude, the most hideous and complete that the world ever saw, he will be awakened with just zeal for the preservation of his own British Liberty, and grow jealous of every attempt to abridge it; since whoever will know the value of Liberty, need only examine the dismal state of those countries where it is not.

LIBERTY, which is the people's civil salvation, cannot be too often inculcated and explained. Where Liberty is gone, what have they more? It has been often secretly undermined, often openly attacked in this free Nation. Against it many monstrous and wicked doctrines have been advanced: To overturn it the holy name of God has been boldly profaned, his sacred Word impiously perverted, all the excesses of oppression and public robbery have been encouraged and sanctified: And all this by some Oracles of the Law, in defiance of Law, by many ministers of Religion, in spite of Religion and of solemn Oaths. Injustice has usurped the name of Law; nonsense, chicanery, and the prostitution of Scripture, were called found Divinity; usurpation and misrule were stiled the Ordinance of GOD: madness was Loyalty; common sense was Treason.

THUS was every thing dear and valuable to this Nation given up: nor was it a meer compliment [III-8] officiously made, and not taken. To manifest how acceptable it was, the perjured and godless traitors who made it, were openly distinguished with protection and rewards: To refute their reveries and barbarous positions, was dangerous, forbidden, nay,

capital; and to prevent the poor people, thus doomed to bondage and misery, from perceiving how inhumanly they were abused and betrayed by their professed guides and pensioners, and by these their paid protectors, they were blinded and terrified by the witchery of words and superstition, nay, threatened with damnation if they would not be damned to be slaves.

WHAT language can paint such shocking wickedness and delusion! Surely none ever feared God so little as some who have spoken in his name; none have ever been so void of humanity towards men as many who assumed a right to guide them to all happiness. Nor was it possible for any man to deliver such tenets as from God, without being either a bold Impostor, or an Enthusiast stark mad, a hard-hearted Knave, or a dreaming Lunatic. In truth, these doctrines of theirs were as notoriously selfish as they were notoriously wicked and absurd. Whenever they themselves were caressed, they never failed to justify oppression and to deify oppressors. Whenever they thought themselves slighted, though bereft of nothing but the power of doing mischief, they ever laboured with all bitterness to distress and even to destroy every administration however legal, however free from any violation offered to oaths and laws. Could there be a stronger demonstration, that such a spirit came not from a gracious and a just God, or from reason, or from any concern for right and justice, and the good of men? And was it not evidently inspired by the foulest ambition, by malice and rage, and every corrupt and ungodly passion? Could they after this expect to be trusted [III-9] or respected by men, they who had shewn themselves such restless enemies to society and the good of men?

To vindicate the Deity from the impious charge of protecting Tyrants, to maintain the cause of Liberty, and shew its blessings, to assert the rights of men and of society, and to display the sad consequences of public corruption, with the beauty and benefit of public virtue, is the design of these discourses. The design I hope is pardonable, and in pursuing it I can truly say, that I was utterly divested of all personal passions, of every partiality, friendship or enmity, and utterly free from any view to hurt or to flatter any man in the world. If I inveigh against any of the dead, or praise them, it is for a warning and incitement to the living. To explain the evils of Tyranny lay directly in my way, and tended to shew the value, the inestimable value of Liberty.

WHAT so nearly concerns the happiness of all men, it imports every man to know. It is but knowing their birthright, with the measures of securing it, as also the peril and ways of losing it, and the curse attending the loss. It is a subject of infinite availment, and comprehends whatever is dear to men in the world; it furnishes the strongest truths, the clearest reasonings, and is perplexed with no intricacies. The great question arising from it, is chiefly this, whether men have a right to what God and Nature has given them, to what their own Laws and Constitutions confirm to them, to what the Oaths and Duty of their Magistrates testify to belong to them: Whether that sort of government which is evidently best for men, be well pleasing to the Deity, or whether he espouses and approves the worst. What question ever admitted of a clearer answer? Yet what tomes of nonsense and ungodly falshoods have been published about it, to sanctify oppression, to [III-10] blast and overthrow all the natural and civil rights of men!

COMMON happiness and security are the ends of society; to procure these ends is the duty of Governors; where they are procured it is the duty of subjects to obey, and reverence, and support their Governors. Where such ends are not pursued, but, in opposition to them, power degenerates into violence, and subjection into slavery; where meer will and passion bear rule, where universal misery and dread and open oppression prevail, can Government be said to exist? No; this is not the exercise of Government, but of hostility; and to resist an enemy is but self-defence; it is the law and duty of nature. Is it not repugnant to nature and to all common sense, to reverence evil, to be fond of the author of evil, and to conceive that any duty is due to him? Was it possible for the Romans to love TIBERIUS, possible to esteem

CALIGULA or NERO? It is enough that people love such as love them, that they esteem those who protect and relieve them.

DISCOURSES UPON TACITUS (PART 2)

DISCOURSE I.

Of the Emperors who are the subject of the ensuing History: Of their Ministers, their Misfortunes, and the causes of their Fall. [↩](#)

Sect. I.

An Idea of NERO's Reign, how mildly it began, how terrible it grew. The deceitfulness of prosperity.

NERO at first proposed to reign after the model of AUGUSTUS, and, upon all occasions, courted the fame of Clemency, Liberality and Courtesy; did every thing that was generous and benevolent to the Public; shewed every act of mercy and tenderness to particulars; wished, that he could not write, when he was to sign an execution; was continually doing popular and expensive things. For these he was extremely flattered: Flattery infatuated him with vanity; and by [III-12] his extravagances he became necessitous. Hence the beginning of his cruelty and rapine. He surrendered himself intirely to a course of luxury, and engaged the City in it; loved Shews and Pantomimes, found the people loved them, and thence promoted them assiduously and continually, and at last obliged men of the first quality to act in them, as he himself did.

THIS course at last grew tiresome, he first contemptible, then hated. He threw off all care of public affairs and the duty of an Emperor, to attend the Theatre, and gain the unprincely glory of singing and acting. There followed continual murders, parricides, false accusations and excesses, as if his life had been a constant struggle to shew how wicked, how execrably bad, a human creature vested with great power may be. He murdered his brother BRITANNICUS, murdered his mother AGRIPPINA, his wife OCTAVIA, his wife POPPÆA, ANTONIA his wife's sister, because she would not marry him, VESTINUS the Consul, to have his wife; murdered most of his own kindred, all of them that were signal for merit or fortune, or splendor, or popularity, RUFIVS CRISPINUS his wife's son, SENECA his ancient Præceptor and Counsellor, with BURRUS Captain of his guards, a venerable and excellent person: as also all the rich freedmen at court, all such ancient men as had at first promoted his adoption, and then his sovereignty. At last he murdered men by heaps with their families and children, by the knife, by poison, by drowning, by starving, by torture and casting them headlong; and all for any cause or no cause, some for their name or that of their ancestors, some for their faces, looks and temper. He robbed the Provinces, robbed the Temples, wasted the public Treasure, murdered the best men, oppressed all, and brought all things into a state of dissolution and desolation. [III-13] These with him were the measures of Government, such as he said his predecessors (though brutal and raging Tyrants) had failed in, and he blamed them for not understanding their own power [a]. He destroyed Rome by fire, meant to destroy the Senate by the sword, and rejoiced at the first tydings of a revolt, as thence he hoped for a pretence to sack and pillage the Provinces.

PRINCES in the flow of their power and grand fortune (things so apt to turn the head and swell the heart) should prevent overmuch giddiness and insolence, naturally cleaving to grandeur, by supposing themselves now and then in a state of distress, and considering the great possibility of a change: They should at least put themselves in the place of others, their subjects and inferiors, and as they would then wish to be used by their Prince, let them use their People. They should reflect how much a tumult of spirit caused by prosperity darkens or

suspends the understanding; they therefore ought to suspend their joy and stifle their vanity and passions, to consult and exercise their reason. Instead of this, they seldom quit their exultation till that quits them, nor hear reason till reason can do them no good, but only serve to reproach and torment them. CROESUS King of Lydia could not bear the behaviour of SOLON, for telling him honest truth and refusing to magnify his power and felicity. But when misfortune and captivity had abated his pride, and brought him to his senses; when he who had been lately so elated and happy, saw a dreadful doom prepared for him, he could sigh, and call mournfully upon the name of SOLON, and prefer his wisdom to the wealth of the world. CROESUS seems to have been a man of sense and natural moderation, but blinded by fortune and flattery.

[III-14]

Sect. II.

The weakness of GALBA, and the iniquities of his Ministers.

GALBA, with an heart altogether upright and well-meaning, for want of prudence, activity and a good head, fell into measures quite unpopular and odious. His severity to the soldiery was ill-timed, so was his strictness and parcimony; and he who was a new Prince, unestablished, and should have courted all men because he wanted the assistance of all, behaved himself so as to disoblige the Armies, the Senate, the Equestrian Order, and the People. Besides, he was blindly controuled, and his authority abused by his servants and ministers, men who were continually prostituting the credit and character of their Master to their own vile gain and wicked passions. By them all things were set to sale, Offices, Provinces, public Revenues, public Justice, and the lives of men both innocent and guilty. He was old, they were insatiable, and eager to make the most of a short reign; and as he was easy and credulous, they were daring and rapacious. From him they enjoyed their place and honours and all their advantages, but employed the same not for his benefit, but their own: Nay, every service which they did to themselves was pernicious to him, since whilst they reaped all the profit, he bore all the odium.

In truth no Prince will be long reckoned good, when his Ministers are known to be bad; and if they are much hated, he will not be much beloved. Few Princes, if any, escape reproach where their Ministers are believed to deserve it. It must be owned that Ministers are often wronged, and suffer imputations very ill-grounded and unjust; nay, perhaps, will be ever doomed to suffer such, from the nature of their post and power; and where they do [III-15] so, it is but reasonable and generous to protect them. But here the guilt was glaring, and their iniquities manifest to all men but GALBA. He whom of all men it most imported to know it, knew it not. As he never inquired into their behaviour, nor blamed it, they never mended it, nor feared him. The sad fate which this their corruption and his own indolence and incuriosity brought upon him, is a sufficient warning to Princes either never to trust implicitly to the advice and conduct of any Ministers, or at least to be well assured that the men are such as may be implicitly trusted. The best of them have weaknesses, and passions, and partialities, enow to lead them into rashness and mistakes: There are therefore perhaps none of them so perfectly innocent and wise, as to render a discerning Prince secure that their management, however uninspected, however unaccountable, will yet be righteous and immaculate. Ministers no more than their Masters ought to be left without restriction and controul. It may perhaps be right in some few instances to deceive a Prince, it may be of public advantage to mislead the Public: But such a latitude will be ever more likely to be abused than well applied.

Sect. III.

The folly of the evil measures pursued by these Ministers, how pernicious to themselves

NOT to dwell upon the ingratitude and vileness of GALBA'S Ministers, thus to abuse, discredit and ruin a Prince to whom they owed all things, and to sacrifice him, his glory and diadem, to sordid interest, which was the smallest thing that they ought to have sacrificed for him, their ancient Emperor, and so good a Master; the measures which they took proved pernicious to themselves. [III-16] Their policy was folly, and though they pursued nothing but their interest, they were not interested enough. The best interest is that which provides for our own reputation and security. Now the Ministers of GALBA, by every step which they took, invited and hastened their own doom. Their safety and establishment depended upon his, and these they were continually weakening and rendering odious and contemptible, and themselves detestable. Their daily oppressions, their daily acts of venality and rapine, multiplied their enemies without measure. Nay, to their own enormous guilt they added the odium of that of others, even that of the most execrable instruments of NERO'S Tyranny, TIGELLINUS and HALOTUS, men whose execution was demanded by the universal voice of the Roman People. Indeed had these two sons of blood been less guilty than they really were, it had been but just, as well as politic and popular, to have devoted their impure lives to the Manes of so many illustrious Romans murdered by them, and to the honest rage of the Public. But this was only justice and reason, it was only obliging the People and strengthening their Master: small considerations with VINIUS, and LACO, and ICELUS, in comparison of filling their coffers and gratifying private passions! They protected both; and thence gained to their Prince what they never studied to avert, infinite public hate, but to themselves what they aimed at, and what every one may conjecture. It is probable too that they dreaded the precedent of punishing any man for having done what they themselves were doing. Yet their very wealth contributed to their destruction and that of their families.

BUT besides the influence of money and example, TITUS VINIUS who chiefly protected TIGELLINUS, had another view which is finely expressed [III-17] by TACITUS; namely, "thence to purchase means of shelter and escape in time to come. For this is the policy of every desperate offender, from distrust of present fortune, and dread of change, to arm himself betimes with private favour against the public hate. Hence it comes, that for the protection of innocence no regard is shewn; but the guilty combine for mutual exemption from punishment." Such was the selfish wisdom of VINIUS: But his wisdom proved weakness; for, by protecting the abhorred TIGELLINUS, he drew fresh abhorrence upon himself. The People, after OTHO had succeeded, were so bent upon the execution of TIGELLINUS, that an uproar ensued, and many seditious clamours, till the sentence was passed for his doom, now overlate, as it was plainly forced, and therefore could claim no thanks. For, under OTHO too, the same policy and corruption prevailing, justice against that monster was hardly procured.

SUCH confederacies between guilty men in power and guilty men out of power, are frequent and natural; and no man who is corrupt or intends to be, will care to join in punishing any man for corruption. MUCIANUS, the prime Confident of VESPASIAN, entertained the Senate with a long discourse in behalf of the Accusers. Yes, the Favourite of VESPASIAN, a Prince who possessed to cure and remove the mischiefs of former tyranny, became an advocate for the Accusers, the sorest instruments of that tyranny. How consistent was this! and what hopes it must give the Senate and People of Rome of seeing better days? What came he for? If it was to save the Romans, why save their worst enemies? If he meant altogether to secure the Flock why so tender of the Wolves, unless he found wolfish inclinations in himself? What [III-18] a comfortable reflection to the Public, that after myriads of men slain, after so many millions spent, after so many struggles and battles, and so much crying desolation, they were to have no change but that of names, and no Prince without oppressors! The Candidates for place and power are always bent upon public reformation, till they have an opportunity of making one, and then find it needless, or

dangerous, or unseasonable. They are great enemies to oppression, till they are in a capacity of oppressing. Then, as their own guilt grows, they become very merciful to the guilty. This is the spirit of man, this the round of things. Great redresses are still wanted, still promised, still unperformed. Such Mockery is not new, and never will be old.

ALL wickedness is folly; nor can I recollect an instance where evil doings have not been followed by painful consequences to the doers. They were either disappointed, or found new difficulties, or met with infamy and mortification, or insecurity, or some grief and uneasiness after the iniquity, such as rendered the committing of it a greater affliction than pleasure. Neither in the fortune of ALEXANDER, or CÆSAR, or MAHOMET, or of any other the most resplendent criminal against Truth, and Liberty, and Peace, is ought to be found to invalidate this reasoning. Even in their beloved pursuits of power, they could have no pure delight: Though they valued not the liberties and lives of men, yet as they valued their own security, and success, and fame, they must needs feel many inward struggles, many apprehensions and distrusts, many doubts about the issue, many anxieties for themselves, and their party and cause [a]. If worthy pursuits also are often attended [III-19] with evils, the testimony of a good conscience and of good men at least makes these evils the lighter.

HOWEVER true or disputable these speculations be, it is certain that the Ministers of GALBA, by their corrupt and selfish management, brought a bloody fate upon themselves as well as upon their Prince; a Prince who, from the integrity of his intention, merited a better, but from his blind reliance upon such wicked men could not reasonably hope for any other.

Sect. IV.

GALBA's blindness in trusting intirely to his Favourites, who by their wickedness blasted his reign, and their own hopes.

HAD GALBA been blessed with good Counsellors, he would in all probability have proved an excellent Prince. He had many public and private virtues; he was temperate, frugal, free from ambition, an enemy to the insolence of the soldiery, and wished well to the Commonwealth. But what availed his good qualities, when he exercised them not? He himself robbed no man, but those under him robbed all men; and he, who should not have employed bad men, or at least should have restrained or punished them, incurred the same censure and blame as if he himself had done the evil, or authorized it. The People justly expect protection and paternal usage from their Prince, and where they find it not, will think the Prince answerable. Why does he undertake the Office? Why is he raised so high above others, and all men, but for the good of all? Why was NERO deposed, if things were not mended under GALBA? Why a new Prince chosen, but for the ease of the Public after a reign of Violence and Tyranny? Vain is [III-20] the change of men, where measures are not changed [b].

GALBA left the administration, he left his own fate and glory to his Favourites; and his Favourites sold him to dishonour, and a violent death, turned the State into a market and shambles; and whilst they were yet glutting their cruelty and avarice, the hand of vengeance overtook them, though it was reasonably judged that some of them had tried to secure a retreat, and had purposely betrayed GALBA to merit favour from OTHO. It is the way of such men: when they have foolishly or wantonly ruined their Master's affairs, their last office to him is to revolt from him, and perhaps it proves the first instance of their dealing sincerely with him. But whether they really meditated treason or not, they were believed to have done it: Such was the public opinion of their vileness and falshood; and such always will be the general rule of judging, that from men notoriously wicked every sort and degree of wickedness will be apprehended.

It is worth observing here how short-sighted and imperfect was the ambition of these men, and how foolishly, as well as wickedly, they marred what they aimed at. Was it glory and power? By consulting and establishing those of their Master, they would have reaped an abundant share to themselves. Good men would have applauded and assisted them; bad men would have feared them: They would have had inward peace, perhaps protection, from their own good works, reverence from the public voice, and the praises of posterity. By the same honest means they might have acquired wealth, and ample fortunes, with the approbation of all men, and probably left it to the peaceable possession of their families. They had the largest opportunities for raising and [III-21] establishing their name: They were the first Ministers in the great and opulent Empire of Rome, vested with the first dignities, and first in favour; and they served a Prince easy to his servants, too easy, one never disposed to check or change them.

As he came to the Empire with great expectation, and popular favour, had his administration proved steady and virtuous, all revolts might have been prevented, or, through his superior credit and strength, easily defeated, and he might have gone to his grave in peace and glory. Both his Rivals were in their persons extremely unpopular, both loathed for their vices, both desperately poor, neither of them esteemed in War, neither thought qualified for the arts of Peace, one a stupid Glutton, one an abandoned Debauchee. He himself had conducted Armies with renown, governed Provinces with integrity. His race was noble, his life innocent; he possessed great wealth, and was by all men esteemed capable and worthy of swaying the Sceptre. What more probable, than that his reign might have lasted peaceably as long as his life, had his reign been well conducted? where a fairer prospect for his Ministers than under himself? By betraying him they betrayed themselves: by ill serving him, they ruined themselves. What could they expect from OTHO or VITELLIUS, but to be considered as real Traitors, or at best as corrupt and wretched Counsellors? the former always detested, the latter always despised, even by such as profit by them. AMURATH the Turkish Emperor cut off the head of the Persian Governor who betrayed a City into his hands. MYR MAHMUD dealt severely with those who had held a traitorous correspondence with him from Ispahan, declared their names infamous, their estates confiscated, and had them all put to death, and their carcasses thrown into the streets. Thus too the Emperor MAXIMIN served MACEDO [III-22] who had prompted his bosom-friend QUARTINUS to revolt, and then slew him to make a merit with MAXIMIN, who, for all his wicked merit, put him to death.

Sect. V.

The infatuation of men in power; they generally rely upon it as never to end, and thence boldly follow the bent of their passions. Instances of this. Guilty Ministers how dangerous.

WHAT I have observed in the last Section was reasonable and obvious. But in the tumult of rampant passions, reason is not heard. Those Ministers were transported with the sudden change of their condition, and giddy with the direction of Imperial Power. The present temptation, the prevailing appetite was too strong to be resisted; and, without regard to consequences, to the Emperor's honour and safety, to the public good, to their own infamy and danger, they blindly followed every impulse of concupiscence and revenge. Men in a torrent of prosperity seldom think of a day of distress, or great men, that their greatness will ever cease. This seems to be a sort of a curse upon power, a vanity and infatuation blended with the nature of it: as if it were possible, nay, easy, to bind the fickleness of fortune, and ensure happiness for a term of years. It is from this foolish assurance, often cleaving to very able men, that those in authority often act with such boldness and insolence, as if their reign were never to end, and they were for ever secure against all after-reckonings, all casualties and disgrace. From whence else comes it, but from such blind security in the permanence of their condition, and in the impunity of their actions, that Ministers have sometimes concerted schemes of general oppression and pillage, schemes [III-23] to depreciate or evade the Laws,

restraints upon Liberty, and projects for arbitrary Rule? Had they thought that ever they themselves should suffer in the common oppression, Would they have advised methods of oppressing? Would they have been for weakening or abrogating the Laws, had they dreamed that they should come to want the protection of Law? Would they have aimed at abolishing Liberty, had they apprehended that they were at any time to fall from power; or at establishing despotic Rule, but for the sake of having the direction of it against others, without feeling its weight and terrors in their own particulars?

A GREAT man near an hundred years ago is changed with having contrived such a model of government for one of our English Kings, as was intirely arbitrary and Turkish, a model deliberately digested in writing. Such a monstrous change of mind had ensued the change of his condition: Formerly he had breathed a very different and opposite spirit, and asserted Liberty with uncommon zeal: It was when he came to sway the State that he altered his stile; which it is probable he would not have altered, had he not imagined that his sway was to have no end. He lived to see it at an end. He, who had but too lightly esteemed Laws and Liberty, and the Lives of men, was bereft of Liberty and Life in a manner contrary to the forms of Law; and as he had promoted lawless and unaccountable power, he fell by an effort of power, unusual and extraordinary. A wicked Minister, who declared in a succeeding reign, that he hoped to see the King's Edicts (that is, his absolute will and humour) have the force of Laws, and pass for Laws, made this declaration in plenitude of favour, which, as he meant not by any virtue of his to lose, he hoped never to forfeit; made it at a time when his head would have been employed in framing such [III-24] Edicts. When afterwards he was abandoned to disgrace, I trust he had different sentiments about kingly power, and perhaps would not willingly have seen his life and estate taken away by a proclamation.

SUCH a reverse in the fortunes of men, especially of great men, who depend upon the caprice, and whim, and breath of another, were easy to be imagined, did not self-love darken the understanding. The greatest men, nay, the wisest men, when they are blind, are exceeding blind. How few of them have provided against an evil day! How few secured themselves a resource of friendship and affection from the Public, in case of a storm at Court, and the frowns of a Crown! nay, what some of them have done to serve the Crown against the People, has been a motive with the Crown (and a politic motive, though not always a just one, at least not generous) to sacrifice them to the pleasure and revenge of the People. Thus CÆSAR BORGIA used ROMIRO D'ORCO, Governor of Romagna, one first employed to commit cruelties, then executed for having committed them; and thus the Great Turk often uses his Bashaws.

To return to GALBA; no Prince was ever more unhappy in his Favourites: They were very wicked, very guilty men; nor can any Prince, who entertains such, be happy or secure. Mr. SELDEN, discoursing of EDWARD II. and his Minions, says, "Thus Favourites, instead of cement between Prince and People, becoming rocks of offence, bring ruin sometimes to all, but always to themselves." Those of GALBA had but their deserts: Their Master merited a better fate, and chiefly through their guilt his blood was shed. Great guilt in Ministers is threatening to a Prince. When they can no longer support their Master, nor their Master them, their next course will probably be to desert [III-25] him, or to rebel against him. As by their wicked administration they had betrayed his interest and dignity, destroyed his reputation, the dearest interest which a Prince can have, incensed and estranged the minds of his people, who are the surest support which a Prince can rely on, it is by no means unnatural, if at last they destroy him whom they had already undone. I shall hereafter prove this by many examples.

Sect. VI.

Weak and evil Princes rarely profit by able Ministers; they like flatterers better: These

frustrate the good advice of others.

EVEN when these Roman Emperors happened to have good Ministers, they rarely made any good use of them, but followed the advice of others and worse: For with bad they were always provided. Hence it is, that as a weak or an evil Prince seldom has good counsel, he is seldom the better for it when he has. SÜETONIUS PAULINUS and MARIUS CELSUS were able men, and probably would have made the cause of OTHO triumphant, had OTHO pursued their counsels. But about all such Princes, for one honest or able man, there will be many foolish and base, and it is great odds but these have much more influence and weight; as they are more forward and impudent, more positive and sanguine, more prone to flatter him, and assure him of success (a method which goes great lengths with Princes); and, as they are worse judges of measures, less concerned about events. Perhaps too they have already made, or mean to make terms for themselves, whatever becomes of their Master. So CÆCINA came to desert VITELLIUS, and to espouse the cause of VESPASIAN, when he was assured that the merits [III-26] of his treason would be rewarded by the latter. Perhaps they are bent upon the ruin of some Rival at Court, For this has also happened, that men have betrayed their own cause out of pique to some particular Leader in it; Armies have been often suffered, by one of the Commanders, to be cut to pieces, purely to bring disgrace upon the other, and LACO, Captain of the guards to GALBA, even in the last struggle of his Prince for saving his life and Empire, opposed every counsel, however wholesome, which came from any one else, particularly from TITUS VINIUS.

Titianus, Otho's brother, and PROCULUS, Captain of his guards, thwarted and frustrated every good advice, every rational project of PAULINUS and CELSUS, and as they were better flatterers, they were better heard. They were both very wicked men; PROCULUS particularly excelled in slander and whispering, and was an adroit Courtier. It was thus that this man, full of craft and injustice, came easily to surpass in credit all who were more righteous than himself. OTHO, moreover, as well as these his Favourites, dreaded and distrusted every able man, relied chiefly upon talebearers, and made his chief court to the common soldiers. So did VITELLIUS, and so probably will most weak and guilty Princes. They dislike to see any man exceed them in prowess, and public estimation, or to possess the credit arising from address, good conduct, and military exploits. Nay, such of them as most eminently want Governors, are sometimes the most fearful of being governed. LEWIS the thirteenth dreaded the great capacity of Cardinal RICHELIEU, and hated his person; as did NERO the person and authority of SENECA.

THE danger of serving such Princes ill, is not greater than that of serving them over-well, nor perhaps so great: and many great Ministers and [III-27] Generals have been ill used and undone for doing eminent service, and discharging their duty with applause; such as CAIUS SILIUS, ANTONIUS PRIMUS, and GONSALO, the great Spanish Captain, under FERDINAND the Catholic. From this weakness and pride of theirs, they are sometimes prone of themselves to follow the advice of weak counsellors rather than of such as are able and sufficient, partly from jealousy of the latter, partly from an ambition of being thought to do notable things without them, and of reaping all the praise themselves, at least of seeing it reaped by such whose moderate ability and character gives them no umbrage.

HENCE the signal miscarriages of Princes who have wise Ministers but neglect their wise advice. NERO was assisted, or might have been, by the counsels of SENECA and BURRUS, and it was no fault of theirs that he proved a detestable Tyrant. What advice he took, was that of Sycophants, Debauchees, Pandars, of the worst and off-cast of humankind. These told him what an accomplished Prince he was, what ripeness of judgment he had, what maturity of years; and being no longer a child, it was high time for him to shake off his Tutor. For towards SENECA they bore notable rancour and antipathy, as was natural to such profligates who then swarmed at Court; and whilst he was there, he still proved some check to the brutal

spirit of NERO; a thing which pleased not the Courtiers, nor NERO himself: For with such Princes flattery in their servants is more palatable and prevailing than virtue and ability.

[III-28]

Sect. VII.

How difficult it is for a worthy man to serve a bad Prince, and how dangerous.

IN like manner was OTHO hurried through evil counsel and conduct into evil fortune, though served by such Leaders as PAULINUS and CELSUS. Such is the risque which an able and worthy man incurs by serving a weak Prince, even to have his good counsels rejected, and to bear the blame and discredit of evil counsels which he had disapproved. For upon the most signal Minister all the reproach will be apt to rest, and he must bear the infamy of the worst; nor perhaps will it be safe for him to disown the foolish and disastrous measures which he opposed, lest he thence cast a blemish upon his Master. Even some able Princes have looked with an evil eye upon the person and credit of an able Minister, and perhaps it is the safest way of advising the best of them, to let the advice seem to come from themselves. Such is the slippery situation of good Ministers under Princes wise or weak; a situation not to be envied.

OTHO miscarried; and as PAULINUS and CELSUS were thought his directors, they were likewise thought traitors: so infamous were the measures which he had pursued, and which they in truth had opposed. Yet afterwards PAULINUS and PROCULUS meanly descended, for their own safety, to confess that they had contrived them purposely; and for favour from VITELLIUS pleaded the merit of having betrayed OTHO. VITELLIUS too was vain enough to believe, that, out of pure regard for him, they had really stained themselves with such foul dishonour. It was shameful to own that they had, though they had not. But so differently do men construe actions done for them and [III-29] against them, and so rare it is to find the bravest men completely brave, any more than the wisest men completely wise. The qualities of all men are limited, and subject to inconstancy; else such a man as PAULINUS, who had so often ventured his life for glory, would never have studied to save it by infamy. It was, however, much less criminal to assume guilt, than to have earned it.

It must be owned, it required either very great virtue or very great folly to serve such Princes as some of these Emperors were; though it was cruel and unjust to betray them. By raising to the Diadem such men as OTHO and VITELLIUS, it looked as if the design had been, not to find one fit to restore the Roman State, shaken, ravaged, and tyrannized by the bloody NERO, but to chuse one purely for his resemblance of that Monster, one as monstrous as he. They were both guilty of the same debauchery and excesses, both studied to imitate him, and to restore his name and honours; nay, divine honours were already paid solemnly to his Manes. It was even reckoned one of OTHO's qualifications for reigning, that in his manners he so neatly resembled NERO. For this the soldiers adored him; and for this the common people loved him, as they had NERO, and as the vulgar ever will any man who gratifies them with idleness, and the means of debauchery. What, for example, is more pernicious to a State, to public Virtue, to private Industry and Innocence, than rioting and idle holy-days? Yet what more dear to the populace than such debauched and riotous days, and the holy idle men who encourage them? I speak of Italy, and other Popish countries.

IN serving such Princes, there was neither honour nor security to one's self, nor benefit to the Public. Their chief delight was in feats of prodigality and voluptuousness, in Jesters, Pathics and Buffoons, [III-30] and all the execrable retainers to NERO's Court. They thought that the business of Sovereignty consisted in excesses and sensuality. Their measures of Government were to oppress and exhaust the State, to depress or destroy every good man, to countenance and employ the most profligate: Or, if they employed men of merit, they did it against their will, and the more they were obliged to such men, the more they hated them; as

VITELLIUS did JUNIUS BLÆSUS, a man nobly born, of a princely spirit, and equal fortune, one who served him generously, and at a vast expence furnished him with a princely train, which the great poverty of VITELLIUS could not yet afford: For all this he incurred the Emperor's distaste, and was repaid in hollow flattery, and sincere hate. Who could cheerfully serve a creature whom he could not help despising, and probably had cause to fear, one by whom he knew himself dreaded, perhaps hated?

Sect. VIII.

Under wicked Princes, how natural and common it is to wish for a change. Their different treatment living and dead. In what a Prince is chiefly to confide.

DOUBTLESS all good men, all prudent men, all who wished the good of the Empire, the tranquillity of Rome, and security to themselves, had their eye upon a change. A better there might be, a worse there could not. All endeavours exerted in behalf of such rash, raging and polluted Tyrants, tended only to prolong public misery and disgrace, as well as the ruin and perils of particulars. They who served them with most applause, must expect distrust and ill usage in return, at best to be dismissed, perhaps to be destroyed, as was that glorious [III-31] Commander CORBULO by NERO, and the illustrious AGRICOLA thought to have been by DOMITIAN. Men wicked and corrupt are always suspicious; and it was natural for them to dread and hate the best men for being the best. Nor could either OTHO or VITELLIUS, with a good grace, complain of being deserted and betrayed. It was no more than they themselves had done to GALBA, who confided in them whilst they were revolting from him.

BESIDES, such was their character with the Public and the public opinion concerning them, such the wrong measures which they took, such the weak and evil counsellors whom they followed, that it was manifest they could not stand. And when Princes begin to totter, the zeal of their adherents always begins to slacken. They who were the foremost to flatter them, are also foremost to censure them; and, as a Prince in power never fails to have merit and applause, a Prince who is fallen or falling, never wants faults and reproach. It was thus with GALBA: How much zeal, how many warm professions did he find whilst he stood? How many upbraidings, how much contumely pursued him after he fell? It was thus with OTHO, thus with VITELLIUS. They were adored and traduced, as fortune was seen to espouse them or to forsake them. And thus it will be with all Princes. It is seldom that they will hear truth, seldom that others will venture to tell it. They must therefore form a judgment of the opinion of the Public, and of their own stability, from their own actions and administration, from the character of the Ministers whom they employ, and of the measures which they pursue, and not from the sayings and soothings of those about them, nor from the shouts of a crowd, nor from the fidelity of their Generals. All these lights may be deceitful, and have deceived [III-32] many. But a righteous conduct may be boldly trusted. At worst, who would not rather fall by it, than subsist by vileness and iniquity? He who falls through virtue is a gainer, whatever he loses; as he who gains by wickedness is certainly a loser, whatever he gains. Virtue is equivalent to all things, and the wages of wickedness are worse than nothing. Nor is this speculation only, and mere refining, but holds in practice, and the commerce of life.

DISCOURSE II.

Of competition amongst the Ministers of a Prince, and their corruption. The evil effects of indolence in a Prince.↵

Sect. I.

Discord between Ministers, how fatal to their Masters.

THE strife and discord between the Ministers of a Prince, who wants authority to controul them, and capacity to make advantage of their difference, never fail to be of mischievous consequence. The Ministers of GALBA were daily striving not to serve him, not to save the State, but to distress and disappoint one another. Between the Ministers of VITELLIUS the like enmity prevailed. He could do nothing without them, they did nothing but contend with one another; and by seeming partial to VALENS he provoked CÆCINA to hate him, and at last revolt from him. For SABINUS (VESPASIAN'S brother) knew his disgusts, and improved them; and by representing his [III-33] unequal usage from VITELLIUS, drew him to embrace the party of VESPASIAN. Nor was this his desertion and infidelity a new or uncommon thing: It is the usual result of such competitions. When an ambitious man cannot engross the whole power and favour. he will renounce what he has, though ever so much, and concur with an enemy to pull down a rival. With such men the fear of public and avowed enemies is not so prevalent and alarming as that of a secret Competitor. Cardinal MAZARIN was abhorred by the faction of the Frondeurs, yet concerted with them for the ruin of the Prince of Condé, even when the Frondeurs were offering the Prince their assistance to destroy the Cardinal, whom the Prince had protected from their vengeance. The Prince afterwards, in emulation to the Cardinal, called in the Spaniards, the natural enemies of France.

THE vile and malicious Eunuchs, they who governed all things under SCHAH HUSSEIN, Emperor of Persia (a few years since deposed by the Agvans) were more afraid of their own Generals, especially if they proved honest and able, than of these Barbarians and public enemies. They were therefore continually destroying every brave commander, and thence daily advancing the interest and conquests of the invaders. This will account for their hasty and amazing success. Yet after they had gained many Provinces, were ravaging the heart of the Empire, and advancing with terror and rapidity to besiege the Capital, the Emperor having appointed a faithful and experienced General, had regained most of the country, and was upon the point of retrieving all; till the Eunuchs, the execrable governing Eunuchs, set themselves, with all their might and malice, to ruin his preserver and the preserver of the State, because no man should have more credit than themselves. They effected their [III-34] wicked purpose, and made that good-natured easy Prince believe, that his deliverer was his enemy, and they themselves his only vigilant guardians, whilst they were disgracing his Government, and overturning his Throne.

WHEN an army was defeated, one faction at Court (for the wretched Eunuchs were always divided into two) never failed to rejoice; as the General being preferred by one faction, was always and certainly maligned by the other. The loss of Armies, the desolation of the Kingdom, the dishonour of their Royal Master, the miseries of the poor unoffending People, touched them not. They hated domestic rivals more than public enemies. There followed, or rather there attended such competition and misrule, an intire dissolution of government. No Magazines, no stores, no experienced officers; nothing fit for the field. Even when all was lost but the Capital, and that was besieged; when the sword was pressing them from without, fear and famine within, these merciless wretches forbore not to cabal against every effort for deliverance, because no man should have the glory of effecting it, and thence endanger or eclipse them.

Sect. II.

*An indolent Prince a ready prey to the falsest and worst of all men: These disgrace his
Reign, and provoke his people. — Their amazing corruption.*

WHEN a Prince neglects himself and his own credit, all men will be apt to neglect him: The worst men will be sure to gather about him, and then the best men cannot serve him. SCHAH HUSSEIN had been served by able Ministers, brave Generals; but the Eunuchs disappointed all their endeavours, and often destroyed their fortunes and lives. Weak and indolent Princes always trust [III-35] men too much or too little; and it behoves every Prince to be wary what sort of persons he entertains about him in any station, since all such, however low, will always have some degree of influence and be able to hurt him. If they cannot mislead him (which yet they will probably endeavour, probably accomplish) they can at least discredit him either by reviling him, or by behaving themselves corruptly, and thence bring a stain upon him. For a Prince always suffers by the ill behaviour and depravity of his servants, especially where they meddle in the distribution of favours or punishments.

GALBA'S common domestics and even his slaves were considerable enough to dishonour the Sovereignty of their Master, because they were known to sell all places and all acts of grace. The Emperor, who should have considered the desert of particulars, should have considered their capacity and pretensions, as well as his own reputation and the justice of bestowing benefits worthily, neglected this useful and important duty, and left it to the administration of his domestics, who discharged it to his reproach and their own gain. With these mercenary and faithless knaves it availed not how much or how fast they disgraced, and consequently ruined their good old Master, provided they could by his indulgence and their own villainy acquire money: Though every step that they took to raise themselves in this dishonourable way, was a step taken to sink him, since in his fame and reputation, which they were thus polluting and pulling down, his best strength lay.

INDEED it never fails to sour and provoke the People, People of all ranks, when they see underlings and upstarts, perhaps vagabonds and strangers, rise, by the mere countenance and indolence of a Prince, into pomp and wealth; see his Butler or his Barber possessed of fortune sufficient for the qualifications of [III-36] many Senators. If upon themselves only they brought public odium, it were of little moment; but by such infamous gain they bring infamy upon their Patron and their Prince, not to mention the just resentment of all such whose reasonable pretensions are thus defeated. So considerable is the evil and danger to a Prince in having venal minds about him. GALBA was as much undone by the corruption of his servants, as by the corruption and violence of the soldiers.

To the Emperor SCHAH HUSSEIN there was no access but through the favour of the Eunuchs, nor any merit considered by them but that of money. These filthy slaves sold the royal protection, sold the royal favours to the best bidder, and made public traffic of public employments and justice. Hence all emulation in merit was extinguished, where no sufficiency, no virtue was regarded. Hence also public oppression, with private extortion and rapine, in all forms; since they who had exhausted themselves to purchase places, were forced to exercise all sorts of villainy and spoil to repay themselves, and to feed their insatiable Patrons the Eunuchs with continual bribes for protection and impunity. Thus all Persia groaned under depredations and licensed spoilers. Formerly no thefts or robberies were known amongst them, because the Governors of the places and provinces were answerable for the damage, and took special care to prevent it. But under SCHAH HUSSEIN robbery was common, and even encouraged, because the Governors had a share, or, in civil words, a perquisite. Nor had they ought to fear from justice, for none was stirring. As long as they had prudence and a purse to fee the Eunuchs, they might spoil and ravage without mercy or shame. He must be a very simple knave, unworthy to be an oppressor, who

would not resign a part to save himself and the whole.

[III-37]

THE Eunuchs, the most barbarous bloodsuckers that Persia had ever seen, were, forsooth, such enemies to blood, that they taught the Emperor a cruel piece of false mercy, that of putting no man to death for any crime whatsoever. Thus these pious deceivers secured themselves. Then by their advice he turned all punishments into pecuniary mulcts; but, as his conscience scrupled to receive ameracements for sin and crimes, they who taught his conscience this tender lesson for their own good, had the fingering of all these fines. Thus these gentle hypocrites enriched themselves.

THE public Tax in Persia was fixed and certain, and every town paid yearly such a limited and constant sum. This the Governors could not alter: But as the mulcts for offences are arbitrary, they were discovering perpetual offences and raising perpetual fines, and thus pillaged the people of sums mighty and uncertain. They used by these money-penalties to levy at once six times more upon some towns than these towns paid to the public Tax in a whole year. Even by the Governor of Isaphan, the capital of the Empire, and seat of Government, thieves and robbers were put to ransom. Such as had not robbed sufficiently to satisfy him and gain his favour and a release, were kept in jail, yet let out at nights to rob again and again; and by their last robberies they cleared themselves of punishment for all the former.

[III-38]

Sect. III.

The Reign of an indolent Prince, how destructive it may prove, however harmless the man. Into what contempt he falls.

NOW whence all the abovementioned crying injustice, whence this absence of all equal protection and deprivation of all Law in Persia; whence all this anarchy and spoil of the greater over the smaller, this general and rampant iniquity, this sacrifice and oppression of innocence? Came it not all from one root, the baseness and corruption of those about the Throne, and the weakness of him upon it? SCHAH HUSSEIN was a Prince of infinite good nature, full of generosity, full of mercy and compassion; his mind of that delicacy and tenderness, that he was startled and alarmed upon having shot a Duck in one of his canals, when he meant only to have frightened her. He thought himself polluted with blood, and for expiation had recourse to acts of devotion and alms-deeds. For he had likewise a world of religion; so much religion, that when fire had seized the great Hall of the Palace, full of wealth and rich furniture, he would not suffer it to be extinguished, for fear of opposing the decrees of Providence. He gave immense Charities, built Monasteries, endowed Hospitals, performed long Pilgrimages, one Pilgrimage of six hundred miles.

Now what availed his good-nature, what his compassion or his religion? He would not hurt a Duck, but suffered his Subjects to be pillaged and undone, brought war and desolation upon his Country. The poor man saw the Duck killed, but saw not the oppressions of his people, nor heard their cries. He seemed to have no other Kingdom or care than his Seraglio. The Ladies there, not his Subjects, had all his time and benevolence; and the Governor [III-39] of a City or Province was sure to please him, if he sent him a fine Woman! No matter how that Governor used or abused the People. About this SCHAH HUSSEIN made no enquiry: If he had, his faithful advisers the Eunuchs were beforehand retained to make a favourable answer. In truth, these indulgent Tutors of his, had consulted his ease so much in withdrawing him from all the cares and fatigues of Government, by assuming the whole of that painful task to themselves, that he seemed not to believe himself interested in the

concerns or fate of his own Empire. When he was told that the public enemy approached to Isaphan; he said, "It was the business of the Ministers to look to that; they had armies ready. For his part, if his Palace at Farabath were but left him, he should be content." Into what insensibility, what weakness, and, therefore, into what contempt, had this poor harmless Prince brought himself, by trusting blindly to selfish seducers.

THAN a Prince, or a State, or great Man fallen into contempt, nothing is more contemptible, nothing is more insecure. This, I think, is an observation of LIVY. Even that religious or rather superstitious turn, with which these designing hypocrites had bewitched SCHAH HUSSEIN, the better to govern their Dupe by such ghostly fears, was of pernicious consequence to his People. In one long pilgrimage which he took, to visit the tomb of a Saint, as he travelled accompanied with all his Seraglio and a guard of sixty thousand men, he oppressed and ruined all the Provinces through which he passed, and wasted more treasure than would have served for many expeditions against the invaders of Persia.

A PRINCE who neglects his affairs will always be contemned, and from the moment he is contemned, he ceases to be secure. People will be [III-40] turning their eyes and minds towards a Successor, growing impatient for a change, and perhaps be ready to make one. At best, though they may wish him well, they cannot esteem him. What esteem could the Public entertain for PHILIP the fourth of Spain, when they saw him marching to defend his Kingdom against the French, accompanied, not with a number of Officers, but with a troop of Comedians. For such had been the contrivance of the Count Duke OLIVARES, to keep him from marching too fast, and from meddling with affairs, and seeing public mismanagements. What wonder if the affairs of that Prince were so loosely conducted, if his designs miscarried, and that great Monarchy, for so long a time, made so small a figure, when the Monarch himself was resigned to absolute indolence, and not he but his Favourites reigned? Small will be the credit of a Nation abroad, when the administration is loose or wretched at home, and small the regard for a Prince who exercises not the duty of one. PHILIP was a good man, but a bad King, as it is possible that a good King may be a bad man.

Sect. IV.

A Prince beset with evil Counsellors, how fast he improves in evil.

A PRINCE who is naturally weak, or, which is the same thing, has ability, but does not apply it, is always sure of being surrounded by the worst of all men, who will be flocking about him as eagerly as a party of robbers about a rich booty, and will exert equal zeal to keep far from him all such who are not so bad as themselves. If they find him weak, they will make him wicked; if they find him wicked, they will make him worse. If they cannot make him directly cruel, they will at least make him idle, and idleness in a Prince is cruelty; since he who [III-41] governs all men, ought to be more vigilant than all. A Prince who minds not affairs, let his intention be ever so good, is liable to be eternally abused and misled; for without experience, and examination, and attending to the course of things, he can form no judgment about them; but must trust altogether to the judgment and representation of others, and thence becomes their property and machine.

THE most mischievous of all the Roman Emperors (and more mischievous the world never saw) were yet made worse by their Favourites and Flatterers. The cruelty of TIBERIUS was heightened by the bloody counsels of SEJANUS; MACRO promoted the monstrous excesses of CALIGULA; and the brutal NERO was made more brutal by the instigation of TIGELLINUS. Of all human vermin the worst are found in debauched Courts; and even a well-disposed Prince, if he be but credulous and lazy, can hardly escape being managed and corrupted by them, especially if he be addicted to pleasure. They will be continually laying baits for him, devising new scenes of voluptuousness, and keeping him immersed in sensuality.

THE Emperor COMMODUS was carefully educated by several learned men placed about him by his father the excellent MARCUS AURELIUS, who at his death left him in the hands of his own ancient friends and worthy Ministers. But he soon became weary of virtuous Men, became soon corrupted by Flatterers and debauched Courtiers, abandoned the duty of an Emperor, and surrendered himself to ease and luxury. In this course he was encouraged by his reigning Favourites, particularly by CLEANDER, who, whilst he was sunk in voluptuousness, studied to destroy him, and set up himself. SEJANUS too, from managing the whole business of the Empire, found himself in a condition of aspiring to be Emperor.

[III-42]

WHEN a Prince runs thus, like COMMODUS, into these dangers (though they were dangers of his own making, and arose from his mismanagement and folly) they sour his spirit, make him distrustful of all men, and thence mischievous and cruel to all. Thus from purposes perhaps harmless at first, he becomes at last a Tyrant. This was the fate and character of COMMODUS, who in the beginning chiefly attended to pleasure: This withdrew him from Government and the business of a Prince: Others ruled; he grew despised: Conspiracies were formed against him: These incensed him; and from being an idle voluptuary, he commenced a bloody Tyrant. He greedily hearkened to all slanders, all defamations; thought all men wicked; contracted fierce enmity to every thing that was good; abhorred and banished from his presence all men who had virtue or wisdom, as men ill sorting with his reign and genius and degenerated into a devouring savage; would see none about him but Buffoons, Pimps, Pandars, Gladiators and Charioteers, wretches as polluted as himself, and so vile as to give him no umbrage; and set himself, to butcher and destroy all who were obnoxious to him or them. Hence he grew further detested, and found that he was; and thence his fresh sallies of Fury and Tyranny. Such is the gradation, and so naturally does evil beget and multiply evil!

DISCOURSE III.

Of public Frugality.↵

Sect. I.

The Prodigality of the Emperors; its terrible consequences to the Public, namely, Tyranny, Murders and Oppression.

AMONGST all the weaknesses, vices, and excesses of the Roman Emperors who involved themselves and the Empire in calamities, none contributed more to their own ruin and that of the State, than their Profuseness and Prodigality. And upon all Princes and Countries in the world the same conduct will have the same effect. “If by popular or vain-glorious bounties we exhaust the Exchequer, by rapine and oppressions we must supply it;” said TIBERIUS very wisely. It was what his mad Successor did; he wasted the publick money, then robbed and murdered to get more. This was the course of almost all the succeeding Princes, of CALIGULA, NERO, OTHO, VITELLIUS, DOMITIAN, COMMODUS, &c. And this the continual cause of lawless oppression and killing. In taxing the People and arraigning particular men, it was not justice or guilt that were considered, but how much money could be acquired. So that wealthy men were always guilty, extravagance and murder succeeded one another naturally, a man who had a great Fortune rarely escaped being a great Traitor, and with his Life he always forfeited his Estate. Oftentimes rich men were put to death without any form at all, but only by a short direction from the Emperor to kill them, and seize all that they had. And NERO, whenever he [III-44] bestowed any public Office, always told the person; “Thou knowest what my wants require: let our joint endeavours be, that no man possess any thing.”

THESE Tyrants first brought themselves into necessities by monstrous wastefulness and dissipation, then let loose their bloodhounds to spoil and destroy men and countries for a supply. NERO declared, that he knew no other use of Treasure but to scatter it, and thought the calculation of expence (without which neither the Public nor particulars can subsist) a task only worthy of misers and mean souls; but esteemed such who knew how to lavish and confound, as spirits altogether polite and magnificent. Nor did he admire and applaud his uncle CALIGULA for any of his execrable exploits, so much as for his consuming, in so short a time, such an immense Treasure left in the Exchequer by TIBERIUS; that is to say, above one and twenty millions of our money in less than a year. He indeed closely followed the great example, insomuch that he plundered and squandered almost all that that mighty Empire could yield him. He robbed and exhausted Nations, Cities, Churches, and all degrees of men, not only of money and land, but of furniture, pictures and ornaments. From wanting, he proceeded to plundering and killing. So had his pattern and predecessor CALIGULA, who had at last descended to keep public Stews for money, whither all men were invited to encourage the Emperor, and promote his trade. He likewise kept a public warehouse for the sale of confiscated goods, which he put upon his customers at his own price. DOMITIAN too, when by every wild expence he had drained the Treasury, and involved himself in great straits, had recourse to every expedient, every trick of rapine and spoiling, and to unlimited butchery.

WHAT else could be expected, after such incredible waste, but proportionable barbarity and plunder? NERO had squandered away above seventeen millions, in mad bounties; VITELLIUS, in a few months, consumed more than seven millions, chiefly in feats of

voluptuousness and gluttony. CALIGULA in one supper spent near eighty thousand pounds, and upon his favourite horse bestowed a stable furnished with ivory and solid gold, besides a great household and train. NERO entertained TIRIDATES in Rome, at the expence of above six thousand pounds a day; and when he went away, presented him with the sum of near eight hundred thousand pounds. To MENEKRATES the Harper, and to SPICILLUS the Fencer, he gave the Palaces and patrimonial Estates of noble Romans, even those of the first dignity, such as had been distinguished with triumphal honours. Nor, after this, was it a wonder to see his Lady POPPÆA drawn by Mules covered with harnesses of Gold, or bathing herself daily in the warm milk of five hundred she-asses, such as had lately foaled.

THE revenue of the world was not equal to the expence and luxury of these Imperial Vultures, frantic with power and elevation. No matter for the misery, the want and beggary of humankind, so these profligates, the worst of the race, might but riot with their vile train of Pandars, Sycophants, Harlots, Buffoons and Informers about them; for in such only they delighted. Nations must be drained of their whole wealth and best blood, to furnish out a debauch for the chief Cannibal and his crew. To pamper a few such as were the curse and disgrace of nature, all the rest were obliged to languish, to sorrow, and to perish. Whenever a new fund was wanted, to carry on the course of voluptuousness and prodigality, it was only laying a heavy Tax upon the miserable People already undone by Taxes, [III-46] or murdering and confiscating a number of men guilty of being rich, sometimes forty at once.

Sect. II.

Only the worst men share in the bounties of an extravagant Prince, and carefully seclude the best — How ruinous his extravagance to himself and the State.

IN the bounties of a prodigal Prince the worst men always share, as by it all the rest are sufferers. Such as really deserve it, are seldom the better for it. The vitious, the idle, the impudent and the false, will naturally flock about him, and be vigilant to keep far from him whatever bears the dangerous marks of honesty, truth, or modesty. Terrible Rivals these to the Minions of Power, and never to be suffered to approach, at least not to be heard when they do. When the poor unfortunate VITELLIUS, not more unhappy in his own folly than in the falshood and corruption of his Confidants, was undoing himself by precipitate counsel, such of his officers as would have dealt faithfully with him, and advised him profitably, were debarred by the Minions, who had in truth so moulded his soft and simple spirit, that he would hear nothing but what was pleasing and pernicious, and disrelished every honest truth, as unsavoury and bitter. An honest Centurion who honourably ventured to acquaint him with his condition, with the strength and victory of his enemies, with his own weakness and loss, was reviled by him as a Traitor; usage which so incensed the brave man, that, as a proof of his sincerity, he went and slew himself.

WHO were they that reaped all the enormous gifts of the Roman Emperors? Who but Fencers, Fidlers, Jesters, Prostitutes, Voluptuaries, Procurers and Accusers, Creatures at once the most wasteful and rapacious, the pests and dishonour of Society and [III-47] of the Court, but with the Emperors chief Favourites and privy Counsellors. The Government of VITELLIUS was chiefly conducted by the vilest Mimics and Chariot-drivers; but especially by ASIATICUS, his Freed-slave: This last was his Pathic, or Male-Mistress, reckoned one of the richest men in the Empire, and the greatest rogue.

“THE followers to a King excessive in gifts, are excessive in demands, and cut them not out by reason, but by example,” says Sir ROBERT COTTON: “Favours past are not accounted. We love no favours but what are future.” Some of these observations he has taken from MONTAGNE. He adds, that “the more a Prince weakeneth himself in giving, the poorer he is in friends. For such prodigality in a Sovereign ever ends in the rapine of his Subjects.” He instances in HENRY the Third. This King, so prodigal and bountiful, was forced to sell his

Lands, sell his Jewels, pawn his Countries abroad, nay, his Imperial Crown, and even to rob the Shrine of EDWARD the Confessor. At last he had not bread for his family, was driven to quit house-keeping, and went about with his Queen and Children, from Abbey to Abbey, humbly seeking victuals and lodging.

A lamentable situation for a King or a Man; yet he deserved no other, and indeed run into it by his great obstinacy, perjury and tyranny. He had sealed, he had signed, and solemnly sworn to observe the great Charter, with many terrible execrations upon himself, or any other that broke it. Yet he afterwards broke it openly, bid open defiance to all Oaths, all Charters and Laws, had recourse to avowed Oppression, called in foreign Counsellors and foreign Guards, became an Enemy to his People and a public Spoiler. But from all his spoiling and oppressing, he gained nothing in the end but the [III-48] just recompence of such enormous measures, shame and distrust, scorn and beggary. Yet again his Oath was taken, again he swore to observe the great Charter, and was once more reinstated and supplied. But, faithless still, and despising the ties of conscience for the mischievous possession of unjust power, he once more ventured his own Damnation and a War upon his People. It must be owned, he grew wiser near his latter end, and after he had governed fifty years, began to learn from many efforts, many trials and revolutions, after much distress and disgrace, that his greatest power, his greatest safety, consisted in ruling righteously, in obeying the Laws, and using his People well.

“His immoderate liberality, says Sir ROBERT, he had found but a weak means to win love; but it lost more in gathering, than it gained in the giving. This Bounty bestowed without respect, was taken without grace, discredited the Receiver, detracted from the judgment of the Giver, and blunted the appetites of such as carried their hopes out of virtue and service.” — He that will “lay the foundations of greatness upon popular love, must give the People ease and justice. For they measure the bond of their obedience always by the good that they receive.”

Sect. III.

The waste of public Money, its tendency to produce popular Commotions and civil War. — How much men love themselves better than the Public. — Such waste seldom answers any end.

WHENCE began the civil War in Paris, during the minority of LEWIS the fourteenth, but from the extreme exactions and oppressions practised to supply the treasury, exhausted by [III-49] prodigality, and by bounties and pensions to particulars? For the Queen and the Cardinal, to recommend their administration, and strengthen themselves with friends, refused nothing, gave the public money with both hands, and by gratifying Creatures made the People mad. For the poor People must ever pay all, even for their own undoing. It may not be amiss to observe here, that, whilst the People, only were oppressed, the sovereign Courts made no opposition: But as soon as they themselves began to be cramped and squeezed, they presently grew public-spirited, and combined to make a great stand. Thence the famous Arrêt of Union of all the Parliaments. Yet the Parliament of Paris, though acting from such narrow and selfish motives, was thought the refuge of the distressed, and adored by the People, who, unless misled by some false friend, or by some superior passion, are always and naturally grateful.

THIS behaviour of the Parliament of Paris reminds me of a man who had a place in the Exchequer during our own civil War. The man was a good Cavalier, a great lover of Church and Monarchy. He had an affection for the cause and person of the King, and was concerned for his misfortunes. But whatever befell his Majesty and the Royal Interest, or that of the Church, which were both daily sinking, the good man, though very sorry, still kept his temper and his place, still preached patience and acquiescence to his friends. He saw all the

calamities of his Royal Master, saw him taken, imprisoned, hardly used, tried, nay, his head cut off, saw Monarchy it self and Episcopacy utterly abolished: He disliked all this indeed, but bore it all. He was still for submitting to the Powers that were, though he approved them not. At last the Parliament did a thing which effectually set fire to his zeal, by going about to regulate and retrench the Fees of the Exchequer. He then declared, [III-50] “That if they were for striking at Fundamentals, it was high time for all honest men to look about them.”

No bribe, no liberality can secure men void of natural honour and virtue. Many of those who had been most highly favoured by Princes, and most beholden to their liberality, were the first to desert them, and to turn against them. Many have thought the advantages given them to be no more than what were already due to their merit, and therefore no ties upon them to future service. Besides, many will be bribed and engaged to go certain lengths, but not all. And such largesses, such officious application to men by the means of money, will be apt to pass for an argument of the weakness of the Administration, and the fears of those in Power; and then the Government will be dispised, and the Leeches still craving for more. Or it will be judged that the Court hath evil and dangerous designs; and then too the price will be raised by some; others will quite fall off. Many of all these sorts quite deserted the Queen and the Cardinal; and of such as remained, few were cordial and determined, whatever they appeared.

Sect. IV.

The wisdom of Parsimony in a Prince ---- The certain distress and disgrace of such as are prodigal.

PRINCES should consider themselves as only Stewards of the public Purse, and what a breach of trust it is, what a breach of honour, nay, how cruel and criminal, to apply the People’s money otherwise than for the People’s benefit, much more to waste it wantonly, or bestow it upon Idlers, Flatterers and Debauchees. I am pleased with the frugality and public spirit of OMAR, the second Caliph after MAHOMET. He had a jewel of [III-51] great price sent him, as a present from the Greek Emperor HERACLIUS, and sold it. His friends advised him to keep it for himself. But OMAR said, he could not answer that to the Public. In proportion to this his public frugality, was the steadiness and credit of his Government; and in dealing with particulars, he was equally just and judicious.

VERY different were the measures of OTHMAN, the next Caliph, different his reputation and fate. He was partial and profuse to his Creatures, employed them however unqualified, removed the best Officers in the State to make room for them, and upon them wasted the public Treasure, which his predecessors owned to belong to the Public. But OTHMAN said that it was God’s, and that he who was successor to the Apostle of God, had a right to dispose of it as he pleased. It is probable that his Minions and Flatterers, they who gained by his mismanagement and prodigality, had been filling his weak head with wild dreams of his *Prerogative and Divine Right*, for which doubtless these pernicious hypocrites appeared very zealous. It was what others have done since; that is, they have often so infatuated a Prince with a divine right of doing whatever he pleased, (that is, a power from the good God to be mischievous to men) that he has perished in making the experiment. In which the Almighty did but vindicate his goodness from such a blasphemous imputation, and give these seducers the lye.

APROFUSE Administration is always loose, disrespected and tottering: That of OTHMAN was eminently so, and ended tragically. Public discontents and resentments, popular remonstrances and insurrections, were the natural effects of his misrule. As he had sacrificed all things to his Creatures, and regarded his Family more than the Public; it was no wonder that the People, who were not [III-52] regarded by him, grew weary of him; no wonder that they were enraged at such a scandalous diffipation of the public money to feed worthless

Favourites. And when the People whom he had provoked, had taken up arms against him, could his Favourites, whom he had so dearly purchased, protect him? No: The poor man, having lost all esteem and the hearts of his subjects, was left helpless and forlorn, and butchered in his house with the Alcoran in his lap. For OTHMAN was very devout, and perhaps saying his prayers, when his Secretary was using his name and seal to the destruction of his best subjects, and servants; a practice usual with the Secretary.

HENRY the third of France was a most lavish Prince, and according to the measure of his lavishness were his exactions and rapine. He was so buried in riot and sensuality, and his subjects so drained and pillaged, as to have it said of him, that only by his daily and heavy oppressions, they knew him to be alive. Could a more infamous thing be said of a King, one whose duty it is to be daily employed in contriving how to ease and benefit his People? He made a very different use of Sovereignty, and robbed them without mercy to satiate his Minions and his Vice: As if Royalty were only pomp and luxury, and Princes only for themselves.

HE reaped the just fruits of such extreme wickedness and folly; and suffered sorely for having made his People suffer. By his prodigality and the barbarous methods which he took to supply it, he drove them to despair; and as the first part of his reign had been wanton and oppressive, the latter part of it was miserable and distressed. He never could recover the esteem and affections of his subjects; so that ambitious men, taking advantage of the scorn and hate borne him by almost all men, hunted him [III-53] to his grave; and he who had been a man of blood, died in blood. Yet this unhappy Prince had many good qualities, and some great ones. But he was easy and profuse, and thence the property of Sycophants, Minions and Monks, and to his People a very great Tyrant.

His father too had a fine disposition and fine endowments, but his reign was grievous and intolerable; because he was profuse, and therefore rapacious. He loaded his Kingdom with heavy impositions, such as were unknown before, yet all too little to gorge a few Favourites. So that besides the general grinding of the poor people, the rich must be brought under forfeitures, and their estates given to the Leeches about the King. To accomplish this, Laws were stretched or trod under foot, evidence forged, witnesses suborned, and every execrable Court-art tried to destroy the innocent, on purpose to enrich wretches bloated with guilt and crimes. Heresy was one fruitful pretence for worrying and robbing the wealthy, that the Minions might have their spoils. To be innocent was of no availment; nor had any man, marked out for a victim, other remedy than that of redeeming his life and estate by a large price given to the Minions for their interposition with the King, who, for the sake of such blood-thirsty serpents, was become the enemy and spoiler of his People.

THE Dutchess of Valentinois, a wicked woman who governed this King and misled him, glutted her self with confiscations; especially those of the Hugonots. He himself the while was necessitous, his Government weak, and full of miscarriages and dishonour. He had spent a large Treasure left him by his father, devoured the substance of his People, seized many Estates, was forty millions in debt, yet the Kingdom not defended, nor his Dominions [III-54] preserved intire, but on all hands lost and dismembered [a].

SUCH a curse upon a King are venal and voracious Favourites: Such a curse upon the People, is a King governed by them. They never fail to bring misery and desolation upon his People, and upon him necessity and dishonour: Perhaps he escapes not so. A violent death, which shortened the days of that Prince, leaves us only room to conjecture what events his measures might have produced, had he continued them, and his reign been longer.

Sect. V.

Public Frugality and public Profusion compared in their effects. ---- Princes brought by

extravagance into distress have no resource in the hearts and purses of the People.

PARSIMONIA magnum est vectigal. It is not great Revenue, but great Frugality, that creates plenty, nor a small income, but want of thrift, that brings poverty. FRANCIS the first with a few Taxes was rich, though always in war: Such was the force of good management, that this alone sufficed for so many demands, so many expences. His Successors with numerous Taxes were poor even in peace. FRANCIS was so apprized of the sufficiency of the public Revenue even then, that he advised his son HENRY the second to ease the People, and abolish some of the Imposts, especially such as were laid on to support the War. We see how well he profited by such good counsel.

WHEN Princes, who by extravagance and mismanagement are distressed in their Finances, come [III-55] to be pressed by any public exigency, by disorders at home or war abroad (and to such exigences such Princes will be ever most obnoxious) they then find, perhaps too late, the folly and wickedness of their ill œconomy. The People whom they have provoked and abused will not help them, or, being already impoverished, cannot. Will they then have recourse to their Minions for help to defend their Crown and Dignity, and to repulse an Invader? NERO in the midst of his sports and profusion never had thought of a day of distress, or that he should ever be obliged to ask the Romans for money, and be refused: But he lived to see that day, to find wants, and none to supply them. When the Provinces and Armies were revolting, and he judged an expedition in person necessary to reclaim them, he wanted a fund to set it on foot, and commanded all orders of men to bring in such a proportion of money. But almost all men refused to contribute any thing, and, with common consent, desired, that he would rather recall all the monstrous sums which he had bestowed upon his creatures and implements, the Informers and Accusers. It was a just and a bitter return made to the deadly Tyrant.

AFRUGAL administration of the public Treasure is a sign of a well-governed State, which can never be well governed where the public Treasure is wasted and misapplied. To the honour of Queen ELIZABETH'S reign it was said, (and to her honour too much never can be said) that in her Court Majesty and Thrift strove for pre-eminence: No Prodigality, no Meanness: No Hardships upon the People; no Resentment upon the Queen. She never had oppressed nor drained her People: No wonder she had their hearts, which Mr. OSBORNE calls, very truly, the Paradise of a Prince.

HER Successor, who was always lavish, was always in wants, and ever hunting after new resources [III-56] for money; nor did he refuse any that were offered, however heavy, however scandalous. Hence so many Combinations and Monopolies, to the ruin of Trade, and the affliction of the Subject, so many vexatious Prosecutions, so many excessive and arbitrary Fines. The Bloodsuckers about him were continually preying upon him, and forcing him to prey upon the Public. Profuseness created want, and want, which tempts private men to be knaves, makes public men oppressors. All his regular Revenue, all the supplies which he had from Parliaments, with all the advantages which arose from many mean devices, many oppressive tricks to get money, were hardly sufficient to raise and support Favourites, Upstarts, Panders and Voluptuaries.

COULD the Public like such an Administration, or honour him? He was accounted at best but a King in Law, not established upon the affections of his People. It was reckoned that his Minions cost England more than Queen ELIZABETH had spent in all her Wars. He was fond of all new ways of raising money and squeezing his People, fond of all Forfeitures and Consiscations; affronted his Parliament, so that they cared not to oblige him; deceived them, so that they would no longer trust him; denied their reasonable demands, or granted and then eluded them; descended to all low shifts, and was at last thought unworthy of all confidence, submitted to have the money granted by Parliament deposited in the hands of Commissioners

appointed by Parliament, yet afterwards forced it from these Commissioners against all faith and honour solemnly plighted.

A PRINCE must be extremely despised of whom it could be said, as it was of him, "That he had no designs to hurt any people but his own; and was severe against Deer-stealers, but indulgent to Man-slayers," since no murder was punished when [III-57] the murderer had money. In return for all his Prodigality, Falshood and Oppression, he was scorned, hated, and lived in constant uneasiness and distress. In his reign began those discontents which afterwards involved the Nation in the long Civil War.

Sect. VI.

The greatest Revenues insufficient under ill management---How grievous this to the People, how baneful to the State. The true Liberality of a Prince, what. The vile spirit of flattering Casuists.

NO Revenue whatever is large enough to bear constant embezzlement. The wealth of the new World, the mines of Mexico and Peru, possessed by the Spaniards, could not keep their great Monarchy from scandalous poverty during a long course of years in the late reigns; because the Finances were miserably managed, lavished in misapplications and enormous Pensions, and diverted from the service of the State. By this means, in a great measure, that proud Monarchy, which had aimed at being universal, was become so impotent and helpless, that, far from conquering other countries, she could not defend her own, saw some of her most considerable territories torn from her, and had it not been for some of her neighbours, even such as she had formerly aimed at swallowing up, but now, for their own preservation, obliged to protect that their ancient enemy, she herself had followed the fortune of her Frontiers, and been the sport and purchase of a Conqueror. A few Provinces once her own, not very large, but very frugal, as they had at first beaten her in her best days, assisted her in her worst, and, in the greatness of their fleets and armies employed in her defence, quite surpassed her, as well as in promptness and [III-58] capacity to fit them out. Can there be a greater instance of the different effects of management and mismanagement?

UNDER the Ministry of Cardinal MAZARIN, during the minority of LEWIS the fourteenth, when money was wanted from the Finances for the service of the State, the Superintendents were wont to answer, "That there was none in the Treasury, but the Cardinal would lend the King some." With honest management the King could not have been so destitute, nor the Cardinal so abounding. When the Emperor CLAUDIUS was once complaining of the poverty and emptiness of his Exchequer, it was pertinently observed, "That he might be abundantly rich, if his two governing Freedmen would admit him for a sharer with them." NARCISSUS and PALLAS were the two meant, they who studied nothing but to ravage and spoil with all their might: No matter what the Public paid; no matter what their Master wanted.

LEWIS the fourteenth, who was extremely magnificent, that is, throwed away vast sums in pomp and vanity, when he heard of the great Confederacy forming against him, resolved to abridge his prodigious expence in building, gardens, jewels, &c. For that very year he had, in building only, spent fifteen millions. Nor could he hold his resolution to retrench, notwithstanding the public necessity so pressing, notwithstanding the private poverty so melancholy and affecting. He went on with Prodigality and Taxing. What the poor People had, he would not want; for his pity was by no means so extensive as his power.

To spare, to foster, and to enrich the People, is the true and chief Liberality of a Prince. Detestable is that Bounty which impoverishes all men. It was truly said of OTHO, that greatly deceived were they with whom his profusion and extravagances passed, [III-59] as he would have had them, under the name and guise of Generosity. The man might know how to waste and confound; but to the discreet and beneficent rules of liberality he must have been an utter

stranger. I admire a saying of HENRY the Great, (who, in truth, was a glorious Prince) that he hoped to see the time when the poorest man in France would be able to have a pullet in his pot; or words to that purpose. This shewed the true and paternal spirit of a King, such a spirit as every King ought to have, else I know no business he has with the Office. What has any King to do but to make the People happy? What have People to do with a King who makes them miserable? Yet, to the dishonour of some of our English Princes, they often claimed payment of the People, and had it, even for reasonable Laws and Concessions, and never parted with any lawless exactions without an Equivalent. They were paid for granting what it was unjust and infamous to deny.

I WAS out of countenance for a late Prince, one who affected the title of *Great* (in my opinion very preposterously) upon meeting somewhere with the following Story. He told a Mistress of his, what great peace of mind he had just received from his Confessor, to whom he had imparted his anxiety about his grinding and exhausting his People in so grievous a manner, and how readily the good man had removed all his scruples, by assuring him, that whatever they had was his own, and whatever was his own he might conscientiously take. She is said to have replied, very freely, but very justly; “And were you such a fool as to believe him?” Doubtless there was no slattery, no self-ends, nor view to favour and preferment in the State-Casuistry of this holy hard-hearted knave, who by the law of God could authorize Oppression, and sanctify the enormities of a Tyrant. Surely worse than no Religion [III-60] is that Religion which extinguishes humanity and warrants barbarity; as wicked as Tyrants are, they who countenance Tyranny, and of all Sycophants such who cajole in the name of the Lord, are the most pestilent and odious.

WHEN King JAMES the first asked Bishop NEAL, whether he might not take his People’s money without the ceremony and consent of Parliaments; the Bishop answered roundly, that he might. “God forbid, Sir, but you should: You are the breath of our nostrils.” By such cant, and the impious burlesque of Scripture, he would have warranted the overthrow of the Establishment, and let loose the King to rob his Subjects, contrary to the Duty of a King, contrary to his Coronation-oath, and against Law and the Constitution. Had the Law provided no punishment for such a poisonous parricide, such a declared enemy to Law and Liberty, and all men? To meditate the death of the King is justly made High Treason. The Bishop was for killing the Constitution. To such extreme wickedness and falshood it is probable this unhallowed pedant was led only out of regard to King JAMES’s partiality to Episcopacy, and chiefly to his being the source of ecclesiastical preferments. I know not in what other sense he could be the breath of the Bishop’s nostril: Sure I am it would have been a very lying compliment out of the mouth of the People, had they been fleeced and spoiled against Law, as the good King desired, and the pious Bishop advised. This miserable consideration was to his narrow spirit superior to the felicity of human Society, the Laws of his Country, and all things.

THE State of Athens was so sensible of the danger and mischief of embezzling or misapplying the public money, that to prevent it they made the following awful Law: “That whereas a thousand [III-61] Talents were yearly assigned for the defence of Athens against foreign invasions; if any person presumed to lay out, or but proposed to lay out that money, or any part of it, on any other design, he should suffer death.” And, though by the Law of Athens no free Athenian could be put in bonds, yet such as had wasted or misapplied the public Treasure, were excepted and denied the benefit of it. Many other wise and severe precautions they took to secure the Revenue of their State, and by it the State itself. Nor can any State subsist in honour and security where havock is made in the Exchequer. A Nation as well as a Family may be undone by Profuseness.

Sect. VII.

Public Frugality advantageous to all; disliked only by a few.----Public Bounties ill bestowed, how dishonourable.

BY all those from whom a Prince takes nothing away, that is to say, by almost all men, he shall be accounted noble and beneficent, and reckoned close and penurious only by a few to whom he gives nothing, says MACHIAVEL; and it is truly said. Let him therefore judge, whether it be not more just, prudent and profitable to oblige and caress his People, though he disgust some particulars, than to cherish and glut a few particulars at the expence of the People. People sometimes love to see a liberal Prince, but care not to feel him, when he is liberal out of their pockets. It must be a melancholy consideration to a Prince (if he consider at all) that by giving a large Pension perhaps to a worthless or wasteful man, he is laying a heavy load upon the backs of hundreds of his best subjects, and oppressing a multitude to be generous or rather prodigal to one. It was a fine and true compliment to TRAJAN, that he warily restrained all lavishness in the Exchequer, [III-62] because he never meant to supply it out of the fortunes of the innocent.

It is indeed infamous in any man to accept of bounties from the Public, if he can live without them. They who do so, are at best but public Almsmen; and every man of fortune, who with it has virtue or shame, will scorn the character. What is here said, does not affect such as for serving the Public receive thence an equivalent; since rewards that are due are never scandalous. But, alas! the service is too often over-rated, and when that ceases, the recompence is often continued to such as want it not, as well as given to many who not only do not want it, but never could deserve it. I have known great Largesses and mighty Annuities granted to many for no apparent reason, but that they were shameless enough to ask, and the Prince weak enough to give. If they had any real claim, it was too infamous to be owned: and it is a terrible reproach upon a Prince, when, for a small or a wicked service done to him personally, equal regard is had, and as much liberality shewn, as for any signal service done to the State, perhaps more, and when the Offices of the State, or its Treasure are prostituted to gratify private Jobbs and Intimacies.

WHEN this giving humour prevails, there is no end of Suiters and Claimers. Every man, every woman will have something to alledge, some suffering or some service. Upon the accession, particularly, of a new Prince such claims always abound. "In every shift of Princes, says Sir ROBERT COTTON, there are few so mean or modest that please not themselves with some probable object of preferment. Men expect payment for doing their duty and assisting the Public, that is assisting themselves, and what is no more than duty they call merit, and merit must be rewarded; and when men are left to measure their own, [III-63] we may guess it will lose nothing of its extent and value. There are indeed few who think themselves as high in employment as they are in capacity." When there are not Places enow to gratify pretenders, an equivalent is expected; and when once Pensions multiply, and are given to many worthless people, there can be no satisfactory reason given for refusing others as worthless. Thus the public Revenue comes to be thrown into a fort of average and spoil. Nor when the corruption has gone far, is it an easy matter to cure it; and he who first attempts it, Prince or Minister, will be sure to find a hard task, a torrent of opposition and outrageous clamours: For all the Harpies, all who had not clean hands, will be found to have foul mouths; and when public frugality, when general ease and relief is intended and pursued, injustice and avarice will be imputed. But the reformation, as it is always just, will certainly prove popular at last, when the generality feel benefit from the just disappointment of a few [b].

DISCOURSE IV.

Of PRINCES, ↩

Sect. I.

The Duty of a Prince, what. His motives to be good, and content with limited Power: That of the Roman Emperors bounded.

IF we now enquire into the duty of a Prince, what else can it be but to conform to the Laws, and see that all others conform; to be vigilant for the public welfare, to consult the good of the whole and of particulars, to prevent oppression and to punish it, to promote virtue and to reward it, to consider himself as made for the People's protection, not the People for his pleasure, and that where his Subjects reap no advantage, he can reap no glory; to enforce the observance of Law by his example as well as by his judgments, and by his faithful care of his People, merit their affection and fidelity [a].

It is thus he must resemble the Deity, nor can he be otherwise the Representative of God than by doing God-like actions. It is not enough that he do things innocent and harmless: it is not enough that he forbear things wicked and mean. What he does must be virtuous, noble, public spirited. Every sordid action, every low artifice he must detest and avoid. He who represents the Almighty, he who guards the Laws and the Lives of men, must be just [III-65] in observing Law, ambitious to resemble his Maker and Sovereign. How can he, how dare he neglect or injure those for whose sake alone he is what he is? "He who is above all, ought to be better than all," was the wise and worthy saying of CYRUS [b].

SUCH a Prince, whose only end and pursuit is the People's good, as it is in truth his only business, will desire no power to hurt them, none such as others under him, or after him, may turn to their prejudice, though he himself would not. Though a Prince perfectly wise and just could never abuse any power, he would not covet power without bounds, because whatever the best Princes have had, the worst will always expect. So that good Princes will be content with a little, a smaller share, that the bad may not have too much. They will look beyond their own time, and contrive that the People may be happy when they themselves are gone. This consideration terribly heightens the crime of Usurpation, and overturning the Laws of a Country. Though he who does it may have good qualities, and possibly desire public good; Yet such as are to come after him may be fools, madmen, bloody savages. CÆSAR, therefore, and his fellows are never to be forgiven, never to be excused.

LET a Prince be invested with a power ever so boundless, it is still intended, or ought to be, for the good of men, and he has none to be cruel or wicked. A power to destroy, is not given, but taken, and what is usurped, has no right whatever. No regular, no just power can be derived from the [III-66] irregular will of man, whatever fine name he takes to himself. "Hard it is for one who has no bounds to his power, to set bounds to his passions;" said the wise and good MARCUS AURELIUS. Nor did the Roman Emperors pretend to be above the Law, but only above the formality of Law. If they acted otherwise, as they generally did, they gave the lie to truth, and their own professions. ALEXANDER SEVERUS declared, that nothing was so much a part of sovereign power, nothing so much its character, as to live according to the Laws. TRAJAN professed, that the Prince was so far from being above the Laws, that the Laws were above the Prince. As he took an Oath to obey the Laws, he faithfully observed that Oath; and thence PLINY says, "That all the Emperors before him had made the same professions, but their professions were not believed:" What they had promised to be, he was.

The Romans in the times of the Emperors, made a wide difference between a Prince and a Master: the former they considered as a lawful Magistrate, the latter as an Intruder and Usurper. And it was observed of TRAJAN, that he possessed the place of a lawful Prince, to prevent the exercise of lawless rule [c]. The Emperor ADRIAN declared to a public assembly of the Romans, that he would govern like one who had the direction of the People's affairs, not his own; and SEVERUS owned himself to be no more than the public Steward. Many Emperors used their power mischievously; but such abuse of power was no part of their Commission.

[III-67]

Sect. II.

The wisdom of governing by Law ----- No just power without Law ---- Just Government requires sense ---- Any wretch capable of tyrannizing ---- No good man fond of boundless power.

THEY who are set over men, too often forget that they themselves are but men. Indeed such of them who pretended to be above Law and above Humankind, were much worse than beasts, they who claimed Divinity, a disgrace to Humanity. Hence PLINY says to TRAJAN, who, without arrogating celestial honours, had a spirit truly divine, "That, from the fate of the Princes his predecessors, it was manifest, that none but such as men love, are beloved by the Gods."

WHAT is it that gives a Prince a right to power? Not his bare will, for then every man who has force, has a right to power, a right to all that downright brutal force can bring him. As the public good is the general rule of Laws, these Laws are the rule and boundaries of the Prince's power. To these all men are and ought to be subject, he especially who is intrusted with their execution and the care of all men. If the Laws are for the security of the State, why should not the Prince observe them, he to whom the guardianship of the State is committed? The Roman Emperors, even in their acts of Tyranny pretended to observe Law, and under the name of some Law most of their cruelties were perpetrated. Nor durst they avowedly violate the Laws. Thus CLAUDIUS was afraid to marry AGRIPPINA, for that there was no Law authorizing an Uncle to marry his Niece. Nor durst he accomplish the marriage till a Decree was purposely made. Thus even the outrageous NERO proceeded in cutting off [III-68] some of the greatest men: He got them butchered under the form and mockery of Law.

It is the more glory for a Prince to govern regularly, and by the just measure of Equity and Laws; for that, in order to govern well, parts, and prowess, and vigilance are required; but any novice, any savage can exert brutal passion, follow his absurd humour, yield to his headstrong will. It is the easiest thing in the world to exercise disorder and misrule, to gratify private appetite, to create public mischief and disorder. This the frantic CALIGULA could do, this the infamous HELIOGABALUS, and this our RICHARD the second or King JOHN. A madman or a fool may be an able Tyrant: and to be so, fools and madmen are the most aspiring. LA BRUYERE says, "That for the exercise of Tyranny there is no need of arts or sciences. Those politics which consist only in shedding of blood, are very narrow and void of refinement: They inspire us to kill such who, while they are alive, prove an obstacle to our ambition. This is what a man naturally cruel does without difficulty. It is the most horrible, it is the most gross method of supporting ourselves, or of acquiring grandeur." Indeed, a wrong head, a wicked heart, and human shape, seem the chief qualifications for a Tyrant.

As unlimited oppression generally follows unlimited power, and as all power that can be abused will be abused, none but a madman, a wicked man, or a changeling will desire unaccountable dominion, whence he can reap no other fruit than guilt and odium, and his People none but misery and pillage. What can be the mark of a viler spirit, what a more

detestable character of a man, what more repugnant to the business and duty of a public Father, than to consider the People as his property, not his care; as if millions were created for the sake [III-69] of aggrandizing one of themselves, often the worst, as a Tyrant is certainly the worst creature in his dominions, let the rest be ever so bad, and bad they must be, as well as wretched. For the breath of Tyranny contaminates all things, destroys the best things, nor can virtue any more than happiness stand before it, or within its reach. It is a maxim with evil Princes to make their subjects evil; and, in order to bear slavery, they must have the abject souls and vices of slaves, must be sordid, ignorant, debauched, void of care for the Public, void of humanity and honour.

Sect. III.

How amiable the character of a good Prince, who rules by Justice and Law, who loves and relieves his People.

HENRY the fourth of France used to say, "That in order to reign well, it is not expedient to do whatever we can:" A saying worthy of the wise head and great heart of that brave Prince. As he said, he practised. He always heard with great patience the remonstrances of his Subjects and Parliaments, nor was ashamed to change his opinion, or to depart from points of prerogative; hated to hear Parasites magnify his power, and shew great tenderness for the privileges of Royalty, or to be praised by men unworthy of praise; would not suffer the Provinces to be oppressed to enrich particulars; confessed that he differed not from his Subjects, since he had but two eyes and two feet no more than they. He told an assembly of the principal men of Normandy at Rouen, that he had called them, not blindly to approve what was his will and pleasure, but to receive their counsel, to trust it, and to follow it. This was the language of a man of sense and honour, and he did just the contrary to what a fool or a small spirit would have done. A [III-70] certain Prince, cotemporary with him, would have probably told such an assembly, "That State-affairs were above their reach," (and quoted some Latin to prove it) "that they should beware of entrenching upon his Prerogative; that he wanted not their advice, for he was a wise King."

THE word Prerogative was what that great French Monarch was seldom heard to mention. He considered it as given him only for one end, nor could it be given to any Prince for any other, for the sake and support of his People, as were his Revenues to enable him to defend the People, and not to be wasted upon pomp and voluptuousness, as were the Revenues of some other Crowns at that time. An oppressive Prerogative is a monster and contradiction: so are oppressive Revenues, nor will a good Prince think ought due to him which his Subjects are unable to bear or to pay. HENRY the fourth abhorred the recent excesses and encroachments of the Royal Authority, and suppressed many duties which the late Tyranny had exacted. In one Edict he forgave the People all the arrears due to the Crown, and wished that his own Revenue had been sufficient, for that then he would have taken nothing out of the purses of his People. The divine MARCUS AURELIUS remitted all that had been due to the Imperial, or to the public Treasury (for they were distinct) during six and forty years. He declared, "That the public wealth belonged to the Senate and People, that he had nothing of his own, that the very Palace which he lived in was theirs."

THIS was the stile, these the concessions of a King and public Father, two characters which should eternally be the same, but too seldom are. Nor were all these professions of theirs the grimace of politicians. MARCUS AURELIUS and HENRY the fourth had no occasion for grimace: Great souls [III-71] are always sincere. They delighted to see their People happy, and studied to make them so. To accomplish this, HENRY the fourth cheerfully lessened his revenue, lessened his authority, and restrained his prerogative where his prerogative interfered with the interest and happiness of his People. He was above all little suspicions, above all doubling and deceit; habits so common to men of little minds and little sense. As he

wronged no man, he feared none, and his large mind was never fretted with the jealousies usually cleaving to power. He knew no purpose of being higher than others, but to do good to all; and when he found himself too high to assist those below him, he feared not to descend; still secure in the benevolence of his intentions and conduct, as well as in the sufficiency of his own might. He was aware that overbearing pride and prerogative were not the means to win affection or esteem, and that the condescension of a Prince is no contradiction to his dignity, nay, a sure way to raise it: He therefore lived with his People like a father with his children; as was said of a Roman Emperor who resembled him, I mean TRAJAN, a Prince in all excellencies resembling HENRY the fourth. What pity that such Princes, such friends to the world and protectors of men, should ever die!

Sect. IV.

The miserable Spirit and Infamy of Princes who consider themselves above Law, and independent on their People.

HAD CATO the elder known two such Princes as the above-mentioned, he would not have given such a shocking character of Kings, "That they were all ravening beasts:" a character due to those whom he knew, eastern Tyrants, the constant Enslavers, Oppressors and Butchers of men. [III-72] Power is indeed a brutal, a hideous thing, when not tempered by Reason and Laws, not employed for the benefit of Society; and such as have it and do not thus use it, are worse than animals of prey, more destructive, more detestable.

ONE of the greatest and bravest of our Princes was EDWARD the third. He had many demands made upon him by his Parliaments, and granted them all. Hence he reigned and died in renown. Two of our weakest and worst Kings (at least till then) were EDWARD the second and RICHARD the second. These were great zealots for Prerogative, that is for a privilege to be mischievous and unaccountable, and rejected all such demands. Hence their miserable reigns, their calamitous ends, their infamous memory. They were that sort of wretches who set up folly and appetite against duty and human society. Good sense and greatness of mind are always found together, and justice is inseparable from either. EDWARD the third had equal wisdom and magnanimity, and was just in proportion as he was brave. It was his study to cherish his People, nay, to be great with them, and to be counselled by their Representatives. "He had the honour, says SELDEN, to be the repairer of the ruins that his father had made, and was a Prince whom you might think by his Story to be seldom at home, and by his Laws seldom abroad."

LEWIS the thirteenth was a great lover of power, in proportion to his great incapacity to exercise it. As a specimen of both, when the People of Tholouse applied to him, by an earnest and unanimous petition, for mercy to the Duke DE MONTMORENCY condemned to die, he answered, "That if he followed the inclinations of the People, he should not act like a King." I question whether his son would have given a better answer, a Prince so flattered for the art of reigning, if his government [III-73] deserve that name. What strange lofty notions must have possessed the weak head of this Prince, that a King should act for himself against his People! The thing is often too true. But, pray, how should the People act, on their part, upon such an occasion? I mean not the People of Tholouse at that juncture, but a whole Nation, when they find by his administration, that he only considers himself, and not them, or rather makes them only a property to himself. Such as have an unjust power, ill got, or overmuch, or such as intend to abuse their power, are ever jealous and fearful. They are ever fearing those whom they cause to fear, and whom they fear they seek to oppress or destroy. This is the nature and progress of Tyranny [d]. In Dr. BURNET's late History we find a shocking declaration of CHARLES the second concerning the Duke of Lauderdale, that the Duke had indeed done a great many damned things against the people of Scotland; "but I cannot see, says his Majesty, that he has done any thing against my interest." A speech upon which I

make no reflection, nor can my imagination furnish one that can possibly heighten its horror.

Now besides the infamy, besides the crying iniquity of LEWIS the thirteenth, of making his Kingdom groan under the merciless weight of Prerogative exerted in violation of their Birthright, Liberty and Law; all the new power which he usurped was usurped to his Minister. It was the Cardinal who swayed the enormous Scepter, and swayed it terribly, even to the dread and shame of the Monarch, who by setting himself above the Laws, above the remonstrances of his Parliament, did but set the Cardinal above him, and from his excessive weakness, to call it no worse, his Minister derived his excessive power. Henceforward he could not, he durst not either see or hear but by licence from his Eminence.

[III-74]

Sect. V.

Princes seeking or possessing arbitrary Power, rarely exercise any themselves: Their Ministers and Creatures generally rule all.

IT is wonderful this strange thirst, this boundless appetite in Princes for unbounded Power, which yet they seldom occupy themselves, but leave to be exercised by others, their Minions or Mistresses. What they gain by putting bonds upon all men, is to be themselves holden in bonds by the meanest or the worst. LEWIS the thirteenth, a Prince very insufficient, but very obstinate, one who had no ideas or very short ones of his own, assumed to be the origin and oracle of all Justice and Law; and his passions, infused or managed by the Cardinal, were to be the rule of life, and to determine the fate of all men. The Cardinal, who used the King like a mere machine, was effectually Monarch of France, as all Frenchmen felt, as all Europe saw. He was indeed an extraordinary man, a mighty genius: but as he trod upon the Laws and Liberties of his Country, the best that can be said of him, is, that he was an able destructive Minister. Whoever rules by fancy will ever be a pernicious ruler, let his abilities be what they will.

THE sovereignty, and folly, and cruelty of CLAUDIUS were all managed by his manumised Slaves, or his Wives; and he had neither discernment or passions but such as they infused. Nor was it peculiar to CLAUDIUS to be under such guidance. The rest of the Cæsars were generally subject to the supreme rule of some mean and uncontrollable Favourite. These lofty Emperors who would bear no limits to their authority, exercised in effect none, but, reserving only the name and iniquity of power, devolved the administration and abuse of [III-75] it upon their vilest domestics, the dregs of human race.

THE great Turk, who claims and exercises a power without controul over the lives of all men, who challenges a right to the fortune and property of all, and is Lord of every acre throughout his vast dominions, enjoys from all this enormous, this sounding sovereignty no more than a mighty name and mighty danger. He is seldom seen, seldom does any thing, or knows what is done. With the seal which he delivers to his prime Vizier, he surrenders the absolute disposal of his immense Empire, the absolute direction of his boundless Authority. The Prerogatives of State which he exerts in his own person, are such as concern not the State, at least help it not: He diverts himself with the tricks and grimaces of Mutes and Buffoons, with his Ladies or Pathics, with Dogs and Huntsmen.

It is thus he discharges the duties of a Sovereign, thus guards the Public, and protects Nations. Are these the marks of authority divine, of a power holden immediately from God, sacred and irresistible, as the Mahometan Doctors teach? Are the characteristics of Divinity to be found in the neglect and abuse of Government, as well as in the discharge of it? If he who does the office be the person divinely appointed, as I think he ought, not the Grand Seignior, but the Grand Vizier is the man. How the Turkish Divines reason upon this point, I

know not I doubt not but they are provided with good casuistry and distinctions to account for their recommending, as they have sometimes done, their Monarch to be dethroned or knocked on the head, though by their principles he was irresistible and sacred. Such force and magic there is in the sage subtleties of this profound Divinity and of these able Divines, and so powerfully do they aid Princes to stand or fall!

[III-76]

A MAHOMETAN preacher was bold enough to tell the Emperor to his face, that instead of defending Buda (then besieged) he went every day a hunting. The rebuke had such an effect, that, as soon as the sermon was ended, his Highness ordered nine hundred of his hunting dogs to be drowned. We see the efficacy of an honest sermon upon a Prince when an honest man is found to preach it, one who aims at truth and reformation, not at flattery and preferment.

THAMAS King of Persia was shut up in his Seraglio, drowned in voluptuousness, for ten years together, leaving his Authority to be abused, and his Subjects oppressed and devoured all that while at the lust and discretion of his servants. They therefore were the sovereign Rulers, whilst he had the sovereign Title. In a manner like this are all or most of the great Monarchies in the East conducted. The Monarchs do nothing, and their Ministers do mischief. These Representatives of the Deity are themselves represented by a Woman, or a Pathic, always by a Slave.

SUCH of our English Kings as had the greatest appetite to absolute rule, as the worst always had, never swayed what violent power they had grasped, but resigned their People, their Dominion and themselves to Creatures and Favourites: Whether the King were a HENRY, an EDWARD or a RICHARD, a JOHN or a JAMES, it was still a PIERCE GAVESTON, a HUGH SPENCER, a MOUNTFORD, a BREMBER, a CARR or a PETERS that misgoverned and oppressed. The King only lent his name and warrant, and often not that; but still blindly approved what they had done, though he knew it not, nor why.

[III-77]

Sect. VI.

The arbitrary will of Favourites often proves the only Law of a bad and arbitrary Prince — How apt they are to abuse his Power, and at last to desert him.

THE caprice, or passion, or evil counsel of a reigning Favourite, will always pass upon a weak Prince for the rules of Equity and Law. As a Prince who is not controuled by Law will in all probability prove bad, and certainly bad where he rejects Law; so a Minister acting without any check or inquiry from his Master, is not very likely to prove modest and virtuous. The one will be apt to grow domineering and insolent, if the other be credulous and indolent. Such a temptation is seldom withstood, or such an opportunity lost. This was the case and misfortune of GALBA. For such, says TACITUS, was his weakness and acquiescence, that by it the avarice of his friends, already insatiable, and ravening according to the measure of his sovereign fortune, was farther heightened and excited; whilst under a Prince thus feeble and credulous, their iniquities were attended with the smaller peril, and with gains the more mighty. PLINY says, [d] it was always a glaring and sure sign, that the Prince was impotent and contemptible, when his Servants were mighty and powerful.

RICHARD the second left his Government so entirely to his Favourites, that they were said “to have taken the Kingdom to farm.” They passed Patents, they issued Proclamations, levied Money, spoiled the Subject, all without his knowledge or once asking his consent. Nor other reason had they for setting him above Law, but that they might be [III-78] lawless. Thus they caused it to be proclaimed in the City of London, “That no person should dare to utter a word

or expression against them, on pain of forfeiting all that he had.” Nay, they made the poor weak King swear to them, “not only to be governed and counselled by them alone, but to maintain and defend them, and to live and die with them.” After this it is small wonder that they would not suffer the great persons of the Realm, or the King’s best subjects, to give him any advice or information, or even to approach him, except in their presence. BREMBER (one of the Minions) caused two and twenty men to be hanged in one night, without law or trial. But this was only a small essay of his power and violence; he had marked out seven or eight thousand obnoxious Citizens to be cut off at once, and prepared a common Hatchet for that purpose, an instrument that providentially served to strike his own head from his body.

CONCERNING those low and servile spirits at Court, who, in times of peace and corruption, swagger and govern all things with high insolence and disdain, manage little intrigues with notable craft and sufficiency, tell lies, practise falshood, traffic for places, and carefully keep all men of honour, capacity and merit at a due distance; it is worth while to observe, what a miserable figure they make in a time of danger and alarms, confounded, struck with terror, ready to change sides, ready to abandon their old friends and protectors, to submit with mean suppleness to such as they had lately deceived, insulted and oppressed, and to become humble slaves to professed enemies.

[III-79]

Sect. VII.

Princes guilty of the Oppressions committed by their Authority. Their Ministers are generally, like them, bad or good. A limited Authority safest to Kings and Ministers. The best Ministers obnoxious to clamours.

A PRINCE who permits oppression and cruelty, is cruel and oppressive, though he know it not; for he ought to know, ought to enquire, and to prevent it, or punish it. Why else is he a Prince, and what else is his duty, but to watch for the public good? Nor did ever any reason otherwise, except Tyrants, public enemies and spoilers, with their Flatterers and Minions, who hoped to gain by misleading and corrupting them. What they cannot do themselves they ought to see well done by others, to redress what is ill done, to take care that it be not repeated, and that public examples be made of public criminals. A Prince becomes bad by his idleness as well as by his actions. He is invested with a great trust, the greatest upon earth, one so extensive that upon the well or ill executing of the same depends the felicity or misery of Nations; so that whoever neglects it, is unfit for it, or unworthy of it.

It is allowed that an able and honest Ministry make amends for the indolence or insufficiency of a Prince: but how rarely does it happen that he chuses such? They generally prove like himself, vicious or weak, or make his folly a warrant for their injustice. His choice is determined not by their talents for Government, about which perhaps he is ignorant, perhaps unconcerned, but by taste, or whim, or passion, for some particular quality, or some foolish excellency that he delights [III-80] in. Peradventure they joak well, or shave well, or procure him Mistresses, or become such themselves, or are notable Musicians, notable Devotees, or notable Drinkers. For such accomplishments, and without any other, Men, and Monks, and Women, and Barbers, and Buffoons and Fidlers have been raised by Kings to rule over Kingdoms.

THEY who do what they please, seldom do what they ought, and such as may do evil with impunity, generally do it with licentiousness. Nor other sence or security is there against evil, but penalties and the dread of evil. Men are then least likely to offend when they dare not. The power therefore of the highest ought to be bounded, and precautions taken as well against the excesses of Kings, as those of Subjects. Kings themselves should desire it: it is the safest rule as well as the most honourable, and even most profitable; since where the

People, secured by the Laws, live unmolested, the Prince will reign in security, and the more free they are, the more able they will be to serve him, the more chearful to support him, as well as more rich and liberal to supply him.

NEITHER can a Prince under the restriction and guidance of Laws, be long served by worthless, silly, or arbitrary men. They must be men of sense and reputation, otherwise they will soon destroy themselves, or him, or both. In a Nation governed by fixed Laws all men will see, indeed feel, whether the Laws and their Properties are violated, whether they are oppressed against Law, or protected by it. The dignity of the Administration must be supported, decency and gravity preserved, with regularity in the course of business; the Public must be tenderly treated, and particulars civilly used: Else the Crown will fall into contempt, into weakness and distress, the Subject into discontents and rage, all things into confusion. Minions and Underlings may, and [III-81] probably always will, have secret influence and sway, sometimes enough to hurt and perplex a Minister, who often suffers blame for the ill things which they, in spite of him, do [f]. But he who conducts the public affairs must be a man of parts, a man of business, and sufficiency, of name and credit.

WITH all this he must expect to be hardly pressed, often find it a hard task to stand. He will often be thought guilty even where he is most innocent. He will be sure to disoblige some, even by obliging others: Several will think themselves at least as well qualified as he for his place, and, in hopes to be taken in, endeavour to push him out. They will be apt to charge him with crimes at a venture, and probably hate him enough to wish him criminal, or to believe him so. Many will concur in the imputation, some through personal anger, more through natural malignity, most of all through folly. The multitude love changes, some find advantage in it, and many hope to find. Even his excellencies and renown may happen to create him enemies and persecution [g]. Perhaps few Ministers ever served a Prince with more faith and sufficiency than Monsieur DE RÖNY did his great Master HENRY the fourth, or with greater regard to the interest of the Public. Yet his credit with the King, though no more than he deserved, and two or three fine employments, however due to his merit, served for a constant pretence to malecontents, and even for the ground of several conspiracies. In matters of great and public moment, it is a difficult thing to please all.

[III-82]

Sect. VIII.

The benefit of standing Laws to Princes and their Ministers, further illustrated. What regard Princes should have to posthumous Fame, what dread of Infamy.

IT is not in a free Country as in one enslaved, where whatever the Prince likes all must seem to approve; where all must bestow their reverence and submission blindfold, wherever he bestows power and favour, though blindfold too. In a Nation of Freedom and Laws, all men claim a right to judge and censure for themselves, a right which they often abuse and misapply, but ought never to lose. Better it is, that all men say what they please, than one man do what he will. Yet a Minister under all these disadvantages, however obnoxious to clamour and unjust censure, is safer and happier than in the service of a lawless Prince, whose rage is usually more sudden than his favour, and who never accuses but he likewise destroys, often without accuseing; whereas when the Laws govern, Ministers are frequently accused, but seldom hurt; nay, the worst often escape, whilst under a Tyrant the best never do.

To Princes themselves the Laws are the best guides as well as guards. Most men will be apt to flatter them, few to tell them the truth. Let them have recourse, for information, to the Laws, Counsellors which will not cajole nor deceive them, nor betray and desert them, as Favourites and Armies may. Sycophants will tell them, that “they may do what they list,”

and, it is like, confirm that impious lie by another equally impious, that “such is the ordinance of God.” The Laws will tell him, that, “whatever he does must be for the good of men; that he has no right to hurt them, no power but what is given him, limited by institutions [III-83] framed by the wisdom of men, for their own safety and his, and that for their security, and not for his own ease or pride, he is set over them. If he break his bounds, if he violate his trust, he becomes an enemy to God and Man, and must hope for favour from neither, since in the sight of God, the impartial Father of all men, none are high or low but in the sanctity or impiety of their lives, and he who injures and betrays all men is evidently the worst of all.”

LET any Prince judge, which is the more reasonable instructor, the Sycophant or the Laws. (For Sycophants, and the vilest, they all are who tell a Prince that he may overturn the Law) Let him judge which is likely to lead him to most justice and benevolence, to most honour and renown, to most security whilst he lives, to most praise when he is dead: Let him determine with himself, whether he would be a NERO, governed by Parasites and his lusts, detested as a Tyrant, doomed to immortal abhorrence through all ages, or a TITUS, who made Justice and Law the measure of his Government, was stiled the delight of human-kind at that time, and has been judged worthy of the same amiable character at all times since. In proportion to the excellence and depravity of a Prince’s reign, will be his same afterwards, illustrious or inglorious.

WHAT can be more delightful to a Prince, than an assurance of being adored when he is dead? What more shocking than to foresee, that he shall be abhorred, or even his memory slighted amongst men? For in the memories of men his most lasting monument must be raised, happy for him if also in their affections [i]. These are the inscriptions, this the character, which cannot be erased, panegyrics [III-84] that will not lye, unperishing honours, out of the power of time, and death, and malice [k]. Such as were by PLINY foretold to TRAJAN, and such as TRAJAN still enjoys, still shall enjoy.

Sect. IX.

Idle Princes seldom come to be able Princes. How much application to business imports them, for their own accomplishment and the good of their Government.

INDOLENT Princes, such as love not business, or are kept from it, besides their being liable to be abused, scarce ever come to be men of great sufficiency, though they may have good natural parts. It is by the continual exercise of the understanding that the understanding is enlarged. A man of much industry, with moderate parts, will be an overmatch for one who has the greatest, but never exerts them. Attention to business and the affairs of life, fills the mind with ideas and reflections, arms it against mistakes and surprizes, and uses it to judging and deciding. But to a spirit untrained and void of experience, every small matter proves a great difficulty, every small difficulty proves discouraging. A man practised in affairs is seldom startled or at a loss, and for every emergency will be apt to find some expedient; for he is used to emergencies, and to provide for them. Every small Clerk will be apt to despise, every little Lawyer be able to outwit a man just come out of a College or a Cloister, though he may make no mean figure there. Even very silly men will acquit themselves notably in business, where it lies in a road and method, and make dispatch where a very [III-85] bright man not used to it would be strangely puzzled. I have seen a man of poor natural capacity, but well trained in business, triumph over a man of extraordinary talents destitute of experience. Such as are originally weak may acquire artificial abilities, as others of great genius, applying to nothing, will be good for nothing.

As the business of reigning is the most important upon earth, he who is invested with supreme authority, in order to make himself worthy of it, should be extremely careful to qualify himself for it. He should inform himself assiduously, exert himself diligently, and

convince all men, that he who bestows every office, is able to discharge, and therefore fit to bear, the highest. It were indeed preposterous, that authority should be in the hands of one who ought to administer it, but cannot, and leaves it all to be administered by others. This was the character of many of the Cæsars, Idiots in Government, Heroes in Tyranny. So that PLINY had just cause to say, That it seemed highly unworthy, that he should confer all dignities, who could sustain none.

It is a misfortune even in a Country where the Laws govern, to have a weak, or, which is the same thing, an indolent Prince; for the administration of an indolent Prince is generally weak; and where he does too little, those who act for him will be apt to do too much. But under a Government limited by Laws, such weakness or neglect in a Prince can do least harm, nor can his will or his folly be pleaded, as in arbitrary Countries, for the cause or cloak of enormities, since his will and his folly are repugnant to the Laws, and may be opposed by Law. All men know how far his power extends, how far others can extend it for him. In absolute Monarchies, not only his will, his fury, his appetites, are Laws, and Laws irresistible, but so [III-86] likewise are the appetites, and will, and sury of his Officers, who always alledge that, whatever they perpetrate he commands; and who dares doubt or deny it, or go to Court to enquire?

BUT let a Prince's power be ever so cautiously restrained, let the Laws which limit and direct him be ever so plain, he will still find an abundant call for all his industry, in chusing his Officers, in observing their Conduct, in overlooking his Revenue, in executing the Laws, in hearing Petitions, in attending to Treaties and Embassadors, in taking care of the Dignity and Tranquillity of the Nation, and even in governing his Family. What more extensive office would a Prince have, if he mean to perform it with conscience and care? Few men are equal to it; the ablest man cannot be too diligent in it.

HENRY the fourth of France had a great understanding, because he had made great use of it. From his childhood he was almost continually exercised in distress and affairs, and forced by the former into the latter. As he was a man of great pleasure, had his Kingdom fallen to him early and easily, it is certain he would not have had equal sufficiency; for sufficiency is to be acquired like a science. He was forced to be industrious, vigilant, inquisitive, and therefore was always improving. Thus he became excellently qualified for Government. HENRY the third might have proved so too, had he been obliged from his youth and for a long course of years to have struggled for his Crown. He had shewn what he was capable of, whilst yet very young. In truth so great was his reputation in the camp, such ability he had manifested as a Commander, and such hopes were conceived of him as a Prince, that he was chosen King of Poland before he was twenty years old. But through idleness, [III-87] and sensuality, and flatterers, he became a most miserable Ruler, infamous and sanguinary.

PRINCES that do nothing, but leave all things to others, will always be minors, as was our RICHARD the second. Contemptible is that Prince who holds nothing of Sovereignty but the Pageantry and the Crown. Poor RICHARD lost even that: Nor can any Prince who takes no care to support his own dignity, be secure that his dignity will not fall. Men who are able and good will be kept carefully from him, at least from serving him. The selfish, the false, the mischievous will always be most numerous about him, perhaps exclude all others, at least will always have the most sway, perhaps the only sway. At last perhaps he will bear no counsel but the worst [I].

IN spight of any human sufficiency or virtue, that a Prince can exert or possess, there will be many abuses growing or creeping in, such as he cannot altogether remove or prevent. But where he is idle, where he is neglectful, disorder will prevail tenfold, corruption walk barefaced, truth and virtue and merit will be brow-beaten or banished, vice and insolence will flourish, the Laws lose their force, the Administration become loose and despised.

SUCH was the reign of HENRY the third of France, such that of RICHARD the second of England. They minded nothing but pleasure and festivity. Their Government by being neglected, grew corrupt, impotent, scandalous, at last fell to pieces. Yet the former was a capable Prince, indeed capable of great things, and only wanted application; but from his propensity to pleasure he disrelished business and fatigue, and by the pernicious flattery and soothing of Minions and Deceivers, came to drop the reins of Government in their hands, [III-88] and reserved to himself only the name and danger. RICHARD the second had the same voluptuous biass, and the like mischievous Leaders. He was not a Natural, nor a Lunatic, nor seems to have wanted a share of sense; but having never been taught, or suffered, or inclined, to exert it, he continued in the state of childhood, simple by habit, foolish for want of industry and experience, and having never discharged the functions of Government, was at last unable to discharge them.

Sect. X.

The most wretched and wicked of all Princes are wont to account themselves most sacred, and to claim Attributes divine.

IT is remarkable that both the wretched Princes mentioned in the last Section were strangely conceited of their own power, had high notions of Prerogative, nay, claimed Authority almost divine, and were extremely jealous of Kingship when they exercised none, but left themselves and their Realms to be abused and undone by the Parasites their Masters. This is the spirit of all wretched Princes, to be proud according to the measure of their folly, to be the fonder of power for being the less able to weild it, and to assume an alliance with the Gods when they are too vile or foolish to be accounted men. The Roman Emperors, most signal for cruelty, frenzy and stupidity, never failed to be Gods, or akin to the Gods.

SUCH Christian Princes as have aimed at Titles and Privileges more than human, would have done well to have remembered, that they were but reviveing the stale pretensions of ancient Tyrants and Pagans, and owning for their Predecessors Madmen, Idiots, Savages, the most detested that ever the [III-89] earth bore. Nor indeed have any followed these Monsters in this profane and enormous vanity but such as in their other qualities too resembled them, the vicious, the prodigal, the false, the poor spirited, and the debauched, such as could not govern well or chose to govern ill, such as boldly called in Heaven to vindicate what Law and Conscience condemned, and alledged a deputation from above to blast and destroy all things below. When impious designs were entertained, when measures execrable and ruinous were pursued, solemn Oaths violated, Liberty extinguished, all the Laws overturned, Tyranny set up, then a Lieutenancy from God was always forged and pleaded, divine impunity for diabolical deeds, a right from the Father of Mercies, of Justice, and of Men, to commit Cruelty and Injustice, to oppress and butcher.

VISIONS like these, wild and impious, are refuted by repeating them, and the dishonour of such as maintained and encouraged them, sufficiently exposed. Such too is the mean character of these Princes, such has been their reign and fate, as to vindicate the Deity from the blasphemous imputation of having avowed them.

DISCOURSE V.

The same subject continued.↩

Sect. I.

The example of a Prince its efficacy: When good how advantageous to his People and himself.

BY the actions of a Prince, the spirit of a Prince is discerned. If he do nothing, it is not he who reigns: If what he does be bad, he had better not reign. One upon whom the felicity of all depends, is under a continual call and obligation to see that none be miserable, that none be wronged or unredressed: and because his own example is of universal influence, beyond that of exhortation, or of precepts, or of preachments, indeed more cogent than Law itself, or penalties, or terrors, it behoves him to shew himself wise and virtuous. How glorious is it for a Prince, when it becomes the glory of all men to imitate him? How scandalous, when he is only their guide to baseness and debauchery? The goodness of his demeanour should vie with the greatness of his power [a]. In vain will he cause vice to be punished, if he himself be vicious: even in his executing of just Laws, he will be accounted unjust, if he himself observe them not; nor will the frowns of Justice be found of such force, as the countenance and pattern of him who holds, or should hold, her scales.

IN Peru, during the Government of the INCA's, when any of the Royal Blood, or of the prime [III-91] Nobles, violated the Law, they were punished more severely than a common Subject, forfeited all their Privileges, were degraded from their hereditary Honours, and accounted Traitors and Tyrants. It was thought reasonable to debase those who had shewn themselves base, and to make an example of such as by their great figure and credit were likely to draw others after their track. Upon the like motives a criminal Magistrate there was punished according to his character and quality, rather than to that of his crime, from an opinion that in a Minister of Justice the least evil was not to be tolerated, since he was appointed to eradicate evils, and obliged to be more observant of the Laws than his inferiors. It was said of the INCA's, that they took such an affectionate care of their Subjects, as to merit being stiled rather Fathers of their Country, and Guardians of their Pupils, than Kings over Subjects. They were called by the Indians, *Lovers of the Poor*. Such should every Prince be, and appear to be. His life and conduct are a perpetual standard: All men see it, most men follow it, and according to the course of his life will be the course of morality or debauchery.

VESPASIAN in a few years (for he reigned not many) by the practice of frugality made all men frugal, and in that short space stopped a torrent of profusion which had been flowing for a hundred years before. HENRY the third debauched all France, as did RICHARD the second all England. Manners as well as fashions beginning from the Court, the corrupt manners there become quickly universal. The Nobility, especially the young Nobility, perceived and followed the taste and pleasures of the King: The Gentry next, then the Commonalty, fell all into the fashion of their superiors. The reign of the great Queen ELIZABETH and that of her Successor, sufficiently shew, how [III-92] far the example of a virtuous or a voluptuous Prince can go towards making their People riotous or sober, as well as towards ennobling or debasing their spirits. The public Manners are best ascertained by those of public Rulers, and the surest cure for the irregularities of Subjects, is the regularity of Princes; since even Example alone without Authority, goes further than Authority without Example, says PLINY [b] to TRAJAN, who was indeed a pattern to his Subjects as well as to all succeeding Princes. He adds, that the fear of punishment is but an unsure guide to right morals.

NEITHER is the Virtue and Morality of a Prince of greater advantage to his People than to himself. Virtuous Subjects are always peaceable, nor will they fail to honour a virtuous Governor. It is the debauched, the riotous, the idle, who are prone to sedition, love public changes, and promote them. Whatsoever particular points a Prince may carry by debauching his People, it cannot be the stability of his Throne, whatever he may think. A People who have abandoned their Virtue will readily abandon their King; nor does he deserve any other, if it was he who first corrupted them. From a vicious People it is madness to hope for virtuous Principles, such as those of just allegiance and fidelity. Where no integrity is left, no honour can be expected; and when they are corrupted so far as to sell or throw away their Liberties, which is the highest degree of corruption, what other or lesser degree will they be ashamed of? Nor can one who has made them universally vile, complain, with a good grace, that they prove vile to him. It is but a part of what he taught them.

[III-93]

It is said of China, that when the Emperor proves licentious and bad, when he neglects his duty and the administration, and falls into enormities and vice, the face of the whole Empire becomes altered, and the People, otherwise sober and wise, grow riotous, unruly, debauched, and tumultuous. So that for his own sake he is obliged to be sober and orderly, obliged to preserve, at least, all the appearances of innocence and virtue. Yet the Monarchy of China is the most compleatly framed of any that the world ever produced, supported by admirable orders and maxims, all settled into reverence and authority by the approbation and usage of numerous ages. But all their admirable maxims and orders are insufficient where the good example of the Prince is wanting to enforce them. The Chinese therefore maintain, that by the virtue of the King the People becomes virtuous, and that he is responsible to Heaven for the wicked manners of his Kingdom. They say, it is a small matter for a Prince to punish crimes; He ought by the example of his own virtue to prevent crimes in others.

THE innocence therefore of a Prince's life is the best guide to his People, and the surest guard of his Person and Diadem. This is what PLINY says to TRAJAN [c]. Many of the Princes before him, besides their own pestilent examples, had forced the People, and all orders of men, by all the influence and terrors of Tyranny, to be debauched, dishonourable, contemptible, and wicked; that all men being corrupt, they themselves might not be seen worse than the rest, and no man have credit or virtue enough to be terrible to the Tyrants. Their policy was as absurd as it was abominable, and their fate proved a warning to Princes and all men, to avoid [III-94] following their destructive example. Where God doth not bless, man will not, says Mr. SELDEN.

BY the necessity of setting a good example, I do not mean that a Prince should be debarred from diversions and pleasure, but only from such as tend to corrupt the public Manners. With such pleasures of his as hurt not his People, the People have nothing to do. Most of the greatest Princes, as well as the best that ever reigned, were men of pleasure, which is almost universally the effect of much Genius and Fire. Nor does it avail how much they love it, if they pursue it with decency, and neglect not business and their duty. The Emperor TITUS, he who was called the delight of mankind, was a man of gallantry, but his gallantries never interfered with his occupations. It is true, says TACITUS, that his soul, youthful and amorous, was not indifferent to BERENICE; but from hence arose no neglect or relaxation in his conducting affairs of Duty and Trust. His father VESPASIAN had the same turn, loved gay amusements, but governed carefully. TRAJAN was addicted to wine and other delights, yet an able and faithful Steward of the Empire. ADRIAN loved diversions, but never neglected affairs. SOLON, a very wise man and worthy Lawgiver, never made any scruple to own his fondness for Ladies, Musick and Wine; nor even in his old age had he lost that taste, or was ashamed of it.

The Character of a Prince to be learnt from that of his Company and Favourites, and his designs by the Opinions which become in fashion about him.

FROM the Characters and Principles of the men whom a Prince promotes or favours, his own may be learnt or presumed TRAJAN shewed [III-95] what he himself was, by the excellency of the persons preferred and countenanced by him. In all things unlike the preceding Emperors, who chose the worst and vilest of all men, he chose the best and most virtuous. Hence he manifested to the world what sort of men and pursuits pleased him best. About him were found no Informers, no Accusers, no Advocates for lawless Power, no Instruments of Oppression, no Flatterers, no Calumniators. The former Princes had chosen Ministers, not so much for their ability in managing affairs, as for their dexterity in administring to their voluptuousness or fury, not Statesmen to rule the State, but Buffoons and Pandars to humour the Prince, or Ruffians and Spoilers to rob and kill for him.

WHAT else but wickedness, cruelty, continual excesses and misrule could be foreseen or expected from Princes perpetually surrounded with Parasites, Jesters, Harlots, powerful Slaves and Assassins? What else to be presumed of Princes, who caressed and advanced the most opprobrious, the blackest and most detestable of all Villains; but that they disliked, distrusted, and would probably destroy every able, every worthy man? Was it not natural to imagine that an Emperor who was daily told that he might do what he pleased, would do what he pleased, and grow lawless when he was informed that he was above Law.

ONE of NERO'S Favourites, a hireling Orator employed to legitimate Tyranny and Murder by Law and Haranguing, to traduce innocent men by invectives before they were surrendered to the executioner, told the Tyrant his Master, that "he did but tire himself and his advocates by proceeding so leisurely with the Senate, in arraigning and cutting them off one by one, when he might, by saying but a single word, have the whole Body destroyed at one blow." For such slackness, this [III-96] faithful Counsellor blamed the bloody Tyrant, as too gentle and over-deliberate. This advice was short and decisive, and not at all disgustful. NERO shewed by abundant liberalities and honours how highly he esteemed the man, preferred him to the Consular and Pontifical Honours, and recompensed him with a bounty of fifty thousand pounds, part of the spoils of such noble Romans as he had hunted down and worried for the Imperial sport of his sacred Sovereign NERO.

WHEN such men and such doctrines prevail, it is easy to guess what will follow, at least what is intended. No man will care to give pernicious counsel but where he knows it will be pleasing, nor will a Prince hear it unless he be inclinable to take it. He only who has a mind to do what he ought not, will like to be told that he may; and the will of the Prince is then preached up when Law and Liberty are to be pulled down. What means or avails the propagating of arbitrary Maxims, but to justify and introduce arbitrary Proceedings? They are too odious to be spread where no great design is to be served by doing it. Nor need any man desire a surer sign, that universal slavery is intended by the Court, than when universal submission to it is inculcated upon the People.

THIS consideration alone leaves no excuse or apology to be made for those reigns, when such slavish Tenets were every where maintained, and the vile Maintainers of these Tenets countenanced, hired and preferred: when from the public Tribunals and public Pulpits, places sacred to Law and Truth, it became fashionable, nay, became the only and surest way of rising there, to assert that there was no Law save in the wild Will of one, who though sworn to defend Law, might lawfully overturn it; to assert impious falshoods manifest to all men, to father such falshoods upon the God of truth, under [III-97] his holy name to shelter outrageous oppressions, to bind up the hands of the oppressed; to maintain that the lives of men, which they held from God, their property, which was secured to them by the

Constitution, the Constitution itself contrived by the wisdom of men for their own preservation, and defended through ages by their virtue and bravery, were all at the mere mercy and lust of him who was solemnly bound to protect all, but might, if he so listed, destroy them all, without opposition; nay, all opposition was damnable. When all this was notorious, constant, universal, the language of Power, the style of Favourites, and the road to favour, what doubt could remain whither it all tended? To prevent all doubts, arbitrary measures were pursued, whilst arbitrary principles were promoted. The persons of men were illegally imprisoned, illegal fines imposed, estates violently seized, and the Public confidently robbed.

Sect. III.

Doctrines in defence of lawless Power, and against civil Liberty, to be punished as Treason against the Public. How Princes discover their spirit.----They seldom take warning.

THE Parliament of Paris maintained, that there were crimes which the King could not pardon, such as any great mischief or indignity done to the State. Pray what treatment is due to a deliberate opinion, declared and urged, that a State may be destroyed, all its Laws annulled, and all men in it made miserable slaves, whenever the chief Magistrate thinks fit? Can there be a greater crime, a greater indication of malice against the Public, or a higher evil intended and avowed? Or can the Authors of such horrible positions be acceptable to any but a horrible Tyrant, to a NERO, or one [III-98] who would be as bad as he, one who hates his People, pursues an interest destructive of theirs, and is consequently their enemy [d] ?

AN English Prince, who longed for power unlimited, though he made miserable Use of what he had, was wont to say, "That a Crown was not worth having, if he that wore it must be thus controuled by a parcel of fellows." He meant the Parliament, who must have been fellows indeed, and bad ones, if the worst of them was worse than himself. He had been trusted with vast sums of the public money for the service of the Public, had betrayed that trust, sunk the money, or applied it against the Public, and after so vile a fraud, instead of penitence and shame, had the face to complain that he was not entrusted with the whole without limitation or inquiry. He had Parasites enough to tell him that it was his right, and over the Kingdom there were Impostors more than enough to persuade People to believe and submit to it, men who for some preferment, or for better preferment to themselves, had the assurance to tell a great Nation, that they ought to bear bondage: Nor did ought but the power of forcery and delusion keep the shameless deluders from being stoned.

SUCH dreadful doctrines, however, and corresponding practices, alarmed all men who had preserved their honesty and their senses, and there ensued such a struggle between him and his People as soured and inflamed them, and made him miserable, fearful and insecure all the rest of his reign. By pursuing the like Politics, by countenancing the like arbitrary Maxims, his Father had come to be first disliked, then distrusted, at last undone. But he had not wisdom and virtue enough to profit by this [III-99] example, no more than his immediate Successor, who made such an open claim of doing what he pleased with his Kingdoms, that his Kingdoms, to save themselves, drove him out. Even the holy men, who for many years had blinded him with a belief, that he might violate his Oath and Trust with safety, as soon as they found the weight of his oppressive hand, which they had encouraged him to exert, turned fiercely against him, and bad him open defiance. Too few Princes take warning. They are often so blinded by their own wilfulness and sovereign fortune, or by the soothings of flatterers, especially of such as flatter them in strains of piety, and mislead them in the name of the Lord, that their doom sometimes comes upon them, before they are apprized of danger.

KING ERIC, heir to Queen MARGARET, who reigned over Sweden, Denmark and Norway, was deposed whilst yet exulting in his power, security, and violence, and despising the cries of his People, whom he had barbarously oppressed. Yet his Successors proved not wiser, nor,

consequently, safer. Confiding in their own strength, and too often instigated by the Clergy, they rioted in Oppression, Barbarity and Massacres, till the evil hour overtook them unforeseen, when they had quite forfeited all title to pity and assistance. The Emperor CHARLES the fifth was a Prince of sense, yet grew rash and wanton through good fortune, and was insolent to his captives, some of them great Princes, whom he carried about, from place to place, in a very injurious manner. Whence, says THUANUS, he gained not a Triumph by the victory, but the most inveterate hate by his Triumph. But amidst his glory and pride, sudden distress and fears overtook him: At Ausburg his soldiers mutinied with great fury, for want of their pay; nor was his dread and danger less from the [III-100] citizens, who immediately took arms to defend their houses from being plundered.

NERO was diverting himself in the Theatre, when news came of the revolt of Gaul, and VITELLIUS immersed in debauchery when VESPASIAN was proclaimed Emperor. CALIGULA and DOMITIAN were concerting more murders, at the instant that they themselves were pierced with the fatal knife; so was COMMODUS. When men have a while done evil actions with success, they begin to think either that they are not evil, or that they may be repeated with equal safety. They do not consider that punishment often comes the surer for coming slow, and that by proceeding in their crimes, they are but advancing to meet it. Wicked men cease to do wickedly when it is out of their power, and only necessity can reform them.

Sect. IV.

Of the Veracity of Princes----The folly of Falshood----The worst and silliest men practise it most ---- it is inseparable from Tyranny.

IF we consider the character of a Prince for Veracity or the want of it, it is certain that as he values his word or disregards it, he himself will be disregarded or valued. The same man can never be accounted honourable and false, nor is it possible for him to follow Falshood, but the fame of Falshood will follow him. To gain belief to words, actions must follow. Evasions and chicaning can never save him: by such shifts and meannesses he will be thought the more mean. When a man is once known to be a knave and a liar, what man of sense or honest man will trust him; and when a Prince is found to falsify and play low tricks, what Nation will trust him? For no man, nor Prince, was ever false or treacherous in many instances, without [III-101] being discovered; and a treacherous temper, once detected, becomes both hated and impotent. TIBERIUS in whatever he said was thought to mean something else, even when he did not.

In Falshood there is no excellence or praise. Any Blockhead, any Lunatic can be a liar. CALIGULA, who was really crazy, could be exceeding false, and though he owned himself above shame, yet practised craft. He was full of darkness and equivocation, and a great dissembler: a lesson which he had learnt early and carefully in the Court of TIBERIUS.

THE silliest people are the greatest liars, and the most gross and stupid Nations have been found deceitful and hollow. For deceit is not peculiar to Courts, though it may be much improved there, nor has any man cause to value himself upon an accomplishment common amongst Barbarians and Canibals, indeed fit for none else. Tyrants, who are worse than Canibals, are always false. NERO was so in a sovereign degree, so by nature, so by education, and could kiss and wheedle such as he hated, and meant to destroy. Thus he behaved to his Mother, thus to SENECA, treated them with much fondness, with many embraces, and caused them to be murdered. Even the stupid VITELLIUS could falsify and deceive, could cover the rancour of his heart under great complaisance and familiarity. DOMITIAN was as false as either, sudden and subtle in his cruelty; and whenever he was most implacable, appeared most moderate and merciful. I believe the same to be generally true of all Tyrants ancient or later, as well as of JOHN BASILOWITZ, LEWIS the eleventh, and MULY of Morocco. It is the first lesson that they learn, it is the most easy, and it is necessary that he who has an evil heart should

hide it, and conceal or disguise his wicked purposes.

[III-102]

WHEN men are continually pursuing mischievous designs, they will be apt to practise continual hypocrisy; for no man will own his intentions to be bad: and such as are conscious of their own depraved inclinations will be prone to suspect others, will study to over reach whomsoever they suspect, will hate those who are like themselves, as well as those who are not. Hence the constant commerce of insincerity amongst corrupt and designing men: when base motives govern their actions, guile governs their tongues, and fair words cover dark ends.

THIS is a terrible situation, and wretched policy. He who deceives all men, will be deceived by all: For no man will trust, no man will love one who cheats every man. Hatred grows as naturally out of distrust, as love out of confidence. I do not find that TIBERIUS had one sincere friend in the world; for he had, or was believed to have had, a friendship for no man. So that as all men feared or suspected him, he was hated by all, trusted by none. It was dealing with him according to his own measure: Had he loved his People, he might have had their love, and been faithfully served, had he acted faithfully.

Sect. V.

Princes of noble and good minds scorn to deceive: thence their Glory and Popularity.

QUEEN ELIZABETH, who regarded her Subjects as her Children, was by her Subjects honoured as their common Parent, and as such she lived with them, as did TRAJAN with the Romans. She never broke her faith with her People, never deceived them. They suspected her of no evil designs, as they saw she practised none; and were zealous for her glory, because her glory was [III-103] for their good. They liked to see her great, since she sought no greatness which tended to make them less, none in which they had not a share. She retained their obedience by the strongest tie, that of their affections; their affections were engaged by the strongest and most natural bonds, those of their own interest; nor knew she what it was to have an interest distinct from theirs, much less an opposite interest. The greatest contest between her and her People, her and her Parliaments, was that of mutual confidence and zeal, as was said of the above-mentioned Emperor and the Roman Senate.

MR. SELDEN says of her, that “to her People she committed her considence under God, and they to her their chiefest treasure upon earth.” He says, that she once refused a subsidy as too much, would take but one half, and thanked the People for the remnant; “a courtesy, says he, that rang loud abroad, to the shame of other Princes.” I think it is the same Author who observes, that “to a Prince who spares them, the People will always be liberal, and a good Prince will spare a liberal People.” It is no wonder that under her the Credit of the Exchequer was as high as that of the Exchange. These were ways to endear her Government to all men, ways to endear Monarchy when conducted by such a Monarch. In her days were seen no struggles for a Commonwealth, nor did her Subjects wish for a plurality of Rulers, when they were happier under one. Monarchy must grow terrible before it grows odious, oppressive ere people long to shake it off; nor will they have recourse to another form of Government, till driven to it for relief. Princes are censured when they bear insults and encroachments from one another, and blamed if they take not vengeance. Is not equal consideration, at least some consideration, to be had to the honour and preservation of a People when [III-104] oppressed and worried by their Rulers, men whom they pay so dearly, and support so nobly, to secure and protect them, an office which that illustrious Queen performed with such benevolence and wisdom?

HER glorious cotemporary HENRY the fourth of France, to his other great qualities added that of great Veracity, in this, as in every thing else, very different from the two Princes his immediate Predecessors. In the Court of CHARLES the ninth, Falshood and Treachery prevailed; and these vices were accompanied by all others, by cruelties, debauchery, poisonings and assassinations, by all sorts of oppressions, all sorts of misrule. HENRY the third was found to be so fraudulent and false, that his promises passed for snares, and by having deceived all men, could be trusted by none. For his known want of faith so often given and broken, he was abandoned by his subjects; and even his oaths, even declarations under his hand, passed for nothing but proofs that he would certainly violate them. At the same time the King of Navarre (afterward HENRY the fourth) who had never failed in his word, was trusted by every body. Even his enemies trusted him: When upon occasion he had offered them hostages, they refused the same, and desired only his word: Yes, his mortal enemies the Spaniards, upon coming to a treaty with him, refused hostages, and sought only his word.

THIS was Virtue, this was Wisdom; and what Prince who knows the value, the glory and advantage of it, would be without it? A worthy Minister of his, the President JEANNIN, a man of excellent understanding, was famed for equal probity, and acted in Counsel, acted in Negotiations, and with particular men, without any refinings or doublings, or little artifices. These are what a man truly wise despises, what none but the apes of wise men practise. [III-105] HENRY the fourth held his honour so sacred, as to declare, "That he would lose his Crown rather than cause the least suspicion of breaking his Word, even to his greatest enemies."

Sect. VI.

The consequences of Falshood in a Prince, Scorn and Impotence---It is the mark of a poor and dishonest Spirit---Great and virtuous Spirits abhor it.

THERE is a meanness, a deformity in tricking and lying, such as a great and a good mind scorns as well as detests. In truth the honour of HENRY the fourth and of QUEEN ELIZABETH, their steadiness and nobleness of mind, were so known and prized, that as far as their names were known, their persons were feared or revered. They despised that sort of *Kingcraft* so unmanly and pedantic, which a cotemporary Prince used to boast of, and by which he made himself little in the eyes of the world, and of his People. His Falshood was so notorious, and he so notoriously decried for his Falshood, that the only fruit he reaped from it, was impotence and contempt. He had no kind of credit abroad, worse than none at home; his treaties were abortive, his mediations slighted, his resentments laughed at; and he who called himself the wisest King in Europe, was really the Dupe and the Jest of all Christendom. The only people who could depend upon him, were his Favourites, and these he durst not deceive: as often as he dared he did, and when he was about to part with one of them for ever, he could ask him, after many kisses, "For God's sake, when shall I see thee again?" Then turn round and say, "I hope in God I shall never see thy face more." With foreign States his promises and his menaces were alike disregarded, because alike unexecuted, and with his People their Prince had not so much credit as a [III-106] Banker. He had so often, so shamefully, forfeited his credit, perverted the public trust, wasted the public money, that he was thought unworthy of all farther confidence. The most disgraceful of all Bankrupts, is a King bankrupt of his Honour.

THE Romans, the greatest People that the Sun ever saw, as they were great in their fortune and valour, were so also in their honour, which they observed with signal punctuality, and by it gained renown with all nations, who whilst they could depend upon their faith, adhered with fidelity to their interest. Some of their allies were so obstinate in their adherence to the Romans, that rather than relinquish them they suffered the sword, famine and utter

destruction, nay, destroyed themselves. They held treachery in such detestation, that when a traitorous Schoolmaster in a Town which they besieged, offered to procure it to be surrendered by betraying all his scholars, the children of the principal Inhabitants, into the hands of the Roman General, they abhorred the proposal, and gave up the villain even to their enemies. The same noble courtesy they did to King PYRRHUS, whilst yet desolating Italy: When his physician proposed to poison him for a certain reward, they rejected the execrable proposal, and communicated it to his Master. Long afterwards, when they had lost their Liberty, and with it too much of their virtue, they yet refused the offer of ADGANDESTRIOUS a Prince of Germany, who undertook, "That if the Senate would send him poison, he would dispatch ARMINIUS;" the most terrible foe that they had ever found in that country. The answer of the Senate was very noble, "That not by snares and blows in the dark, but openly armed, and in the day of battle, the Roman People pursued vengeance against their enemies." The Romans, Queen ELIZABETH, and HENRY the fourth, [III-107] had great Spirits, great Honour, but were not accomplished in little falsifications, such as the abovementioned Prince gloried in by the name of *Kingcraft*. It was well he had some cause of glorying.

Sect. VII.

Tyranny worse than Anarchy, or rather nothing but Anarchy.

IT is usually said, that bad Government is better than none; a proposition which is far from self-evident. I am apt to think that absolute Tyranny is worse than Anarchy; for I can easily suppose popular confusion to be less mischievous than a settled active Tyranny, that it will do no less harm, and is likely to end sooner. All tumults are in their nature, and must be, short in duration, must soon subside, or settle into some order. But Tyranny may last for ages, and go on destroying, till at last it has left nothing to destroy. What can the most dreadful Anarchy produce but a temporary work of desolation and fury, what but violation of Law and Life? And can Government be said to exist, where all Justice is neglected, where all Violence and Oppression is committed, where lawless Will is the only reason, where the ravages of blind appetite, and of the blind sword; are the only administration?

If this be Government, what is Anarchy? Is obedience due to aught but Law and Protection? Is he a Governor who spoils and kills? Am I obliged to pay duty and reverence to my enemy, to a common robber? By doings, and not by titles and names, is a Governor distinguished from an enemy; and less vengeance is due to a professed spoiler, than to a spoiling Magistrate. What have Societies to do with such a destructive Traitor, but to exterminate or destroy him, before he has destroyed society and all men? An Oppressor under the name of a Ruler, is the most detestable Oppressor; and, by [III-108] such impudence and mockery, should but quicken universal resentment. I know of no argument for destroying Anarchy, but what is full as strong for the destruction of Tyranny.

Sect. VIII.

Bad Princes ought to be treated with severity and abhorrence, in honour and justice to the good ---- No worthy Prince offended to see a wicked Prince exposed.

IN discoursing on Princes, I have treated the good with all possible reverence, as the tender Fathers of their People, as benevolent Guardians of Law and Righteousness, as Friends to human kind: A divine Character, which can never be too much prized, never too much extolled. If towards the bad I have shewn equal indignation, I hope I shall want no excuse, since it was equally just. They who honour worthy Princes, cannot avoid detesting Princes that are wicked; nor can such as hate not the wicked, ever truly love the worthy, says PLINY [e] to TRAJAN, who, I dare say, believed him, and must needs find it a genuine compliment to his own excellent reign, to see those of the preceding Tyrants well exposed, since the blacker theirs appeared, the brighter his must shine. To expose them was to praise

him, and it is chiefly by such opposition of characters, that his friend the Consul adorns that of the Emperor, in his immortal Panegyric, a Master-piece of Eloquence, Truth and good Sense, and a continued Invective against DOMITIAN, and the other Imperial Savages, who had stained and perverted the Sovereignty. It is thus, in a great measure, that he applauds TRAJAN, and his method was just.

[III-109]

To reverence bad Princes, is to rob and injure the good, as reverence is the reward and perquisite of well-doing. If no evil whatsoever can be entitled to respect, what claim to it have the authors of evil, they especially who commit the highest? Do the Indians well in adoring mischievous Demons? Were the ancient Pagans wise in their wild worship of fire, fevers and crocodiles? Was any beast of prey, were all beasts of prey, half so destructive as NERO? Were the ravages of the Conflagration or a Pestilence worse than his ravages? Are men bound to reverence the plagues, the tormentors, and the consumers of men? To speak respectfully of bad men, Princes or others, is not reverence but flattery, and flattery is abuse. Before men can be brought to adore a hurtful being, they must be first (so far at least) divested of their senses, and struck blind by superstition, and then it is reverence without reason, consequently nothing. Who would value himself upon the trances of a mad-man, mistaking you for a Deity, and adoring you?

A GOOD Prince should indeed take it amiss to perceive bad ones spared, as it will argue a presumption that he approves them, or will come to resemble them: An imputation which he should fear and abhor. He will therefore, for his own sake, encourage all freedom to examine and display their behaviour and memory. Nor can he discourage this as long as he means not to do as they did. PLINY asserts it roundly, as a matter of the utmost certainty: "That, when of an evil Prince posterity says nothing, it is evident that the present Prince follows his steps." When COMMODUS put one to death for reading the life of CALIGULA, freely written by SUETONIUS, what could the Public infer, but that he knew his own conduct to be like that of CALIGULA? TRAJAN, who was a virtuous Prince, cared not how contumeliously the name and [III-110] memories of Tyrants were used: Nor was aught a greater proof of the excellence of his administration, and the integrity of his heart, than that in his reign it was safe for all men to inveigh against evil Government, and evil Princes, as the same PLINY observes; and elsewhere, still complimenting that glorious Emperor; "We then shew how passionately we love good Princes, when we are seen utterly to abhor the bad." TACITUS says, to the deathless praise of this reign, that such was the rare felicity of the times, "That you might entertain what sentiments you pleased, and declare what sentiments you entertained."

In consequence of such true principles, these two noble Authors treat NERO, DOMITIAN and their fellows, as Monsters, Beasts, and Executioners; and thus must every honest, every rational Author treat such Princes. PLINY says, that DOMITIAN was "the Spoiler, the Butcher of every excellent Person; a most treacherous Prince; a most rapacious Robber." With such bitter and terrible names did a Roman Consul treat a wicked Emperor, in presence of a good one, PLINY before TRAJAN, nay, speaking to TRAJAN. TACITUS is not more tender: like the other, he loved virtue, and hated vice too much to be so.

[III-111]

DISCOURSE VI.

Of Bigotry in Princes. ↩

Sect. I.

The mischief of Bigotry in a Prince: Its strange efficacy, and what Chimera's govern it.

TACITUS tells us, that OTHO was, in his designs upon the Sovereignty, violently instigated by the vain predictions of the Astrologers, who were ever confidently averring, that the Stars presaged approaching revolutions, and a year of signal glory to OTHO. What else was this his absurd and greedy belief in the Astrologers but Bigotry to deceivers and false prophecy, whence he was prompted to seize the Empire, murder the Emperor, and throw the world into War and convulsions? For with him these wretched predictions passed as uttered by a prophetic spirit, and as the propitious warnings of the Fates. My Author, according to his custom, accounts for OTHO'S credulity in these by a fine observation, "That such is the visionary genius of human nature, ever most zealous to believe things dark and unsearchable." He adds, that PTOLEMY (one of the Astrologers most credited by him) confined not himself afterwards to predictions only; but having first flattered the ambition of OTHO, was now prompting him to the last bloody act of treason. His reflection upon this is just and strong, "That from the harbouring of such aspiring wishes, to the forming of such black purposes, the mind is led with wonderful facility."

[III-112]

CROESUS, King of Lydia, was a bigotted believer of Oracles, and many and immense were the gifts and oblations which he made them. By their fallacious responses he was incited to war with CYRUS, which ended in his perpetual captivity, and in the utter conquest of his wealthy Kingdom.

BIGOTRY in a weak Prince, or in any Prince, is always one of his worst and most dangerous weaknesses, generally ruinous to his People, often to himself; as it subjects him to the blind controul of narrow-spirited and designing Guides (for all Bigots must have Directors and Masters) who in managing his conscience seldom forget their own interest, and to that interest often sacrifice the Public and all things.

BIGOTRY has a kindness for nothing but itself, and to all the rest of the world bears at best perfect unconcern, generally perfect malice. Hence wild wars and persecutions, Countries oppressed and exhausted, Communities enslaved and butchered, all perhaps for names and garments, for postures and grimaces, for sounds, and distinctions, and nonsense. Corresponding to the design is the result; numbers are made miserable or destroyed, that a few may flourish and domineer. For, that dominion is founded in Grace, and that the holy ought to inherit the Earth, is a position as old and extensive as roguery and enthusiasm. From this spirit Princes who are guided by it, instead of public Fathers and Protectors, often become public Pests and Destroyers; Nations are animated against Nations, and those of the same Nation plague and devour one another.

WHAT human wisdom can restrain men actuated by divine fury? And when they think that the Deity commands them to spoil and kill, what avails any counsel or exhortation to protect and to save? SHECK EIDAR a Prince and Enthusiast of Persia, [III-113] having made a Reform of the Mahometan Religion there, declared it impossible to be saved without adhering to his system: And upon such as are to be damned in the next world, it is always deemed lawful,

may, necessary and meritorious, to inflict penalties and death in this.

THE Turkish Doctors, on the contrary, differing from those of Persia in some important niceties, hold it lawful for the true believers (that is, for themselves) to kill, destroy and exterminate the Persians. Those pious zealots even hope from the goodness of God, that, at the day of judgment he will graciously change these Heretics into Asses, and doom them to carry the Jews, as the most contemptible of all Nations, a full trot into Hell. For such cruel and unrelenting censures, certainly these sound divines must have enormous provocation, and the Persians undoubtedly hold the most shocking opinions. They do so: For, instead of washing the naked feet all over, as the orthodox Turks do, they satisfy themselves with only sprinkling the water lightly over them. Another of their damnable Doctrines is, that they do not trim their Mustaches, according to the pure doctrine and usage of these their antagonists, but cut their beards only upon the chin. What is yet more horrible, they hold it lawful to wear green about their feet, a colour sacred to the memory of MAHOMET; and, as a further demonstration of their obstinacy and pestilent notions, they assert the lawfulness of wearing a red Turbant. What can be a more just, what a nobler ground for hatred and war between these two Nations; war and hatred never to have an end?

INCITED by such worthy causes as these, and openly avowing them as the motives of anger and hostility, their respective Princes have often conducted vast armies against each other, wasted countries, [III-114] sacrificed millions. An Emperor of Turkey had it once in his head to have massacred all the Christians in his Dominions, though in several of his Countries they were by far the greater part. But this and all the Laws of mercy and policy are but weak considerations when opposed to religious impulse, and the instigation of Bigotry and Bigots. MAHOMET was to be humoured, he who was the Apostle of God, he who hated Infidels. Now who would, who durst refuse to oblige God and MAHOMET? Nor was such reasoning peculiar to the Mahometan Dervises, the good men who conduct the Consciences of Mahometan Princes. The professors of the best Religion cannot reason better, whenever they allege Religion to justify violence.

Sect. II.

How easily a bigotted Prince is led against reason and interest: What ravages he is apt to commit.

FOR such dreams and whimsies as those last recited, or for whimsies equally absurd, equally reproachful to men and societies, haave Princes been brought to consume their People and risk their States. The Emperor JUSTINIAN, bent upon a war against the Vandals in Africa, was dissuaded from it by his first Minister, the Captain of his guards, for solid reasons, but urged again to the same wild design by the credit and foolish reasons of a Bishop, who it seems had in his sleep seen a vision, which encouraged the Emperor by all means to exterminate those Heretics. (They were Arians.) Who could withstand such an argument? And was not the expedition a wise one, worthy of a judicious Prince and of the Public-weal? It was at least worthy of him who advised it, and he dreamed or lied meritoriously for the truth, that is to say, for his own opinion and animosity. In sanguinary, in wild [III-115] and destructive counsels, none have ever exceeded, few have ever equalled, those who professed to be the Ministers of mercy and peace.

HENRY the second of France made a most scandalous Peace with the Emperor, even to the dismembring of his own Dominions, on purpose to make war upon his native Subjects, and to crush and butcher the Hugonots, who gave him no provocation, but that of praying to God in a manner which they judged most acceptable to God. This the selfish Bigots who governed his Passions and Counsels, and dishonoured his Crown, represented as the most crying crime, and this crime he punished with the most glaring rigour. It was a fine pursuit in which these seducers had engaged a Prince, in himself truly magnanimous, that of cutting the Throats of

his People. One of his Successors, a great aimer at Glory, with all his mighty ambition was cramped by the little spirit of a Bigot. He who aimed at universal Monarchy, was himself subject to the Empire of Bigots, and his Bigotry made his country groan, made him an enemy to great part of his Subjects, the soberest and most industrious of them all, and produced oppressions and desolation utterly repugnant to the glory which he thirsted after without measure, and claimed without a title.

THE expulsion of the Moors from Spain, effected by the devices and instigations of restless and mischievous Monks, working upon the Bigotry of the King, and continually alarming his Conscience with the anger and denunciations of Heaven for his slowness and want of zeal, is another sad instance of the baneful nature of this sort of spirit, when found in a Prince, or in those who govern him. In all places where it prevails, how different soever they be, and upon all occasions, how contradictory soever they prove, whatever it proposes or pursues, is still the cause of God: And who that once believes this, will, by [III-116] opposing it, venture to fight against God? There is afterwards no room, nor perhaps safety, to mention public good or public peace, or any temporal consideration whatever. For what are these in comparison? What signified the numbers and industry of the Moors, as long as they were Infidels? Where the harm of dispeopling and impoverishing Spain, when, with so small a loss, so great, so pious a point was gained, that of quieting the King's Conscience and making the Monks easy? No matter what became of the Bees so the Drones were safe, and the Bigot was appeased.

Sect. III.

A bigotted Prince how subject to be drawn into Guilt and Folly — The dictates of Bigotry how opposite to those of true Religion.

ANY folly, any chimera or punctilio, let it be as absurd, as mean and trifling as it will, when once it is pronounced sacred, grows instantly momentous, and equal, nay, superior, to all things. Whether it be a piece of earth, or piece of building, or a coat, or a cap, or a day, or an uncouth word; it is more important than the tranquillity of the world and all the rights of men, and for it all men are to be oppressed, or worried, or slaughtered. Nay, the highest and most diffusive mischief which a Prince can do, shall be made his highest merit; and public devastation or a general massacre shall be recommended as a sure and pious atonement for his private vices and enormities.

HENRY the third of France was very debauched, very devout, a notorious Bigot, a notorious Oppressor. But by acts of penance all his acts of impiety were cancelled, his conscience calmed, and he free to begin a new score of iniquity. This was the repeated round of his life. Amongst the atonements [III-117] exacted from him by the merciless Hypocrites whose property and instrument he was, the persecution of the Protestants was always one: The rest consisted in profuse bounties and donations to the Monks. So that the blood and spoil of his poor Subjects payed for all. He, moreover, rendered himself contemptible by descending to strange and ridiculous mortifications, and to all the foolish mummery of Friars, so much below a King or a Man, but so much conducing to the holy purposes of his ghostly Guides, who thus bewitched him and held him fast to their fraternity.

WHILST the late Pope, a well-meaning man, but a wretched Bigot, instead of attending to the Administration of his Principality, was bestowing all his thoughts and time in visiting Churches and Images, in consecrating Chappels and Altars, and the like pious and unprofitable fooleries, corruption and injustice prevailed in his Court, oppression and misery amongst his People. With the best intentions that could be, his reign was despicable and grievous. What PHILIP DE COMINES says, that a stupid Prince is the heaviest curse that God can send upon a People, is equally true of a bigotted one; for Bigotry is religious stupidity, pious craziness; and as folly, whether natural or spiritual, is of it self blind and always requires

guiding, the Bigot as well as the Blockhead will be for ever a slave to Pedagogues and Seducers.

CARDINAL RICHLIEU, amongst the other implements of his Sovereignty over his Master the Monarch, was always provided with some able Divines to explain away conscientious Scruples, the impressions of Morality, and the precepts of the Gospel, whenever the same thwarted his Passions and Politics. Nay, the whole Assembly of the Clergy of France always proved his complaisant Casuists upon occasion, and accommodated their Theology [III-118] to the drift of the first Minister. When he was engaging these his Sycophants to declare the marriage of the Duke of ORLEANS to be null, because he did not like it (and a better reason the Bible it self could not have furnished for illuminating these venerable Guides) the Queen Mother wrote to the Pope, to forbid the Clergy from meddling with that marriage: "For, she said, it was publicly notorious, that the Bishops were all Courtiers, and would say whatever the King or Minister would have them, and even contradict what they then declared, should a future Minister bid them." By the like management he brought the King, who, like a good Catholic, abhorred Heretics, to protect and assist Heretics, as he did the Protestants in Germany, yet at the same time to crush and oppress his own Subjects, because they were Heretics, though by the Law and his Duty he owed them protection.

To believe in God, to trust in him, and to adore him, is the Duty of a Prince and of all men. But, for the love of God to hurt and distress men, is amazing wickedness and phrenzy. Conscience is the most sacred property, and has as just a right to protection from the Sovereign as have the lives and fortunes of his Subjects. If difference in Religion cause disputes amongst his People, so does difference about civil Property; and in religious controversies amongst them, it is his duty to hold as even a hand as in litigations about money and land. In one case as well as the other, he is to leave them to Law, and Reason, and Argument, and to prevent their deciding religious opinions, any more than civil suits, by force and violence.

[III-119]

Sect. IV.

Further instances of the great mischiefs occasioned by Bigotry of Princes.

WHENCE proceeded the Croisades, those mad expeditions so often undertaken by Christian Princes to recover Judea out of the hands of the Saracens, but from the Bigotry of Princes and People inspired and managed by the Pope and the Clergy? For this, Europe was drained of her best Men and Treasures, and her strength wasted in the East, for no reasons of State or security, but only for the sake of the Rock where our Saviour's Body had lain for some hours. Neither he nor his Apostles had declared, that he had endowed this Rock with any sanctity or virtue, any more than any other stone or earth upon which he had chanced to tread. But the cheating Priests, they who always laid the first foundations of their Empire in delusion, by their noise, impudence and forgeries raised such frantic zeal in the minds of men, as produced great armies, efforts, and slaughter for the recovery of a bit of ground just like other ground. It was apparent that neither God, nor Christ, nor the blessed Spirit concerned themselves about it, else they would have guarded it from the hands of Infidels. So far otherwise, that never did any warlike expeditions more miserably miscarry, never was so much valour and strength so uselessly thrown away. Indeed, the whole ended in misfortunes and disappointments, nor produced aught save the destruction of Christian blood and wealth abroad, misrule, weakness and poverty at home, and the establishment of Ecclesiastical Tyranny in Christendom. Yet, though it was manifest that God blessed not these extravagant rambles, which were likewise repugnant to all good policy amongst men, the solemn cheats who deceived in his name, who would always be knowing his [III-120] will in spite of

himself, and who valued not the interest of men, failed not to preach up more, when all the former had ended in nothing but infamy and ruin. They cared not what became of the world so they could govern it, and with all their might, and frauds, and impudence, again and again excited Christendom to destroy itself to humour them.

WHAT will not deluders dare, what will not the deluded suffer, when delusion reigns and reason is subdued? When men have lost the use of their senses, they are not likely to be very circumspect about their persons and fortunes; nor will such as rob them of their understanding, spare their lives or property; and they who belied God made no scruple of abusing men. Still more Croisades were preached up and undertaken. To carry them on men sacrificed their persons and estates, married women their jewels and rich apparel, maidens their portions, widows their dowries; he who had no property gave his life, and such as were too feeble to travel and fight, hired others in their room. Under such phrenzy the Impostors had brought them by an assurance of pardon for all their sins, by an offer of the inheritance of the Saints to all who had the grace to act like madmen, and perish like fools. Paradise and Salvation, of which these Jugglers assumed to be the disposers, cost them nothing, and these they were always ready to traffic away for any substantial advantage and gratification present. Thus they abused the Laity with words and hopes, a sort of payment which they themselves would never accept: Nor, in truth, was ever any sett of men so addicted as they to secure all their rewards and establishments in this life, whilst, to disguise their designs, they were all the while discoursing piously of another.

They preached up the contempt of the world to others, and still humbly accepted to themselves whatever they had induced others to renounce. Nay, [III-121] to engross all, seemed to be the only drift of such preachments.

ALL this was glaring and notorious to common sense: But the Monks had vanquished and banished all common sense by the dint of ghostly fears: And to combat any understanding that was still stubborn and unbewitched, they were furnished with other weapons, with dungeons, ropes and faggots. Every one who dared to contradict the Monks, though in defence of the veracity and honour of God, and for the welfare of human-kind, was an Atheist, at best a Heretic, fit to be consigned to Satan and destroyed by men. So far had these enemies to the world gained the dominion of it with its property, and such credit had the mockers of God obtained by boldly abusing his name and word! What could be more ruinous, and had proved to be, than these Croisades? Yet with what vehemence did the Clergy promote them, and how fast and blindly did Kings and People run to destruction and shame at the cry and instigation of the Clergy, who had the craft and address to throw all their works of zeal, all or the principal hazard and expence, upon the heads and pockets of others, and of making the Laity their dupes, property and drudges? Pere DANIEL, the Jesuit, in his late History of France, is forced to own, that the Clergy there, after they had preached up a Croisade with mighty eloquence and zeal, grumbled bitterly when they themselves became taxed to carry it on. So rare, says he, it is to find any zeal that is perfectly disinterested! This is a very merciful reflection. The truth is, that their zeal was nothing but interest, or, at best, frenzy.

THE Story of Saint BERNARD is remarkable. He was engaged by the Pope to exert his credit and eloquence in raising a Croisade. The warm Monk undertook it zealously, and laboured in it with ardour. Even miracles were said to have been wrought in [III-122] favour of his endeavours. He alledged a divine call, and authority divine for that expedition, and prophesied certain success to the Christians, certain destruction to the Turks. Upon such assurances from Heaven, uttered by one of its Embassadors, who sounded the Lord's trumpet to war, all men ran to enlist themselves, and whole Cities and Villages were left desart. A mighty army passed into Asia, most of that mighty army perished: The whole expedition was fatal, and God's Providence gave the lye notoriously to the promises of his Embassador, who

yet kept himself in countenance by a pitiful subterfuge; “That these forces miscarried for their sins.” Why did he not foresee these sins, he who pretended to divine light and prophecy? He had boldly promised success without exception or reserve; and the excuse which he made will equally serve any quack-prophet that ever appeared or ever can appear in the world.

BESIDES the loss of men, which was often such as left the countries that furnished them little else but Widows and Orphans; (for the Monks who remained in safety at home, were to be accounted, not members, but moths of human Society) besides the waste of Treasure, then very scarce in Christendom; the Administration of Government was every where neglected or abused in the absence of the Governors, men, who can never fail of finding business enough at home, if they will conscientiously perform it. Kings too were sometimes taken prisoners, and for ransoming them, almost all the money which remained in their poor Countries, always made poor by these pernicious enterprizes, must be amassed and carried away to enrich their enemies.

WE now see clearly the folly and mischief of these wild adventures; we discern (in this instance at least) the danger of credulity, the pestilent influence of delusion. They who were under it perceived it [III-123] not, and we wonder at their blindness. Succeeding generations will perhaps be finding cause, though I hope not equal cause, of wondering at us, though they too may have their follies, but perchance not the same follies.

DISCOURSE VII.

Of Ministers. ↩

Sect. I.

The choice of Ministers how much it imports Prince and People. Of what sad consequence to both, when bad. The bad only serve themselves, not their Master.

PRINCES cannot do all themselves, and must therefore appoint such as they can trust to act for them and in their name, men who are to apprise them of what is proper for them to know, to advise them what is fit for them to do. These are their Ministers and Counsellors, and upon the rash or prudent choice of these, the credit and ease, or dishonour and danger of a Prince, as well as the safety, or ill usage of his People largely depends. As wise Princes chuse such as are like themselves, so do Princes who are weak or vicious. NERO'S Favourite was TIGELLINUS, Queen ELIZABETH had a WALSINGHAM, TRAJAN a PLINY, HENRY the fourth of France a Duke de SULLY.

In a free Country, a Prince has a great advantage and assistance in chusing his Ministers, for if his intentions be righteous, if he mean to maintain the Constitution of the Laws, he will of course appoint men of name and ability: And this he may do without much ability of his own: He need only [III-124] attend to the unbiassed humour and opinion of the Representatives of the People, and he cannot fail of being furnished with the ablest men. Whenever you want to chuse, you are, by the general consent, directed to the person worthy to be chosen, said GALBA to PISO. Not unlike this is the observation of HELVIDIUS PRISCUS, when an Embassy of Senators were about to be sent to VESPASIAN. HELVIDIUS proposed, that they should be nominated by the Magistrates; for that by the judgment of the Senate thus manifested, the Prince would be, as it were, advised and warned, whom to fear and shun, whom to countenance and approve. He adds, that no greater support was there of a righteous reign, than righteous Ministers about the person reigning. If indeed a Prince aim at overturning the Constitution and setting his Power above the Law, he will find out tools proper for the wicked work, creatures of mere will, of desperate fortunes or designs, dreaded or contemned, selfish, enterprizing, or fool-hardy, such as will humour him, such as must depend upon him. But a Prince who studies publick good, will like men who are publick-spirited. Such as are known to love their Country and its Laws, can never be unacceptable to one who has no views but to preserve both.

WHILST NERO was guided by the counsels of SENECA and BURRUS, great hopes were conceived of his Government, because they were known to be worthy and able men. The Plan of his Reign conceived by them, and by him exhibited in his first speech to the Senate, was very just and fine. "He claimed not the judgment and decision of affairs, nor would allow the shutting up those who were accused in the same house with their accusers, and by it sustain the impotent Tyranny of a few. Nothing should be saleable within his walls, nor any access there to the [III-125] crooked plots and attempts of ambition. Between his Family and the Republick a just distinction should be maintained. The Senate should uphold her ancient jurisdiction. Italy and all those provinces, which depended by allotment upon the People, should apply only to the Tribunal of the Consuls, and by them procure access to the Fathers. To himself he reserved, what was especially committed to his trust, the direction of the Armies." TACITUS adds, that these declarations of his wanted not sincerity, and by the Senate many regulations were made, agreeable to their own good liking. For some years his Government continued very good, at least very plausible, and, as far as they conducted it, was unexceptionable, nay, reckoned a pattern to the best Princes, as the rest of it cannot be exceeded by the worst.

BUT when BURRUS and SENECA were dead, or their credit with NERO decayed, it was easily foreseen at what he aimed, and that he would break out into all the outrages of a Tyrant, especially when it was seen who held the chief sway about him. SENECA and BURRUS were therefore sorely lamented, the more for that TIGELLINUS succeeded. As he had shewn himself unworthy of such a Ministry, he now found a Minister worthy of such a Prince, who promoted him only for his infamy and vileness. And as they had taken all care to form him to virtue and good government, it was the business and pursuit of his present director to draw him headlong into a course of abominations and cruelty. Infinite enormities he caused him to commit; many he committed of his own head, unknown to his Master. They were well matched, or rather very ill: NERO promoted him because he was a polluted and mischievous man; and he improved NERO into a most pestilent Tyrant, such a Tyrant as committed a power of tyrannizing even [III-126] to his manumised slaves. HELIUS was one of them, and to his governance and disposal the Emperor surrendered the people of Rome and those of all Italy, with a sway so absolute and dreadful, that, without once consulting his Master, he sentenced Roman Knights, nay, Senators, to what punishments or penalties he listed, some to exile, some to death, many to confiscations. By the breath of this arbitrary and potent Slave capital doom was pronounced against one of the most illustrious Grandees of Rome, SULPITIUS CAMERINUS, as also against his son; and both were doomed to die, for no sort of crime, or other reason, save that they used the additional name of PYTHICUS, a name derived to them from their ancestors. The just Judge charged this as impiety against the Emperor, who had acquired that title by his victories in the Pythian Games. If the Freedman were thus mighty, what must be the first Minister, and one in such high favour?

TIGELLINUS at last acted as became such a Minister to such a Prince, proved a Traitor to his master, whom he had made a traitor to his trust, brought all men to abhor him, then deserted him. What other could be expected from him? Was it likely that he who was a villain to almost all the world, could be faithful to any man in it? It was but natural that a man who had acted so many villainies for him, or in his name, should act one against him, and save his own life at the expence of his Master's. Purely for his own sake, only directed to his own ends, had been all the efforts of his Ministry, and what NERO vainly thought to be the effects of duty and fidelity, resulted from treachery and selfish views. He meant nothing but the gratification of his own brutal spirit, and the aggrandizing of himself, purposes which could not be accomplished but by the favour and authority of NERO. He therefore did not serve NERO; he only humoured and [III-127] deceived him, as does every Minister every Prince when he encourages him in evil courses, or pursues them in his name.

Sect. II.

A sure rule for a Prince to know when he is advised faithfully. The duty of a Minister to warn Princes with freedom. The interest of Princes to hear a Minister patiently. Few will tell them truth, when telling it is offensive. A wise Prince will encourage it.

HERE therefore is a rule for a Prince to judge of the fidelity of his Ministers, by considering whether their counsel be good or evil: If it be unjust, or cruel, or unpopular, though it may be pleasing, it is certainly faithless. No Prince is advised well, who is not advised honestly, and whosoever serves him wickedly, serves him falsly; since no service is due to him, none ought to be done for him, and none will profit him, but what is righteous and honourable. All the actions of a Prince, all his pursuits should tend to glory and popularity, and from just actions alone all genuine glory arises. AGESILAUS King of Sparta said well, when the necessity was urged of complying with the *Great King*, a title always given to the Monarch of Persia, "The Great King is not greater than I, unless he be juster." PLUTARCH, who mentions this, adds, that he thus settled the true, the Royal Standard of Greatness, which is to be estimated by Justice, not by Force. What glory can follow wickedness in any shape, however disguised by art, or new named by flattery?

FROM the Governors of men nothing should be found but what is for the good of men; when that good is not pursued, but evil felt instead of good, the Governors are deemed infamous, because by them Government is perverted. When the sword [III-128] given for protection, is turned upon the givers, and, instead of protecting, slays, he who weilds it will be accounted unworthy to hold it. This is what all wise Princes know, what such as know it not should be told, and what honest Ministers will always tell. What else is the use of Counsel and of Counsellors? It is betraying a Prince to suffer him to do evil unwarned; how much worse to lead him into it? He will certainly suffer for it at last. Danger naturally accompanies wicked actions, especially wicked actions that affect the State. One danger surely attends such actions, the danger of infamy, of all others the greatest, such as a Prince ought to dread more than death. Now what is due to men who train and sooth a Prince into the worst, the most shocking doom that can befall him, that of being odious to the present and all succeeding generations? For the infamy of Princes is ever as immortal as their glory, perhaps more, as men are apter to reproach than to praise. Thus NERO is oftener mentioned than TITUS, CALIGULA than TRAJAN.

HENCE it imports a Prince to be patient of counsel, to court information, and prize men who tell him truth, to hate slatterers who always conceal or disguise it, and to submit his own opinion and pursuits to be examined, canvassed, and even contradicted. If he be peevish and imperious, wedded to his own sentiments, hate free speech, and discourage such as use it, he must expect, that his servants will utterly neglect their duty, when it is thus dangerous or fruitless to do it. When it becomes safer to deceive him than to counsel him, few or none will be apt to counsel him, many will be ready to deceive him: all his measures will be extolled, the worst perhaps most of all, because they want it most, and he may be fondest of the foolishness. Many reasons will be found to support that which is most against reason, and he may go on [III-129] with great ease, because free from contradiction, boldly, because blindly, and meet ruin with applause. Perhaps he will feel the blow before he knows it to be coming, and, just at the approach of death, learn that he has a disease. Too many are apt to flatter wantonly, but almost all men will flatter when they are forced to it. Few men in the world will venture a Prince's displeasure, fewer their employments, and scarce any their lives, to tell him uncourtly truths. When NERO had thrown off all shame and restraints, was already debasing his dignity in the face of the world, and engaged in harping and in singing-matches upon the public Stage, it was no longer possible or safe to admonish him of the ruinous course which he followed. So that what his worst sycophants encouraged, his best friends seemed to approve. Even BURRUS joined in applauding him whilst his heart ached for him. He proceeded in his scandalous pursuits with such ardour as to destroy whomever he found to dislike them, hoping for applause from all men, not for Reigning but for *Acting*: The Theatre was his scene of glory, and in theatrical diversions he was engaged when he received news of the conspiracy formed to deprive him of empire and life. He was undone before any one was found bold enough to tell him, that he was undoing himself.

EXCEEDING singular and hardly ever to be expected is such resolute honesty as an Emperor of China once found in his Mandarins. He had given himself over to acts of Tyranny, and was proceeding in them. His Ministers modestly but truly represented to him the enormity and evil tendency of his conduct. He immediately caused these Ministers to be executed: Others made the same representations, and had the same fate. In the next the like stiffness and integrity was still found, and against them too the like bloody sentence pronounced. Yet [III-130] more remained to bear a testimony equally virtuous and daring. By this their perseverance, so sleddy and undaunted, his stubbornness was overcome, he relented, and, yielding to conviction, changed his course of reigning.

VIRTUE so disinterested, so heroic, is seldom seen. In the beginning of the civil wars in France, during the minority of the late King, when all things were running into confusion, a present remedy wanted, and a Council called to find one, out of seven or eight Counsellors who composed it, not one was found who spoke as he thought, for fear of offending the Queen Regent; insomuch that, as the sure way to please her, all studied to deceive her. Fear is not wont to speak truth. When perfect sincerity is expected, perfect freedom must be allowed; nor has one who is apt to be angry when he hears truth, any cause to wonder that he does not hear it. A Prince of temper and sense, one who has patience to hear, and capacity to distinguish, need seldom be deceived. Queen ELIZABETH, TRAJAN, and HENRY the fourth of France not only encouraged freedom in their Ministers, and took advice in Council, but abroad and from all men.

DE ROSNI, the great Confident of HENRY the fourth, used to treat him with so much plainness, nay, sometimes with such roughness, as none but a very wise King, who knew his value, and the use of plain speaking, would have borne. A foolish Prince (and such are always proudest) would have banished him for ever, perhaps done worse. That great Prince found cause to consult others besides his Ministers, when enquiring how to ease his People oppressed by the Farmers of the Revenue, he learnt that some of his Privy Council were so mean to be Pensioners to these rapacious Farmers, had share of their wicked gains, and thence supported them in all their rapine and oppressions. He [III-131] discovered too, that all tricks and artifices were used to keep him from knowing the state of his Revenue, and the accounts perplexed on purpose to make it impossible, at least extremely difficult and tedious.

Sect. III.

Ministers to be narrowly observed, as well as heard. They sometimes combine to nourish corruption and blind the Prince. How nearly it concerns him that all about him be uncorrupt.

HENRY the Great took the advice of his Ministers, as also care not to be misled by their advice: When MIRON, Lieutenant-civil, and Provost of the Merchants, espoused the interest of the People whose property in the rents of the Townhouse of Paris the Court was about to seize, the Courtiers pressed to have him doomed to some terrible punishment, as an Incendiary; nay, as a Blasphemer, because in his remonstrances to the King, he uttered some uncourtly truths, such as, though they touched not the King, fell heavily upon some of his Counsellors. This they called flying in the King's face, and would have had him vindicate their honour as his own; nay, their honour at the price of his justice. He was too worthy and wise to hearken to them.

A WISE Prince will profit as well by watching his servants, as by consulting them. HENRY the Great saw in how many channels they had caused corruption to flow, nor could he with all his vigour and understanding stop all, nor even cleanse the seats of Justice. Of old the order taken in that Kingdom for supplying the Tribunals worthily, was very good, by directing a Register to be kept of all the able Advocates and Lawyers. Out of these, upon a [III-132] vacancy, three were presented to the King, for him to chuse one. But the Courtiers had advised the King to slight all such representations, as restraints upon Royalty, and to chuse one of his own mere will and finding. Thus it fell into the hands of the Courtiers to recommend, and they always recommended him that gave most. Hence base fellows filled the Courts, ignorance possessed and polluted the sacred seats of Justice, and these scandalous dealers, who had found money more regarded than virtue and sufficiency, were seen to value Law and Righteousness less than Money. Of this venality of places THUANUS justly complains, in the dedication of his excellent History to that King. Yet this evil, this establishment of corruption has been found scarce capable of a cure even by such Princes and Ministers as had the cure of it at heart.

INDEED all corruptions creep easily in, but are with great difficulty removed. In time they even grow fashionable, and then no man is ashamed of being in the mode; so that the greatest infamy upon earth ceases to be infamous when grown common, as every iniquity countenanced at Court will grow. When the shame of being vicious is banished, vice becomes established; nay, virtue will then be thought singularity and sourness, and be treated with coldness and contempt. So much it imports a Country, so much it imports a Prince who values common honesty, his own reputation, and the interest of his Country, that all about him have clean hands. It is not enough that his Ministers and great Officers be untainted and above the mean traffic of selling places: None that are near him, or approach his person should be suffered to dabble in that vile commerce. The disgrace and the danger will at last reach him, and when places are basely filled, when honours are unworthily bestowed, he will bear, at least, share of the blame. [III-133] He should consider such infamous traders as Vulturs, that prey upon the very vitals of Sovereignty, the credit of the Sovereign, as creatures obscene that contaminate his Court, injure and provoke his People, alienate their affections, and dishonour his reign. When such venality prevails, it will certainly be known, as certainly create disgusts, soon spread to general murmuring. Some will be provoked because it immediately hurts them, others will resent it as it affects the Public, and all will dislike it as it is base. It may indeed happen that the man who has favour for money, may deserve it without money, and then it is hard upon him to pay for what he merits: But generally speaking, the worst men rise when money is the way of rising. However that be, the thing itself is dishonourable and unpopular: and what hath a Prince more to fear than unpopularity and dishonour?

LET a Prince, the ablest Prince, take what care he pleases, he will still be in danger to be misled, if those in his confidence have an interest to mislead him. VESPASIAN, who at first intended no oppression, was by evil counsel brought to commit many. Queen ELIZABETH confessed to her Parliament with regret, that she had been overreached, her power abused, and enormities committed under her name. EDWARD the third suffered his reign, one of the most glorious that history can shew, to be stained by the Ministry of a Mistress, a rapacious Woman, who had a shameful sway over him and his affairs. The Prerogative, which in the hands of a good Prince is a rod of Gold, when exerted by evil instruments under him, becomes a rod of Iron; as I have seen it somewhere observed.

[III-134]

Sect. IV.

What selfish ends the Counsellors of Princes sometimes pursue, yet pretend public good. They gratify private passion to the ruin of the State. What a reproach to a Prince the corruption of his Servants.

HENRY the Great, after gaining the Battle of Ivry, might, according to the general opinion, have had the City of Paris surrendered to him, had he immediately advanced thither. That he did not, was ascribed to the artifices of his Ministers agreeing to dissuade him from it upon different motives of their own. The Marshal de BIRON was thought to dread Peace, for that by it his own great importance would have been lost or lessened. Monsieur D'O, Superintendent of the Finances, was believed to aim at the sacking of Paris, that thence the King's treasures might be filled, and his debts cancelled. Others imagined that the Hugonot Ministers retarded him, from a jealousy of an accommodation with the Catholics of Paris about matters of Religion. The several conjectures are reasonable, that, particularly, concerning the Marshal de BIRON, who was so fond of continuing the war, that he would not suffer his son to seize the General of the League, when he proposed it and had it in his power. "How, says the Marshal, wouldst thou send us back to plant cabbages at Biron?"

THE Marquis de LOUVOIS, Minister to the late French King, acted from the same principle, and by it influenced his Master. He was eternally contriving to keep the King and his Kingdom involved in wars, because he himself was Secretary at War, and during war found that he was of most consideration. As further proofs of the power and prevalence [III-135] of private spirit in public concerns, in the minority of that King, the Dutchess de LONGUEVILLE instigated the civil war with all her might, purely to avoid living with her husband the Duke, whom she had provoked with her conduct. The Duke de NEMOURS did what he could to promote it, on purpose to separate the Prince of CONDE from the Dutchess of CHATILLON, a Lady whom they both loved. The Queen Regent studied not to prevent a civil war, since it might bring back her dear fugitive Cardinal. KATHERINE DE MEDICIS was continually stirring up commotions, conspiracies, and even civil wars, even against her own son HENRY the third, with design to secure power to herself. She succeeded too well: She exhausted that noble Country, oppressed the Subjects, destroyed Liberty and Laws, to promote desolation, licentiousness and the consuming sword. Was this Wretch, this Pest of Society, the Parent of her Country? As the most comprehensive calamity that could befall a Nation, she kept it always divided, always engaged in war and blood. When the People, wearied and weakened with long strife and slaughter, had procured peace and a breathing-time, she never ceased her wicked machinations, until she had broke it again, and, in spite of Treaties and public misery, set their blood a running. Moreover, to drive all virtue out of a country, from which she had already driven all security and concord, she carefully promoted all sorts of debauchery, and amidst the pangs and calamities of the State, encouraged every excess of voluptuousness and revelling. Nay, to gain and corrupt the Grandees with the fairest and most bewitching baits, she kept her Court replenished with fair Ladies well trained and fit to cajole Malecontents, and to soften Heroes. Those whom nothing else could influence, this did. By what name can we call these politics, this trade of hers?

[III-136]

MANY public designs, however admired and interesting, are sacrificed to private ends and personal piques. The Duke de MAYENNE, that zealous Catholic, General of the League, the mortal enemy to Heresy and HENRY the fourth, postponed all his zeal for Religion, all regard for the League, all his hate of Heretics, to the sole fear that his nephew the Duke of GUISE would be declared King and set above him. Upon this apprehension he made a truce with HENRY the fourth.

It is happy for Princes when their interest and that of their Ministers are the same; happy for the Public when both combine to promote the common good. But when such as conduct the Administration are drawn away by low pursuits and gains of their own, the Prince's reputation will be blotted, the public interest at best neglected, often marred or ruined. There are instances where a general war has been risked, rather than a few Courtiers would part with some private bribes and gettings, even from scandalous Villains and Banditti.

THE Uscoques, who were a nest of fugitives settled at Segna upon the Frontiers of Hungary, and there protected by the House of Austria, as a band of desperate fellows proper to repulse the encroachments and insults of the bordering Turks, became themselves Freebooters upon all Nations, and thence caused universal complaints from the neighbouring States, especially from that of Venice; and repeated applications were made to the Imperial Court for redress. This course of rapine, and consequently these complaints and expostulations, went on for many years. The Uscoques still robbed, the foreign Ministers still complained, no effectual redress was obtained, and therefore a War was threatened. Behold the true reason of all this. When the Merchants and Traders, despoiled by this band of Thieves, went to the Imperial Court to represent their losses, [III-137] and to beg relief, they saw their Jewels and Brocades upon the Wives of the Imperial Ministers.

THIS was a hopeful confederacy and commerce between great Ministers of State and a Den of Robbers. It was thus they were protected in robbing: They, indeed, paid so high for this protection, that though they had made infinite spoil, and acquired great wealth, they were still beggars, for they were suffered to keep none. One old Uscoque had in his time acquired by plunder to the value of eighty thousand Crowns, yet perished for want. The Robbers at Court seem to have been the more rigorous sort of the two, for they left nothing: Surely they were the most infamous.

WHAT a scandal upon the Imperial Court, to be thus bribed by a nest of Rogues and Outlaws, to suffer such depredations upon the innocent, to have such vile spirits at the helm of the State, and, for the sordid lucre of particulars, to venture a war in Europe. Much more honourable were the grounds which engaged ALONSO the ninth, King of Leon, in a war against another Prince, his kinsman, for that the latter owed him ten thousand *Maravedis*, about seven pounds ten shillings of our money. Upon the payment of that sum Don ALONSO promised to make peace.

I THINK it is boasted of the Austrian Family, as a proof of their innate generosity and clemency, that in the space of three hundred years, they never punished any of their Ministers, their worst Ministers, with death or confiscation. So safe were those who maintained this honourable alliance with the Uscoques. This character of that August House, reminds me of what was said of CHARILAUS, a King of Sparta, remarkable for extreme gentleness, “that he was so gracious as to be very good to the very worst of men.”

[III-138]

Sect. V.

Under a Prince subject to be blindly managed, a change of Ministers rarely mends the Administration He often hates his Ministers, yet still employs them. Ministers most in danger where the Prince has most Power.

IT is a heavy misfortune to a country, when a Prince is subject to the management and designs of whomsoever he happens to have about him; for then the change of persons rarely mends the condition of his country or his own condition. LEWIS the fourteenth was weary of the imperious humour of Madam DE MONTESPAN, and apprized that many of her demands were unreasonable and insolent; yet could refuse her nothing when face to face. So manageable was that great Monarch by those who had once got possession of him, Ministers or Mistresses, that even Mademoiselle FONTANGE, a stupid idiot, but very handsome, domineered over him. He generally hated his Ministers, and almost always feared them, wanted to get rid of them, but was afraid to discharge them. In order to remove FOUQUET, Superintendent of the Finances, he used the most remote pretences, disguised his intentions, made seints, took a long journey, drew an army together, and made such mighty movements, as if some great war had been on foot. Yet FOUQUET was at all times in his power, nor does there appear any other cause for so many precautions, and such a grand apparatus, but his own extreme timidity and causeless fear. He could not abide LOUVOIS his first Minister, who had long managed him: The like aversion he bore to SEIGNELAY and LA FEUILLADE, two other of his Ministers: Insomuch that when he had taken Mons, he reckoned it amongst the other [III-139] felicities of the year, that he was relieved for ever from these three great Officers. He had been weakly subject to them, then as weakly afraid of them. Had it not been for the King's dread or hatred, or that of some superior Favourite, it was thought that LOUVOIS might have lived to have been an older man.

WHAT signifies the change of Ministers, without changing measures? What, when they who succeed are permitted to be as bad as their predecessors? Let a Prince hate a Minister ever so much, or dread him, or destroy him; all this avails neither him nor the State, if the

Administration be not mended. Without this any alteration or punishment is folly or mockery. It is the grimace of Justice, like that in Turkey, where the Grand Seignior frequently cuts off a wicked and rapacious Bashaw, but never returns any of his rapine. He ought to correct or prevent foul dealings, to discountenance such of his servants as commit them, and to protect and encourage such as commit none against all clamour and malevolence; for clamours and malevolence there will be against Ministers the most virtuous and irreproachable, as long as there are Ministers or Men.

MINISTERS are only safe there, where the standing fence of impartial Laws will be able to protect their innocence, when in spite of innocence the People think them guilty, and the Prince through pique or policy would punish them as such. The People may be misinformed, and often are, and passion may misguide the Prince. But the Laws are never angry, at least with the guiltless, and judge not but according to truth and evidence. There, as they cannot act by the mere command of the Prince, so neither can they suffer by his mere will. In arbitrary countries the Prince must sometimes destroy good Ministers, because it is known that he [III-140] can; and to an enraged populace or soldiery he has no room to plead his inability. His overgrown power is a curse upon himself as well as upon his servants, and by having too much he has none, or worse than none, none to protect and save, which is the office of a Governor and a Father; but only to kill and destroy, which is the work of an enemy and an executioner. Such a power is but the worst part of bondage, bondage to him, bondage to them, to be doomed to act, not to chuse it, doomed to the most terrible of all slavery, that of destroying, or being destroyed. This has been often the situation of the greatest Monarchs upon earth. It was that of OTHO. In OTHO, says TACITUS, authority sufficient was not found to prohibit acts of violence; it was hitherto only in his power to ordain them to be done. It was that of VITELLIUS. To him, says the same Author, no power remained either to command or to forbid; nor was he any longer Emperor, but only the cause of war. And it was that of many of their successors. In Turkey it is common. Who can securely serve such Princes? They can put you to death if you do not obey their commands, however unjust they be, and cannot defend you when you do, nor save you, however innocent you are.

Sect. VI.

Ministers trusted without controul, sometimes threatening and perillous to a Prince. How fatal this often to themselves, and to the State.

EVEN Princes of parts, and naturally jealous, are sometimes subject to a fondness for Favourites, even to folly and their own danger, apt to heap so much grandeur upon them as to have none left for themselves; and when nothing of Sovereignty remains but the name, that too will soon follow, [III-141] unless some chance or stratagem intervene to secure it, and redeem the whole. TIBERIUS, the darkest and most suspicious Prince upon earth, was yet open to SEJANUS without reserve, trusted him without bounds. To this Idol every thing was made to bend, all knees to bow, and many noble lives sacrificed. By his power and artifices he destroyed most of the Imperial Family; nay, effected the same by the co-operation of TIBERIUS, whose passions he guided and enflamed. In all public honours done to TIBERIUS, SEJANUS was included, and shared in them with the Emperor at the Emperor's desire, at Rome, in the Senate, over the Provinces. In the City he had more Statues erected than the Year has Days. Men every where swore by the Fortune of SEJANUS, with the same solemnity as by that of the Prince, nor was the name of the Prince found oftener in the last Wills of the Romans than the name of SEJANUS. To him, in his absence, Embassadors were sent with the same form as to the Prince, Embassadors from the People of Rome, Embassadors from the Equestrian Order; nay, Embassadors from the Roman Senate. His birthday was celebrated publicly, by a decree of Senate, as well as that of the Prince. For his health public vows were paid every return of the new year, as for the health of the Emperor.

WHAT else was all this, but to invest SEJANUS with Sovereignty, by paying him all the honours due to a Sovereign? Though all discerning men saw the consequence, saw his pursuits, and whither they tended, no man durst inform or warn the Emperor, because by it he must have exposed his own life; so capricious was the Prince, so powerful his Minion. No wonder his intelligence was late, and that his information and despair came together. SEJANUS swayed the State at the head of the soldiery, who were Masters of the State, and had in their hands the [III-142] making and unmaking of Emperors: So that no more remained to be done to accomplish a revolution, but just to change names, SEJANUS for TIBERIUS, the latter long since imprisoned in an Island, the former already governing the Empire, and adored by the Army. Nothing but the form seemed wanting, and that too was concerted, and the conspiracy settled. TIBERIUS, at last, illuminated, by wonderful wiles and dissimulation, and by the bold management and lies of MACRO, escaped this peril. Yet it was nine months ere he could accomplish the fall of this mighty Traitor, whose doom proved as destructive to the Roman State as had his flourishing Fortune.

No Tyranny was ever more signal than that of TIBERIUS both in raising that pestilent Favourite, and in pulling him down. Whomsoever SEJANUS disliked, TIBERIUS destroyed, and by his favour or frowns all men prospered or perished. The Roman World seemed the Patrimony of SEJANUS. The Roman People were his vassals, the Grandees of Rome his dependents or victims, the Army his guards, the Emperor his shadow. But whatever mischief he had done whilst he lived, he did rather more when dead. As before, all who were obnoxious to him, had been murdered, or beggared, or banished; so now all who had espoused him, and adhered to him, all who depended upon him, all who had favoured his fortune, or were suspected to have favoured it, were doomed to the like inexorable cruelty, to dungeons, to halters and the bloody knife. Nay, progressive murders were too slow for the inhuman rage of TIBERIUS [a]. Men, Women and Children must be butchered in the lump, lie dead in heaps, and barbarity be exercised on their carcasses.

[III-143]

THIS general carnage is affectingly described in the sixth Book of the Annals. “His cruelty being but inflamed by incessant executions, all those kept in prison under accusation of any attachment to SEJANUS, were by his command put to the slaughter. Exposed to the Sun lay the sad monuments of the mighty butchery; those of every, sex, of every age; the illustrious and the mean; their carcasses ignominiously thrown, apart or on heaps. Neither was it permitted to their surviving friends or kindred, to approach them, to bewail them, nor even any longer to behold them. Round the dead guards were placed, who watched faces and marked the signs of sorrow; and as the bodies putrified, saw them dragged to the Tyber, where they floated in the stream, or were driven upon the banks, no man daring to burn them, none to touch them. The force of fear had cut off the intercourses of humanity: and in proportion to the growth of Tyranny, every symptom of commiseration was banished.” It was in court to TIBERIUS that most men courted SEJANUS: For this, TIBERIUS destroyed them, as he had before those who did it not. If the crime was so great, the old Tyrant should in justice have destroyed himself as the greatest Criminal.

Sect. VII.

The great mischief of exalting Favourites beyond measure, especially such as command great Armies.

MUCH the like sway had PLAUTIANUS under SEVERUS, and much the like fate. He had enjoyed the same post, committed the same oppressions and excesses, and was put to death for having had the same treasonable designs. No man's fortune escaped his claws, and by trick or violence he shared in the estates of all men: Many of the [III-144] most considerable he put to death. No Nation escaped his extortions, no City was unpillaged. The Presents made

to him were larger and more frequent than those to the Emperor, and he could boast more Statues erected to him, in Rome, in other Cities, by private men, by public societies, and even by the Senate. The Senators and Soldiers swore by his Fortune, and for him made solemn vows. He commanded the guards, governed all things, did what he listed. Indeed so giddy and wanton his boundless power had made him, that having invited to his house an hundred Romans of good Families, he caused them all to be castrated. Nor were they boys only whom he thus abused, but men grown, some of them married men; and all for no other cause than to increase the number of his daughter's Eunuchs. DION CASSIUS says, that he had seen some of these men, so suddenly made Eunuchs, Eunuchs who had children, wives and beards. To this daughter, whom he married to the Emperor's son, he gave a fortune large enough for the daughters of fifty Kings.

ALL this power was too mighty to last in the same shape; nor did it. He must either cease his greatness, to be greater, or perish. Rather than do the first, he ventured the last in order to the second. He attempted to cut off the Emperor, and was himself cut off. Fortune saved SEVERUS, as it had TIBERIUS, and they kept their Diadem, when they had nigh lost it. So near sometimes is Treason to a Throne, and sometimes ascends it. PLAUTIANUS, in the midst of his hopes and grandeur, he who was first Minister to the Emperor, Father-in-law to the Emperor's son, and aiming himself at the Empire, was executed like a common malefactor, by the command of his daughter's husband, and his body thrown into the street. So strangely are the views of the greatest men baffled! [III-145] This great match for his child, whence he hoped an accession of credit and might, hastened his tragical fall, and made it more tragical. With him too fell his family: His son, born, as once seemed, to wealth more than Royal, his daughter more than royally portioned and married, were banished to an island, where having for some time led a miserable life, destitute of common necessaries, struggling with many miseries, apprehending yet more and heavier, they were relieved by the hand of an executioner in the following reign.

NEITHER does it appear that SEVERUS had in the least foreseen such a reverse in the Fortune of his great Favourite, and for want of such foresight, caused it. It was but the natural consequence of such a blind and unbounded trust. The temptation was too great, and what was at first ambition in PLAUTIANUS, grew at last to be necessity. This SEVERUS himself afterwards owned, lamented the weakness of human nature, which in elevated fortune knows no moderation, and blamed himself for haveing raised him so high that he grew giddy. By the ruin too of PLAUTIANUS many were endangered, several suffered a bloody doom.

WHERE-EVER there are greatstanding Armies, Revolutions are suddenly brought about, and therefore will be often attempted; for whoever has the Army, has or may have the State. Hence the danger of TIBERIUS, hence that of SEVERUS, and hence the danger and sudden fate of many Princes in almost all ages, as well as encouragement to ambitious men to set up themselves by corrupting the soldiery, a task not over difficult. It was the fate of most of the Roman Emperors, as to be made by their Armies, so to be destroyed by their Armies.

DISCOURSE VIII.

The same subject continued.↩*Sect. I.*

Good Ministers often ruined and destroyed for their virtue by a combination of the bad. The spight and wicked arts of the latter. How ready to charge their own guilt upon the innocent.

IT is a matter of grief and concern, though not always of wonder, to see the best servants of a Prince often supplanted, often undone by the worst, to see his truest friends depressed, and the most pernicious parasites triumph, to consider the vile lyes and contemptible causes by which the bad undermine and undo the good. JUNIUS BLÆSUS was one of the most illustrious Romans, of a princely Spirit, and his Fortune like his Race, very noble. He was Governor of Lionese Gaul, and espoused the cause of VITELLIUS early and cordially; nay, bore at first all the expence of his Imperial State and Train; for such was the poverty of VITELLIUS, that he could not as yet support the same himself. For such splendid instances of his zeal VITELLIUS returned him many open commendations, and much secret hatred.

A MAN of so much esteem and merit the false and spiteful Courtiers could not bear. They bore him special enmity, for that, in a reputation glorious and popular, he so far surpassed themselves contaminated with every sort of infamy. A man so dangerous to the Tribe, by being so much better than they, and so much above them, must therefore [III-147] be taken off, and as he was perfectly innocent, some fault must be forged, and the simple Emperor alarmed with the shadow of some terrible Treason. A terrible one indeed they found: BLÆSUS happened to sup with a Friend, whilst the Emperor happened to be out of order. This was aggravated to him, and this embittered him. Here was ground and encouragement enough to proceed to a direct charge; it was all that the plotters wanted, they who made it their business to dive with a curious eye into all the passions and disgusts of the Prince. Instantly one of the body is dispatched to impeach him. The Impeacher made a dismal, a weeping harangue, how “BLÆSUS was making merry, and the Emperor’s life at stake, nor could aught secure it but the death of such an insolent criminal.” The argument prevailed: The foolish Emperor ordered him to be poysoned, and, as brutish as foolish, went full of glaring joy to see him in his agonies; nay, boasted, that he had feasted his eyes with the sight of an enemy expiring.

This was the unworthy, the tragical end of JUNIUS BLÆSUS, procured by the poysonous tongues of traducers; a man venerable for the antiquity of his house, signal for elegance of manners, signal for uprightness of heart; in his faith towards VITELLIUS obstinately firm, free from all vice, from all ambition and intrigues, so far from coveting any hasty honour, much less sovereignty, that he could hardly escape being judged worthy to be Sovereign. The truth is, he had been already tried by the Courtiers and false friends of VITELLIUS, and by them tempted to desert him, but tempted in vain. This alone might prompt some of them to destroy him. It was what many supposed to have occasioned the death of FONTEIUS CAPITO commander in Germany under GALBA: CORNELIUS AQUINUS, and FABIVS VALENS, [III-148] two Colonels of Legions, instigated him to rebel, and upon his refusal slew him, then charged him with Rebellion.

Sect. II.

How hard it is for a good Minister to support himself with a Prince surrounded by Sycophants and Seducers, or to preserve him and his State. Their execrable Stratagems to execute their Malice. How such sometimes abuse the Prince, mislead him, distress him,

AS no good Minister can be fafe where such mischievous Minions prevail, so neither can a Prince nor his State. It is not the honour of the Prince, it is not the ease and benefit of the Country that they seek and consider; it is only their own interest and advantage, and this they will pursue, though to the ruin of Prince or State. King JAMES the fifth of Scotland had a fair opportunity of establishing a lasting peace with England. HENRY the eighth his Uncle, then at great variance with the Pope, the Emperor and Spain, willing to strengthen himself at home, even desirous to settle the succession upon his Nephew, courted him to an alliance; nay, to an interview and conference at York. Nothing could promise fairer for the advantage of Scotland, for many ages harrassed and desolated by wars with England, nothing prove more honourable and beneficial to the Scotch King than the entail of the English Crown and the support of his Uncle. HENRY the eighth had then only a daughter, MARY, and she was declared illegitimate. King JAMES therefore, by the advice of his Council, declared his acceptance of the proposal; the English Embassadors returned highly satisfied, and highly pleased their Master, who made [III-149] great preparations at York for the entertainment of his Nephew.

BUT the Scotch King had Minions about him of more prevalence with him than his Council, or his Honour or his Interest, if these two can be parted. To these Minions the Clergy apply, and with large bribes engage them to dissuade the King from keeping his word. Some of the Minions too were Clergymen, and in the name of all laboured to debauch and deceive the King. They frightened and cheated him with the word *Heresy*. And whatever offended the Clergy, be it man or thing, must surely be an enemy to God and the King, and consequently very bad and terrible. They said, it was grown up in England, and growing fast in Scotland, and shewed him what notable profit would accrue to him from suppressing it, and enriching himself with the estates of such as professed, and of such as favoured it. With this they gave him a list of their names, encouraging him to plunder and burn the best and richest of his subjects.

THE King listened to the proposal too greedily, and communicated it to the Laird of Grange his Treauret. This was an honest and bold Man, who freely shewed his Master the monstrous iniquity and mischief of such counsel, exposed the evil and rapacious hearts of the Bishops, their corrupt practices, unsufferable pride, ambitious designs, and ungodly lives, with their utter unfitness to be trusted in Council, or with any civil concerns; represented, how rashly and perniciously one of his Predecessors, King DAVID, had stripped the Crown of its Patrimony to endow Bishopricks and Abbeys; whence his Majesty was now so poor, the Prelates so rich, so prodigal and assuming, that they strove to be Masters and Directors in all things. Thus he convinced the King, and recovered him to his first reasonable purpose of closing with England; insomuch that his [III-150] Majesty, next time the Prelates approached him, fell upon them with great bitterness, for having endeavoured to mislead him into such cruelties against so many Noblemen and Barons, to the danger of his own Estate. "Wherefore, said he, gave my Predecessors so many lands and rents to the Kirk? Was it to maintain Hawks, Dogs and Whores to a number of idle Priests? The King of England burns, the King of Denmark beheads you: I shall stick you with this Whingar." Wherewith, says Sir JAMES MELVIL (from whom I quote these words) he drew out his dagger, and they fled from his presence in great fear.

HE now fully resolved to keep his promise with his Uncle of England, as tending both to his advancement and honour. But his resolution held not. The Bishops were not easily baulked nor ashamed, nor wont to relax when interest, or dominion, or revenge was in view. Again they assail the Minions, particularly OLIVER SINCLAIR, with store of gold, promised him high honours by their weight and procurement, especially the command of the Army against England, could he bring his Master to violate his Faith, and break with his Uncle. Their next step was to undo the Treasurer, by defaming him to the King: "He was proud, he was a

Heretic (an imputation always powerful, however stale and foolish) he carried an English new Testament in his pouch; nay, he was so arrogant, that he would not procure Women for the King, nor prostitute his Son's Wife to his Majesty's Pleasure." For this was one article of the charge against him, and urged by a venerable Prelate. It was usual for these Favourites to furnish the young King with Women, married or unmarried, thus to preserve their favour.

WHEN the King vindicated his Minister, as a plain, frank Gentleman, whom he loved well, and [III-151] to whom he begrudged no reward; the Prior of Pittenween replied and said, "Sir, the heir (heiress) of Kelly is a lusty fair Lass, and I dare pledge my life, that if your Majesty will send for her presently, he shall refuse to send her to you." (The Lady was betrothed to the Treasurer's Son.) A godly proposal, and it took. The King signed an order for the Lady to be brought to him; nay, the Prelates and their Faction contrived that a brother Prelate, the Prior of Pittenween, should carry it, and return with the fair prize. The Treasurer refused to comply, for good reasons: amongst others, the reverend Envoy was his known Enemy, and a known Debauchee. The Prior however who had gained the main point, rejoiced in the denial, and by it enraged the King, nay, from him a warrant was obtained to seize the Treasurer, and commit him to the Castle of Edinburgh.

HE was aware of their mischievous devices, and hastened to Court. The King lowered, nor would speak to him. He boldly asked his Majesty, Why such a change, so much displeasure presently after so much favour, and for what offence? The King replied, "Why did thou refuse to send me the maiden whom I wrote for, and gave despiteful language to him I sent for her?" The Treasurer said, that he thought himself meetest to bring her, nor would he trust the Prior, as he knew him to be one infamous for rapes, a man the most notorious of any in Scotland for debauching of women, whether wives or virgins. Such failings, it seems, the holy man had, but was zealous for the Hierarchy against Heretics and his Country. "Hast thou then brought the Gentlewoman with thee?" said the King. Yes, Sir, said the Treasurer. This softened him. "Alas, saith the King, they have set out so many leasings against thee, that they have [III-152] obtained of me a warrant to put thee in ward: But I shall mend it with a contrary order."

THE Treasurer answered with lamentation; "My life, Sir, or warding is a small matter: but it breaks my heart, that the world should hear of your Majesty's facility." For he had learnt, that in his absence they had made the King send to England to contradict his promise, and refuse to meet his Uncle. His lamentations availed not: The worst counsels had swayed him. The Prelates, and other Minions corrupted by them, and subservient to them, rule the King. HARRY the eighth rages, vows to revenge so much scorn, and sends away an Army to lay Scotland desolate by fire and sword. The Scotch King too raises forces, but forces without heart, as in a cause undertaken for the pleasure of the Prelates against their Country. This damped their spirits, but what quite finished their dejection and despair was, to see OLIVER SINCLAIR, a Minion and Hireling of the Prelates, declared General of the Army.

THE Lords and principal Officers, through indignation that the Court and Country should be governed by such vile instruments as the Bishops and their Creatures, refused to fight under such a worthless Commander; nay, suffered themselves to be all taken prisoners. The whole Army was overthrown, the Kingdom defenceless, and exposed to the ravages of a victorious enemy, and the poor King to anguish and disgrace. Against the Bishops all mouths were open, all men enraged, to see the Country perishing to satiate their fury and ambition: The King heard the general outcry, his eyes were opened, and, in the fulness of his heart, he dropped some expressions of resentment against his ghostly and execrable advisers; for which expressions they soon took severe vengeance.

[III-153]

SUCH men never retract, never forgive. The Realm was under the spoiling hand of Enemies and Invaders, the Army routed, the Nobility provoked, the People miserable and murmuring, the King distressed, and his Honour lost. Did all this soften the Bishops? No: to accomplish their malice and good services to the Public and their Sovereign, they murder him by poison. For, with their other politics and wholesome severities derived from Rome, they had learnt the art of making an *Italian Posset*, and with this, administered by some of their faithful villains about him, they shut up the days and reign of JAMES the fifth, first deprived him of his Innocence, next of his honest Counsellors, then of his Peace and Honour, lastly of his Life.

WERE not these notable Directors of a Monarch's power and conscience? Nay, even dying and dead they abused him, as well as they had whilst alive. One of them attending him at his death, dictated a Will for him, and what he himself caused to be written, when the poor King was expiring, he boldly declared to be the King's Will afterwards. To such an amazing power in wickedness and want of shame had the Clergy then grown by their enormous increase of property. But they were popish Clergy: The Protestant sort thirst not after wealth, and where they have it, are too meek to become proud and abuse it, too conscientious to neglect the cure of souls, and live in luxury, too modest to haunt Courts, too disinterested and sincere to flatter Princes, too just and impartial to preach selfish doctrines tending to raise themselves by the purse, or subserviency, or sufferings of others.

[III-154]

Sect. III.

Reflections upon the fate of King JAMES the fifth of Scotland seduced and undone by Minions, who withdrew him from the direction of an honest Minister.

SUCH was the fate of JAMES the fifth, a Prince of spirit and good qualities, but debauched, abused and undone by wicked and crafty Minions, Pandars and Seducers; such the dismal issue of false and unjust Counsels, of forsaking honest and worthy advisers, to follow the deceitful, the selfish and corrupt; and such ample ground had Sir JAMES MELVIL for saying as he does of Princes, especially of young Princes, and their favour to those who misguide and ruin them. "They were carried away by the craft and envy of such as could subtilly creep into their favour, by flattery and by joining together in a deceitful bond of fellowship, every one of them setting out the other, as meetest and ablest for the service of their Prince, to the wrack of him and his Country; craving the Prince to be secret, and not to communicate his secrets to any but their Society. Thus the Prince's good qualities being smothered by such a company, were commonly led after the passions and particularities of those, who shot only at their own marks: Some of them continually possessing his ear, and debarring therefrom all honest, true and plain speakers; so that no more hope could be left of a gracious Government, nor place for good men to help the Prince and Country, wherethrough fell out many foul, strange, and sad accidents, as may be afterwards seen and read: Princes misused, and abused, their Country robbed, their best and truest servants wracked, and the wicked instruments at last perished with all their high and fine pretences; others, ay, [III-155] (always) such-like, succeeding in their place, never one taking example to become more temperate and discreet, because of the destruction of those who went before them; but as highly and fiercely following their greedy, vain and ambitious pretences, obtained the like tragical reward."

HE afterwards quotes the complaint made by Monsieur DE BOUSSIE, when left and disliked by the Prince his Master. "Alas, wherefore should men be earnest to surpass their neighbours in worthiness and fidelity, seeing that Princes, who get the fruits of our labours, like not to hear of plainness, but of pleasant speeches, and are easily altered without occasion upon their truest Servants?"

Where Flattery is encouraged, Flatterers rule, and sincerity is banished. Ministers sometimes fall not through guilt but faction; yet always accused of guilt.

WHEN a Prince will bear no Minister that tells him the truth, and only exalts those who sooth and flatter him, the best Flatterer is always sure to be the first Minister, and his Master will be pleasantly deceived instead of being faithfully and unacceptably served. The Marquiss de VIEVILLE, Superintendent of the Finances to LEWIS the thirteenth, gained his favour and preferment by extolling the King's spirit and conduct, in commanding his armies in person. Though that Prince had no sufficiency in war, he liked to hear that he had, perhaps believed it; for what is more vain than power, what more credulous than vanity? At the same time his Chancellor DE SILLERY fell under displeasure and lost his employment, for blaming these military rambles. His Son too, [III-156] Monsieur de PUYSEUX, Secretary of State, was afterwards removed, on pretence, that the King could not trust a Man who was doubtless soured by the disgrace of his Father.

To the disgrace of that Minister almost the whole band of Courtiers contributed, all from causes personal and distinct. The Queen-Mother hated him for his superior credit with the King; Cardinal RICHLIEU, for having opposed his elevation to the Purple; the Prince of CONDE, for forwarding a Peace with the Hugonots, whence his own credit was lessened or lost in the Army; the Count of SOISSONS for retarding his marriage with the King's Sister; de THOIRAS for discrediting him with the King; the Duke de BELLEGARDE for opposing the resignation of his employment to a kinsman. These were their true motives, though very opposite to those that they avowed. They charged him with insolence to the King, infidelity in his trust, and corruption. Whatever faults he might have, his faults had no share in his disgrace.

FAVOUR at Court is a brittle thing. That of VIEVILLE, the Superintendent, had its period and declension. Though he had flattered the King and lyed for his honour, the King gave him up to the jealousy and displeasure of the Cardinal, a more terrible antagonist than the Monarch himself. Falling Ministers are always faulty, and must be: It would be preposterous and unjust to pull them down, yet own them innocent. VIEVILLE was accused of many heavy crimes, "with deciding great affairs of his own head; with altering the King's orders; with sending directions to Embassadors, without communication with the King or Council; with doing acts of injustice, and throwing the odium upon the King, and with gratifying his pride and passions at the expence of the King's honour."

[III-157]

To the honour of that Minister it must be owned, that upon trial, all the uproar and pompous charges against him for malversation and corruption in the Treasury, appeared groundless. In truth, in all the efforts of faction and rivalship men do not study to punish Truth, but Reproach. The Cardinal wanted to ruin him. It is so probable that men in office may be guilty, that if such guilt be but boldly charged, it will be readily believed. When the suspicion is once well raised, it will hardly fail of being well received. This serves the turn, and proves a good warrant for disgracing an innocent man once thought guilty. Indeed when prejudices subside, and popular heat cools, it is probable his innocence will begin to appear and be credited; but first he is disgraced or undone, and his Competitors already triumph, till perhaps they meet with the same measure from others.

THE Eunuchs of SCHAH HUSSEIN falsly charged the first Minister behind his back with a conspiracy, and produced a forged Letter to support it. By that Letter it was to be executed in a few hours. The Emperor was frightened, and gave immediate orders to arrest him. The Emperor considered the Eunuchs as his guardian angels, who by their vigilance had saved him, yet would needs be so just as to hear that great Man in his own defence. He defended

himself gloriously, exposed their execrable fraud, and manifested his own innocence. But what signified his innocence, or the Emperor's conviction, for his eyes were put out? Of this the cruel villains had taken present care, that he might never stand in their way in the same post, or any post again.

[III-158]

Sect. V.

A Minister may be disgraced for his Virtue, and Fidelity to his Prince. Mercenary Courtiers certain Enemies to upright Ministers. Justice done to both by time and history.

IN the reign of RICHARD the second, Sir RICHARD SCROOPE was promoted to be Lord Chancellor of England, a Person reckoned so accomplished and just, that he was raised to that Great Trust at the request of the Parliament, both Lords and Commons. He was indeed too just to hold it long. He would not serve the turn of the Favourites, and the Favourites would not let him serve the King and Kingdom. They had begged Grants of diverse Lordships lately fallen to the Crown: But what the King had weakly granted, the Chancellor honestly refused to confirm. He alledged "the King's wants and debts, with the necessity of satisfying his creditors; that no good Subject should prefer his own advantage to the King's interest, private lucre to public good: Already they had received from his Majesty abundant Largesses; and it was but modest to ask no more." This repulse fired them, and to the King they went with grievous accusations against the Chancellor: "He was obstinate, he contemned his Majesty's Commands; he must suffer exemplary punishment for his disobedience and scorn of the Royal Authority, which would otherwise fall into public contempt."

THIS was enough to incense the undiscerning King, who sends in a fury to demand the Seal. Doubtless it was from pure tenderness for the King's Honour (whom they were cheating and robbing) and with no eye to any interest of their own, that [III-159] they arraigned the Chancellor, and asserted the Prerogative. Nor is it to be imagined, that they did not represent him abroad in ugly colours, as proud and insolent, engrossing all favour to himself, injuring the King's best friends, nay, acting the part of a King himself. Nor were all these imputations more than what others had deserved, and therefore likely enough to be believed of the Chancellor, who was thus severely censured, thus ungratefully dismissed, for his uncommon faith and integrity.

THE good Chancellor reaped one advantage of which neither Malice, nor Power, nor Time could deprive him. He is recorded in the History of his Country, as a glorious Magistrate, an upright Minister, a faithful Patriot: whilst his supplanters bear such a Character as they deserve, that of Sycophants, public Robbers, Enemies to King and People. Thus it is that virtue triumphs over vice, and for ever triumphs; this the immortal reward of men who faithfully serve their Country, who worthily discharge public Trust. The fruits of base actions perish; their infamy only is sure to remain. It is a dreadful lot, that of being hated to all following generations. How amiable is the contrary lot, to be beloved and praised whilst there are Men and Letters in the World? Such are the different and lasting lots of a *Chancellor* JEFFERIES, and a *Chancellor* COWPER.

DISCOURSE IX.

Of the People. ↪

Sect. I.

The variable Character of the People: very good or very bad, according to their education and government. Hence the improvement or depravation of their manners.

CONCERNING the People it is scarce possible to lay down any general proposition. If we say, that they are greatly disposed to evil, it is true: If we assert, that they have a fund of goodness in them, it is true. They are cruel and merciful, constant and fickle, fond of their benefactors, ungrateful to their friends, very patient, very furious, unmanageable, and easy to be governed, greatly given to change, greatly afraid of it, apt to love extravagantly, apt to hate implacably. They are indeed just what they are made, formed by habit and direction: They take the impressions that are given them, follow the opinions of such as lead them, the example of those who govern them, and are capable of being very virtuous and modest, very vitious and turbulent, according to the lessons and pattern of their Guides and Rulers.

THUS the Romans from a band of Robbers, became a civil Community, at first rough and rude, afterwards regular and sociable, then polite and elegant, always brave, fond of Liberty and Glory, impatient of Servitude. Such was their beginning, alteration, and improvement, still in proportion to the influence of their Leaders and Laws, fierce and [III-161] warlike under ROMULUS because he was so, tamed by Religion or Superstition under NUMA, addicted to civil oeconomy and regulations of State under SERVIUS TULLIUS, who made such institutions his care; zealous Republicans under a republican Government; full of reverence for Arts and Learning when Arts and Learning came to be favoured and introduced by the Magistrates. Afterwards when they were corrupted by evil and ambitious men, they became extremely corrupt, and intirely changed by the change of their Government; and in order to make such a change or to continue it, such corruption was carefully promoted and perpetuated. Their spirit, their honesty, and even their discernment were vitiated, sunk and banished, to qualify them for misery and chains. Whilst they had courage, integrity and eyes, usurpation could not prosper nor vassalage be established. Thenceforward the Roman People grew utterly debauched and spiritless; their Virtue, which rose with their Government, fell with it, and they were as unlike what they had been, as Servitude is unlike Liberty.

NOR was such a revolution of Manners peculiar to the Romans, but in all places will follow such revolutions of State. It is not so much by the genius of the Clime, by the heat or coldness of a Country, that the characters of the Inhabitants are to be known and estimated, as by the nature of their Government, and the wisdom, or defect, or corruption of their Laws. It is thus that men from Savages and Banditti, become just and humane, or from virtuous and free, abject slaves and barbarians.

ATTICA, the Country of the Athenians, was over-run with violence, feuds, robbery and murders, until THESEUS reformed the Government, and by it civilized the People, who by virtue of their Liberty and Laws, afterwards corrected and improved by SOLON, came to be the masters and standard of [III-162] politeness and learning over the world. Thus LYCURGUS reclaimed the licentiousness of the Spartans, and established such an institution, and such wise orders amongst them, that for courage, patriotism and every kind of virtue, they were the envy and wonder of all Nations. As the Liberty of these two famous Cities decayed, so did their Valour and Probity, and perished when that perished. They seemed afterwards

another race of men, though their blood and climate were still the same. The Grecians, once Conquerors and Masters of universal Empire, are now spiritless Slaves, sunk in unmanly superstition, drunken, ignorant, barbarous.

THE Nations in Peru lived nearer to the condition of beasts than that of men, till taught the Laws of Society by the *Inca's*: For these Princes did not so much subdue them, as instruct and polish them. So that these Clans of Savages, many of them Canibals, dealing in human sacrifices, and practising abominations scarce credible, were brought by the mere force of good usage and good Laws, to be sociable, discreet and humane: They who were strangers to agriculture, they who went naked, were destitute of houses, lived upon rocks and hills, and knew not what it was to dress their food, dropped all their wildness, formed regular habitations, fell into present industry, cultivated the ground with care, and altogether grew a mighty People, sober, ingenious, orderly, and formed an Empire above two thousand miles in extent, an Empire which continued for eight hundred years happy and flourishing.

It is chiefly by education and the exercise of the understanding that some men come to surpass others; for by nature men are alike, all made of the same materials; nor greater difference is there between the Lord and the Slave, than that which proceeds from chance or education. Many men [III-163] great in title have the spirit of Slaves; many men mean in fortune have greatness of spirit: Many a CICERO has kept sheep, many a CÆSAR followed the plough, many a VIRGIL foddered cattle. Government is public education, and as the national discipline is good or bad, Nations will be well nurtured, or ill. In all civilized Countries, the people are generally harmless and manageable, where they are not misled or oppressed. Oppression is apt to make a wise man mad, nay, the wiser he is the more he will feel the oppression, because he will the more readily discern it to be unjust: And when men are misled, they discern not justice from violence.

Sect. II.

The People under good Government apt to be peaceable and grateful: often patient under Oppression: often moderate in opposing Oppressors: inclinable to Justice when not misled.

THE Roman Commonalty quarrelled not with the Nobility, until the Nobility insulted and oppressed them; nay, they bore it a good while without complaining, complained long before they proceeded to an insurrection, even their insurrections were without blood, and they grew calm and content upon every appearance of redress; for, their redress was seldom complete, and what was undertaken seldom made good. In the struggle, particularly about the Agrarian Law, a Law so necessary to the State, so necessary to preserve equality amongst Citizens, without which they could not be long free, they were perpetually injured, disappointed and abused. The Law was eternally violated, they eternally the sufferers. Was it any wonder that a grievance so notorious and heavy, so much affecting the Public and the People, was felt and resented by [III-164] the People; any wonder that they contended for its removal, or, that when it was not removed, they had recourse to violence to procure justice, and were guided by their Tribunes, who sometimes, under the name of that Law and a colour of espousing the Populace, pursued very ambitious and dangerous designs?

WHO were the aggressors? The Nobility surely, they who had so long deluded the Plebeians, that these could no longer trust them. The Plebeians had indeed shewn much more faith and patience, than the other had honour or justice; and where between parties, treaties are always broken, enmity will be always reviving. Yet it was many years, rather many ages ere that enmity had recourse to the sword or produced hostility and blood. The People preserved a strange stiddy reverence to the Patricians, whilst these were daily scorning, daily aggrieving the People. (In the City, says LIVY, the violence of the Fathers was daily increasing, and so were the miseries of the People. When they had gained admission to the public Honours, which had been long accounted things sacred, and thence inaccessible to the

Populace, who were reckoned unworthy and prophane, they were very tender and slow in exerting that glorious privilege and power, and for many years continued to confer all the great Offices upon the Nobility. So that they seemed to have given back again that right for which they had so long contended before they gained it [a].

THE People are very apt to be deceived, yet as often to their own wrong as to that of others; and when through mistake they have hurt others, they are sorry for it as soon as made sensible of it. Their pity generally follows their severity, and is more lasting than their anger. If their wrath be immoderate, [III-165] so is their commiseration; and what mischief they do in their fury, they are inclinable to repair when their senses return. When the popular Orators at Athens had before the People falsely represented some of their brave Officers as criminal, the People doomed the innocent men to die, but repented as soon as they were undeceived, and discharged their vengeance upon the Orators.

THE People too are very grateful to their benefactors, and their affections generally lasting whenever they are well apprized that the object is very deserving. The Athenians ever adored the memory of THESEUS and SOLON, ever honoured their descendents. The same respect the Lacedæmonians always paid to the name and posterity of LYCURGUS. That of LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS was affectionately revered by the Romans, so was that of POPLICOLA, of the GRACCHI, and indeed that of all their great Patrons and Heroes. Queen ELIZABETH is never mentioned by an Englishman but with affection and praise. The name of ORANGE is popular in Holland, though some who bore it pursued very unpopular measures there. Does not this shew that the love of the People is stronger than their disgusts? They rather remember him who first founded their Liberty, than him who attempted to take it away.

IN Countries where the race of their Princes has proved rather bad than good, nay, exceeding bad, yet the People are generally bent to honour, generally averse to change that race, but retain a fondness without cause or merit, nay, against reason and interest. This is foolish, but it is good-natured folly. The Roman People were fond of the Cæsars, the Parthians of the Family of ARSACES, the French of that of CHARLEMAIN, though most of each line proved contemptible or tyrannical, often both. When any of the blood grew quite intolerable, and [III-166] for his cruelty or insufficiency was deposed, another of the same blood was placed in his room. The Lineage was still beloved and supported, though the men were often changed and abhorred.

Sect. III.

The People generally fond of old Names and Habits. The difference between the same People under different Governments: How generous and friendly when free; how vicious and false when enslaved.

THE People are indeed subject to change, but it is chiefly by fits, when they are angry, or seduced. Left to themselves, they usually go on in the old way, or return back to it again. Old Habits and old Names seem to please them most, nor do they readily desert the same till forced or deceived. CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS were so sensible of this bent in the People to ancient Customs and Institutions, that when upon enslaving Rome, they had in effect dissolved the force and essence of the Roman Magistracy, they left the Magistrates their old Names, and all the appearances of power and dignity. They are likewise inclinable to be quiet and harmless, where no provocation rouses them: but when they are enraged, they are very terrible and very cruel. Yet their outrage is not apt to last. They soon cool, and when their rage subsides, remorse is apt to follow: They will then embrace the man whom just before they sought to murder, and love him the more for having intended him a mischief. [b]

BETWEEN the Roman People under the Commonwealth, and the Roman People under the Dominion of the Emperors, the difference was as great [III-167] as between different Nations, and they only resembled each other in language and dress. They were indeed as different, or rather as opposite, as men uncorrupted and free are to debauched Slaves. In LIVY you find the People brave, generous, temperate and just, especially for some ages after the rise of the State: TACITUS represents them as false, flattering, spiritless and debauched: Yet neither of these Authors is chargeable with contradiction or falsifying. By Liberty they were inspired with virtue and every good quality: To fashion them for Tyranny, all their virtue was destroyed, all baseness and debauchery encouraged, and they were taught not to consider the Roman State, but only the Roman Emperor. Their zeal and allegiance were to be manifested by obsequious fawning, and a torrent of flattery. This was all their lesson and duty, and they learnt it notably. They adored, they extolled every Tyrant, the worst generally most: Whether he committed murder, or incest, or folly, drove chariots, or sung songs, he was still divine, still invincible. Their acclamations were to sound not with what was just or true, but with what was deceitful and pleasing. Their praises were no proof or effect of their affection, but of their falshood and servility: Whether they hated or despised him, they were sure to magnify him, nay, ready to use the same stile towards his enemy and destroyer on the very same day [c]. They were loud in behalf of GALBA at noon, vehement in calling for the blood of OTHO: Before night they were as loud in the applauses of OTHO, as vehement in traducing GALBA, who was then murdered, and his carcass the sport of the Rabble.

[III-168]

How unlike this to the spirit and behaviour of the Roman People under the free State, when any great man, and their benefactor was sacrificed? After the murder of the GRACCHI the People failed not to reproach and even to insult the authors of it, though the greatest men in Rome. They charged SCIPIO NASICA, upon all occasions, in the streets, and to his face, as a Tyrant and Murderer. Insomuch that to save him from their indignation, the Senate contrived to send him into Asia, under the pretence of an Embassy. Nor durst he ever return into Italy, though he was chief Pontiff, but wandered abroad under discontent and anguish, and soon died of grief, according to the account given by PLUTARCH. Nor did the celebrated SCIPIO AFRICANUS, a man as great, as popular, and as much admired as any man that ever lived at any time, escape much better, for having shewed his approbation of that murder. This provoked them so, that notwithstanding his extraordinary character, and the reverence always paid him, they treated him with despight publicly, and interrupted his speeches with hissing. To the memory of the GRACCHI, the Roman People amply manifested their fondness and reverence, caused their Statues to be made, erected them in public, consecrated the places where they were slain, there offered first-fruits and oblations, there performed worship and devotion.

Sect. IV.

The People when deceived by names and deluders, how extremely blind and cruel, yet mean well.

THE People are so sincere in their friendship, that they are often fond of their false friends. CÆSAR was popular whilst he was undoing the People; so were the Dukes of Guise; so is the Inquisition. [III-169] That execrable Tribunal, bloody and treacherous as it is, a reproach to Christianity, destructive to men, is revered as the bulwark of Religion, though it be only so to the pernicious Impostors who are the pests of Religion, enemies to Society and human Happiness. This cruel band of the People's servitude and misery, the People would venture their lives to defend. So profoundly are they bewitched, so effectually bound and blinded by ungodly Sorcerers, spiritual Fortune-tellers, whom they hug and enrich for cheating and enslaving them. When once their faculties are thus darkened or dead, it is not surprizing that they fiercely reject all relief and illumination, that, following the impulse or

nod of their powerful seducers, they are ready to fight in defence of their blindness and chains, ready to sacrifice and butcher all who would enlighten and release them.

CAN there be a greater instance of the power and mischief of delusion, a greater warning to guard against it? Superstition is apt to creep in and gain force, even without the aid of art: But when art, and industry, and interest combine to promote and increase the infirmities of Nature; when all helps, all tricks, all terrors are applied and exerted to mislead, frighten and deceive; nay, when power, and penalties, and punishments, might and magistracy, rods and axes, combine in the cause of delusion and deluders; when all inquiry is forbid, all inquirers executed and damned; what can ensue but thick ignorance and barbarity, the triumphs of fraud, the exile of common sense? Can infatuation and hardness of heart go further, than to rejoice in using a man cruelly, in torturing him till he is almost dead, and afterwards recovering him on purpose to burn him alive, for an opinion perhaps very innocent, perhaps very just, by himself esteemed sacred, at worst hurtful only to himself? Yet at such shocking acts of inhumanity there are people, there are women and [III-170] infants, and whole Nations that can rejoice, though in other instances not ungenerous nor cruel. They can sorrow for the just execution of a thief or a murderer, and exult to see a conscientious man thrown quick into the flames, for daring to be rational, for consulting truth, or endeavouring to make himself acceptable to the Deity.

THE Deities are hungry, the Priests of Mexico were wont to cry in the ears of their Emperor. He took their word, and in submission to such holy warning, butchered thirty thousand of his Subjects in one year, to humour the Priests, and to feed the Idols. What else is the language of all men who prompt any Prince to shed blood and plague his Subjects in defence of Bigotry falsely called Religion? For, religion itself disclaims hurting any man for any opinion. *The Deity is angry*, is the stile of all persecutors; and by the force of that cry, more blood has been shed in Christendom than ever was in Mexico, or by all the human sacrifices since the Creation. What else is persecution, but human sacrifice? What but destroying men to please the God-head? MONTAGNE says with reason, "That the Savages do not so much offend him, in roasting and eating the bodies of their dead, as do they who torment and persecute the living."

Sect. V.

The power of delusion further illustrated. The dreadful wickedness and impieties committed under the name of Religion. Religious cheats surpass all others.

WHEN the Reformation was gaining ground in Sweden, by the secret countenance of that extraordinary Prince, GUSTAVUS ERICSON, the People enraged by the Clergy, made an insurrection, [III-171] and advanced towards Stockholm, with fury and menaces. The King sent to the multitude, consisting chiefly of Boors (for the more stupid the men, the stronger their zeal) to know their demands. In answer they insisted, "to have all the Heretics burnt, and the bells restored again." For it seems some of these sacred utensils had been dislodged. Here is an instance of a People's furiously opposing the greatest good that could befall them, the light of the Gospel, and redemption from their thralldom to Popery, nay, venturing a rebellion and their lives to defeat that good, and to procure the destruction of their friends and neighbours for being wiser than themselves: Nor is it the only instance. The like happened in many other Countries upon that same occasion. To shew, however, that the People are capable of being mended and undeceived, when the Government is wise and just enough to rescue them from their deceivers; King GUSTAVUS having abolished Popery, and proved himself an able and upright Prince, lived to see his Person and Government so well beloved, and the People so changed, that the same Nation who once took up arms against him, would have ventured their lives for him.

THE People generally mean good, when they commit evil. The Swedes thought that there was no Salvation out of the Church of Rome; so their Priests told them, nor would they or dared they disbelieve their Priests: And who would not be tenacious of the means of Salvation? They had the same false assurance, upon the same holy authority, that Heretics were enemies to God. So that in fighting against Heretics, they only fought God's Battles; in burning of Heretics, they did but execute God's vengeance upon God's enemies.

WHO is it that would not obey, when he is convinced that the Almighty commands? Hence the [III-172] power of Impostors who speak, and govern, and cheat the People in his name; and hence the frenzy and wickedness of the People when under the influence of such Impostors. Who will be deterred by the dread of the block, or checked by the ignominy of the gallows, when he considers the gallows or the block as the means of martyrdom, and the way to glory? Have there not been men who by the merit even of murder, the murder of Kings, fought to gain a place in Paradise, and immortality amongst men? Was not JACQUES CLEMENT, who assassinated HENRY the third of France, deemed a Martyr? And when his impious fraternity the Monks, had roused the bloody Bigot, to perpetrate the detestable deed, was he not said to have been inspired by God? It is plain that the wretch was persuaded that he had a call from Heaven. JEAN DE CHASTEL, a youth who attempted to murder HENRY the great, shewed not the least sign of remorse at his execution; so strongly was the Enthusiast possessed that the murder of an Heretic, and one excommunicated by the Pope, was a service acceptable to God. RAVILLAC afterwards accomplished the murder of that incomparable Prince, many years after he had ceased to be a protestant, and been formally reconciled to the Church of Rome. The ghostly deceivers persuaded the gloomy Villain, that the King was a Heretic in his heart, for that he did not persecute and kill the Protestants.

THOMAS A BECKET, a mischievous assuming Priest, as this Island ever saw, turbulent, rebellious, forsworn, was entitled a Saint and Martyr; a fellow that really deserved a halter, was complimented with a crown of glory, and for many centuries had more worship paid him than JESUS CHRIST. He was indeed a greater advocate for power ecclesiastical. So enchanted were the People by the cant and charms of Impostors, so utterly bereft of understanding, as [III-173] to adore their deceivers, their enemies, and oppressors! Can these People be said to have been rational, they who were for exalting such as had a manifest interest to keep them blind and humble, an interest to get all their property, and to leave them none of their senses?

It is enough to mortify and grieve any candid spirit, who wishes well to humanity, to see human nature so pitifully debased, human understanding suspended, lost or turned into a snare; taught to be angry at common sense, and to submit to the nonsense of sounds; to learn folly as an improvement; to bear slavery as duty and happiness; to bestow their wealth upon those who inveighed against wealth, yet were ever and insatiably pursuing more; to encourage them with great revenues to perform functions which they performed not, but left to others whom they hired for poor wages; to persecute truth, and fall prostrate before falshood; to worship names and garments, common earth, common food, and common men, with many more absurdities alike disgraceful to reason, alike pernicious to society. Such is the sovereign force of delusion, and such was the character of the English Nation, such that of the English Clergy, in the days of the great English Saint, THOMAS A BECKET, and till the Reformation, when the use of reason and conscience was restored.

Sect. VI.

The People not turbulent unless seduced or oppressed: slow to resist Oppressors: sometimes mild even in their just vengeance: brave in defence of their Liberties.

IT is owing to the arts and industry of seducers, that the People are sometimes uneasy and discontent under a good Government; for under such a Government they are naturally inclined to be quiet [III-174] and submissive, and it must be very ill usage that will tempt

them to throw it off, when they are not first notoriously misled. There were insurrections against GUSTAVUS ERICSON, so there were against Queen ELIZABETH, all animated by the same spirit, superstition managed and enflamed by Priests. But when a just Administration is once settled, and become familiar to the People, and where no violent innovations are attempted, they will not be apt to disturb it, nor to wish ill to it. They are in truth very slow to resist, and often bear a thousand hardships before they return one. The Romans long suffered the encroachments, insults and tyranny of the last TARQUIN, before they drove him out, nor would they have done it so soon, but for the rape and tragical fate of LUCRETIA. The Dutch endured the Tyranny of Spain, till that Tyranny grew intolerable. When King PHILIP had wantonly violated his solemn oath, destroyed their ancient Liberties and Laws, shed their blood, acted like an implacable enemy, and used them like dogs, it was high time to convince him that they were men, and would continue free men in spite of his wicked attempts to enslave them. They did so to some purpose, to their own immortal glory, and establishment in perfect independency, to his infinite loss and lasting dishonour.

THE People of Swisserland groaned long under the heavy yolk of Austria, sustained a course of sufferings and indignities too many and too great for human patience: so insolent and barbarous were their Governors, so tame and submissive the governed. At last they roused themselves, or rather their oppressive Governors roused them, so as not to be quelled. Yet they carried their vengeance no further than was barely necessary for their future security. They spilt little or none of the blood of their Tyrants and Taskmakers, the Rulers from Austria, [III-175] who had so freely spilled theirs. They only conducted these lawless spoilers to the borders of the Country, and there dismissed them in safety, under an oath never more to return into their territories. What could be more slow to resist, what more meek in their resistance, than that brave and abused People? They were indeed so brave, and had been so abused, as to resolve never more to submit to the Imperial Power. Thenceforth they asserted their native freedom, and asserted it with amazing valour. With handfuls of men they overthrew mighty hosts, and could never be conquered by all the neighbouring Powers. Their exploits against the Imperial Armies, against those of LEWIS the eleventh, then Dauphin, against CHARLES the bold, Duke of Burgundy, are scarce credible. Three hundred and fifty Swiss routed at one time eight thousand Austrians, some say sixteen thousand. An hundred and thirteen vanquished the Arch-Duke LEOPOLD'S Army of twenty thousand, and killed a great number; an hundred and sixteen beat another Army of near twenty thousand, and slew him.

It was no small provocation, no casual mistakes, or random sallies of passion in their Rulers, that drove the Dutch and the Swiss to expell theirs. No; the oppression, the Acts of violence were general, constant, deliberate and increasing. For such is the nature of men, especially of men in power; that they will rather commit two errors than retract one; as Lord CLARENDON justly observes. Sometimes they will commit a second, to shew that they are not ashamed of the first, but resolved to defy resentment, to declare their contempt of the People, and how much they are above fear and amendment. Some of them have delighted to heighten cruelty by mirth and derision, like him in Swisserland, who having long insulted and abused the poor People, and still thinking their servitude imperfect, set up [III-176] his Cap in the market-place, and obliged all that passed by to pay in reverence; nay, to punish one for failing in duty to that Cap, he caused him to place an Apple upon his son's head, and at such a distance cleave it with an Arrow. Was there not cause, was it not high time to exterminate such instruments of cruelty?

DISCOURSE X.

The same Subject continued. ↩

Sect. I.

The infatuation of Men in power: they are much apter to oppress, than the People to rebel. People oppressed rejoice in public misfortunes. In disputes between Magistrates and People, the former generally to blame.

IT is a miserable infatuation of Men in power, to push that power and the People's patience as far as either will go, and leave no room for a retreat. Those of this spirit finding the People tame and patient to a certain degree, conclude that they will or must be so to every and the utmost degree, and so never think of taking off their heavy hands, till the People, grown desperate, throw of them and their power, and having found no mercy, may be tempted to shew none. Promises of amendment will then be too late. They will not trust to the faith and good usage of one, who had dealt faithlessly and barbarously with them, even before they had exasperated him by opposition. His remorse and promises, however sincere, will be thought false and ensnaring; [III-177] and even of his good actions unkind constructions will be made [a].

UNDER an evil Administration, or one suspected and hated (a misfortune that seldom comes without cause) People will rejoice in the public distress, suffer themselves to be invaded, submit to be vanquished, bear national dishonour and private loss, rather than assist their Governor to prevent it. Thus the Romans behaved under the Decemvirate. That People of all others the most brave, of all others the most signal for public spirit, refused to fight, and bore a defeat; because rather than not be revenged upon that usurped Magistracy, they chose that the public enemy should execute that revenge, and to obtain it, ventured the worst that could befall themselves and their Country. Under TIBERIUS, people received with joy any news of revolts and invasions. In the year 1639, the English Nation was pleased that the Scots had seized the four northern Counties; and in the Reign of CHARLES the second his Subjects hated the French, because the King loved them, as a Droll pleasantly told him, when he was wondering what might be the reason.

THE People are sometimes long patient under unjust usage, where it is not altogether violent and severe. The Romans under the usurpation of the Decemvirate, continued peaceable whilst the exercise of that power was tolerable; nay, they suffered many efforts of Tyranny, oppressive enormities, murder, arbitrary imprisonment, lawless decrees, and lust passing for Law, before they had recourse to resistance and self-defence. At last they roused themselves, driven to outrage by outrageous oppression. This their proud Oppressors might have foreseen, had not power and pride made them altogether blind. APPIUS CLAUDIUS the chief of [III-178] them, had hardened his spirit against all reason and tenderness: So strangely was he intoxicated with the possession of his enormous power. Yet with all their provocation, they hurt no man's person. They at first threatned high, and sufficient cause they had: But by a few reasonable words they were soon softened, upon assurance of seeing the usurpation abolished. These Usurpers were like most others: They had their authority from the Law, would keep it against Law, and stretch it beyond Law. I could mention a Commonwealth, in which the People have seen themselves for many years, daily divested of their rights, and instead of chusing their Magistrates themselves, according to the very fundamentals of their Constitution, see their Magistrates chuse one another, their Government changed, and an Aristocracy grown out of a popular Government. This public abuse, corruption and breach of Trust, the People see, complain of it indeed, but bear it. Their patience too may have a period: I wish that they may never be prompted to seek a violent

remedy, such as may shake or overturn their State.

GOVERNORS are apt to censure the People as restless and unruly, the People their Magistrates as unjust and oppressive. It is generally very easy to decide who are most to be censured. There are many Countries where arbitrary oppressions are felt every day, yet not one insurrection or rebellion known in an age. Power is an incroaching thing, and seldom fails to take more than is given. Men in limited authority are apt to covet more, and when they have gained more, to take all. The People, who aim chiefly at protection and security, are content to keep what they have, nor seek to interfere in matters of Power, till Power has attempted to rob them of liberty and right: When these are seized by those who are bound to defend them, are the People to blame for expressing resentment, and [III-179] seeking redress? It is but the natural Law of self-preservation, a Law that prevails even amongst Brutes; and is the effect of Reason as well as of Passion. In the first sallies of their wrath, they sometimes discharge it violently and shed blood, and when justice is denied, seek redress from force: but their wrath lasts not, and when they once have recovered their usurped rights, they even spare the Usurpers.

Sect. II.

The gentleness of the People in their pursuit of Justice against oppressive Magistrates. How readily Men who have oppressed the Law, seek the protection of the Laws. The People not revengeful: they shew mercy where they have found none.

REMARKABLE was the modesty and innocence of the Roman People, after all the violent oppressions of the Decemviri. Even they from the Camp marched peaceably through the City under their arms, and when they might have fallen upon their domestic enemies, the ten insolent Tyrants, and destroyed them at once, they preserved their temper and civil behaviour, hurt no man's person, no man's house or fortune. They only desired to be reinstated in their ancient Liberties, and left those who had usurped their Liberties to the chastisement of the Law, an indulgence which they who had destroyed Law could not reasonably have claimed. It is indeed remarkable, that APPIUS CLAUDIUS, the Ringleader of these Usurpers, and the most obnoxious to popular vengeance, he who had abolished all appeals to the People, appealed to them himself when he saw himself reduced to the condition of a Subject; saw himself impleaded for his enormities and lawless rule. Could there be a more mortifying declaration of a man's own guilt? He who had destroyed all the privileges of the People, [III-180] had the confidence to implore the People's protection. As a free Roman Citizen he claimed and prayed an exemption from bonds, after he had imperiously bereft the free citizens of Rome of that just immunity.

THE Story is beautifully recounted in the third book of LIVY. APPIUS has had his fellows in other countries, men who would not submit to the decision of Law when they thought themselves above Law; and afterwards, upon the abatement of their pride, were glad to seek its protection; men who promoted arbitrary imprisonments without allowing legal relief from the Tribunals of Justice, then claimed that relief when they came to be imprisoned. Such men are for equal Justice, not when other People want it, but when they want it themselves. Surely if any man ought to be denied the benefit of Justice, it is he who will do none: A consideration which was urged against APPIUS [b].

I BELIEVE that upon research, it will be generally found, that the People have used their Rulers with much more tenderness than their Rulers have used them; that merciless Usurpers have found mercy, and barbarous Tyrants, when deposed, have not been treated barbarously. That mighty man of blood, SYLLA, he who had wantonly massacred thousands, usurped the Government of Rome, filled its streets with carcasses, as well as all Italy with murder and lamentation, a monster of cruelty, an enemy to his country and all men, lived in safety after he had resigned his power, lived in the midst of Rome, a City which he had usurped,

oppressed, and caused so often to bleed and mourn: He who by so many violent deaths had made his Country thin, died in peace. So gentle and forgiving were the [III-181] Romans, that though he walked daily and publicly amongst them without any precaution, they made no attempt upon his life, however hateful and guilty. Doubtless the Athenians might have slain their Tyrant PISISTRATUS, during so many years as he lived privately in exile after they had expelled him, if their vengeance had prompted them: They suffered him to live in quiet, let him live to enslave them again. Towards DIONYSIUS the younger, the Syracusians manifested themselves equally mild and unrevengeful. When they were released from that filthy Tyrant, saw him a necessitous vagabond, reduced to teach boys, they offered not to disturb him, so far were they from seeking his life, but left him an opportunity of enslaving them once more. Nay, to an Aunt of his, sister to the Tyrant his Father, they always paid the respect due to a lawful Princess, even after the abolition of Tyranny, supported her in princely sort, and buried her magnificently.

THE Romans however they regretted the usurpation of CÆSAR, regretted his death more. He had done them the highest evil that Man could do, and they grieved for his loss. The People of Ispahan, upon the late Revolution in Persia, shewed more grief for the misfortunes of their Emperor SCHAH HUSSEIN than for their own, though theirs were as great as could befall human nature; and though from his evil Administration, all their numberless calamities flowed, first all their long pillage and oppression, next war, invaders, and desolation, then famine and a siege, lastly, their subjection to the will and sword of a foreign enemy, fierce, jealous and sanguinary. Yet their chief concern was for their old Emperor, the author and inviter of all their sore afflictions, when they saw him about to resign a crown which he was never worthy to wear.

[III-182]

Sect. III.

The People not hard to be governed, nor unconstant, nor ungrateful, at least not so often as they are accused.

I AM inclinable to think it so far from being true, that the People are hard to be governed, that I am afraid the very contrary will prove true, namely, that they are too easily to be oppressed: Neither is this to their praise. Is it not sufficient for the character of any Nation, sufficient for their duty and glory, to submit quietly to just and humane, to equal and certain Laws, to which their Governors themselves submit? Surely, yes. Is it not infamy rather than loyalty, for People to yield tamely to the wanton will of Usurpers and Traitors, whose duty it is to protect them, whose practice it is to rob them, who will submit to no Law, who execute cruelty instead of Justice, oppress men against Law, or act lawlessly under the name of Law? What else can it be? Here therefore is the difference between Freemen, who obey righteous Laws, and Slaves, who must obey the worst and any.

I KNOW not in the world very many Governments that do not make a shift, and some of them use not very good shifts, to supply themselves with as much power as they well want, and as much revenue as the People can spare. Nor do the People usually refuse or envy them a competent portion of either, nor even some excesses and extravagance in both. But when nothing will suffice less than a power to destroy as well as to protect, nothing less than beggaring the Subjects instead of taxing them; when the Laws are annulled or despised, and their birth-right seized; are they unconstant and ungovernable, because they feel wrong, and seek right? Who can be easy under distress, or thankful for barbarous usage? [III-183] When men are made great in order to do great good, those who made them so, and for whose sake they are so, will murmur, if they are disappointed, especially when instead of great good, they are repaid with great evil.

SUCH as become enemies to their benefactors cannot wonder if their benefactors resent ingratitude so glaring, and so faithless a return. Violence, especially violence from men who owe us good usage, will sooner or later be returned with violence, and ought to be. Not mere power, but protection is entitled to duty and gratitude, and whoever sets up for governing without protecting, must not be surprized to meet with detestation instead of affection, contempt instead of honour, opposition instead of submission. Good Government makes a good People; nor will the good complain of the good. Where the People are bad, it will be presumed that their Rulers have made them so: And then who has most reason to complain? Perhaps the People are accounted bad for adhering stubbornly to their Liberty and Laws: To rail at them for this, is to make them a high compliment, and a severe contumely upon their Governors; namely, that they would be Oppressors, but their People are too virtuous and brave to let them.

THE State of GENOA had recourse to the French King for protection against her Enemies. “No, said the King; the Devil may have that People for me, they are only fit for such a Governor.” A speech which has been repeated as a Satire upon them ever since, yet was really a very great Praise, whatever he intended. He had once before undertaken their Protection, and sent them Troops, who indeed relieved them from the former enemy, but proved a worse. To repay themselves for saving the Republic, they wanted to destroy it; to enslave it, because they had delivered it from slavery. For [III-184] such heinous Treachery and Tyranny the People drove them out, and provoked that Prince by preserving themselves. For this he gave them to the Devil as a proper instrument to revenge his quarrel. What would he have had of them? to have been thankful for changing their condition without making it better? to have grown presently easy, because they had changed their Oppressors, but were still oppressed? to have kissed the Iron rod, only for that it was new, though as heavy as the old, and been humbly satisfied with whips and racks, chains and rapine, beggary and death? Could they take cruelty to be mercy? Could they reverence the blackest treachery, and submit tamely to servitude from those whom they employed and paid to abolish it? Did they belong to the Devil for refusing to sacrifice their Freedom and Property, their Families, Lives, and every human happiness, to the lusts and spoil of enemies, or to such as were worse than enemies, faithless friends?

Sect. IV.

The People falsely charged with Fickleness, and Ingratitude, and Rebellion in resisting Oppressors and Tyrants. All Tyrants, all who assume lawless rule, are Rebels, and the greatest.

JUST such cause of anger had King JAMES to the People of England, &c. of whom he was wont to make the same complaint, that they were a fickle, giddy and rebellious People: A slander that turned wholly upon himself, who had alienated their affections by using them like slaves, by governing them without and against Law, and, for a limited English Monarchy, setting up a boundless Tyranny. It was not enough to be trusted with the power of protecting them, the noblest Trust that mortal man can possess; No; he must have a power also to destroy [III-185] them, which none but a Destroyer can want. Three great free Nations could not, would not bear to be tyrannized by one trusted and sworn to protect them. If a man whom I take for a guard become an assassin, and turn upon me the arms which I gave him to defend me, am I blameable for discharging him? Will any but assassins blame me? If King JAMES was not satisfied with the conditions of the Monarchy, he might have declined accepting it: No man would have taken him by force, and made him a King. In receiving it he received a Trust for the benefit of the People, attended with all reasonable advantages, with all possible glory to himself. This Trust he ingloriously perverted, and applied it treacherously to their subversion. When he ought to have made the Law his rule, according to his duty and his oath, he made his Will his Law, or rather the will of his bigoted

Queen and of his hot-headed Priests. Against the Constitution he set up the sword, his outlawed Priests against the established Church, Romish Superstition against the Protestant Religion, and an Army of Papists against a Protestant People. This was such absolute Treason against the Public, that the People must have been fickle and wicked indeed, had they given up the ancient Laws, their Property, Lives, and just Rights into the jaws of this violent, this enormous and upstart Power, calculated always to destroy, never to save.

WERE the People fickle for adhering to their old Constitution? were they changeable in not submitting to a change, an avowed and violent change of their ancient Government? Were they ungovernable, because they rejected misgovernment? ungrateful for defending their Lives and Estates against the Usurpation of those who owed them all gratitude? Were they Rebels in maintaining the Law against such as were open Rebels to Law, and insolently professed to be above Law, though vested with power to protect [III-186] Law, the only just end of power? People that will not be oppressed, will always be reckoned ungovernable by men who are, or who would be Oppressors, and enemies to Oppression will be stiled enemies of Government. It will be seditious to blame the excesses of Power, insolent to mention the insolence of those who abuse Power; it will be the sign of a turbulent spirit, to distinguish between public right and wrong, between Government and Tyranny, nor will it be enough to own all good Government to be irresistible, but the worst and the abuse of the best must be likewise irresistible: To complain of Tyranny, will be Faction; to throw it off, Rebellion. They who oppress are the first and greatest Rebels; and for the oppressed to turn upon them, is but to resist Rebellion, is but to do a just and a natural action. Whoever violates the Laws of reason, equity and nature, whoever violates the Laws of his Country, whatever station or name he bear, is a Rebel, subject to the Laws against Violence and Rebellion. Tyrants, therefore, and lawless Oppressors are the highest and most consummate Rebels in the world, capital Traitors to God and Man, and punishable by all the Laws of God and of Reason.

Sect. V.

People who are slaves love not their Prince so affectionately, nor can defend him so bravely, as those who are free.

WEAK and poor is that loyalty which results only from force and fear, nor can it last longer than does the slavish passion which creates it, but goes with it, as it comes with it. Whenever the dread is gone, so is the loyalty, or follows him who causes superior dread. From a People that are slaves, no Prince can expect steady duty and adherence. Let who will master them, they can be but slaves, and [III-187] therefore have small reason to oppose one who cannot well make their condition worse, or to abide by him who has made it so bad, and would not make it better. Nor have they spirit to defend him, though they were willing. They are in the field what they are at home, pusillanimous, abject, cowardly. Hence most of the great Monarchies have been overturned, at least always beaten, almost as soon as attacked, especially when by Freemen the attack was made. Thus DARIUS fell before the Greeks, who in all encounters, and with few men against multitudes, had been long accustomed to vanquish the Great King, and at last seized his many Kingdoms, as long before they would have done, but for their own domestic jealousies and strife. Thus too ANTIOCHUS fell before the Romans, and thus TIGRANES. LUCULLUS said well, that “the Lion never counts the number of the Sheep,” when he, who led but fourteen thousand men, little more than two Legions, was told what myriads he had to encounter. It was indeed an encounter between Lions and Sheep, nor found his men so much occasion for fighting as for laughing, to see such a vast host frightened and flying before a handful of men. From the little free State of the Samnites, the Romans found more danger and opposition than from all the absolute Princes in the world. Such is the mighty difference between the spirit of Freemen and of Slaves, between men who live and fight for themselves, and men who breathe and act at the mere mercy of another.

In the East the servitude of the People is as blind and complete, as Tyranny, and Art, and Superstition can make it. Does this Slavery in the People, Slavery the most stupid and abject, secure the Prince, and fortify his Throne? So far otherwise, that the Eastern Kings, they who are such absolute Masters of the lives and fortunes of their Subjects, are thence the more unsafe, and thence their Thrones the [III-188] more unstable and wavering. The higher he is, the more violent and probable is his fall. The People indeed profess to adore him: Yes, because they are forced; or whether they do it through fear or superstition, their adoration is not accompanied with personal love; and the nearer he approaches to a God, the less affection he has from men. Where the distance is so vast, there can be no intercourse of mutual kindness, nor can aught which causes only awe and terror, ever cause love and tenderness. He who would gain his People's hearts, must not set himself too high, nor them too low. Between persons who would continue cordial friends some equality must be preserved, whether they be private men, or Kings and People.

Sect. VI.

The weak and precarious condition of the greatest Prince, who is not beloved by his People. No Tyrant can be, and why.

PEOPLE who possess no certain property, nor establishment in their Country, are under no tie to their Country, nor holden by any obligation to their Prince. So that, as LA LOUBIERE observes in his historical relation of SIAM, since they must bear the same yoke under any Prince whatsoever, and since it is impossible to bear a heavier, they never concern themselves about the fortune of their Prince. He says, experience shews that upon the least trouble or attempt, they let the Crown go quietly to him, whoever he be, that has most force or most policy. A Siamese will readily die to discharge private hate, to be released from a wretched life, or to escape a cruel Death: but to die for their Prince and Country, is a virtue unknown there. They want the motives which animate free men: they have no liberty, no certain property, consequently [III-189] no attachment to their native soil. Insomuch that those of them who are taken captives by the King of Pegu, will reside peaceably in that Country, at a small distance from their own frontiers. They soon forget their native abodes, where they knew nought but servitude, and bear the present because no worse than the past. The Natives of Pegu too, when carried into Siam, shew the same indifference to return home, and for the same reason. The Kings of the East, says he, are regarded as the adoptive Sons of Heaven, their souls believed to be celestial, in virtue as much transcending other souls, as their royal lot appears happier than that of the rest of men. Yet if one of their Subjects revolt, the People begin presently to doubt which of the two souls is most valuable, that of the lawful Prince, or that of the rebellious Subject, and whether the heavenly adoption be not passed from the King to the Subject. Their Histories are full of such examples. He likewise quotes Father MARTINIUS, who says that the Chinese are often persuaded, that in changing their Sovereign they follow the will of Heaven, and have sometimes preferred a common Robber to the reigning Prince.

BUT besides, says he, that such despotic authority is almost destitute of defence, the exercise of it centering altogether in the Prince, is weak for want of spreading and communication. Whoever would dispossess the Prince, has little more to do than to take upon him the spirit and person of a Prince; because all the authority being confined to one, and exerted but by one, is presently transferred, for want of many employed and interested to preserve it; and there is none but the Prince concerned or able to defend the Prince. He adds, that it appears, that in the ancient rebellions in China, whoever seized the royal Seal, presently rendered himself master of all; for the People always obeyed orders where-ever the Seal [III-190] appeared, without enquiring in whose hands it was. Such too is the jealousy and care with which the King of Siam keeps his, which he trusts with no man, as to make it credible, that the obedience of the People there also follows the Seal. So that the chief danger

of these Princes arises from things whence they hope their chief security, whether it be from a great Army, or a Seal: Whoever gains these, is presently King. The same is true of a great Treasure, the last resource in arbitrary Governments. The People there are under a continual state of ruin and poverty, and being constantly drained, cannot furnish any sudden supply upon sudden exigency. The Prince therefore must trust to what he has, and that likewise being liable to be seized, may be turned against him, may serve to exalt the Usurper. Upon this LA LOUBIERE remarks justly, that besides the exhausting and spoiling of the People, by drawing from them great sums to fill his treasure, it frequently helps forward the ruin of him who has gathered it, and as it was collected to preserve him, it is employed and dissipated to undo him. This is the substance of what that Author says in the latter part of the fourteenth Chapter, Part the third.

So much does a Prince gain by boundless power, by enslaving his People, and having an interest and purse different from theirs. They have no ability to support him, nor any reason: They have no money to give him, because he has taken all, or too much; they have nothing of their own to defend, and why should they defend him, since by losing him, they lose nothing?

DISCOURSE XI.

Of Nobility. ↩

Sect. I.

The political cause of Nobility. They are readily respected by the People: apt to oppress. Nobility without Virtue, what. The Spirit of Nobility, what it ought to be.

AFTER so much said about the People, it may not be improper to add something concerning the Nobility. As by the People I mean not the idle and indigent rabble, under which name the People are often understood and traduced, but all who have property, without the privileges of Nobility; so by the latter I mean such as are possessed of privileges denied to the People.

In a State no man ought to rise above the rest, without giving the rest some equivalent for such superiority; and for all public distinction there ought to be some public merit. As it is wise in a Prince or a State to employ men of virtue and capacity, it is but just to reward them. This was the natural rise of the Roman Senators, chosen for their ability and experience to direct the State, and dignified with the title of *Conscript Fathers*, as were their descendents by that of *Patricians*. Their duty arose from their dignity, and their dignity recompensed their duty. Thus they merited their pre-eminence and popular estimation; nor did the People ever fail in reverence to them, until they failed in their respect to the People, and hardly then. So natural it is for power to encroach, and so much apter are men in authority [III-192] to depart from moderation, than the People from subjection. As property begets power, so does power property: The Senators, they who swayed the State, engrossed the riches of the State. The People were poor, and kept poor by the Nobility, who oppressed them by excessive usury, and when they could not satisfy the debt, seized their persons, and kept them in bonds. The violence was too great, the usage too ignominious to be always borne by a free and bold People, who therefore in their own defence forced the Nobility to allow them Magistrates and Protectors of their own. Thus began the popular Tribunes, Officers who frequently mortified the Nobility, taught the People to aspire in their turn, and to assert a right to all the highest Honours. This was the effect and punishment of Patrician Pride. The People were content to be governed; but when their Governors insulted and oppressed them, they assumed a share in governing themselves.

THE People are the materials of Government, their protection its end, nor can it have any other; and that Government is a Monster where the People have no share, such a Monster as nature produces not, a Head unconcerned for the Body and Members, and, instead of nourishing, devouring them. In Society no man should be higher than others, but for the good of others; when that good is not obtained, when he considers himself only for himself, and pursues his own advantage to the hurt of others, his elevation is preposterous; it is against justice and nature, and better he descend than all men sink. Nature produces no Nobility, nor do the greatest when they come into the world, surpass the meanest in features, complexion or strength. The difference is created by civil establishment, which confers Nobility for political ends, but cannot convey a great soul with a great name, any more than stature or strength. It would be well, if, when the best men [III-193] are thus raised, their descendents would continue to resemble them. When they do not, their degeneracy is a scandal to themselves as well as injurious to the Public, and thence the more scandalous. For being elated none of them have any cause, since it is incumbent upon them to surpass others in Virtue as well as in Title.

NOBILITY without Virtue is but exalted infamy, and the severest thing you can say of a great man, is to call him mean; and mean he is if he do mean things, let his name be ever so sounding; nay, he is mean when his behaviour is not great. The absence of good qualities is abundant reproach; but where he has many evil and none good, he becomes a disgrace to his Country, ought to be the scorn of his order, and consigned to the rabble, as he is already one of them in masquerade. His spirit ought to be noble like his name, full of private benevolence, full of public zeal, abhorring corruption, despising little personal advantages, doing justice to every man, seeking the good of all men; his example illustrious as his title, above falshood, above lucre. It is thus he deserves superiority and praise, and were he not noble, has a claim to be so. He honours a great station more than a great station can him. Greatness of soul is above the gift of man; a Crown cannot convey it, but only distinguish it, and does honour to itself by honour so bestowed. Little to be valued is that reverence which is paid only to title and rank; nor will a wise man much regard that respect which would be paid to his footman, were his footman in the same station. True esteem is always personal. What men pay to fortune and accidents, is only flattery or fashion, and in it the heart has no share.

[III-194]

Sect. II.

The Duty of a Nobleman to his Country. In Virtue and public Spirit he ought to surpass others.

A MAN of great title with a little and evil mind, is worse and more despicable than the lowest of the vulgar, who are often bad through mere necessity and ignorance, as well as through a vicious education. Even poverty cannot excuse the base actions of a man of rank. He who has a worthy mind, will not act poorly even in poverty; he will consider his Duty and Honour preferably to his wants, and bear calamity rather than reproach. All Noblemen should be the ornaments of Society, else Society cannot esteem them, nor ought; for their integrity is of great concernment to the Public. According to the measure of their Virtue or Corruption, the State often thrives or decays, especially where they have a large share in making the Laws, and in directing the Administration. It is but common honesty to be just to their Country, to consult and promote its interest; it is no more than the duty which all men owe it; and upon public men, men of eminence and title, this duty is more particularly incumbent: They are of most consideration, they are better qualified (it is to their irreparable shame if they are not) and they are already possessed of their reward, by being what they are.

WHOEVER is indifferent about the interest of his Country, let his condition be ever so low, is unworthy to live in it, and it ought to drive him out; for he who is not its friend, is its enemy. Though he may have no fortune, he has still something valuable to engage him; he has a life to lose or to be protected, and by being protected by the Public, he is bound, nay, he is paid to wish it well and to defend it. Besides this, common humanity, the interest, [III-195] and distress, and preservation of his acquaintance and neighbours, or relations, are powerful calls upon him to love and promote the good of the whole. He who has no public Virtue can hardly be thought to have any other; since out of a complication of private virtues public virtue arises, out of tenderness and mercy, out of generosity and goodness of spirit, out of friendship and justice, out of love for Liberty, and Right, and Peace, as likewise from an aversion to Intrusion and Violence, to Usurpation and Servitude.

A PASSION for the public Weal is the noblest passion that can possess the heart of man, and he who has it not can have little else that is good or laudable there. A benevolent heart interests it self even in the concerns of remote Nations, and in Revolutions which befell many ages ago. Who can read of free Nations falling into bondage, of Virtue depressed, of Villainy exalted, without sympathy and commiseration? Who, even at this distance, or a thousand

ages hence, can behold the divine BRUTUS perishing in defence of the most righteous cause upon earth, behold the debauched ANTHONY, the faithless OCTAVIUS, triumphing in the worst, without being touched with indignation, touched with sorrow? Or see, without emotion and heaviness, these and the succeeding Tyrants mowing down, with settled fury, whatever was good and glorious amongst men?

If public Spirit be the duty of all men, the duty not only of the middle, but the lowest order, how much public Spirit is to be expected from the Nobility, from them upon whom their Country has poured its highest favours, upon whom it should rely for the last zeal and services? What can be so just, what so dear, what so noble and comprehensive, what so much a duty, as to love and maintain what gave us not only birth, but fortune, honours and distinction? It is but gratitude to a generous benefactor: [III-196] and if we are ungrateful, so sovereignly ungrateful, what good quality have we? Against Ingrates the ancient Persians had an express Law, very penal and rigorous. They considered ingratitude as the source of all enmities amongst men, and an indication of the vilest spirit, nor believed it possible for an ungrateful man to love the Gods or Men, or his Friends, Parents, or Country. Surely he that loves not the last, can love none of the rest, and ingratitude to one's Country implies universal ingratitude.

Sect. III.

A Nobleman void of good Qualities, or possessed with bad, a miserable Character. The Baseness and Corruption of the Roman Nobility; its fatal consequence.

ANOBLEMAN and not a Patriot, is a wild contradiction, at best a pitiful and depraved character. What is he? Surely not worthy to bear any trust for his Country, or to shine in her honours, if he make no conscience of his trust, if he betray it, or be indifferent about it, or want public faith and zeal, uncorruptible faith and affectionate zeal. As public Honours should be given for public Spirit, public Spirit should ever accompany public Honours: nor without that has any man a right to these, either to obtain them or to keep them. By such an essential defect and disqualification he degrades himself, and forfeits what he has no capacity to enjoy. He is afterwards to be considered as an Intruder, a Mimic who indeed acts a part, but sustains no real Dignity. Nor can the ornaments and prerogatives of his Order serve for aught but to expose him to constant ridicule and despatch; like many of the Nobility in the time of SALLUST, who says of them, "That they were like so many Statues, and besides their pompous name had nothing to recommend them."

[III-197]

THE stupidity of the Roman Nobility was far from being their worst quality. They were corrupted, debauched, oppressive, insolent, venal; mercenary men who betrayed the Public, who debased themselves to make vile traffic of their voices and power in the State, sold Justice, sold Countries, gave judgment against the Innocent for money, or neglected to do it when the Innocent had none: For money they protected public Enemies, for money authorized domestic Oppressors. Whoever would see a true picture of them, need only read the story of the War against JUGURTHA finely told by SALLUST. By their Corruption they hastened the downfall of Liberty, of which in truth corrupt men are never worthy. What they afterwards suffered in the civil war, from the rage of Usurpers, was a just punishment upon them for such shameful degeneracy and corruption. Thenceforth they served for continual sacrifices to succeeding Tyrants. They might thank themselves: Had they been just and uncorruptible, they might have saved themselves and the State. By their Corruption and Venality, by their Pride and Oppression, they had lost their power.

WHENEVER Government becomes corrupt and oppressive, it grows from that moment hated and weak. Hence ambitious men find temptation and opportunity to overturn it. They will find enough to say against it, and enow to hear them; what they say will be greedily swallowed. The lot that is disliked, is generally believed the worst that can happen, another is desired, and a remedy hoped from a change, which seldom brings one. Whenever the present Governors are hated, their Competitors are sure of being admired, though perhaps much worse. But the evil which is immediately felt is thought heaviest, and to get rid of it, a heavier is often incurred. Besides men will venture a mischief to themselves, [III-198] if by it they can afflict their enemies. The Roman Nobility had provoked the Roman People, so that both pursuing separate interests fell naturally under the dominion of one. The like happened in Denmark: All public burdens and taxes were laid upon the People, nor would the Nobility bear any part, but treated them with scorn and oppression. The injured People took bitter vengeance, made the King absolute to make the Nobility Slaves. These made once a great figure: At present a small Officer in the Army is of more account than a Nobleman of Denmark.

Sect. IV.

The beginning of public Corruption generally from the Nobility: How ruinous this to the Public, and to themselves.

THE first great blow that was given to the Liberties of France, was given by the Nobility, who consented, in the reign of CHARLES the seventh, as PHILIP de COMINES observes, that the Court should raise money upon their Tenants, for the venal consideration of having share of that money to themselves [a]. He adds that by this that King brought a heavy sin upon his own soul and upon that of his Successors, and gave his Kingdom a wound which would continue long to bleed. Upon this occasion, I cannot forbear quoting another passage from that good Frenchman, that honest Politician, worthy Historian. "Is there, says he, a Prince upon earth, who has power to lay a single penny upon his Subjects, without the grant and consent of those who are to pay it, otherwise than by Tyranny and Violence?---No Prince can levy it, unless through Tyranny, and under the [III-199] penalty of excommunication. But there are those who are brutish enough not to know what they can do or omit in this affair."

THESE impositions grew monstrous, almost as soon as they grew arbitrary: CHARLES the seventh, who began them, never raised annually above an hundred and eighty thousand pounds. His Son LEWIS XI. almost trebled that Revenue; and since then all that the Kingdom and People had, even to their skins, has hardly been thought sufficient for their Kings. All this might have been easily foreseen; but a little present lucre blinded the French Nobility.

BY money got with their consent, the Court could maintain Armies without their consent; and it was too late to defend their public privileges, when they had given away the public purse, the first and greatest privilege, the bulwark of all the rest. They afterwards found, by dear experience, that nothing which hurts their Country could in the issue benefit them, and that in betraying the rights of the Public, they had betrayed their own. By flattering and exalting the Crown for some present gratuity, some poor personal advantages, they brought themselves to a slavish dependence upon the Crown for all the advantages of honour and life. Neither could the Crown be blamed for giving them money, if it was true that they would not do their duty, would not serve their Country without money. By it however they gained little. Besides the meanness and disgrace of it, what they got corruptly, they wasted prodigally, and ruined their posterity without mending their own condition. It was moreover a temptation to the Crown to grasp at all, since whatever is coveted, it knew how to accomplish.

WHAT the Nobility did, others were too ready to imitate, and the Court took advantage of the venality of all. So that MEZERAY had too much [III-200] cause to say what he does of the States-General holden in the beginning of the reign of CHARLES the eighth, that the President of the States, many of the Ecclesiastics, and several Deputies, sold themselves to the Court, and betrayed the public cause. It must be owned that whatever the Court acquired this way, was but a poor acquisition, not the hearts of the People, but the venal mouths of their Deputies. Nor can a Monarchy be ever strengthened by any acquisitions which weaken the People. It is at best but the strength of a man in a frenzy and convulsions, mighty for a time, and supernatural, but ending in miserable faintness, languor and death.

Sect. V.

The advantages of public Liberty to the Nobility. How fast Tyrants destroy them. The strange degeneracy of the Roman Nobility: contemptible, yet proud: subject to be degraded for base Morals or Poverty.

IN a free Country the Nobility have room to exercise all their virtues: Under an arbitrary Prince what virtue they have they must hide; since if it be signal, they may find it fatal. It is certain that by most it is marked with a jealous eye, and such jealousy seldom sleeps or forgives [b]. The Politics of almost all the CÆSARS were nothing else than bloody devices to murder every man of quality signal for any virtue military or civil, or for wealth and family. TACITUS is full of such examples, and I have elsewhere referred to them. It was treasonable to be noble; capital to be rich; criminal to have borne honours, criminal to have declined them; and the reward of worth and virtue was quick and inevitable destruction; says TACITUS. [III-201] So that men of character, possessed of great qualities, were, for safety, obliged to disguise them, and to appear, against nature, mean, fawning, debauched, and even stupid, like the first BRUTUS under TARQUIN. The natural heaviness of GALBA was supposed to be assumed, purposely to escape the deadly suspicion of the several Tyrants under whom he had lived. Such was the splendor of his race, and such the terrible spirit of those times (which he had escaped) that thence colour was ministered for bestowing the name of real wisdom upon that which in him was real heaviness, as the same author observes. Through this fear and precaution, under the Tyranny of DOMITIAN, TACITUS says, men were so careful to conceal their faculties, that they lost a great space of their life in silence and non-existence, insomuch that they had survived not only others but themselves. Now where was the advantage, where the honour of being Noble, when such as were Noble were obliged to act meanly, and to seem mean? It was all mock-honour, and a misfortune to possess it. Under such pressure and terrors could virtue rise or flourish, a thing too rare even where it was encouraged?

IN fact most of the Nobility were what they seemed, corrupt, base, servile, void of spirit and virtue, destitute of accomplishments, in name only and fortune distinguished from the Rabble, and therefore worse than they. Ridiculous is a noble name without noble qualities. Is a fruit-tree to be regarded, which bears no fruit? The reasoning of MARIUS is unanswerable [c]. The illustrious virtue of the founder of a family, is but a perpetual reproach upon his descendants, if they want virtue. The merit of our forefathers derives none upon us, no more than their [III-202] crimes do guilt. Is it any praise to a coward, that he had an ancestor who was brave? He has much cause to be ashamed, none to glory, yet probably will glory in spite of shame. The less merit generally the more pride, and nothing is more common than to find in very worthless, in very corrupt men, notable stateliness and insolence. I have known men of the most fastidious spirit and confident mien, do actions little and base, known them false, sordid, unjust. What can be more odious than such men, what more contemptible? Do not Titles and Honours, if they have any, render them more contemptible, more odious? For a great man to be dishonest and corrupt, is infamy in abundance; but when to corruption and dishonesty he adds insolence and disdain, he is completely infamous, and claims abhorrence from all men.

It was part of the office of the public Censors at Rome, to weed the Senate, and to degrade unworthy Senators: Nor could that illustrious dignity be gained or kept without a suitable fortune. It was not thought honourable or safe, that any one with an ill character and no estate, should act and vote amongst Magistrates and Lawgivers; that a man of bad morals should direct the public manners, and dispose of property, yet have none. Nor was aught more just, than that they who had the spirit of the worst Plebeians, as well as the poverty, should be reduced into the class of men whom they resembled. A Senator was at first no more than a Plebeian well accomplished, and therefore ennobled; and it was but reasonable, that Senators, who wanted accomplishments, should be declared Plebeians again, when in effect they were so before. Nobility was the price of worth, and without worth, reckoned Usurpation. It was thought equitable usage, as to raise men of merit, so to pull down men who happened to be raised without it. The worthless Nobility were a [III-203] scandal to the worthy, as well as to their own ancestors; nor was it just that the worst should be ennobled, when the best could be no more. Great qualities were accounted natural Nobility, such as no favour, no power could bestow; and the power which exalted worthless men, was thought rather to debase it self than to honour them. Besides it was disgraceful and dangerous to the State, that men unqualified, corrupt, venal, infamous, should be allowed any share in the sway; that an Ignorant and a Mercenary should have equal weight with the ablest Senators, and upright Patriots.

Sect. VI.

Public Virtue justly due from the Nobility to the Public. They ought to be zealous for Liberty upon their own account.

IT is but just to the Publick, for men to merit the stations which they hold in it, to render themselves worthy of the privileges and emoluments which they enjoy from it. To take a reward without deserving it, is a sort of robbery, especially when to that reward public Service and Duty are annexed. The Nobility of a Country have more advantages from it than the rest of the Natives, and are therefore more bound in honour and conscience to serve it. It is for this only they are, or should be Noble. For their own sake also they are bound to study its prosperity, and to guard its Liberty and Laws. Where these are precarious, so will be their dignity, which can never be safe where Liberty is not so, unless in an established Aristocracy, of which I do not now speak. By such righteous conduct, a conduct so worthy of public Leaders, so incumbent upon the Protectors of their Country, they entail security upon their families, and glory upon [III-204] their own name. For under Tyranny even the memory of great Men is denied Justice. ARULENUS RUSTICUS was condemned for having published the life and praises of THRASEA PÆTUS, a glorious Patriot murdered by NERO, who hated him for his virtue, which the Monster laboured to extirpate from the earth. HERENNIUS SENECIO was put to death under DOMITIAN, for doing the like justice to the virtuous memory of HELVIDIUS PRISCUS. Even the books were doomed to the flames; so zealous were these Tyrants to destroy the name as well as the life of every excellent person. But in spite of the Tyrants, in spite of all their power and rage, those precious names are still preserved, still praised: So will be the names of all great Men remarkably good; and, to heighten the glory of these, the infamy of great bad Men, will be never suffered to perish. Here therefore is the choice, to be immortal in Praise, or in Reproach.

DISCOURSE XII.

Of public Teaching and Teachers. ↩

Sect. I.

Whoever is head of the State ought to be head of the Religion of the State. The force of early impressions, with their use and abuse.

TACITUS says, that no Government was ever sufficiently powerful to repress the turbulent sallies of a people, who were once brought to sanctify and defend the evil doings and devices of men as real parts and acts of Religion. [III-205] Never was any observation more true; and it shews of what importance it is to Government to take care how the people are nurtured, that the public education be rational and just, and that subjects be not taught to reverence any authority in the State more than the civil authority, or indeed to behold or feel any other whatsoever. Where the public Teachers depend not upon the Magistrate, his subjects will no longer depend upon him, but upon their Teachers, nor obey him when taught disobedience by them. It is dangerous to the Magistrate to have his people believe, that any man, or set of men, has more interest with God than he has, since then, the same man, or set of men, will of course have more interest with his people. Every Magistrate therefore who would rule with proper awe and in proper security, must be at the head of the Church as well as of the State. This was the just policy of the Caliphs in Arabia and Egypt, this the policy of the Sophi's of Persia, and this is the policy of the Crown of Great Britain. The great Turk assumes not the name, but he exercises the power by making and unmaking the Mufti at his pleasure.

IN discoursing of public Teaching, I do not mean to consider the course or method of education in schools and universities, but to examine the effects of ignorance or understanding in the people, and how much it concerns a State what notions are instilled into them concerning Religion and Government.

I BELIEVE it will be allowed just, that such impressions as are most wise and virtuous, and worthy to last, should be first made, not only because they are most important, but because the most early impressions are likely to abide longest, especially when the understanding finds afterwards cause to approve and retain what the mind had already imbibed. Upon our spirits, whilst yet young and tender, any [III-206] ideas whatsoever may be stamped, however foolish, however mad, or even pernicious. Nay, such are very easily infused, though very hard to be removed. This is exemplified in the eminent stubbornness of religious errors. What is more monstrous than some of these, what more repugnant to all common sense and human happiness, what more dishonourable to the attributes of God, what more disgraceful to the reason of men, or more baneful to society? Yet what upon earth is maintained with such fondness, with such zeal and obstinacy? Whence comes all this ferocity for the support of folly, often in defence of misery, but from hence, that these reveries are for the most part very early sucked in, besides that they are confirmed by superstition, which teaches men not to reason, but to fear, not to see, but to believe? I know not that thing which human minds may not be taught to adore, let it be ever so absurd, ever so deformed, or destructive, whether Crocodiles and Serpents, or Impostors and Dæmons. Nay, what they often adore does not even exist, but is only fancied, like the imaginary Deity mentioned and ridiculed by CICERO, called *Aius locutus*, the *Voice that spoke*, or like the Idols mentioned by St. PAUL, who of them says truly, "that they were nothing in the world;" that is they were only statues and names.

OF this openness of the soul to receive impressions readily, and of its fondness for impressions early received, excellent use might be made, though it has happened to be generally misapplied and abused. The mind may be taught true propositions as well as false, such as tend to its honour and advantage as well as those which tend to its hurt and disgrace. People may be brought up with an high opinion of their own reason as well as with a low, and learn to exercise it as well as to lay it aside, to consider and prize it as a gift and guide given them by God, as [III-207] well as to rail at it, and to distrust its guidance. As in some countries (alas! too many) they are educated to love delusion, and to adore deluders, they might in others be instructed to despise deluders and to abhor delusion; here to love liberty and right, as there to bear bondage and misrule; to love God without being cheated and impoverished in his holy name, to honour Governors, but to own no allegiance to Oppressors; to know that the wise God cannot command fooleries, nor good Magistrates rule violently.

Sect. II.

The ignorance of the People no pledge of security to their Governors. The ignorant Rabble always most tumultuous.

GOVERNORS are not the less secure because their subjects have sense and discernment; I think they are much more so, and that from the stupidity and blindness of their people they have constant danger to apprehend; as blind men are apter to be misled than men that have eyes. The ignorant and foolish are eternally subject to misguidance, eternally apt to be inflamed by Incendiaries, to be deceived and drawn away by Demagogues. Such as have no understanding of their own, will be ever at the mercy and command of those who can gain their admiration and esteem, and will ever follow the man who can best seduce them. Thus the causeless mutinies in Armies, thus unprovoked tumults and insurrections in Cities and Countries, generally consist of the ignorant and brutal Rabble, excited and conducted by wretches often as low as themselves, only of superior craft and the bad are chiefly guided by the worst. Such was the sedition of the Legions in Pannonia, in the beginning of the reign of TIBERIUS.

[III-208]

“IN the Camp, says TACITUS, there was one PERCENNIUS, formerly a busy Leader in the embroilments of the Theatre, and now a common soldier; a fellow of a petulant, declaiming tongue, and by inflaming parties in the Playhouse, well qualified to excite and infatuate a crowd. This Incendiary practised upon the ignorant and unwary. He engaged them in nightly confabulations, and by little and little incited them to violence and disorders, and towards the evening when the soberest and best affected were withdrawn, he assembled the worst and most turbulent. When he had thus ripened them for sedition, and other ready incendiaries were combined with him, he personated a lawful Commander, and harangued them.” His harangue was artful and vehement, and by it he quite fired the credulous multitude. All licentiousness followed and terrible outrages, especially when VIBULENUS, another incendiary and common soldier, had inflamed them with fresh fury by an impudent lye, as if his brother had lately perished for promoting the common cause. Insomuch that had it not appeared that the Impostor never had any brother, to atone for that imaginary murder their General was in danger of suffering a real one. Now during all this insurrection and uproar of the common herd (for of such only it consisted) the General was still dutifully obeyed by the Centurions, and by all the soldiers of any merit.

INDEED all sudden disorders are raised, all furious and unjust revolutions are accomplished, chiefly by the gross and undistinguishing crowd, nurtured in no principles, or bad ones, ready to take every impression and alarm, to love or to hate by impulse and direction, and to be guided not by justice, and sense, but by passion and names, and cries.

ONE tumult is generally the picture of all others; and reason, which is a calm and orderly thing, can [III-209] scarce have part in any, but instead of it rage and wilfulness bear sway: Like the uproar in Ephesus against St. PAUL, stirred up by the Shrine-makers to DIANA. A terrible insurrection there was, and a hideous clamour. The whole city was filled with confusion, yet the greater part of the multitude knew not wherefore they were come together. They only agreed in their common phrenzy and in a common cry, that *great was Diana of the Ephesians*; and this cry was the only argument which they continued to urge for the space of two hours against what the Apostle had declared; namely, “that they were no Gods which were made with hands;” a most self-evident and pious truth, if ever there were any. But this manly and benevolent doctrine served only to provoke, not to convince a rabble nurtured in blind error, and therefore furious to defend it.

Sect. III.

The untaught vulgar, how liable to be seduced. The great Power of their Teachers over them.

IT does not at all follow from the ignorance of the people, that they are thence the more likely to be peaceable subjects. The more ignorant they are, the more easily they are deceived; and such who depend, not upon reason, but upon authority and men, are the surest dupes of Ambition and Craft, the certain materials for every public combustion. A few loud, or solemn, or even senseless words artfully pronounced and applied, are sufficient to raise their passions, to present them with false objects of love and hate, to fill them with foolish pity or foolish indignation, and to harden them against all sense and peace. It is likely they may be even so blind and bewitched, as to think all their outrages and cruelties so many acts of justice, nay, [III-210] of piety and merit, especially in countries where they are wickedly taught to believe, that violence and barbarities are well pleasing to God and warranted by his will, provided that, for their justification, his name be boldly used. Whoever can persuade them, that their lawful Governors are enemies to God, has it in his power to make them enemies to their lawful Governors; and then the next step will be to rebel against their King, in order to shew their obedience to the King of Kings.

NEITHER is it any certain security to their Ruler, that they may be also taught to consider him and his power as altogether irresistible and sacred, though he should even degenerate into the most pestilent Tyrant; since, besides that such doctrine is utterly against nature, which when thoroughly incensed, will prove often too stubborn to be bound by any doctrine; there can be no constant dependence upon the operation of any principle which is it self founded upon nonsense and falshood. Whatever is absolutely absurd admits of infinite uncertainty and latitude in reasoning from it, and a contradiction once granted generally involves a man in a train of contradictions even to that contradiction and to one another. Moreover the reception of an absurd position implies such blindness in them who embrace it, that the same men who taught them, (for example) that they must never resist upon any pretence whatsoever, may afterwards teach them to resist even upon the very pretence of defending nonresistance.

SUCH inconsistencies we have seen in our own time. They who teach nonsense, claim likewise a right to declare the explanations of their own nonsense, and these they take care to accommodate to their present temper and views, and to the several variations of their views. Nor from such as they have instructed in folly have they cause to apprehend [III-211] any discoveries to their disadvantage, or that any inconsistency will be charged upon them. Men who submit to be blind, have no right to see; and he who sees for them, will hardly suffer them to perceive any faults or errors in himself. So that he may persuade them to one thing to day, to another to morrow, yet scorn to own any contradiction in his conduct, or in their practice. He will still be sure of their adherence, so long as they have not light enough to see

that they want light; nor, whilst they delight in darkness, can they dislike him who keeps them in it.

Sect. IV.

The deceitfulness of Doctrines which are against Reason and Nature.

THERE can hardly be found under any Government ignorance more gross than under that of Turkey; nor can the power of the Sovereign there be possibly carried higher, either in the minds of the People, or in the principles of their Religion. Yet where upon earth is sovereign Power more precarious than there, where more perillous? and where is the life of the Sovereign so often sacrificed? All men profess to adore his person, all men own his authority to be without bounds; no man pretends that it ought to be limited: Nay, to dispute the doctrine and prerogative of his absolute Will, would be as penal, as to call in question the Attributes, and even the Being of God; nor did it ever enter into their hearts to circumscribe his Sovereignty by any law. They profess passive obedience even unto death, though he command whole armies to precipitate themselves from a rock, or to build him a bridge with piles of their bodies for his passing of rivers, or to kill each other to afford him sport; nor is he ever accountable for any action or excess whatsoever, though he destroy wantonly, [III-212] and without all cause, a thousand of his subjects in a day. These are flights worthy the grossness of Turks, worthy the gross flattery of Turkish Divines; nor have any Divines exceeded them in stretching this slavish Doctrine, except some of our own who have held it unlawful to resist even for the salvation of human kind. As they had thus improved upon the Turkish Casuists, so in another instance they wronged them, by asserting that this doctrine was the peculiar characteristic of their own Church, when it was that of the Mahometan Church many hundred years before.

BUT this doctrine, however savage and gross, and however by it flatterers may please undiscerning Princes, has been found so opposite to nature (as indeed it is to all common sense) that it has proved too barbarous even for the barbarity of Turks; and of all Princes who have died violently, none have died more tragically than theirs, none have found so little respect and obedience. These Gods upon earth; these shadows and images of the Almighty; these brethren to the Sun; these givers of all earthly dignities and crowns, are, with all these their divine titles, often the sport and victims of the vilest rabble.

THIS it is to carry submission beyond reason and nature. As every thing human is limited, so of course is human patience; and what avails theory against the bent of nature? You may bring people by teaching and ghostly fascination, to say any thing be it ever so absurd, ever so hurtful, perhaps to believe it too. But there is difference between saying and bearing, between assenting and suffering. When the trial comes, passion will prove stronger than opinion.

THE most ignorant people, though they cannot reason, can be angry; and anger, whilst it lasts, is their guide. Their other guides may dictate to them, and argue for them, but cannot feel for them, may [III-213] govern their ideas, but not their rage. All schemes which presuppose the continual rest or suppression of the passions, are foolish and fantastical, let the terrors and restrictions which they annex be ever so awful. What can be more so than the dread of hell, of everlasting torture and burning; a penalty denounced by some, particularly by the Turks, against resistance, and by many believed? Yet has this dreadful terror, even when corroborated with numerous guards and mighty armies, secured the thrones of Princes? No: Such as have trusted to it, have fallen in spite of it, perhaps because they trusted to it. They who rule righteously want no such deceitful support; for such it is, at best; and he who relies upon it has generally no other to rely on, and therefore deserves not a better. It is not just that falshood should support misrule, or the holy name of God serve to shield an

Oppressor. A good Prince confides in the laws, and in his own upright administration, and has no occasion for recourse to lies and frauds, since he is sure of the favour of God and man: and he who reigns wickedly, ought not to wonder if his wicked hopes perish.

Sect. V.

The foregoing Reasoning further illustrated. How much it behoves Rulers that their Subjects be well and rationally taught.

HOW little passive principles, and unlimited power, and mighty armies secure a Prince against public discontents, the Revolution at Constantinople the other day, is a signal proof and example; and many such examples have happened there. This is the second within the space of seven and twenty years. A Prince whose authority knew no bounds, one by whose breath all men lived, and the greatest men perished, one whose height of power could only [III-214] be expressed by titles taken from the Almighty, is in a moment tumbled from his proud throne into a prison. Had he not been raised so unnaturally high, his fall would not probably have been so immediate and violent. Where there is only one man to be changed, the change is soon made, let the nature of his power be ever so pompous, let his name be ever so solemn. Titles the most lofty signify nothing, when all reverence for titles is gone; and his despotic power, which he holds from his armies, must leave him whenever his armies do.

AN angry faction, or a tumultuous soldiery, or even one desperate fellow, can effect a Revolution, where it is to be effected by removing a single person, since upon a single person in all arbitrary countries, the whole Government rests. But, to remove a Parliament, or to destroy all them who chuse Parliaments, is a far different task. Here therefore is the security of a Prince ruling over a free people. The States of the Country are a wall about him. Whatever burthens the subjects bear, as they are laid on by public consent, cannot provoke them against him: Hence his safety from popular tumults. As he relies not upon armies, at least but in part, even the revolt of an army can but in part distress him; and he has a resource amongst his people, where he has not provoked them by oppression. It will moreover be a constant check and discouragement to any design against him, that, though it should succeed, the Government would not be altered, and severe vengeance would be sure to follow.

SINCE, therefore, neither gross ignorance in the people, nor the possessing them with the most slavish tenets, can secure their Rulers against insurrections and revolt; it is the interest of their Rulers, as well as duty, to provide that the public education be rational and virtuous, and the public morals be sound, that the people have just notions of right and wrong, [III-215] that they be not taught slavery instead of subjection, delusion under the name of religion, and folly for devotion. Where they are taught to be honest and sensible, they will be certainly dutiful to their Governors as well as just to one another; but if they be left to folly and corrupt dealings, their reverence to magistrates will be precarious, and may be as well too little as too much, since without a share of sense, especially a sense of honour and obligations, they can have no sure rule of conduct and obedience, and are more likely to follow evil than good, to be turbulent than peaceable.

EVERY departure from just liberty is an approach to slavery; every advance towards slavery is a step to brutality, which is then compleat when no liberty is left: And the nearer men are to beasts, the sooner they are enraged, the harder to govern. Wild beasts, however managed and muzzled, often destroy their keepers, as the most abject slaves have sometimes destroyed their proud tyrants. Men who know how to exercise their reason and to watch over their passions, will be quiet under good usage out of choice and interest, whereas such whose faculties are vitiated or suppressed, know not when it is proper to sit still, or when it is right to rouse: They may be persuaded, by those whom they trust with the management of their senses, that the best condition is the worst, that the most equal Government is Oppression, that the most legal Title is Usurpation; that a Prince, provided his name be JOHN or JAMES,

may do whatever he pleases, be it ever so wicked and tyrannical; but if he be called THOMAS or WILLIAM, let him be ever so just and wise, he is an usurper. For, to the stupid and intoxicated herd they do not, they need not, give the true reason, or a better reason, or any reason at all, for this their partiality and aversion. Neither is it likely that they will own, that in stiling Rulers the Ordinance of God, or Apostates [III-216] from God, they are generally, almost eternally, guided by their passions, to fawn or clamour, flatter or revile, bless or curse, be obsequious or rebellious, just as they find themselves courted or neglected.

Sect. VI.

Power in the hands of the public Teachers how dangerous to Rulers; and how ill it suits with Christianity.

A PEOPLE led by delusion, especially by religious delusion (the most powerful of all others, and thence the most practised) are the subjects, not of the civil magistrate, but of the deluders, who may incite them against him, as well as engage them for him. Insomuch that for his own safety, and for the repose of the State, he must be beholden not to his People, but to the Leaders and Pedagogues of the People. To them he must pay all his court, and leave them to domineer, nay, assist them in domineering, that they may suffer him to reign, though only to reign in name. Constant distress and restraint is the least that he can expect, nay, if he continue not sufficiently tame, they will perhaps arm his own subjects against him; perhaps, not content with putting him under due fear and chastisement, they will even depose him, perhaps butcher him, or oblige him to butcher himself. Even this last sally of their pride and power is not new, as the others have been very common. The Egyptian Priests of old had gained such absolute sway over all men, especially over the King, that, as often as they found themselves prompted by any offence from him, or by any caprice of their own, they were wont, by a short order, to command him to die.

OTHERS, since, have acted with equal scorn towards Princes, and deposed and murdered them with as high a hand. Nay, in most of their struggles [III-217] with their Sovereign, they have proved too hard for him; a superiority which they at first gained through his own blindness and ill policy, by giving them himself, or suffering others to give them such mighty revenues, that, by the strength of these, and by their influence over the consciences of men, which with equal weakness he had surrendered to their will and blind guidance, they were become so potent and imperious, that he was glad to compound with them for the quiet possession of his Throne, to comply with all their demands, to be still augmenting their privileges and power, and thence to weaken and give up his own; nay, to be their daily and common executioner, and to inflict death and vengeance where-ever they shewed displeasure. Nor did all this complaisance always save him, if he manifested any uneasiness or reserves, or the love of mercy rather than of cruelty, or refused chearfully to kill or distress all his subjects, who in their devotions used not the words and tunes in fashion, though the fashion was daily changing.

THE speech of the Bishop of *Nismes* to the French King the other day is a curious specimen of the spirit of those men. He tells his Majesty, "That his Monarchy is founded upon Catholicism," that is, upon whatever they, the Bishops, shall think fit to call so; for they are the Judges. So that, whenever he falls from Catholicism, that is, whenever he provokes these Judges of Catholicism to declare that he does, he falls of course from his Monarchy. In the mean time they modestly expect from his Majesty, that he should persecute and undo all who refuse to submit blindly to their authority and dictates, in spite of conscience and conviction. It is the usual reasoning of such men. Whoever opposes or contradicts them, never fails to be an enemy to God and the King.

[III-218]

CHRISTIANITY, which was certainly propagated without the aid of wealth or power, never has, never can receive any assistance from either. Like all other institutions civil and sacred, it must subsist upon the same principles from whence it began, or cease to subsist. Nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive, how Religion, which is a conviction of the soul produced by the grace of God there, and without that grace can never be produced, should result from force or gain, things which naturally cause only pride and the fear of man, and other worldly passions quite repugnant to Religion. Nor was any thing ever more evident than that, when secular authority and secular riches are contended for in behalf of Christianity, it is done not by the voice of Christ nor for any purposes of his, but by the voice of interested men, and for apparent ends of their own.

WE will readily allow them to be holy men, who call men to Christ, and labour to convert souls from sin; but surely they are not also holy when they are employed about things which have no share of holiness in them. They are not holy in offices and pursuits which are purely civil or natural. No man can be said to be holy in eating, sleeping, or in growing rich: neither is he holy even in preaching or praying, if in these functions his soul be corrupt or insincere. If his sermon be about secular things, it is not a religious sermon, no more than any other speech prompted not by grace but by passion; or, if he pray without faith and the spirit, his prayer is no longer holy. We must distinguish between the occupation and the man, between his holy occupation and his other occupations. Were every thing which a holy man does, to be accounted holy, even his sin would be holy, his acts of frailty would be acts of holiness. In his preaching and teaching the same rule must be observed; else his mistakes must [III-219] be swallowed as instruction, and he may preach you into sin and folly as well as out of it.

Sect. VII.

The absurdity of implicit belief in any set of Teachers, with its mischievous and monstrous consequences. The natural progress of Persecution.

WHAT is said above shews the monstrous nonsense of submitting blindly to any set of Teachers, and the matchless assurance of such as claim it. The condition of the countries where this wicked point is gained, their shocking ignorance and misery, are abundant warnings to nations who yet possess the privilege of private judgment and conscience, to be zealous in preserving a privilege so precious, the inestimable gift of God and Nature, that divine ray issuing from the Deity, and the true characteristic of a rational creature.

It is human reason more than human shape, that denominates a man. Indeed such as part with their reason, have in a great measure renounced their species, and are to be ranked with creatures that are not rational, nay, in some sort, below them; for, dumb beasts part not with their instinct. After this fatal surrender of their chief faculty, what other faculty, or which of their senses can they claim a right to exercise? They have indeed small pretence to any reserve, nor is any reserve allowed them such as may interfere with their spiritual bondage. They are even doomed to renounce their eyes, their taste and their smell, to disown the taste of bread in bread, and the flavour of wine in wine, to see the one God, who is indivisible and fills heaven and earth, cut out of a loaf into numberless human bodies intire, yet still, to maintain that he is but one though thousands of mouths are eating him, and each eats him whole.

[III-220]

AFTER swallowing this infinite lie, what other dare they dispute, especially when it comes from men armed with double terrors, those of Hell and those of secular Power? It is then too late to assert our senses, which perhaps are already bewitched and given up; it is too late to alledge, that it implies an absolute contradiction and impossibility, for any man to bind and govern the involuntary motions of my soul, which I my self cannot direct, nor hinder, nor

alter. From the assuming of a power over the mind of man, every other power will follow of course; and civil servitude is the sure result of spiritual.

FROM hence men should be exhorted to examine before they assent. To order men to believe in their hearts what the heart of man cannot conceive, is such a stretch of assurance and impiety, such a mark of malice against truth and sense, such an assault upon natural candor and veracity, such a sure way to harden men in lying and hypocrisy, such an apparent inlet to all delusion and every ungodly dominion, that all men should rise up against it. It may begin with negative penalties, but, if suffered to go on, will end in an Inquisition; for, a small punishment infers the necessity of a greater, where the first answers not the end, and consequently of the highest, when none but the highest will do.

How few consider this, with the danger and natural tendency of punishing for opinions? Many would rejoice at the whipping of a man for having notions different from theirs, yet be sorry to see him burned: whereas the same arguments that justify the use of the lash will justify that of the faggot, and were that man as strong as his persecutors, he has an equal right and pretence for whipping or burning them. So that, if this spirit were universally let loose, before persecution ceased men must cease.

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Sect. VIII.

The Will of God not deposited with any set of Men. The use of public Teaching, with the Character necessary to public Teachers. How much they are corrupted by Pomp and great Wealth.

WHEN the Will of God is matter of record, it is monstrous absurdity to depend for the knowledge of it, upon the authority of men; and it is an open affront to the divine Being, to stile it his revealed Will, and yet to call it obscure or hard to be understood. What can be greater mockery than to suppose, that the omnipotent God should impart to some men only, certain great secrets which were of the utmost importance to all men; that all men were to be eternally taxed for having these secrets eternally communicated them; that he should publish these secrets in his revealed Will to remain always concealed though always preached; that they are still to be secrets, still hid, though thousands are publishing and explaining them every day, and have been for many ages? Is it not more worthy the idea of an all-wise, of an all-merciful God, to believe that he lays open to all men whatever is necessary for all men to know?

NEITHER does this reasoning affect the being of national Churches. It is my opinion, that a panochial Clergy are of infinite use, where they take pains by their example and instructions to mend the hearts of the people, where they teach them to love God, and their Neighbour, and Virtue, and their Country, and to hate no man. As corrupt as men are, though more prone to evil than good, I believe it possible for a wise, and diligent, and upright Clergyman, to shame vice and dishonesty out of his parish, to make virtue amiable to all his hearers, to convince knaves of the folly and deformity of knavery, and [III-222] to persuade them to be honest even for the sake of interest, as well as for quiet of mind, and for reputation, and the love of their neighbours. By the same means other evil habits might be cured, such as drunkenness, lewdness, lying and idleness. People might be even made fond of all the genuine duties of Religion, which are really but few in number, and all capable of demonstration to the meanest capacity.

BUT it is absolutely expedient, that they who profess to teach truth, be themselves men of veracity; that they be virtuous and sober in order to recommend sobriety and virtue, and shew by their behaviour, upon all occasions, that their duty, that the instruction and happiness of

the people, is dearer to them than their own interest. If the conduct of a Teacher be contrary to all this, his character is contrary to that of a Pastor. If he set out with a great and solemn falshood, and say that he came from God, whom he never saw, if he alledge the call of the Holy Ghost, when his call was apparently interested and human; these are the marks of every false prophet, and he doth not teach, but deceive: Or if he be debauched, or false, or idle, vain will be his attempts, if he use any, to cure these vices in others. If he have a great or considerable revenue for the cure of souls, and surrender that important cure to a worthless hireling retained at a small price, can he be thought to love souls so well as money? Nor can he pass for an Ambassador of Peace, if he revile, or curse, or teach his people to hate and injure such as differ in speculations from him.

NEITHER can he be thought a messenger of truth, or an instructor of men, if he puzzle them with curious and fanciful notions irreconcilable to probability and human apprehension, yet to be embraced as necessary duties. This were to represent the wise and good God as delighting to mock and perplex [III-223] his creatures with riddles and contradictions. And, for men to own their belief of any religious proposition, which they cannot possibly conceive, is to mock God in their turn; since to embrace with our understanding what the understanding cannot comprehend, is absolutely impossible. I can easily conceive, that a just God must love righteousness and hate iniquity; and this must be obvious to the conceptions of all men. But, I cannot conceive how the God of truth should delight in sophistry, how he who would have all men come to the knowledge of truth, should desire to have all men confounded with inexplicable niceties, or to have that made true in systems which in reason can never be true.

NEITHER can a Teacher ever edify others whilst he preaches up himself. If he contend for power, and dominion, and worldly pomp, how is he a spiritual guide? The blessed JESUS and his holy Apostles had nothing of all this, claimed nothing. And it is amazing that others, who evidently want the spiritual endowments of the Apostles, should venture to demand, as successors to the Apostles, what it is plain the Apostles never had, nor sought. Other arms than persuasion and prayer, they have none, and power is incompatible with either. It was natural for MAHOMET to plant a false Religion by troops of horse. BUT CHRIST and St. PAUL took no such ways, nor allowed others to take them.

NOR has it at all appeared, that our Religion ever flourished in proportion as Churchmen grew wealthy. I doubt its spirit will be found to have constantly sunk as their pomp increased. The People, indeed, have ever been most ignorant where the Clergy have been most powerful. The more the latter had, the less they taught, and, when under the name of Religion, they were become masters of all things, they [III-224] quite abolished Religion to set up frauds and superstition. To what gross ignorance, to what misery and barbarity they had brought Christendom before the Reformation, I leave Historians to declare. In what a horrible state of stupidity, dread and desolation, they still keep the parts of it yet unreformed, all travellers see, and all that read travels may learn.

So much the poor People got by giving these their Teachers all, or too much, and by believing their commission to be from God, when they were acting like the most depraved of men, full of revenge, though professed followers of the meek JESUS, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; nay, confidently glutting their avarice under his name, though he himself had not a place where to lay his head.

ALL this was natural, and, in all places upon earth, the like causes will produce the like effects, to the end of the world. The people who had been long deluded, grew first blind; when they had parted with their reason, they were easily brought to part with their property, and where all the property was, there all the power followed.

Public Teachers have no Power, no Creation but from the State. Their Folly and ill Policy in claiming any other.

IT becomes the wisdom of all Governors so to fashion and regulate the public Teachers, as to let them know, and all men see, that they are the Creatures of the State, appointed by the civil Power to a religious office. This was the wisdom of England at the Reformation. They were then obliged to swear, that they derived all power of all sorts whatsoever, from the Crown; nor could they after this, without express perjury, claim any antecedent or independent power. They were by this cut off [III-225] from the profane nonsense and presumption of their predecessors, of representing JESUS CHRIST, and of succeeding the Apostles; a source from which the Popish Clergy had drawn all their gain and fairy dominion, and with which they had covered and hallowed all their wicked pretences and frauds.

YET for several reigns after the excellent Queen ELIZABETH, though the same law, and oaths and subscriptions continued, many of the Clergy, in defiance of the constitution, of conscience and of shame, adopted all the antichristian and corrupt claims of the Popish Clergy; and, through the monstrous policy of the reigning Princes, this their lawless behaviour was connived at, nay, supported. For, the Court, where all arbitrary schemes were on foot, in order to gain its own pursuits, humoured and assisted the Clergy in theirs; and though both Court and Clergy became thence notoriously unpopular and obnoxious; though both Monarchy and Church suffered a terrible Catastrophe, for aiming at more than belonged to either, the same restless spirit possessed both upon their re-establishment, and both arrogated a power to be lawless and forsworn, by divine right.

THIS spirit met another severe check afterwards, yet revived again with equal confidence; but the times since bore it worse than ever: Insomuch that all the contempt of which Churchmen so much complain, has been brought upon the Clergy by many of the Clergy themselves. Their claims were so ambitious, extravagant, indeed so false and wicked, and have been so well exposed, that no man of common sense could reverence the persons who made them.

WHAT they are, the Law certainly makes them; what they have, the same Law certainly gives them. Why would they be falsely aspiring to a higher creation, and a title divine? Why be deriving from God what all the world sees to come only from the [III-226] bounty of societies and of particular men? Why be broaching doctrines destructive of Liberty in a nation of Freemen? Why assert an extraordinary, even a divine power to do certain actions, and pronounce certain words, which any man who has hands and a tongue could speak and perform as well, if the civil Magistrate appointed him? Why would they shock all men of any discernment or piety, by fathering all their most selfish, all their most earthly and sordid opinions upon our blessed Redeemer and his holy Gospel, all their notorious falshoods and contradictions upon the word of truth? Why cover apparent ambition and avarice, manifest vengeance and anger, with these sacred names?

THESE were not ways to gain reverence; and had they gained any, it had been all false reverence, not worth gaining, indeed worse than none. Truth wants no false decking, nor any help from falshood, but is often lost or injured by such unnatural company. Whoever speaks truth and does good, is sure of a warrant and approbation from heaven, whatever be his habit or his title; and, if he utter falshood and do mischief, he may be assured that God will disown him; and no name, however solemn, no habiliment, however grave or gorgeous, can in the least justify him.

THE Apostles had no power, no revenues, nor even the countenance of authority. All their credit, all their reverence and success flowed from their heavenly doctrine and behaviour. I hope the world, which has been so long illuminated with the light of the Gospel, is not worse than it was then. The Gospel has been many ages planted amongst us; nor could the Clergy be said to be still planting it over again where the people already believed and received it. The business therefore of the public Teachers was, by continually urging its precepts upon the consciences of men, to improve them in practical [III-227] holiness, to purify their lives in this world, and thence fit them for another. For this purpose they have encouragement and support from the State; and as a designation and maintenance from the civil power is all that they can desire, it is likewise all that they want. They have all possible scope to propagate every divine truth, to enforce every social and civil duty: And whilst they are thus worthily employed, no man will envy them, no man can contemn them; nay, all men will, for their own sakes, pay them all due countenance and respect.

IN this glorious pursuit they might be of excellent use to others, and gain great esteem to themselves, by making people good and government easie, for good men will be good subjects. But it will be a great obstacle in their way to esteem, if they aim at too much, and would derive it only from their name and function, however they neglect or pervert their duty, and however worthless they be in their persons. Too great a fondness for themselves, will make others less fond of them, and by deriving their pedigree too high, many will be provoked to set it too low, or even at nought; like vain men who boast the greatness of their race, when their descent is known to be ordinary, and their rise late and sudden.

Sect. X.

The fatal and ungodly consequences of allowing force in matters of Religion and Conscience; how inconsistent with the nature and end of religious Teaching. The contempt of public Teachers, whence it arises, and the cry of Priestcraft how founded.

FROM all temporal power the public Teachers ought to be carefully debarred. This is what neither agrees with the Teachers of Religion, or with the nature of civil Government, which admits not of [III-228] partnership. for the same cause that any degree of spiritual power is claimed, the highest degree will be claimed, till at last the civil power is either swallowed up in the ecclesiastical, or becomes only its tool and machine, as in Spain and Italy, where the Clergy claim a jurisdiction independent upon the Magistrate, which also infers a right to excommunicate and depose him. This is at best a two-faced Tyranny, a lame and uncertain Government, constrained to do too little or too much; a monster with two heads, each aiming at the chief direction of the body, each furnished with a set of limbs moving opposite ways.

THEY who deal with the soul, if they meditate its conviction, must avoid all force, which can only teach it to lie. Indeed the exercise of power in matters of Conscience has produced such tragical effects, always and every where, as to be sufficient warnings to every country and generation to prevent kindling a flame that would consume all things. Whenever this power has been once gained, the public Teachers have then done teaching, and begun to command. Instead of arguing, they then imprison, and silence gainsayers by a halter, or a faggot.

It is wonderful how a man of this spirit, can have the face to attempt the conversion of any man or nation of men. How can he pretend to reason me into his opinion, when if I embrace it, I must never leave it, though I dislike it, nor follow my reason afterwards, though my reason satisfies me that I have been mistaken, and that my present profession is impious and absurd? Would it not be madness to embrace the opinion of a man, who professes to persecute or kill you, if you ever afterwards change your mind, let your conviction be ever so full, your conscience ever so uneasy? I would fain know how such men can set about the

work of conversion, unless they play the hypocrites, and hide all their terrors, their daggers and their flames, till they have once [III-229] made sure of your person. This were a fraud unworthy the Christian name, and yet I cannot see how such men could avoid such a fraud. They are obliged either to forbear conversions, or to deceive their converts. Their principle is antichristian, and must lead them into antichristian practices. Whoever would preach the name of Christ, must renounce all persecution, all severities.

SUCH of our Clergy as disown all spiritual independent power, all chimerical claims to a divine right, and honestly derive all their distinction and privileges from the Law of the Land, have acted a wise as well as an honest part, and are the only men who can preserve the Church and Churchmen from contempt, by giving up all ghostly craft, all restraints upon Conscience, and by declaring for reason against force. Such men can never be charged with Priestcraft nor be obnoxious to the scorn that follows it. That such craft has long prevailed in the world, done prodigious mischief in it, and proved always baneful to private Conscience and to public Liberty, is too manifest to be denied. Indeed, to raise a cry of Priestcraft where there is none, would be foolish and unjust; and it is as foolish and unjust to complain of the cry where the thing subsists. I doubt the thing only began the cry, and continues it where it is continued.

EVERY claim of the Clergy's, which is irreconcilable to the understandings, to the freedom and interest of the Laity, is Priestcraft, such as any power to domineer, to damn or to save, to know hearts by confession, to change the qualities of persons, and places, and matter, by prerogative and words, &c. Surely the impartial God, the Father of mercies and of men, is not influenced by the persons of men; nor can the same words be effectual with him out of one man's mouth, and ineffectual out of the mouth of another. This would not savour of infinite wisdom, [III-230] but of infinite caprice; as it would be infinite cruelty to make the happiness and eternal welfare of men depend upon habits and postures, upon names and forms, and to leave the salvation of one man, or of many, at the option of another, or of a few. Yet this doctrine, as false and impious as it is, has been maintained; and a power to oblige all men to submit to it has been contended for.

Sect. XI.

Power in the hands of any public Teachers, leads naturally to Popery, and is Popery. How apt they are to differ amongst themselves, yet claim conformity from all others. Persuasion and good example their only province; the sanctity of their doings their only sanctity.

SUCH principles as these mentioned in the last Section, constitute the genuine spirit of Popery. This is the spirit, these the principles which make Popery terrible. For, as to the mere whimsies of Popery, its ridiculous tenets and worship, they are of little moment in themselves. If a man pay adoration to a piece of paper with a picture upon it, or to a bit of rotten wood, or to a rusty nail; he is to be pitied for his folly, but by his folly he hurts not me. It is the power of the Clergy, it is their long claws that constitute Popery, render Popery terrible, and are Popery, real Popery, whatever else it be called. A Clergy who may do whatever they please in behalf of themselves against the Laity, will ever be popish Priests; that is, they will do what popish Priests have always done, every thing to depress the Laity, every thing to exalt themselves. Other difference there will be none, save in names and trifles.

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WHERE-EVER the power of Popery, that is, an unbounded authority in the Clergy, is established, all the visionary follies, all the idolatry and extravagant superstition of Popery, are likely to follow. The ignorance and panick fears of the vulgar, and the cunning and selfishness of their guides, will in time introduce all the rest. The amazing positions and

absurdities of Popery were not immediately settled with the monstrous power of the Popes, but gradually and naturally followed it.

Calvin was a Protestant, and a Reformer, and occasioned great good by weakening Popery: but in the proceedings against SERVETUS, CALVIN was a Pope, nay, a popish Inquisitor, if it be true, that he was the author of these proceedings. Was SERVETUS a Heretic to JOHN CALVIN? So was JOHN CALVIN to the Pope and the Monks, who had as much right to burn him, and were as little vouched by the Gospel in their trade of burning, as was he in burning SERVETUS.

WERE every man who differs from another in religious points, especially in points owned to be not only curious, but even inexplicable, to be executed, but one man in the world would remain alive, since all men differ more or less. No men differ more about Religion than Clergymen, or with more acrimony. They are subject to dispute about things of the least and of the greatest moment, and to mix much passion with all their disputes, be the subject ever so important, or ever so trivial: I wish I could say, that they never manifested any unchristian want of charity towards each other, and towards all their opponents whatsoever. However that be, it is matter of wonder, that they, who are so different and opposite, nay, so endlessly divided in their sentiments, can so boldly exact conformity from all men, can contend that all men should agree with them, who cannot agree with one another.

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UNDER all the darkness and uncertainties of Paganism, did the Philosophers (the Teachers of those days) differ more widely, or quarrel more fiercely than the Teachers under a clearer dispensation have differed and quarrelled? Or did the wrangling of these old heathen Sages ever produce such furious ferments in the world, such merciless wars, such public desolation, as the everlasting contention between Fathers and Fathers, between Doctors and Doctors, has produced? It is strange, that they who professed to be guided by eternal verity, and to guide all men to it, should maintain eternal strife about it. If this be owing to their own various conceits, to their passions, errors and particular interests, with what certainty, or satisfaction, or safety, can we rely upon such disputing and contradictory Leaders? How is it possible to be determined by judges who vary thus infinitely in their judgments? Will they tell us, that they agree in the thing, though they differ in explaining it? This would be too great mockery, when it seems we must assent to the thing as they explain it; else there is an end of all their pretended authority and guidance. If they say, that the thing cannot be explained at all; this is still equally absurd, since the assenting to what admits no explication, is to assent to nothing; and why do they dispute about what they can never clear?

It, in truth, looks as if the providence of God had thus ordered it, on purpose to baffle the vanity of such men as would dictate to others, and attempt to make his word clearer or darker than he himself has thought fit to make it. It looks as if he meant to warn us, by these their perpetual wrangles, to depend upon our own eyes and reason for understanding his will revealed in his word, which to the meanest capacity discovers what is sin, and what is duty. What more is necessary? Has curious doubting [III-233] and learned discord ever mended the world? I wish the contrary were not too tragically true.

THE province of public Teachers is persuasion. Other force than that, and the force of good example, is monstrous; it is contrary to the Gospel to require any, or any respect at all but what results from their usefulness and the piety of their lives. All men will be ready to reverence them according to the measure of their integrity and virtue, and of the good that they do. What would they have more? This is reverence upon a solid foundation, such as will last. But to demand high respect to mere shew and names, to the sanctity of their characters, however little there appear in their persons, or to their mighty prerogatives from Heaven,

when their pursuits are altogether worldly, is the direct way to bring themselves under public ridicule and even public indignation.

It is only sanctity of actions that makes a sanctified character; and whoever does those actions has that character, as he who does them not cannot have it, though he may boldly assume it. A Clergyman who is a persecutor, an oppressor, a drunkard, proud, unjust, licentious, must with an ill grace talk of his sacred profession, or pretend to the Holy Ghost. Much more conceivable it is, much more likely and natural, that the Holy Spirit should influence and accompany any Layman who is peaceable and merciful, just and sober. That Spirit can never surely be supposed to dwell in evil and vicious men, be their titles ever so specious and cœlestial. He whose ways are not apostolical, can never be esteemed a successor to the Apostles: whereas he who lives like an Apostle, though he bear no particular habit or name, is an apostolical man.

It is not reconcilable to common sense or any sense, that holiness or the power of holiness can adhere indelibly to a man of an idle, or profligate [III-234] and impure life, merely by the force of ordination, that is, of being ordained, according to the prescription of the Law and Forms of man's devising, to perform an office which he performs not, but neglects or dishonours. Can it ever accord with reason, or with the idea of God and his Religion, that those lands, which are once possessed by one sort of Churchmen, though acquired by the most impious frauds, to maintain the luxury of infamous and cheating Monks, must still continue appropriated to the use of another sort of Churchmen, and can never be alienated without the sin of sacrilege? That the holy Church of Jesus Christ, who possessed no wealth himself, nor left any behind him, can crave or bear an endowment acquired by robbery and frauds, or refuse to make restitution to such as have been plundered in his name by vile and rapacious deceivers?

Sect. XII.

How it is that public Teachers fail of respect, or gain it.

CAN there be more shocking tenets than those, mentioned in the last Section, or more repugnant to all reason and virtue, to all truth and piety? Yet many such tenets are maintained with notable fierceness. It is certain that the Reformation owned none such; nor, consequently, does our Church, which is founded upon the Reformation, own them. In renouncing Pepery, we renounced all its falsities and abominations; nor can he who adopts and defends them, be an English Protestant, nor indeed hardly a Christian, if he thus fly in the face of Christ and his Apostles, and in their name demand possessions which they never enjoyed, demand power which they never sought, but always renounced.

If in their exhortations, they promote narrow interests, separate from the public interest, or hurtful [III-235] to it: if they endeavour to make their hearers rather blindly obedient to themselves than zealous for the public weal and for the honour of the State, rather intoxicated dupes to names and delusion, than wise and good subjects: if when they are angry at their Governors they encourage disaffection to the Government, but, when humoured, preach up slavery and tameness under oppression however outrageous, can they hope to be revered? Can they be thought actuated by Religion, or Reason, by Mercy, or Truth, or by any good spirit? But, if their conduct be contrary to all this, no contempt or public despite can possibly befall them. Where they act worthily, they will be as sure of respect, as by acting differently they will be sure to miss it. True respect comes from good deeds and not from notions and appellations, much less from pride and the itch of dominion, from impatience of difference in opinion, or peevishness of spirit. Whoever manifests a general meekness of behaviour, universal charity and forbearance, consults and promotes private honesty and peace, with public virtue and tranquillity and the welfare of society, and goes about doing good, cannot

fail to find the esteem of all men.

Sect. XIII.

Excessive Revenues of the public Teachers, how pernicious to the World. A decent and easy maintenance to be allowed them.

WHAT respect a great portion of the world owes to its Teachers, the miserable condition of most parts of it, the ignorance and slavery to which they have brought it, and under which they suffer, nay, oblige it to lye, do abundantly shew. Can it be denied that as their power rose, civil happiness sunk, that in proportion to their [III-236] grandeur has been the misery of their followers? Indeed if the most heavy and lasting curses that can befall or afflict human kind, entitle them to respect, they may, in many places, claim the highest, from public delusion, persecution, beggary and bondage, and from general desolation and woe, as from so many monuments of their own raising, or such at least, as they largely helped to raise. It is evident, that where they prosper most, the people are the most wretched, and that to such prosperity such wretchedness is owing; if that can be called prosperity which produces such infinite evil.

Is not this ample warning to nations which are not yet in the same condition, to take care of every approach towards it? And is not this a ready answer to every attempt for accumulating overmuch worldly property upon spiritual men? Beyond a certain measure it makes them useless, very much makes them dangerous, and their pride and power always rise in proportion to their revenues. Is it not so in Spain and Italy, where their infinite wealth, eternally productive of infinite authority, has made them a public plague and scourge. There their terrors and depredations know no bounds: Guarded by flames and an Inquisition against gainsayers and all opposition to their enormous falsehoods and insatiable avarice, they cheat and domineer without fear or restraint, and not content to prey upon the substance of the miserable Laity, rob them even of their senses and their time. So complete is the delusion there, so fast the bondage over soul and body.

If this be dreadful, let other nations yet free and rational, yet at liberty to understand the Bible and to follow their Consciences, guard against all measures that would lead them, however imperceptibly, into the same doleful and unchristian state, for Christianity is a state of freedom. The Church of Christ [III-237] has subsisted, and even flourished, without any revenues at all; but too much revenue has always impaired its purity, sometimes quite defaced it, as in the above instances. It has always so happened, that immense wealth and a holy profession have not well accorded, and much pomp and spirituality neither look well nor sound well together. Neither can there be a more effectual demonstration, that neither a heavenly commission, nor heavenly hearts belong to men, to any set of men whatsoever, than to see them ever and ardently engaged in pursuits of worldly wealth and worldly power.

LET the public Teachers have a maintenance in the name of God, a decent and easy maintenance secured to them by laws and the consent of society; but let them not boldly pretend to derive their maintenance from God, when it is evidently the gift of men. They who contend for this, cut themselves off from all regard, and cannot possibly be grateful to any benefactor, since they consider him not as the giver, but only as the instrument, nay, probably may think him an usurper in pretending to give them what was theirs before by divine right.

MOREOVER their maintenance ought to be restrained within a certain measure, and not suffered to grow so as to devour in time the property and maintenance of all other men. If some of them have too little, as doubtless they have, others have too much; and in all orders of men there will ever be such inconveniences and unequal distribution; nor is it possible for public wisdom to remedy the same, or for the public purse to enrich or even to support all that are indigent, or situated lower than they wish, and sometimes deserve. It is more just that

particulars should bear a hard lot, than that, to mend it, society should suffer, and the ballance of society be lost or endangered. It is against all [III-238] reason, and very ungenerous, to seek relief from any scheme which would in time bring all men to seek relief from them. I wish it could be so ordered, that where-ever Religion produce Gain, Gain would never prove to be more considered than Religion.

Sect. XIV.

An inquiry why the Christian Dispensation has, with all its advantages and excellencies, so little mended the World. Whether and how far public Teachers are chargeable with this.

WHY the world has not been more mended by the Christian Dispensation, of itself so much adapted to mend the world, is worth the inquiry of all men, especially of such as are employed to inculcate its precepts upon the minds of all. And here many other inquiries subsequent to this will naturally occur; namely, whether they have ever pursued their own worldly interest more assiduously than suited with their holy profession, and never prostituted religion to serve the pursuits of wealth and power: whether they have ever dispensed with sins, and been even partial to favourite and bountiful sinners, or discouraged and even persecuted conscience, and sincerity, and all holiness that bore not their mark: whether they never claimed an absolving and damning power, and by it brought men to fear them more than God, to be more afraid of offending them than of committing sin, for which they could so easily pronounce pardon: whether they have always manifested that humility, gentleness and benevolence so well becoming such as spoke in the name of Christ: whether they never used the Holy Gospel to warrant their own anger and ambition or avarice, and in the stile of the Gospel enflamed the mad rage of party: whether they have been equally [III-239] diligent to make their followers sincere Christians, as warm zealots, Champions for Christ as Champions for Churchmen: whether they promoted knowledge and all religious and rational inquiries without reserve, and taught truth rather than blind submission, rather than the narrow principles of particular factions: whether they have promoted the great blessings of society, civil and religious Liberty, obedience to equal and fixed Laws rather than to the lawless and unsteady will of man, and have always supported Government, when Governors observed the Laws: and whether men who have a holy profession, if in their conduct they be not holy, can be revered for their profession which they dishonour, or lead men into all righteousness, without being righteous themselves?

THE continual endeavours of so many thousand Teachers in any country, to recommend the beauty and benefit of Religion and Virtue, and to shew the deformity and mischief of evil and immorality, would surely be of vast weight and consequence. But let the number of Teachers be ever so great, small good will ensue, if many exert no endeavours at all, if many do it superficially, like a task which they seem forced to, and not to chuse or delight in.

If they recommend dry and dark speculations, such as are hard to be understood, or if understood, produce no practical duties, and, without mending the heart, only perplex the head; or if they inveigh against such as entertain ideas different from theirs, and provoke people to bitterness towards each other, instead of exhorting them to mutual love and forbearance: If their hearts appear set upon pomp, and gain, and dominion, rather than filled with humility and self-denial, and zeal for the souls of men: If they promote ignorance and slavery, persecution and discord, and shew anger or favour to men, not according as they are wicked or virtuous, but countenance [III-240] their own followers however bad, and hate and distress such as only follow the pure dictates of Conscience: If they darken or pervert the Gospel by vain glosses, by false and selfish comments, and would oblige all men to submit to these their inventions, though directly opposite to the Gospel and all the ends of the Gospel; small is the wonder that mankind are not mended by such depraved instruction. It is indeed wonderful that, bad as they are, they are not still worse, since it is manifest that over a great

part of the earth, and in some of its finest regions, their Instructors are continually deceiving, debasing, blinding, frightening and oppressing them.

IN matters of Religion, neither the Greek Church nor the Roman Church allow their people to retain common sense, nor to forgive it in others. For Religion they are taught gibberish, and contradictions, and dreams, and to hate and damn as Atheists, or Heretics, all who are not so blind, and distracted, and slavish as themselves. Their Teachers even assume to sell them the mercy of God and eternal Salvation, at a price, to absolve them from the blackest guilt for money, and for money to disarm the Almighty of his resentment and vengeance. As long as they can pay, they may sin, and are thus encouraged, nay, warranted in eternal immorality. In the Office of the Datary at Rome, sins are taxed according to their several sizes and qualities, and the greatest as well as the least are cancelled by silver and gold; and for iniquities destructive to society and shocking to nature, such as have wealth may find atonement.

WHERE such or any commutations for sin are allowed and practised, are sins likely to abate, sinners to mend, or Religion to abound, or even to subsist, in any force or purity? I wish nothing like this vile traffic were found in other countries even [III-241] where Popery is abolished. I doubt a good gift to the Altar, that is, to them who minister there, often passes as an expiation for a multitude of sins; and has it never happened that a bounty to the Church has been strangely pressed upon the consciences of timorous and dying people, as what powerfully opened the gates of Paradise, and was a prevailing antidote against future torments?

ONE thing seems to be notoriously true of almost all parties in Religion, that men are not esteemed by them according to their real piety and virtue, but according to their blind adherence and party-zeal; and the most worthless or worst men are often caressed and applauded, whilst the soberest and the best are neglected or decried. Thus we have seen very pious Christians hated and traduced as very bad Churchmen, when very base and very profligate men were extolled as excellent Churchmen.

THE Gentlemen of Port Royal were, for their Learning and Writings, for their Religion and Virtue, an ornament to the learned world as well as to the Kingdom of France: They were even zealously attached to the Romish Religion. But all this merit saved them not from contumely and persecution, because they had defended the eternal laws of Morality and the Gospel against the execrable maxims and casuistry of the Jesuits, who in their voluminous writings had confounded all Morality and Conscience. For this the Gentlemen of Port Royal were represented as Atheists, Heretics, and enemies to the Church, nay, as enemies to the Government, and thence exposed to all injustice, ill usage, and the frowns of power. The like treatment had the divine Archbishop of Cambray, the immortal FENELON. When at the same time, the grossest ignorants, the vilest voluptuaries, the most hot-headed bigots, were [III-242] reckoned excellent Catholics, applauded, and preferred.

WHAT the King of Sardinia has lately done, in taking the education of youth out of the hands of the Jesuits, merits great attention, and is an example to other Princes and States, at least to those of the same communion. It was indeed of high moment, that the publick education should not be directed by an order of men who were continually pursuing an interest directly against the interest of the State; who taught his subjects not so much to reverence the Magistrate, as to reverence Them, not to love or consider the good of the whole, but the good of that Order; who poisoned them with party-maxims destructive of the maxims of society; and instead of instilling the benevolent principles of peace and mutual forbearance, without which all society must be miserable or perish, inspired virulence and eternal hate, and would rather see the State run into ruin and dissolution, than suffer the least variation from their own conceits, however fond, or ridiculous, or wicked. For, it is

notorious, that this is the spirit of the Jesuits. I wish it were not the spirit of several other sects and bigots, especially where their bigotry is animated by a passion for power and riches. It seems the Court at Turin is not much disturbed at the threats of the Reverend Fathers to leave the country, but even frankly offers passports to as many as think fit to go.

No body can forget the extraordinary merit and bitter treatment of the late excellent Dr. CLARK, his able performances in defence of Christianity, and the restless attempts to ruin him as a bad Churchman. The declaration of Father CANAYE the Jesuit to the Marshal D'HOCQUINCOURT, related by St. EVREMONT, was open and instructive. The Marshal had said, that he was formerly a Jansenist, but now for the Jesuits, and could be [III-243] crucified for his Religion, though he knew not why or wherefore. Oh excellent words, blessed motions, says the Jesuit! *be crucified for Religion, yet not know why or wherefore!* what an extraordinary grace, my Lord, has Heaven bestowed upon you? *Estote sicuti infantes: Be as little children: Blessed are the poor in spirit.* The good Father liked the Marshal's zeal the better for being stark blind: so far was he from blaming his ignorance.

WHERE-EVER it is more dangerous to offend the Clergy than to offend God, it is natural for the interest of Religion to decay. For the ignorant and the many, will always incline, nay, probably, be taught to rely more upon Them than upon Him, and to think that if they can but please Them, they cannot displease Him. Where an ill man who conforms, is better used than a good man who dissents, the necessity of being good will not be considered, but the necessity of being conformable, and men will not be so much afraid of sin as of dissenting. When the doing certain actions, which may be done without any devoutness at all, shall yet pass for devotion, many will be apt to think that when they have performed these, they have done all that is required, at least made amends for past iniquities, which they may still cancel, as often as committed, by the like atonement and repetitions, and by a little devotion on one day in the week, calm their conscience about all their failings during the rest.

THUS false zeal is, as it were, a mulct for want of Religion, and passes for Religion; and many other Churchmen besides those of Rome, seem to accept of equivalents in the room of real piety. Were it otherwise, the guides of one sect would love the sober and good men of another sect better than the vicious of their own. They would hate the strictest conformists who wanted virtue, and esteem separatists who had it. But I doubt the constant [III-244] practice is otherwise in most Churches and Sects. So that the name of Religion is used, but the thing, the essence, is often turned into faction and party, and lost in the endless passions of men. They all talk of CHRIST and PAUL, and appeal to them. Perhaps it is well for many that they are not yet called upon by either to make good their appeals. Nay, were CHRIST or PAUL to return to the earth under their former characters, I fear their reception, in many countries, would not be better than it was in Judæa.

THIS Section, as well as the whole Discourse grows too long, though much more might be said. I shall make but one observation more, namely, upon the strange inconsistency which has sometimes appeared in the notions of some great and venerable Doctors about evil and sin; I mean how they could be vehement against peccadillos, against follies and frailties, which were of little consequence, and for which perhaps they had no relish, yet could often, at the same time, go deliberately, nay, zealously, into apparent measures of public oppression, or of public tumults and war; could assist and sanctify the most enormous, the most dreadful, the most complicated and devouring of all sins, those of Tyranny and Rebellion; could declaim terribly against profane swearing, which only hurt him who uttered it, and yet encourage and animate universal Perjury, sometimes in Magistrates, at another time in the people; and be for establishing universal Slavery, or inciting general Revolts, at different times, just as they happened to be pleased or disgusted. For such has been the inconsistency of their behaviour in many countries, and at many times; and, as none have ever proved sorer plagues to righteous Governors, none have been such fell champions for Tyrants. And as to

the abuses of Religion, especially such as were gainful, have they ever appeared willing to reform [III-245] them, or willingly suffered them to be reformed by others? And have not all great and useful Reformations been accomplished by the Laity, and constantly opposed by the public Teachers? Could Religion, the humble and disinterested Religion of the Gospel flourish under such Circumstances, and such Directors?

Sect. XV.

Of Public Spirit, its use and efficacy. How little promoted by public Teachers. Some Considerations upon the importance and character of Public Spirit.

WHILST the public Teachers were so much attached to party and interest, it was no wonder that in their teaching there were many material omissions. One thing of great importance they seem to have almost intirely neglected, I mean the raising and recommending of Public Spirit, so necessary to the prosperity of every Country, and even to the preservation of all. It was this which animated the Roman State, and set the Romans above all other men. But they who instructed the youth of Rome had no by-ends, no detached interests of their own. They inspired such as they taught, with the love of their Country, and of Virtue, and of Honour. The public good, the glory of the State, was the end of all, and to promote it they had learned chearfully to forego every private advantage, nay, life it self. This was a fine spirit, early and constantly infused, and produced men who were a credit and ornament to human nature, and are patterns still for the whole race. Such was the glorious effect of a noble and rational education.

THE Romans began to know the value of Liberty, and to feel a passion for the Public Weal, at an age when others since are conning over words, and [III-246] know little else but to fear the rod, and, without once thinking of their Country, only learn to reverence a particular set of men and names, and heartily to hate all the rest. They are for a course of many years employed about words, and notions, and subtleties; and when they are thus sufficiently disciplined into narrowness of mind, when their heads are well filled with absurd maxims, and unmeaning distinctions, they may be safely trusted abroad in the world, as secure against all free and rational sentiments, and possessed with false ideas of reverence and of aversion, to the end of their lives. When, like the young Romans, they might be shining in assemblies or armies, they are engaged in Logic, and combating in Metaphysics.

MR. LOCKE says, "It is matter of astonishment, that men of quality and parts should suffer themselves to be so far misled by custom, and implicit faith. Reason, if consulted, would advise, that their children's time should be spent in acquiring what might be useful to them when they come to be men, rather than to have their heads stuffed with a deal of trash, a great part whereof they usually never do (it is certain they never need to) think on again as long as they live; and so much as does stick by them, they are only the worse for. This is so well known, that I appeal to parents themselves, who have been at cost to have their young heirs taught it, whether it be not ridiculous for their sons to have any tincture of that sort of learning, when they come abroad into the world; whether any appearance of it would not lessen and disgrace them in company. And that certainly must be an admirable acquisition, and deserves well to make a part in education, which men are ashamed of where they are most concerned to shew their parts and breeding."

[III-247]

In latter ages the cause of public Liberty has been little beholden to the public Teachers, who, instead of instilling and cherishing Public Spirit, without which Liberty can hardly subsist, have too often exerted all their endeavours to extinguish both. Where-ever Slavery is settled, they help too assiduously to confirm it, and where it is not, many of them have appeared diligent agents to introduce it. Was it thus they merited the profound reverence

which they claimed from mankind, thus that they earned the mighty revenues which they enjoyed, for bringing upon men the highest evil which men can suffer, an evil big with every other evil, the dreadful calamity of public Servitude?

FOR the following part of this Section upon Public Spirit, I am obliged to a noble [a] Lord of great knowledge, observation and parts, with all which he himself seems to be much less acquainted, than they are who have the happiness of knowing him; and such is the private manner in which he passes most of his time, that his acquaintance are far from numerous: So natural it is for fine qualifications to be accompanied with great modesty.

“IT is a remark of THUCYDIDES, that bad Laws well executed are better than good Laws not duly observed. It is not enough for a Nation to have a good Constitution, unless both the Governors and People concur in adhering to it with strictness. Abuses once suffered to creep in, so naturally gain ground, so quickly spread, that it requires constant vigilance to prevent their entrance and growth. A jealousy for the Public is a commendable jealousy, and if ever the excess of any passion were justifiable, it would surely be so here. That temper of mind to which we give the name of Public Spirit, is so necessary to all societies, [III-248] that it is next to impossible they should long subsist without it. Indeed, whatever difficulties particular men may find in the exercise of it, all men agree to commend it. Nor can there be better proof of the excellency of any character, than to see the very men who resolve never to deserve it, taking great pains to make the world believe that they have a right to it.

“IN times of the greatest corruption, we do not find, that ever a corrupt man of any sense durst openly avow his principles, or declare that he made his own interest the measure of his public conduct. Quite otherwise: Such men are apt to start at their own picture, and will not forgive those who discover their views, and represent them in proper colours. Such tenderness is prudential; since the discovery of ill designs, is a step towards defeating them. Besides, men are generally more ashamed of vices which shew the weakness of their understanding, than of those which unfold the corruption of their hearts. It is a confession of the meanness of a selfish disposition, that men are thus loth to be thought governed by it. Though they would be glad to reap benefit from their low pursuits, they are ashamed to be detected in contriving them.

“IT therefore looks as if it were equally renouncing the rules of good sense, and every impulse of good nature, to be destitute of regard for the welfare of the Community, or to imagine that any private advantage can stand in competition with the prosperity of the whole. For one nation to grow rich by the spoils of others, is very unjust, yet not always impolitic. But to weaken and impoverish our own Country, is as foolish as it is wicked; since private property must be very insecure, when once that of the public is in danger; nor can it [III-249] be ever more so than when it comes to be deserted by those whose interest it is to preserve it.

“I believe that scarce any Constitution has been overturned by mere accidents or misfortunes. Errors at home may have immediately contributed to national ruin, and foreign invasion brought it on. But a long course of mismanagements, of ambition and rapine, and of evil and loose administration, has generally preceded all great Revolutions; when the leading men made it their only study to supplant, decry, and oppress each other; when the people were on both sides perverted to serve the narrow and corrupt purposes of particular and opposite Leaders, and were animated not by zeal for their Country, but for hostile factions debauching and rending their Country. Whenever cabals, and licentiousness, whenever corruption, and contempt of authority, are the measures of acquiring, and afterwards of supporting power, the consequences must be oppression and injustice, which will naturally introduce disorder and confusion. A Government thus sapped in the foundations, like a tree loosened at the roots, will infallibly be overturned by the first unruly blast, and would in time be overset even by its own weight.

“SOCIETIES can never subsist but through the same means by which they were first instituted. Impartiality and justice, zeal for the Public, and a steady adherence to its interest, are the only national securities. When these are wanting, large Territories, and great Fleets and Armies, will prove but feeble supports; and, in spite of all such splendid appearances, destruction will follow. The several changes of Government in the Grecian Commonwealths, are proofs of this observation. Abuses of power made corruption necessary; corruption produced baseness, luxury, and the extinction [III-250] of all virtue, and these seldom ended but in some kind of Usurpation and Tyranny. Nor were they brought to a sense of their follies until they had thus suffered for them; and, before they thought of returning to their old principles of honesty and Public Spirit, they must be first awakened by the severe lash of some arbitrary power.

“IT was for this integrity of Manners, for this Public Spirit, and inviolable attachment to their Constitution, that the Lacedemonians were so remarkable, as were also the Romans for many ages, and it was through the decay of Public Spirit and national Integrity, that Athens was so near being destroyed in the course of the Peloponnesian War. ALCIBIADES, who had boundless ambition, employed his great wealth in debauching the people, that by their assistance he might raise himself upon the ruin of his antagonist. Hence also the peace concluded between the two nations by Nicias, was broken a few years after it was made; a breach which brought on all those losses abroad, all those distractions at home, which had like to have ended in the utter subjection of the Republic.

“MANY examples of this kind are found in the Roman Historians; but remarkable above all is the story and conduct of CÆSAR, who by debauching the people enslaved the State. Whoever reads TULLY’S Epistles, which are a curious secret History of those times, must be struck with the prodigious dissolution of manners in that once honest and powerful people. Indeed so astonishing was the change, that they were become even past reclaiming. All the smart of their long and heavy misfortunes was not sufficient to bring them back to a sense of their duty to their Country. Insomuch that when by the death of their Dictator, Liberty was once more, as it were, presented to [III-251] them, they wanted the courage, or rather they had not the honesty to accept it.

“IF we inquire into the accounts of latter days, we still find the same causes regularly producing the same effects. What was it that occasioned those long and desperate civil wars which afflicted and almost destroyed the great and powerful Kingdom of France? Was it not private ambition, private interest carried on under public pretences? The preservation of the old Religion, and the modest request of a toleration to the new, were the outward appearances, and very plausible they were. But the unjustifiable ambition of the Princes, and the selfish attachment of their dependents, were the secret springs that produced and prolonged those pernicious disturbances, pernicious not only in weakening and impoverishing the State for the present, but in debauching the principles of all orders of men, and making each side look upon the irregular views of their own party as the only objects of attention and zeal, and thus sacrifice the interest, nay, almost the very being of the Community, to the low and narrow pursuits of furious factions. And when after the short calm of HENRY the fourth’s reign, the public disorders began to revive in the minority of his Successor, and it was found necessary for the support of the Royal Power, to curb and break that of the Grandees, an opportunity was furnished to two succeeding Ministers, for their own security as well as their Master’s, totally to destroy all possibility of opposition. So that putting an end to the old establishment, in its room they set up a new, which, probably, the French Nation will never be able to remove or alter.

“IT is impossible to forget, on this occasion, the great Revolution in a neighbouring Kingdom, not much above half a century ago. Whilst the Nobility [III-252] and Commons were wisely quarrelling about the manner of raising the money requisite for disbanding the

army, two or three Parricides snatched the opportunity, and sold the Liberties of their Country for two hundred and fifty thousand crowns, and changed an elective and limited Monarchy into one hereditary and absolute.

“WHO can reflect on the folly of such conduct, without surprize, when he considers it as sometimes passing upon the world for mighty artifice and cunning? To barter away substances for shadows, to part with a birthright for a mess of pottage, is an absurdity so glaring, that one might as well believe those who do it to be possessed with real honesty, as with any share of wisdom. Contemptible, and poor, and foolish are any terms, even the highest terms, for betraying one’s Country. They who do it, do but teach and encourage others to play the same game upon themselves, where they find by their example it may be done with impunity. What is general dishonesty, but general insecurity? To practise villainy ourselves, is to authorize it in others against us; and it is as natural to lose by it as to gain by it. They who for some profit of their own would defraud mankind of their liberties or fortunes, are like sharpers who intoxicate company with liquor before they play with them. They may succeed in robbing their dupes of their money, but have cause to fear their rage; since by the unjust loss of their money, men are likewise apt to lose all temper.

“WITHOUT peace of mind there can be no such thing as happiness; nor can there be any peace of mind where there is a sense of guilt, which is naturally accompanied with apprehension of danger. Can such as know that they are not to be trusted themselves, ever frankly trust others? They will be apt to think others like themselves, [III-253] true only to self-interest, and so will try to deceive them, as well as despise them for being deceived. Thus endless dishonesty, whether in private or public life, will be attended with endless anxieties, when such as practise it remember that by all their unrighteous acquisitions, all their guilty success, they can only set themselves up as marks to be shot at, and will have the less chance of escaping by being so much exposed.

“GREATNESS acquired by great abilities and Public Spirit, is a noble acquisition, and will be enjoyed with satisfaction, though it cannot always escape obloquy and clamour. But power and pomp purchased by the misery and groans of the people, as it is always detestable, so it is always unsafe. Grandeur, in order to be respected by the Public, must be supported with merit towards the Public. They who love the people, they who consult their interest, and pursue it, are worthy to shine amongst them, nay, worthy to rule them. But greatness without dignity, which arises as well from public benevolence as from capacity, is like Laws without penalties: The weak and simple may perhaps submit to them; but they are despised by those whom they are most wanted to restrain. To be exalted upon the ruins of Liberty and Laws, to rise by force and iniquity, and to assert superiority over men by hurting and oppressing them, is strange infatuation, a dangerous province. It is like being mounted on an unruly horse without bit or bridle; a situation which no wise man would chuse to be in. When SOLON was advised to make use of his interest with his countrymen to seize the supreme rule, he answered wisely, that *Tyranny indeed was a fair spot; but there was no way to come out of it.*

“SUCH as are known not to love their Country, cannot reasonably expect to be safe in it, or that [III-254] enmity to the Public will not meet with public hate, which is the next step to public revenge: and they who are indifferent to every interest but their own, though they may purchase flatterers who have minds as bad as theirs, can never be exempt from one miserable reflection, that most men, and all the best men abhor them, whilst only a few of the worst applaud them; nor can they find much delight from the hollow praises of a tribe of Fawners, when they remember that injured multitudes are at the same time perhaps cursing them.

“THE desire of applause is implanted in human nature, and without doubt intended by the Author of nature as an incitement to virtue and benevolent actions; since by such means only we can be sure of obtaining so pleasing a gratification. We may indeed personate Public

Spirit for a while, yet have none, and for a while pass for virtuous without having Virtue: But the fraud will soon be discovered. No disguises can long hide the false Patriot; and his hypocrisy will but add to his condemnation, when it is no longer able to cover his guilt.

“THERE seems to be one never-failing test whence to distinguish a public spirited Man; even an honest and disinterested heart. This is a sort of constitutional Virtue, and whoever has it is secure against many of the most dangerous temptations. The love of money and of power are violent passions, and few who are strongly possessed with them can safely trust themselves. How naturally does the avaricious man listen to any scheme for filling his coffers? How eagerly does the ambitious man enter into measures for inlargeing his figure and power? How apt are both to flatter themselves that they deserve all that they can possibly possess, that whatever they can grasp [III-255] is but their due, and that therefore they can never grasp too much? Blinded by these favourite inclinations, they can bear nothing that thwarts them; and, as they thus state the account on one side only, the balance must be eternally one way.

“THE true Patriot is content to take the approbation of his own conduct, at least for one part of his reward; neither would he exchange his quiet of mind, or the good wishes of his countrymen, for all the benefit which he could possibly make by justly forfeiting either. He has a general benevolence to the rest of the world, and cannot taste that unnatural happiness of being alone easy amongst the many that are miserable, especially were they to be miserable by his means. Though he may not set up for any romantic pitch of Patriotism, though he do not undertake to devote himself for his Country, like CURTIUS, and may be diffident of the weakness of human nature when put upon such awful trials; yet of one Virtue he is at all times sure, never to sacrifice the Public to his passions or interest, or risque the tranquillity of the State for any views or emoluments of his own.
The END of the DISCOURSES.

Endnotes for Part 2↔

- [a] Negavit quemquam principum scisse quod sibi liceret.
- [a] Si recludantur tyrannorum mentes, posse aspici laniatus et ictus---sævitia, libid[Editor:illegible letters] malis consultis animus dilaceretur.
- [b] Eadem novæ aulæ mala, æquè gravia, non æquè excusata.
- [a] Aliis quidem quum omnia raperent, & rapta retinerent, utsi nihil rapuissent, nihil detinuissent, defuerint omnia. *Plin. Pan.*
- [b] Augeo Principis munus, quum ostendo liberalitati inesse rationem. Ambitio enim, et jactantia, et effusio, et quidvis potius quam liberalitas existimanda est, cui ratio non constat. *Plin. Paneg.*
- [a] Omnia invisere, omnia audire, et undecunque invocatum, slatim velut numen adesse et assistere.
- [b] Un Roy (entant que Roi) n'ai rien proprement sien: il se doit soy même à autrui. La jurisdiction ne se donne point en faveur du jurisdiciant: C'est en faveur du judicie; *says Montagne. He adds, That a superior is created not for his own advantage, but for that of his inferiors: As a Physician is so for the sick, not for himself.*
- [c] Sedem obtinet Principis, ne sit Domino locus.
- [d] Cuncta ferit dum cuncta timet.
- [d] Præcipuum indicium non magni principis, magnos libertos.
- [f] Damnatus culpæ quam alii deliquerant.
- [g] Causa periculi non crimen ullum, sed gloria viri.
- [i] Mihi in animis vestris templa; hæ pulcherrimæ effigies et mansuræ.
- [k] In quos nihil fiammis, nihil senectuti, nihil successoribus liceat.
- [l] Ita formatis principis auribus, ut acerba quæ utilia.
- [a] Par omnibus, et hoc tantum cæteris major quo melior.
- [b] Vita principis censura est, eaque perpetua — non tam imperio nobis opus est, quam exemplo.
- [c] Discimus experimento, fidelissimam custodiam principis, ipsius innocentiam.
- [d] Tempus fuit, et nimium diu fuit, quo alia adversa, alia secunda principi et nobis.
- [e] Neque enim satis amarint bonos Principes, qui malos satis non oderint.
- [a] Non jam per intervalla ac spiramenta temporum, sed continuo et velut uno ictu Rempublica exhaustit.
- [a] Possessionemque honoris usurpati modo a plebe per paucos annos, recuperasse in perpetuum patres viderentur. *LIV.*
- [b] Diversa pari certamine postulantibus.

[c] Quippe illis non iudicium aut veritas, sed tradito more quemcunque principem adulandi, licentia acclamationum, et studiis inanibus.

[a] Inviso semel principe, seu bene seu male facta premunt.

[b] Unum Appium Claudium & legum expertem, & civilis & humani fœderis esse.

[a] A cecy consentirent les Seigneurs de France, pour certaines pensions qui leur furent promises, pour les deniers qu'on leveroit en leurs terres.

[b] Promptissimus quisque sævitia Principis interciderat.

[c] Quanto vita illorum præclarior, tanto horum socordia flagitiosior.

[a] Lord PAGETT.