

JOHN TRENCHARD AND THOMAS
GORDON,
*CATO's LETTERS: or, Essays on Liberty,
Civil and Religious, and Other Important
Subjects (1720, 6th ed. 1755)*

FOUR VOLUMES IN ONE

C A T O ' s
L E T T E R S :

O R,

ESSAYS *on* LIBERTY,
CIVIL and RELIGIOUS,

- And other Important SUBJECTS.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L . I .

The SIXTH EDITION, corrected.



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- Volume 1: November 5, 1720 to June 17, 1721 - facs. PDF
- Volume 2: June 24, 1721 to March 3, 1722 - facs. PDF
- Volume 3: March 10, 1722 to December 1, 1722 - facs. PDF
- Volume 4: December 8, 1722 to December 7, 1723 - facs. PDF

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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CATO'S LETTERS:
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IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
THE SIXTH EDITION, CORRECTED

**DEDICATION TO JOHN MILNER, ESQ; OF GREAT RUSSEL-
STREET BLOOMSBURY. [Gordon]** 

[I-iii]

SIR,

As shy as I know you to be of publick notice and eclat, let me for once draw, if not you, your name at least, from that recess which you value in proportion to the measure of felicity that you derive from it, and to your contempt for the blaze and tumult of publick life: A taste to which I have the pleasure of finding my own so entirely conformable.

Quiet passions and an easy mind constitute happiness; which is never found where these are not, and must cease to be, when these cease to support it. Mighty pomp and retinue, glaring equipages, and the attendance of crowds, are signs, indeed burdens, of greatness, rather than proofs of happiness, which I doubt is least felt where these its appearances are most seen. The principal happiness which they seem to bring, is, that other people think them marks of it; and very imperfect must be that happiness which a man derives not from what he himself feels, but from what another imagines. We may indeed be happy in our own dreams, but can never be happy by the dreams of others.

Happiest of all men, to me, seems the private man; nor can the opinion of ill-judging crowds make him less happy, because they may think others more so. He who can live alone without uneasiness, who can survey his past life with pleasure, who can look back without compunction or shame, forward without fear or rebuke; he, whose every day hath produced some good, at least is passed with innocence; the silent benefactor, the ready and faithful friend; he who is filled with secret delight, because he feels his heart full of benevolence, who finds pleasure in relieving and assisting; the domestic man, perhaps little talked of, perhaps less seen, beloved by his friends, trusted and esteemed by all that know him, often useful to such as know him not, enjoys such high felicity as the wealth of kingdoms and the bounty of kings cannot confer.

Imaginary happiness is a poor amend for the want of real. Nor can a better reason than this be urged against envying any man's grandeur and state, however mighty it be, however easy it appear. A great lot is ever accompanied with many cares; and whoever stands constantly in the eyes of the world, will be apt to feel a constant concern (perhaps even to anxiety) how to become his station and degree, or how to raise it, or how to keep it from sinking. The more he is set to view, the more glaring will be any blot in his character, and the more magnified: Nay, malignant eyes will be seeing blots where there are none; and 'tis certain, that, with all his grandeur, nay by the means and help of his grandeur, it will be always in the power of very little people to mortify him, when he can no ways in return hurt them: And thus the least man may become an overmatch for the greatest.

Men are more upon a level than is generally believed; or rather the advantage is commonly where 'tis least imagined, if we take our estimate where it ought to be taken, from the state and measure of their passions; since from this source their happiness or misery arises. Greatness accompanied with vexations, is worse than an humble state void of anxiety; and he who aims not at an elevated lot, is happier than he, who, having it, fears to lose it.

Happiness is therefore from within just as much as is virtue; and the virtuous man enjoys the most.

If with this goodness of mind he be also a wise man, and a master of his passions; if to good sense he have joined other laudable accomplishments, a competent acquaintance with books, with a thorough knowledge of the world, and of mankind; if he be a benevolent neighbour, a useful member of society, perfectly disinterested, and justly esteemed; if he have served and saved great numbers; if he be daily protecting the innocent, daily watching and restraining the guilty; his happiness must be complete, and all his reflections pleasing.

Who this happy man is, where this amiable character to be found, is what I pretend not to inform you; though I am persuaded that few that know you, will ask that question. My purpose here is, to desire your permission to prefix your name to the following edition of *Cato's Letters*, as well as to what I have said of Mr. Trenchard. He esteemed you as much as one man could another: You lived in a long course of intimacy with him: I have long lived, to my great advantage and pleasure, in an equal course of intimacy with you. You saw most of these papers before they came out, and many of them were first left to your perusal and judgment. You know in a great measure which were his, which were mine; and no man else whosoever was concerned or consulted. You know what motives produced them; how remote such motives were from views of interest; and that whilst they continued in full credit with the publick, they were laid down, purely because it was judged that the publick, after all its terrible convulsions, was again become calm and safe.

You can vouch, that, as these letters were the work of no faction or cabal, nor calculated for any lucrative or ambitious ends, or to serve the purposes of any party whatsoever, but that they attacked falsehood and dishonesty in all shapes and parties, without temporizing with any, but doing justice to all, even to the weakest and most unfashionable, and maintaining the principles of liberty against the practices of most parties; so they were dropped without any sordid composition, and without any consideration, save that already mentioned. They had treated of most of the subjects important to the world, and meddled with publick measures and publick men only in great instances.

You know that in the character which I have here given of Mr. Trenchard, I have set him no higher than his own great abilities and many virtues set him; that his failings were small, his talents extraordinary, his probity equal; and that he was one of the worthiest, one of the ablest, one of the most useful men, that ever any country was blessed withal.

You know all the writings which he ever produced, and saw most of them before they were published. You know that whatever he wrote was occasional, the effect of present thought, and for immediate use, and that he never laid up writings in store; an undertaking quite opposite to his turn; and all his acquaintance knew that he could never submit to such a task.

I mention this last particular in justice to him, that he may not be answerable for any work in which he had no share. Because I have been told that some, who knew nothing, or very little of him, perhaps never saw him, have fathered upon him writings which he never wrote; from no kindness to him, but purely because they were not disposed to let me be the author of a work which found such favourable reception from the world, though it was written several years after that worthy man, my friend, was dead. You, who are one of his executors, and saw all his papers, know, as the other executors perfectly do, that he left no writings at all behind him, but two or three loose papers, once intended for *Cato's Letters*, and afterwards laid aside; which papers of his, with some of mine of the same sort, you have in your hands.

As you have for many years seen whatever I intended for the publick, you know by what intervals I translated Tacitus, and when it was that I wrote the discourses upon that author, since you perused both as I produced them, and the discourses prefixed to the first volume

were not begun till three years after his death; nor those to the second till two years after the former. You can therefore vouch what an absurd falsehood they are guilty of who would ascribe these discourses to him, to whose valuable name I ever have done, I ever shall do, all honour and exact justice. Had he really written and owned that work, 'tis more than probable, that the same slanderers would have attributed it to somebody else.

I should not have once mentioned this ridiculous falsehood, which you and many others know to be a complete one in all its parts, had it not in some measure concerned the publick. Let this detection be the punishment of the little malicious minds who invented it; nor can there be a greater, if they have one honest passion remaining, that of shame or any other, to represent them to themselves in their own miserable colours, lying, envious, and contemptible. It is a lot sufficiently wretched, to be obliged to hate one's self; and to be hardened against just shame and remorse, is almost as bad. Doubtless it were better to have no soul, than to have a lying and malicious one; better not to be, than to be a false and spiteful being.

Unhappily for these undiscerning slanderers, who, whilst they mean me a reproach, make me a compliment, many of the reflections in the discourses upon Tacitus, are illustrated from books that have been written, and from facts that have happened since Mr. Trenchard's death, some of them long since his death.

It may be proper here to mention another mistake which has generally prevailed; that a noble peer of a neighbouring nation, now dead, had a chief, at least a considerable hand in *Cato's Letters*. Though what I have already said in this address to you abundantly contradicts this mistake; yet, for the satisfaction of the world, and for the sake of truth and justice, I here solemnly aver (and you well know what I aver to be strictly true) that this noble person never wrote a line of those letters, nor contributed a thought towards them, nor knew who wrote them, till all the world knew; nor was ever consulted about them before or after, nor ever saw any of them till they were published, except one by accident.

I am far from mentioning thus much as any reflection upon that able and learned nobleman, who professed a friendship for Mr. Trenchard and myself, and was so fond of these letters, that, from his great partiality in speaking of them, many people inferred them to be his own. I must add, that he sent once or twice, or oftener, some papers to be published under Cato's name; but as they were judged too particular, and not to coincide with Cato's design, they were not used. He afterwards published some of them in another form. What heightened the report of his being the author of *Cato's Letters*, was, that there then came forth a public print of his lordship, with a compliment at the bottom to him, as Cato. I have been told, that this was officiously done by Mr. Toland.

My regard for the memory of Mr. Trenchard obliges me to take notice also of some men, who, since his death, have thought fit to have been very intimate with him; though, to my knowledge and yours, he hardly ever conversed with them, and always strove to shun them, such of them especially as he found to be void of veracity.

Let me add, that these letters are still so well received by the publick, that the last edition has been long since sold off and for above three years past it was scarcely possible to find a set of them, unless in publick auctions. I mention this, that the present edition may not seem owing to the frequent quotations made from them in our late party-hostilities. I flatter myself, that, as these papers contain truths and reasons eternally interesting to human society, they will at all times be found seasonable and useful. They have already survived all the clamour and obloquy of party, and indeed are no longer considered as party- writings, but as impartial lessons of liberty and virtue. Nor would it be a small recommendation of them to the world (if the world knew you as well as I know you) that they have ever had your approbation. I am

therefore very proud, upon this publick occasion, to declare, that I have long experienced your faithful friendship; and that I am, with very great and very sincere esteem,

SIR,

Your most faithful and
Most humble servant,

T. GORDON

THE PREFACE ↩

[I-xxi]

The following letters, first printed weekly, and then most of them gathered into collections from time to time, are now brought all together into four volumes. They were begun in November, 1720, with an honest and humane intention, to call for publick justice upon the wicked managers of the late fatal South-Sea scheme; and probably helped to procure it, as far as it was procured; by raising in a nation, almost sunk in despair, a spirit not to be withstood by the arts and wealth of the powerful criminals. They were afterwards carried on, upon various publick and important subjects, for nigh three years (except a few intermissions, which will appear by the dates) with a very high reputation; which all the methods taken to decry and misrepresent them could not abate.

The pleasing or displeasing of any party were none of the ends of these letters, which, as a proof of their impartiality, have pleased and displeased all parties; nor are any writers proper to do justice to every party, but such as are attached to none. No candid man can defend any party in all particulars; because every party does, in some particulars, things which cannot be defended; and therefore that man who goes blindly in all the steps of his party, and vindicates all their proceedings, cannot vindicate himself. It is the base office of a slave, and he who sustains it breathes improperly English air; that of the Tuilleries or the Divan would suit him better.

The strongest treatise upon the liberty of the press could not so well shew its great importance to civil liberty, as the universal good reception of these papers has done. The freedom with which they are written has been encouraged and applauded even by those who, in other instances, are enemies to all freedom. But all men love liberty for themselves; and whoever contends for slavery, would still preserve himself from the effects of it. Pride and interest sway him, and he is only hard-hearted to all the rest of the world.

The patrons of passive obedience would do well to consider this, or allow others to consider it for them. These gentlemen have never failed upon every occasion to shew effectually, that their patience was nothing increased by their principles; and that they always, very candidly and humanely, excluded themselves from the consequences of their own doctrines. Whatever their speculations have been, their practices have strongly preached, that no man will suffer injustice and violence, when he can help himself.

Let us therefore, without regarding the ridiculous, narrow, and dishonest notions of selfish and inconsistent men, who say and do contradictory things, make general liberty the interest and choice, as it is certainly the right of all mankind; and brand those as enemies to human society, who are enemies to equal and impartial liberty. Whenever such men are friends to truth, they are so from anger or chance, and not for her own sake, or for the sake of society.

I am glad, however, that by reading and approving many of *Cato's Letters*, they have been brought to read and approve a general condemnation of their own scheme. It is more than ever they did before; and I am not without hopes, that what they have begun in passion, may end in conviction. Cato is happy, if he has been the means of bringing those men to think for themselves, whose character it has been to let other men think for them: A character, which is the highest shame, and the greatest unhappiness, of a rational being. These papers, having fully opened the principles of liberty and power, and rendered them plain to every understanding, may perhaps have their share in preventing, for the time to come, such storms of zeal for nonsense and falsehood, as have thrown the three kingdoms

more than once into convulsions. I hope they have largely helped to cure and remove those monstrous notions of government, which have been long instilled by the crafty few into the ignorant many.

It was no matter of wonder that these letters should be ill understood, and maliciously applied, by some, who, having no principles of their own, or vile ones, were apt to wrest Cato's papers and principles to favour their own prejudices and base wishes. But for such as have always professed to entertain the same sentiments of government with Cato, and yet have been offended with his sentiments; as this their offence was neither his fault nor intention, I can only be sorry for their sakes, that the principles which they avowed at all times should displease them at any time. I am willing to believe, that it was not the doctrine, but the application, that disobliged them. Nor was Cato answerable for this; themselves made it, and often made it wrong. All candid and well-bred men (if Cato may be reckoned in the number) abhor all attacks upon the persons and private characters of men, and all little stories invented or revived to blacken them. These are cowardly and barbarous practices; the work and ambition of little and malicious minds: Nor wanted he any such low and contemptible artifices to gain readers. He attended only to general reasonings about publick virtue and corruption, unbiassed by pique or favour to any man. In this upright and impartial pursuit he abused no man's person; he courted no man's fortune; he dreaded no man's resentment.

It was a heavy charge upon Cato, which however wanted not vouchers (if they were in earnest) that he has spoken disrespectfully, nay, insolently, of the King. But this charge has been only asserted. If it were in the least true, I should be the first to own that all the clamour raised against him was just upon him. But the papers vindicate themselves; nor was any prince ever treated with more sincere duty and regard, in any publick or private writings, than his present Majesty has been in these. In point of principle and affection, his Majesty never had a better subject than Cato; and if he have any bad ones, they are not of Cato's making. I know that this nation cannot be preserved, if this establishment be destroyed; and I am still persuaded, that nothing tended more to his Majesty's advantage and popularity, or more to the credit of his administration, or more to the security of the subject, than the pursuing with quick and impartial vengeance those men, who were enemies to all men, and to his Majesty the most dangerous of all his enemies; a blot and a curse to the nation, and the authors of such discontents in some, and of such designs in others, as the worst men wanted, and the best men feared.

In answer to those deep politicians, who have been puzzled to know who were meant by Cicero and Brutus: Intending to deal candidly with them, and to put them out of pain and doubt, I assure them, that Cicero and Brutus were meant; that I know no present characters or story that will fit theirs; that these letters were translated for the service of liberty in general; and that neither reproof nor praise was intended by them to any man living. And if these guessing sages are in perplexity about any other passage in Cato's letters, it is ten to one but the same answer will relieve them. There was nothing in those letters analogous to our affairs; but as they are extremely fine, full of virtue and good sense, and the love of mankind, it was thought worth while to put them into English, as a proper entertainment for English readers. This was the utmost and only view; and it was at least an unkind mistake to suppose any other.

In one of Brutus's letters it is said, "We do not dispute about the qualifications of a master; we will have no master." This is far from being stronger than the original: *Nisi forte non de seruitute, sed de conditione serviendi, recusandum est a nobis*. From whence some have inferred, that because Brutus was against having a master, therefore Cato was against having a king: A strange construction, and a wild consequence! As if the translator of Brutus's letters were not to follow the sense of Brutus: Or, as if there were no difference in England between a king and a master, which are just as opposite as king and tyrant. In a

neighbouring country, indeed, they say that their monarch is born master of the kingdom; and I believe they feel it; as they do with a witness in Turkey. But it is not so here: I hope it never will be. We have a king made and limited by the law. Brutus having killed one usurper, was opposing another, overturning by violence all law: Where is the parity, or room for it?

The same defence is to be made for the papers that assert the lawfulness of killing Caesar. It has been a question long debated in the world; though I think it admits of little room for debate; the only arguments to be answered being prejudice and clamour, which are fully answered and exposed in these papers. What is said in them can be only applicable to those who do as Caesar and Brutus did; and can no otherwise affect our free and legal government, than by furnishing real arguments to defend it. The same principle of nature and reason that supported liberty at Rome, must support it here and every where, however the circumstances of adjusting them may vary in different places; as the foundations of tyranny are in all countries, and at all times, essentially the same; namely, too much force in the hands of one man, or of a few unaccountable magistrates, and power without a balance: A sorrowful circumstance for any people to fall into. I hope it is no crime to write against so great an evil. The sum of the question is, whether mankind have a right to be happy, and to oppose their own destruction? And whether any man has a right to make them miserable?

Machiavel puts Caesar upon the same foot with the worst and most detestable tyrants, such as Nabis, Phalaris, and Dionysius. "Nor let any man," says he,

deceive himself with Caesar's reputation, by finding him so exceedingly eminent in history. Those who cried him up, were either corrupted by his fortune, or terrified by his power; for whilst his empire continued, it was never permitted to any man to say any thing against him. Doubtless if writers had had their liberty, they could have said as much of him as of Catiline: And Caesar is much the worst of the two, by how much it is worse to perpetrate a wicked thing, than to design it. And this may be judged by what is said of Brutus his adversary; for, not daring to speak in plain terms of Caesar, by reason of his power, they, by a kind of reverse, magnified his enemy.

He afterwards gives a summary of the doleful waste and crying miseries brought upon Rome and upon mankind by the imperial wolves his successors; and adds, that, by such a recapitulation, "it will appear what mighty obligations Rome and Italy, and the whole world, had to Caesar."

I shall say no more of these papers either in general or particular. I leave the several arguments maintained in them to justify themselves, and cannot help thinking that they are supported by the united force of experience, reason, and nature, it is the interest of mankind that they assert; and it is the interest of mankind that they should be true. The opinion of the world concerning them may be known from hence; that they have had more friends and readers at home and abroad than any paper that ever appeared in it; nor does it lessen their praise, that they have also had more enemies.

Who were the authors of these letters, is now, I believe, pretty well known. It is with the utmost sorrow I say, that one of them is lately dead, and his death is a loss to mankind. To me it is by far the greatest and most shocking that I ever knew; as he was the best friend that I ever had; I may say the first friend. I found great credit and advantage in his friendship, and shall value myself upon it as long as I live. From the moment he knew me, 'till the moment he died, every part of his behaviour to me was a proof of his affection for me. From a perfect stranger to him, and without any other recommendation than a casual coffee-house acquaintance, and his own good opinion, he took me into his favour and care, and into as high a degree of intimacy as ever was shewn by one man to another. This was the more remarkable, and did me the greater honour, for that he was naturally as shy in making

friendships, as he was eminently constant to those which he had already made. His shyness this way was founded upon wise and virtuous considerations. He knew that in a number of friendships, some would prove superficial, some deceitful, some would be neglected; and he never professed a friendship without a sincere intention to be a friend; which he was satisfied a private man could not be to many at once, in cases of exigency and trial. Besides, he had found much baseness from false friends, who, for his best offices, made him vile returns. He considered mutual friends as under mutual obligations, and he would contract no obligation which he was not in earnest to discharge.

This was agreeable to the great sincerity of his soul, which would suffer him to mislead no man into hopes and expectations without grounds. He would let no body depend upon him in vain. The contrary conduct he thought had great cruelty in it, as it was founding confidence upon deceit, and abusing the good faith of those who trusted in us: Hence hypocrisy on one side, as soon as it was discovered, begot hatred on the other, and false friendship ended in sincere enmity: A violence was done to a tender point of morality, and the reputation of him who did it lost and exposed amongst those who thought that he had the most.

He was indeed so tender and exact in his dealings with all sorts of men, that he used to lay his meaning and purposes minutely before them, and scorned to gain any advantage from their mistaking his intentions. He told them what he would and would not do on his part, and what he expected on theirs, with the utmost accuracy and openness. They at least knew the worst; and the only latitude which he reserved to himself was, to be better than his word; but he would let no man hope for what he did not mean. He thought that he never could be too plain with those whom he had to do with; and as men are apt to construe things most in their own favour, he used to foresee and obviate those their partial constructions, and to fix every thing upon full and express terms. He abhorred the misleading of men by artful and equivocal words; and because people are ready to put meanings upon a man's countenance and demeanor, his sincerity extended even to his carriage and manner; and though he was very civil to every body, he ordered it so, that the forms of his civility appeared to mean no more than forms, and could not be mistaken for marks of affection, where he had none: And it is very true, that a man's behaviour may, without one word said, make professions and promises, and he may play the knave by a kind look.

He used to say, and from knowing him long and intimately I could believe him when he said, that he never broke a promise nor an appointment in his life, in any instance where it was practicable to keep them. If he were to make a visit at an hour, or to meet a friend at an hour, he was always there before the hour. He observed the same severe punctuality in every other engagement of his, and had a very ill opinion of such as did not make every promise of every kind a matter of morality and honour. He considered a man's behaviour in smaller matters, as a specimen of what he would do in matters that were greater; and that a principle of faithfulness, or the want of it, would shew itself in little as well as in considerable things; that he who would try your patience in the business of an appointment, would fail you in a business of property; that one who promised at random, and misled you without an intention to mislead you, was a trifling man, and wanted honesty, though he had no treachery, as he who did it with design was a knave; that from what cause soever they deceived you, the deceit was the same, and both were equally to be distrusted; that punctuality or remissness, sincerity or perfidiousness, runs, generally, through the whole of a man's life and actions, and you need only observe his behaviour in one or two, to know his behaviour in all; and a negligent man when he is neglected, has no reason to complain, no more than a false man when he is hated. In many instances, negligence has all the effects of falsehood, and is as far from virtue, though not so near vice.

As Mr. Trenchard was wary and reserved in the choice of his friends, so no small faults, no sudden prejudices nor gusts of humour or passion, could shake their interest in him, or induce him to part with them; nor could any calumnies, however artful, nor the most malicious tales and infusions, however speciously dressed up, lessen his regard for them. In those cases, as in all others, he would see with his own eyes, and have full proof, before he believed or condemned. He knew how easily prejudices and stories are taken up; he knew how apt malice and emulation are to creep into the heart of man, and to canker it; how quickly reports are framed, how suddenly improved; how easily an additional word or circumstance can transform good into evil, and evil into good; and how common it is to add words and circumstances, as well as to create facts. He was aware that too many men are governed by ill nature; that the best are liable to prepossessions and misinformation; and that if we listen to every spiteful tale and insinuation that men are prone to utter concerning one another, no two men in the world could be two days' friends. He therefore always judged for himself, unbiassed by passion or any man's authority; and when he did change, it was demonstration that changed him. He carried his tenderness even to his lowest servants; nor could his steward, who had served him many years, and given him long proof of great integrity and good understanding, ever determine him to turn away a servant, till he had satisfied himself that he ought to be turned away. He was not assured but his steward might be prejudiced, notwithstanding his probity: And the steward has told me, that he never went with any complaint to his master, how necessary soever for him to hear, but he went with some uneasiness and diffidence.

No man ever made greater allowances for human infirmities, and for the errors and follies of men. This was a character which he did not bear; but it is religiously true. He knew what feeble materials human nature was made of; perhaps no man that ever was born knew it better. Mankind lay as it were dissected before him, and he saw all their advantages and deformities, all their weaknesses, passions, defects, and excesses, with prodigious clearness, and could describe them with prodigious force. Man in society, man out of society, was perfectly known and familiar to his great and lively understanding, and stood naked to his eye, divested of all the advantages, supplements, and disguises of art. His reasonings upon this subject, as upon all others, were admirable, beautiful, and full of life.

As to his indulgence to human infirmities, he knew that without it every man would be an unsociable creature to another, since every man living has infirmities; that we must take men as they are, or not at all; that it is but mutual equity to allow others what we want and expect to ourselves; that as good and ill qualities are often blended together, so they often arise out of one another: Thus men of great wit and spirit are often men of strong passion and vehemence; and the first makes amends for the last: Thus great humourists are generally very honest men; and weak men have sometimes great good nature. Upon this foundation no man lived more easy and debonair with his acquaintance, or bore their failings better. Good nature and sincerity was all that he expected of them. But in the number of natural infirmities, he never reckoned falsehood and knavery, to which he gave no quarter. Human weaknesses were invincible; but no man was born a knave: He chooses his own character, and no sincere man can love him.

In his transactions with men, he had a surprising talent at bringing them over to his opinion. His first care was that it was sure, and well-grounded, and important; and then he was a prevailing advocate: He entered into it with all his might; and his might was irresistible. He saw it in its whole extent, with all the reasons and all the difficulties, and could throw both into a thousand surprising lights; and nothing could escape him. This a friend of his used to call bringing heaven and earth into his argument. He had indeed a vast variety of images, a deluge of language, mighty persuasion in his looks, and great natural authority. You saw that he was in earnest; you saw his excellent judgment, and you saw his

upright soul.

He had the same facility in exposing and taking to pieces plausible and deceitful reasonings. This he did with vast quickness and brevity, and with happy turns of ridicule. Many a grave argument, delivered very plausibly and at large, in good and well-sounding language, he has quite defeated with a sensible jest of three words, or a pleasant story not much longer. He had a promptness at repartee, which few men ever equalled, and none ever excelled. He saw, with great suddenness, the strength and weakness of things, their justness or ridicule, and had equal excellence in shewing either.

The quickness of his spirit made him sometimes say things which were ill taken, and for which, upon recollection, he himself was always sorry. But in the midst of his greatest heat I never heard him utter a word that was shocking or dangerous: So great was his judgment, and the guard which he kept over himself and over the natural impetuosity of his temper. He was naturally a warm man; but his wisdom and observation gave him great wariness and circumspection in great affairs; and never was man more for moderate and calm counsels, or more an enemy to rash ones. He had so little of revenge in his temper, that his personal resentment never carried him to hurt any man, or to wish him hurt, unless from other causes he deserved it.

He had an immense fund of natural eloquence, a graceful and persuasive manner, a world of action, and a style strong, clear, figurative, and full of fire. He attended to sense much more than to the expression; and yet his expression was noble. Coming late into the House of Commons, and being but one session there, he could not exert his great talent that way with freedom; but the few speeches which he made were full of excellent strong sense; and he was always heard with much attention and respect. Whether he would have ever come to have spoke there with perfect ease and boldness, time, from which he is now taken away, could only shew. It is certain, in that short space he acquired very high esteem with all sorts of men, and removed many prejudices conceived against him, before he shewed himself in publick. He had been thought a morose and impracticable man, an imputation which nothing but ill-will, or ignorance of his true character, could lay upon him. He was one of the gayest, pleasantest men that ever lived; an enchanting companion, and full of mirth and raillery; familiar and communicative to the last degree; easy, kind-hearted, and utterly free from all grimace and stateliness. He was accessible to all men. No man came more frankly into conviction; no man was more candid in owning his mistakes; no man more ready to do kind and obliging offices. He had not one ambitious thought, nor a crooked one, nor an envious one. He had but one view; to be in the right, and to do good; and he would have heartily joined with any man, or any party of men, to have attained it. If he erred, he erred innocently; for he sincerely walked according to the best light that he had. Is this the character, this the behaviour, of a morose, of an impracticable man? Yet this was the character of Mr. Trenchard, as many great and worthy men, who once believed the contrary, lived to see.

He was cordially in the interest of mankind, and of this nation, and of this government; and never found fault with publick measures, but when he really thought that they were against the publick. According to the views which he had of things, he judged excellently; and often traced attempts and events to their first true sources, however disguised or denied, by the mere force of his own strong understanding. He had an amazing sagacity and compass of thinking; and it was scarce possible to impose appearances upon him for principles: And they who having the same good affections with him, yet sometimes differed in opinion from him, did it often from the difference of their understandings. They saw not so far into the causes and consequences of things: Few men upon earth did; very few. His active and inquisitive mind, full of velocity and penetration, had not the same limits with those of other men: It was all lightning, and dissipated in an instant the doubts and darkness which bewildered the heads of others. In a moment he unravelled the obscurest questions; in a

moment he saw the tendency of things. I could give many undeniable instances, where every jot of the events which he foretold came to pass, and in the manner that he foretold. Without doubt, he was sometimes mistaken; but his mistakes did him no discredit; they arose from no defect in his judgment, and from no sourness of mind.

As he wanted nothing but to see the publick prosper, he emulated no man's greatness; but rejoiced in the publick welfare, whatever hands conducted it. No man ever dreaded publick evils more, or took them more to heart: At one time they had almost broke it. The national confusions, distresses, and despair, which we laboured under a few years ago gave him much anxiety and sorrow, which preyed upon him, and endangered his life so much, that had he staid in town a few days longer, it was more than probable he would never have gone out of it alive. He even dreaded a revolution; and the more, because he saw some easy and secure, who ought to have dreaded it most. This was no riddle to him then, and he fancied that he had lived to see the riddle explained to others.

The personal resentment which he bore to a great man now dead, for personal injuries, had no share in the opposition which he gave to his administration, how natural soever it was to believe that it had. He only considered the publick in that opposition; which he would have gladly dropped, and changed opposition into assistance, without any advantage or regard to himself, if he could have been satisfied that that great man loved his country as well as he loved power. Nor did he ever quarrel with any great man about small considerations. On the contrary, he made great allowances for their errors, for the care of their fortunes and families, and even for their ambition, provided their ambition was honestly directed, and the publick was not degraded or neglected, to satiate their domestick pride. He did not vainly expect from men that perfection and heroism which, he knew, were not to be found in men; and he cared not how much good ministers did to themselves, if by it they hurt not their country. He had two things much at heart; the keeping England out of foreign broils, and paying off the publick debts. He thought that the one depended upon the other, and that the fate and being of the nation depended upon the last; and I believe that few men who think at all, think him mistaken. For a good while before he died he was easier, as to those matters, than I had ever known him. He was pleased with the calm that we were in, and entertained favourable hopes and opinions. Nor is it any discredit to the present administration, that Mr. Trenchard was more partial to it than I ever knew him to any other. In this he sincerely followed his judgment; for it is most certain than he had not one view to himself; nor could any human consideration have withdrawn him from the publick interest. It was hard to mislead him; impossible to corrupt him.

No man was ever more remote from all thoughts of publick employments: He was even determined against them; yet he would never absolutely declare that he would at no time engage in them, because it was barely possible that he might. So nice and severe was his veracity! He had infinite talents for business; a head wonderfully turned for schemes, trains of reasoning, and variety of affairs; extreme promptness, indefatigable industry, a strong memory, mighty dispatch, and great adroitness in applying to the passions of men. This last talent was not generally known to be his: He was thought a positive, uncomplying man; and in matters of right and wrong he was so. But it is as true, that he knew perfectly how mankind were to be dealt with; that he could manage their tempers with great art, and bear with all their humours and weaknesses with great patience. He could reason or rally, be grave or pleasant, with equal success; and make himself extremely agreeable to all sorts of people, without the least departure from his native candour and integrity. As he chiefly loved privacy and a domestick life, he seldom threw himself in the way of popularity; but where-ever he sought it, he had it. One proof of this may be learned from the great town [∗] where he was chosen into Parliament; no man was ever more beloved and admired by any place. He found them full of prejudices against him, and left them full of affection for him. Very different

kinds of men, widely different in principle, agreed in loving him equally; and adore his memory, now he is gone. The few sour men who opposed him there, owed him better things, and themselves no credit by their opposition.

In conversation he was frank, cheerful and familiar, without reserve; and entertaining beyond belief. His head was so clear, ready, and so full of knowledge, that I have often heard him make as strong, fine, and useful discourses at his table, as ever he wrote in his closet; though I think he is in the highest class of writers that have appeared in the world. He had such surprizing images, such a happy way of conceiving things, and of putting words together, as few men upon earth ever had. He talked without the pedantry of a man who loves to hear himself talk, or is fond of applause. He was always excellent company; but the time of the day when he shined most, was for three hours or more after dinner: Towards the evening he was generally subject to indigestions. The time which he chose to think in, was the morning.

He was acceptable company to women. He treated them with great niceness and respect; he abounded in their own chit-chat, and said a world of pleasant things. He was a tender and obliging husband; and indeed had uncommon cause to be so, as he well knew, and has shewn by his will: But he had worthy and generous notions of the kind regard which men owe to women in general, especially to their wives; who, when they are bad, may often thank their husbands. This was a theme that he often enlarged upon with great wisdom. He was very partial to the fair sex, and had a great deal of gallantry in his temper.

He was a friendly neighbour: he studied to live well with every body about him; and took a sensible pleasure in doing good offices. He was an enemy to litigiousness and strife; and, I think, he told me, that he never had a law-suit in his life. He was a kind and generous landlord; he never hurried nor distressed any of his tenants for rent, and made them frequent, and unasked, abatements. There were yearly instances of this. He was exact in performing all his covenants with them, and never forgot any promise that he had made them. Nor did he ever deny any tenant any reasonable favour: But he knew his estate well; they could not easily deceive him: And none but such as did so, or attempted it, were known to complain.

To his servants he was a just and merciful master. Under him they had good usage and plenty; and the worst that they had to apprehend in his service, was now and then a passionate expression. He loved to see cheerful faces about him. He was particularly tender of them in their sickness, and often paid large bills for their cure. For this his compassion and bounty he had almost always ill returns. They thought that every kindness done them, was done for their own sake; that they were of such importance to him, that he could not live without them; and that therefore they were entitled to more wages. He used to observe, that this ingratitude was inseparable from inferior servants, and that they always founded some fresh claim upon every kindness which he did them. From hence he was wont to make many fine observations upon human nature, and particularly upon the nature of the common herd of mankind.

Mr. Trenchard had a liberal education, and was bred to the law; in which, as I have heard some of his contemporaries say, he had made amazing progress. But politicks and the Irish Trust, [*] in which he made a great figure, though very young, took him from the Bar; whither he never had any inclination to return. By the death of an uncle, and his marriage, he was fallen into an easy fortune, with the prospect of a much greater.

He was very knowing, but not learned; that is, he had not read many books. Few books pleased him: Where the matter was not strong, and fine, and laid close together, it could not engage his attention: He out-ran his author, and had much more himself to say upon the subject. He said, that most books were but title pages, and in the first leaf you saw all; that of

many books which were valued, half might be thrown away without losing any thing. He knew well the general history and state of the world, and its geography every where. For a gentleman, he was a good mathematician; he had clear and extensive ideas of the astronomical system, of the power of matter and motion, and of the causes and production of things. He understood perfectly the interest of England in all its branches, and the interest and pretensions of the several great powers in Europe, with the state and general balance of trade every where. Upon these subjects, and upon all others that are of use to mankind, he could discourse with marvellous force and pertinency. Perhaps no man living had thought so much and so variously. He had a busy and a just head, and was master of any subject in an instant. He chiefly studied matters that were of importance to the world; but loved poetry, and things of amusement, when the thoughts were just and witty: And no body enjoyed pleasantries more. He had formerly read the classicks, and always retained many of their beautiful passages, particularly from Horace and Lucretius, and from some of the speeches in Lucan. He admired the fire and freedom of the last; as he did Lucretius for the loftiness of his conceptions: And Horace he had almost all by heart. He had the works of Cicero and Tacitus in high esteem: He was not a little pleased when I set about translating the latter. He thought no author so fit to be read by a free people, like this; as none paints with such wisdom and force the shocking deformities of that sort of consuming government, which has rendered almost the whole earth so thin and wretched.

He had a great contempt for logick, and the learning of the Schools; and used to repeat with much mirth an observation of Dr. Smith, late Bishop of Down, his tutor. The doctor used to say, that “Mr. Trenchard's talent of reasoning was owing to his having been so good a logician”; a character for which he was eminent at the university. The truth was, that his reasoning head made him excel in the subtleties of logick. Reason is a faculty not to be learned, no more than wit and penetration. Having as great natural parts as perhaps any man was ever born with, he wanted none of the shew and assistance of art; and many men, who carry about them mighty magazines of learning and quotation, would have made a poor figure in conversation with Mr. Trenchard. He highly valued learned men, when they had good sense, and made good use of their learning: But mere authorities, and terms, and the lumber of words, were sport to him; and he often made good sport of those who excelled in them. He had endless resources in his own strong and ready understanding, and used to strip such men of their armour of names and distinctions with wonderful liveliness and pleasantry. Having lost all the tackle of their art, they had no aids from nature. False learning, false gravity, and false argument, never encountered a more successful foe. Extraordinary learning and extraordinary wit seldom meet in one man: The velocity of their genius renders men of great wit incapable of that laborious patience necessary to make a man very learned. Cicero and Monsieur Bayle, had both, and so had our Milton and George Buchanan. I could name others; but all that I could mention are only exceptions from a general rule. As to Mr. Trenchard, the character of *Aper*, the Roman orator, suits him so much, that it seems made for him.

Aprum ingenio potius & vi naturae quam institutione & literis famam eloquentiae consecutum—communi eruditione imbutus, contemnebat potius literas quam nesciebat: Ingenium ejus nullis alienarum artium inniti videretur. Dialog. de Oratoribus.

He was not fond of writing; his fault lay far on the other side. He only did it when he thought it necessary. Even in the course of the following letters, he was sometimes several months together without writing one; though, upon the whole, he wrote as many, within about thirty, as I did. He wrote many such as I could not write, and I many such as he would not. But in this edition, to satisfy the curiosity of the publick, I have marked his and my own with the initial letters of our different names at the end of each paper. To him it was owing, to

his conversation and strong way of thinking, and to the protection and instruction which he gave me, that I was capable of writing so many. He was the best tutor that I ever had, and to him I owed more than to the whole world besides. I will add, with the same truth, that, but for me, he never would have engaged in any weekly performance whatsoever. From any third hand there was no assistance whatever. I wanted none while I had him, and he sought none while he had me.

His notions of God were noble and refined; and if he was obnoxious to bigots, it was for thinking more honourably of the deity, and for exposing their stupid, sour, and narrow imaginations about him. There was more instruction in three *extempore* sentences of his upon this subject, than in threescore of their studied sermons. He taught you to love God; they only to dread him. He thought the gospel one continued lesson of mercy and peace; they make it a lasting warrant for contention, severity, and rage. He believed that those men, who found pomp and domination in the self-denying example and precepts of Jesus Christ, were either madmen, or worse—not in earnest; that such as were enemies to liberty of conscience, were enemies to human society, which is a frail thing kept together by mutual necessities and mutual indulgences; and that, in order to reduce the world to one opinion, the whole world must be reduced to one man, and all the rest destroyed.

He saw, with just indignation, the mad, chimerical, selfish, and barbarous tenets maintained by many of the clergy, with the mischievous effects and tendency of these tenets: He saw, as every man that has eyes may, that for every advantage which they have in the world, they are beholden to men and societies; and he thought it downright fraud and impudence, to claim as a gift from God, what all mankind knew was the manifest bounty of men, and the policy of states, or extorted from them; that ecclesiastical jurisdiction and revenues could have no other possible original; that it was a contradiction to all truth, to Christianity, and to all civil government, to allow them any other; that the certain effect of detaching the priesthood from the authority of the civil magistrate, was to enslave the civil magistrate, and all men, to the priesthood; and these claims of the clergy to divine right and independency, raised a combustion, a civil schism in the state (the only schism dangerous to society) made the laity the property or the enemies of the clergy, and taught the clergy avowed ingratitude for every bounty, indulgence, privilege, and advantage, which the laity, or any layman, could bestow upon them; since having all from God, they could consider laymen only as intruders, when laymen meddled with celestial rents, and pretended to give them what God had given them. I am apt to think that from this root of spiritual pride proceeds the too common ingratitude of clergymen to their patrons for very good livings. They think it usurpation in laymen to have church benefices in their gift. Hence their known abhorrence of impropriations; and we all know what they mean, when they find so much precipitancy and so many errors in the Reformation. It was a terrible blow to church dominion, and gave the laity some of their own lands again.

Some will say, that these are only a number of hot-headed men amongst the clergy; and I say, that I mean no other: I only wish that the cool heads may be the majority. That there are many such, I know and congratulate; and I honour with all my heart the many bishops and doctors, who are satisfied with the condition of the clergy, and are friends to conscience and civil liberty; for both which some of them have contended with immortal success.

But whatever offence the high claimers of spiritual dominion gave Mr. Trenchard, he was sincerely for preserving the Established Church, and would have heartily opposed any attempt to alter it. He was against all levelling in church and state, and fearful of trying experiments upon the constitution. He thought that it was already upon a very good balance; and no man was more falsely accused of an intention to pull it down. The establishment was his standard; and he was only for pulling down those who would soar above it, and trample upon it. If he offended churchmen, while he defended the legal church, the blame was not

his. He knew of no authority that they had, but what the laws gave them; nor can they shew any other. The sanctions of a thousand synods, the names and volumes of ten thousand fathers, weigh not one grain in this argument. They are no more rules to us, than the oracles of Delphos, no more than a college of augurs. Acts of Parliament alone constitute and limit our church government, and create our clergy; and upon this article Mr. Trenchard only asserted what they themselves had sworn. Personally he used them with great civility wherever he met them; and he was for depriving them of no part of their dignities and reversions. As to their speculative opinions, when he meddled with them, he thought that he might take the same liberty to differ with them, which they took to differ with one another. For this many of them have treated his name very barbarously, to their own discredit. Laymen can sometimes fight, and be friends again. The officers and soldiers of two opposite camps, if they meet out of the way of battle, can be well-bred and humane to each other, and well-pleased together, though they are to destroy one another next day. But, I know not how it happens, clerical heat does not easily cool; it rarely knows moderation or any bounds, but pursues men to their death; and even after death it pursues them, when they are no longer subject to the laws or cognizance of men. It was not more good policy than it was justice in these angry men, to charge Mr. Trenchard with want of religion; as it is owning that a man may be a most virtuous man, and an excellent member of society, without it. But, as nothing is so irreligious as the want of charity; so nothing is more indiscreet.

As passionate as he was for liberty, he was not for a Commonwealth in England. He neither believed it possible, nor wished for it. He thought that we were better as we were, than any practicable change could make us; and seemed to apprehend, that a neighbouring republick was not far from some violent shock. I wish that he may have been mistaken; but the grounds of his opinion were too plausible.

I have before owned that he was passionate; but he shewed it only in instances where it was not worth while to watch and restrain his temper. In things of moment, or when he had a mind not to be provoked, no man was more sedate and calm. I have often seen him laugh a peevish man out of his peevishness, and without being angry, make others very angry. If he had a mind to dive into any man's designs, in which he was very successful, or meant to gain any end upon him, it was impossible to ruffle him. He was only hasty, when he was inadvertent. There was a rapidity and emotion in his way of talking, which sometimes made him thought warm when he was not. *Etsi vehemens, nondum iratus*; as I think Tully says of himself upon the like occasion. He was likewise apt to give quick answers to impertinent questions, and to mortify men who he thought talked knavishly. Hence chiefly he was called a hot man. Little things sometimes provoked him, but great provocations set him a thinking; and he was capable of bearing great losses, opposition, and disappointments, with signal temper and firmness. He was very merry with those who wrote scurrilously against him, and laughed heartily at what they thought he resented most. Not many days before he died, he diverted himself with a very abuseful book written by a clergyman, and pointed personally at him; by a clergyman highly obliged to his family, and always treated with great friendship by himself.

He had a noble fortune, of which he took such care as a wise man should. He understood husbandry and improvements excellently, and every place where he came was the better for him. But though he was careful to preserve his estate, he was no ways anxious to increase it. He kept a genteel and a plentiful table, and was pleased to see it well filled: He had a great number of servants, and daily employed several tradesmen and many labourers. So that of his whole yearly income he saved little at the year's end, not above two or three hundred pounds. This will appear strange to most people, who generally believed that he saved great sums: But I know what I say, and it is plain from the personal estate which he has left.

As to his family, which I mention last, because it is the last thing upon which a wise man will value himself; it is one of the ancientest in England, and well allied: His ancestors came over with William the Norman; and there has been a good estate in the name ever since. He left no child, and his three sisters are his heirs. I know but one family now remaining of the name, Mr. George Trenchard's, of Dorsetshire, a member of the House of Commons; and I believe the estate in both families is worth near ten thousand pounds a year.

He died of an ulcer in the kidneys, after an illness of five weeks and some days; and he died like a wise man, with great resignation and calmness of spirit, quite free from all false fears or panick terrors, and without one struggle or convulsion. The day before his death he talked to me much and often of an affair which regarded myself; and which, were I to mention it, would shew the great concern and tenderness that he had for me. He died in the fifty-fifth year of his age. I saw him expire, and these hands helped to close his eyes; the saddest office that ever they performed.

In his person he was a strong, well-set man, but of a sickly constitution, and scarce ever in perfect health. He thought too much, and with too much solicitude: This without doubt impaired, and at last wore out, the springs of life: The vigour and activity of his head caused him many bodily disorders, whatever he did, he did intensely; and no man was ever more turned for the *hoc agere*. What Livy says of Cato the Elder, suits Mr. Trenchard extremely; *Versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceres, quodcunque ageret*. He had a manly face, and a fair sanguine complexion; regular features, a look of great good sense, and a lively black eye, so full of fire, that several people have told me that they could not bear to look him in the face. I have heard the same observation made of his father, who, by all accounts, was a gentleman of much wit and spirit.

To conclude: He had extraordinary abilities, extraordinary virtues, and little failings, and these arising from good qualities: He was passionate from the quickness of his parts; and his resentments arose from things which his heart abhorred. I will end his character as Livy does that of Cicero. The words are extremely pertinent:

*Vir magnus, acer, memorabilis fuit, & in cujus laudes exsequendas,
Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit. Fragm. Livii.*

Thus much, I hope, I may be permitted to have said of this great and upright man, and my excellent friend, before the following work; and much more I could have said. His character was as little known, as his name was much. Many sorts of men and causes combined to misrepresent him. Some were provoked by his honest freedom; others emulated his reputation; some traduced him through prejudice, some through folly. But no good man that knew him thoroughly could be his enemy; and what enemies he had, malice, misinformation, or his own virtue, made.

The world has few such men as Mr. Trenchard; and few men in it will be missed so much. His parts, his spirit, and his probity, will be remembered, and perhaps wanted, when the prejudices raised against him will be dead and forgotten with the passions that raised them.



CATO'S LETTERS

[Vol. I.: November 5, 1720 to June 17, 1721]

No. 1. SATURDAY, November 5, 1720.

Reasons to prove that we are in no Danger of losing Gibraltar. [Gordon] ↪

SIR,

As I have heard, with concern, the report of our being in danger of losing Gibraltar, lately revived; so I had no small pleasure to see, in the generality of the people, a just sense of the great importance of that place to the trade and security of England.

All men, in truth, shew their opinion of it, by the fears which they express about it; and if we set aside (as unworthy of mention) a few prostitute hirelings, who go about coffee-houses to drop, as far as they dare, stupid and villainous reasons for giving it up: I say, excepting such a contemptible few, I defy those, who for vile ends, or to make good vile bargains, would gladly have it surrendered, to pick out of all the people of England, one honest, rational, and disinterested man, to concur with them in it.

Thank God, in spite of the folly of parties, and the arts of betrayers, we see in all men a steady, warm and unanimous spirit for the preservation of Gibraltar; and I hope to see shortly the time, when we shall, with the same frankness and unity, exercise our reason and our eyesight in other matters, in which we are at present misled, either by infatuation, or false interest.

There are two things which surprize me in the many apprehensions which we have had about Gibraltar. The first is, the great diffidence manifested by such fears: Men must be far gone in distrust, before they could come to suspect, that their superiors could ever grow so much as indifferent about a place of such consequence to their country; and to suppose them capable of giving it up, is to suppose them capable of giving up Portsmouth, nay, England itself. Such suppositions must therefore be unjust, and the height of ignorance or spleen. Can it be imagined, that men of honour would forfeit their reputation, patriots sacrifice a bulwark of their country, or wise men venture their heads, by such a traitorous, shameful and dangerous step?

But, say some, perhaps it will be suffered to be taken by surprize; and then all the blame will only rest upon some obscure officer, who may easily be given up or kept out of the way, while those who contrived the roguery, and felt the reward of it, will be as loud in their resentments, as others who love their country well enough to grieve for its disgrace or its losses.

I know, indeed, that all this has been said more than once, and some plausible circumstances urged, to shew that it was not absolutely groundless. But, alas, what a poor plot would here be! A farce of treachery and nonsense, visible to the weakest of mankind, and only fit to raise hatred and contempt towards the wretched framers of it. This would be to deal with us as with a nation of idiots, blind and insensible, who can neither see day-light, nor feel injuries, nor return insolent usage. No, no, we are not as yet to be hood-winked by such thin schemes: We can ask, if need were, a few plain questions, which would easily puzzle such feeble politicians; but at present we have no occasion.

All this, however, shews how much we are apt to suspect foul play in this, and many other cases of the like nature; nor shall I now maliciously enquire, to what prevailing cause such distrust is to be ascribed.

Another thing, at which I am apt to wonder, is, that, considering how much our credit is concern'd to clear ourselves from the charge of any base purpose, of being willing that Gibraltar should be given away, we have not yet done it, at least in any publick and satisfactory manner: The mistaken people will say, and have said, that our silence is a confession of our guilt; and that if their censures and suppositions had not been just, it was in our power publickly to have confuted and removed them; neither of which we have done, but suffered them to remain under painful fears, and ourselves under the suspicion of neither regarding their interest, nor their ease, nor our own credit.

Why did you not, say they, tell all the world how much you were wronged, and belied, in a declaration, said to be the Regent's of France, which expressly asserted, that a bargain was made to give away Gibraltar? Why did you not demonstrate, that you were at least as willing to preserve your own towns, as to conquer countries for other people, who are remarkable for doing you as little service as they possibly can? Why did you suffer it to be suggested, with the least colour of probability, that you would rather throw away what was your own, than not procure for foreign allies, at your expence, what was none of theirs? Why do we fight, why conquer, if we must thus condescend to implore the vanquished, graciously to grant peace to us the conquerors, for which we will humbly pay them with part of our dominions? And how came foreign states, most of them slaves, to be more in your favour, than Old England, which is a nursery of freemen?

All these are malicious questions, though I hope groundless; but as they are proposed by many thousands of his Majesty's liege subjects, in a modest and serious way, methinks it would be a seasonable piece of discretion and good policy, to prove them groundless.

For God's sake, let us answer, if we can answer; and if our innocence can be shewn, as no doubt it can, let it be shewn. It will not even be enough, that Gibraltar is never given up, but we ought to purge ourselves from the imputation of ever having entertained so criminal an intention. If we can do this, it will recover us some part of the credit and confidence which we have lost by not doing of it. I therefore hope, and humbly propose, that we may soon see some able and sagacious pen, instead of making panegyrics upon us, make apologies for us.

In the mean time, permit me to give here three unanswerable reasons why Gibraltar cannot either be given up, or taken:

First, because Secretary Grimaldo says it. [*]

Secondly, it would make South-Sea stock fall: And,

Thirdly, and lastly, we have wise and honest governors.

G

No. 2. SATURDAY, November 12, 1720.

The fatal Effects of the South-Sea Scheme, and the Necessity of punishing the Directors.
[Gordon]↩

[I-5]

SIR,

The terrible circumstances of our French neighbours, under the plague in some places, expecting it in others, and dreading it in all, is a loud warning to us, to take all expedients and possible precautions against such a formidable calamity.

We have already had, and still have, a contagion of another sort, more universal, and less merciful, than that at Marseilles: The latter has destroy'd, we are told, about sixty thousand lives; ours has done worse, it has render'd a much greater number of lives miserable, who want but the sickness to finish their calamity; either by rendering it complete, or by putting an end to them and that together.

Indeed, had the alternative been offered us half a year ago, I think it would have been a symptom of wisdom in us to have chosen rather to fall by the hand of God, than by the execrable arts of stock-jobbers: That we are fallen, is a sorrowful truth, not only visible in every face which you meet, but in the destruction of our trade, the glory and riches of our nation, and the livelihood of the poor.

But complaining does not mend the matter; yet what sensible heart can avoid complaining, when he hears his country, a whole country, a potent nation, a nation happy in its climate, in its prince, and in its laws, groaning under mighty evils brought upon it by mean and contemptible hands, and apprehending evils still more mighty? This gives bitterness to a humane spirit, though it suffer not otherwise than by sympathy. Is there no way left of doing ourselves justice, and has the death of our prosperity extinguished all sense of our injuries?

'Tis true, it is both prudent and religious in private persons, to stifle the notions of revenge, and calmly to expect reparation from God and the law: But jealousy and revenge, in a whole people, when they are abused, are laudable and politick virtues; without which they will never thrive, never be esteemed. How far they are to carry their resentments, I do not pronounce: The measures of it must be determined by circumstances; but still keen resentment ought to be shewn, and some punishment, or punishments, inflicted. When the dignity or interest of a nation is at stake, mercy may be cruelty.

To this spirit of jealousy and revenge, was formerly the Roman commonwealth beholden for the long preservation of its liberty; the Venetian commonwealth owes its preservation to the same spirit; and liberty will never subsist long where this spirit is not: For if any crimes against the publick may be committed with impunity, men will be tempted to commit the greatest of all; I mean, that of making themselves masters of the state; and where liberty ends in servitude, it is owing to this neglect. Caesar thought that he might do what he had seen Marius and Sulla do before him, and so enslaved his country: Whereas, had they been hanged, he would, perhaps, never have attempted it.

I bring these examples to prove, that nations should be quick in their resentments, and severe in their judgments. As never nation was more abused than ours has been of late by the dirty race of money-changers; so never nation could with a better grace, with more justice, or greater security, take its full vengeance, than ours can, upon its detested foes. Sometimes the greatness and popularity of the offenders make strict justice unadvisable, because unsafe; but

here it is not so, you may, at present, load every gallows in England with directors and stock-jobbers, without the assistance of a sheriff's guard, or so much as a sigh from an old woman, though accustom'd perhaps to shed tears at the untimely demise of a common felon or murderer. A thousand stock-jobbers, well trussed up, besides the diverting sight, would be a cheap sacrifice to the Manes of trade; it would be one certain expedient to soften the rage of the people; and to convince them that the future direction of their wealth and estates shall be put into the hands of those, who will as effectually study to promote the general benefit and publick good, as others have, lately, most infamously sacrificed both to their own private advantage. Something is certainly due to both the former. The resurrection of honesty and industry can never be hoped for, while this sort of vermin is suffered to crawl about, tainting our air, and putting every thing out of course; subsisting by lies, and practising vile tricks, low in their nature, and mischievous in their consequences.

That a multitude of families are ruined, and suddenly sunk from plentiful circumstances to abject poverty, is affecting and lamentable; though perhaps all owing to their own rash confidence in the management of known knaves: That innocent children, born, as they imagin'd, to fair fortunes, and brought up accordingly, must now want bread, or beg it, is a catastrophe that must pierce every tender heart, and produce pity and tears: But to see one's country labouring under all the sad symptoms of distress, without the violence of war, without the diabolical refinements of able politicians; but purely from the dull cunning of inferior rogues, void of bravery, void of abilities; wretches that would run away in the field, and be despised in assemblies; this is what should turn pity into rage, and grief into vengeance.

For a nation to suffer itself to be ill used, is of dangerous example; whether those that use it ill be its neighbours or its natives. Patience, in this case, invites fresh injuries; and that people, who would not bear many unjust burdens, must not bear one.

A country, as I said above, ought to do itself justice with speed, as well as with vigour: Delay has often rendered a cure impossible in the body politick, as well as in human bodies: By delays, the edge of resentment goes off, and the offender has leisure to fortify himself by new rogueries.

I would therefore have my countrymen take advantage of the humour that they are in, and make a virtue of their present anger. Let them rouse the bold spirit of a free nation; and shew by all lawful and loyal means, that they who always scorned to be the property of tyrants, will not be the prey of stock-jobbers.

G

I am, &c.

No. 3. SATURDAY, November 19, 1720.

The pestilent Conduct of the South-Sea Directors, with the reasonable Prospect of publick Justice. [Gordon] ↩

[I-10]

SIR,

A man robbed in his house, or on the highway, receives from the law all possible satisfaction: He has the restitution of his goods again, where it can be made; he has the life of the offender, if he can be apprehended; and there is a plentiful reward given for every such apprehension. By this salutary method, vengeance is at once taken for the crime committed, and a terrible example made of its author, to prevent its repetition.

The law is the great rule in every country, at least in every free country, by which private property is ascertained, and the publick good, which is the great end of all laws, is secured; and the religious observance of this rule, is what alone makes the difference between good laws, and none. The terror and sanctity of the laws are shewn by the execution of them; and to a contempt of the laws, or to a direct dispensing with them, have been owing most of the shocks and revolutions, that we have, for many ages, sustained in England.

Some laws are, indeed, unwarily made, being procured by passion, craft, or surprize; but such are generally either suffered to wax obsolete, or are repealed, as we have seen in many instances, and may yet see in more.

But I speak here of those laws which have a direct and known tendency to secure to us what we have, and to preserve us what we are: A free people are kept so, by no other means than an equal distribution of property; every man, who has a share of property, having a proportionable share of power; and the first seeds of anarchy (which, for the most part, ends in tyranny) are produced from hence, that some are ungovernably rich, and many more are miserably poor; that is, some are masters of all means of oppression, and others want all the means of self-defence.

What progress we have lately made in England, towards such a blessed state of confusion and misery, by the credulity of the people, throwing their all upon the mercy of base-spirited, hard-hearted villains, mischievously trusted with a power to undo them, is too manifest from the woeful condition that we are in. The ruin is general, and every man has the miserable consolation to see his neighbour undone: For as to that class of ravens, whose wealth has cost the nation its all, as they are manifest enemies to God and man, no man can call them his neighbours: They are rogues of prey, they are stock-jobbers, they are a conspiracy of stock-jobbers! A name which carries along with it such a detestable and deadly image, that it exceeds all human invention to aggravate it; nor can nature, with all her variety and stores, furnish out any thing to illustrate its deformities; nay, it gains visible advantage by the worst comparisons that you can make: Your terror lessens, when you liken them to crocodiles and cannibals, who feed, for hunger, on human bodies.

These monsters, therefore, stand single in the creation: They are stock-jobbers; they have served a whole people as Satan served Job; and so far the Devil is injured, by any analogy that you can make between him and them.

Well; but monsters as they are, what would you do with them? The answer is short and at hand, hang them; for, whatever they deserve, I would have no new tortures invented, nor any new death devised. In this, I think, I shew moderation; let them only be hanged, but hanged

speedily. As to their wealth, as it is the manifest plunder of the people, let it be restored to the people, and let the publick be their heirs; the only method by which the publick is ever like to get millions by them, or indeed any thing.

But, say some, when did you ever see rogues covered with wealth, brought to the axe or the gallows? I own that the example is rare, more is the shame of this nation, which has had such rich temptations, and such frequent opportunities; we have had publick guilt in abundance, God knows, often protected by party, and often by money. Faction on one side, and riches on the other, have, as it were, made a lane for the great criminals to escape. But all these escapes, which are, indeed, our reproach, cannot give any ground to fear a present one.

This nation has formerly been bought and sold; but arts were used to blind the people's eyes, the effects of the treachery were not immediately felt; and we know that the resentment of the vulgar never follows from their understanding, or their reflection, but from their feeling: A pick-pocket may tickle a plain fellow's ear, till he has got his purse; but if he feel it going, he will knock the thief down.

We have felt our pockets picked, and we know who have done it: vengeance abides them.

I am told, that some of them have the face to pretend, that they ought not to be put to death; but we hope that the legislature will effectually convince them, that this their partiality to themselves is groundless: All their hopes of safety must consist in their money; and without question, they will try to make the wages of their villainy protect their villainy. But I cannot see how any sums can save them; for as they have robbed and cheated all men, except their accomplices, so all men are concerned to see justice done to themselves; and if the ordinary channels of justice could be stopped by bags of money, or by partnership in original guilt, the enraged, the abused people, might be prompted by their uppermost passion, and having their resentment heightened by disappointment, might, it is to be feared, have recourse to extraordinary ways; ways that are often successful, tho' never justifiable.

Here are no parties in this case to disguise truth, and obstruct justice; the calamity is general, so is the resentment: All are sufferers, all will be prosecutors. The cry for justice is loud and united; if it be balked, I can prophesy no good from so cruel an omission.

If this mighty, this destructive guilt, were to find impunity, nothing remains, but that every villain of a daring and avaricious spirit may grow a great rogue, in order to be a great man. When a people can no longer expect redress of publick and heavy evils, nor satisfaction for publick and bitter injuries, hideous is the prospect which they have before them. If they will tamely suffer a fall from plenty to beggary, they may soon expect another, and a worse, from that to slavery: But I hope better things of England.

I have before my eyes a wise and beneficent prince, a generous and publick-spirited Parliament, an able and disinterested ministry; all contending with each other for the wealth, the glory, the liberty of their country: And I have before my eyes a brave and honest people, lovers of trade and industry, free of their money, and well-deserving of the legislature, passionate for liberty, and haters of chains; but deluded, drained of their money, and abused beyond patience, beyond expression, by mean sharpers, that swagger in the plunder of their country.

Where therefore there is so much capacity, and there are so many good dispositions to help us on one side; such loud and melancholy calls, for that help on another side; such open, such execrable, such publick crimes, from a third quarter; we may hope every thing from the speedy meeting of the King and Parliament. They are our protectors, and we trust that they do not bear the sword in vain.

I doubt not but many schemes will be laid before them, some of them designed for a source of new rogueries, and to prevent enquiries into the old ones. It shall be the business therefore of this paper, to watch and examine such schemes; and to condemn them, or recommend them, just as they deserve.

I have, you see, taken the guilt of our traitors for granted, as I think all men do: But because they shall have all fair play, I undertake hereafter, if it be found necessary, to prove it by an induction of particulars.

G

I am, &c.

No. 4. SATURDAY, November 26, 1720.

Against false Methods of restoring Publick Credit. [Gordon] ↩

[I-15]

SIR,

All men are now taught, by miserable experience, that the project of the South-Sea, through the hard-hearted knavery of some, who have been in the direction of it, and through the folly or rather distraction of the people, has not answered the good and wise ends designed by the Parliament; but instead of that, has ruined thousands of innocent and well-meaning people, to glut harpies and publick robbers with millions: Unhappy fate of poor England, worthy of a better! For this, trade has been neglected: For this, industry discouraged: For this, credit undone; and all, that stock-jobbers might make fortunes, and small sharpers grow mighty men.

Every one, therefore, seems to agree, that something is necessary to be done, in a legal way, to restore, once more, our publick credit. But it is hoped, we are far from consenting, that any thing ought to be done to repair the losses, occasioned by folly and covetousness, out of the estates of those, who always foresaw, who always opposed this mighty mischief; much less at the further expence of the honour and trade of the nation.

To set this matter in a due light, it is necessary to enquire what is meant by the publick credit of the nation.

First, credit may be said to run high, when the commodities of a nation find a ready vent, and are sold at a good price; and when dealers may be safely trusted with them, upon reasonable assurance of being paid.

Secondly, when lands and houses find ready purchasers; and when money is to be borrowed at low interest, in order to carry on trade and manufacture, at such rates, as may enable us to undersell our neighbours.

Thirdly, when people think it safe and advantageous to venture large stocks in trade and dealing, and do not lock up their money in chests, or hide it under-ground. And,

Fourthly, when notes, mortgages, and publick and private security will pass for money, or easily procure money, by selling for as much silver or gold as they are security for; which can never happen, but upon a presumption that the same money may be had for them again.

In all these cases, 'tis abundantly the interest of a nation, to promote credit and mutual confidence; and the only possible way effectually to do this, is to maintain publick honour and honesty; to provide ready remedies for private injustice and oppression; to protect the innocent and helpless from being destroyed by fraud and rapine.

But national credit can never be supported by lending money without security, or drawing in other people to do so; by raising stocks and commodities by artifice and fraud, to unnatural and imaginary values; and consequently, delivering up helpless women and orphans, with the ignorant and unwary, but industrious subject, to be devoured by pick-pockets and stock-jobbers; a sort of vermin that are bred and nourished in the corruption of the state.

This is a method, which, instead of preserving publick credit, destroys all property; turns the stock and wealth of a nation out of its proper channels; and, instead of nourishing the body-politick, produces only ulcers, eruptions, and often epidemical plague-sores: It starves

the poor, destroys manufactures, ruins our navigation, and raises insurrections, &c.

The first loss is always the least; one half of the nation is ruined already; I hope we may learn wit from our misfortunes, and save the other half: In order to this, we may expect, that no new projects will be countenanced or received, which have any tendency to prejudice trade, or which cause monopolies, or set up exclusive companies; and that no privileges or advantages be granted, for which ready money might be got.

Some people have the assurance to publish it, for example, that a certain set of stock-jobbers, whose faith and modesty are now well known and felt, expect, among other gifts from the publick, that the island of St. Christophers should be given them, as a further expedient to get more wealth to themselves, and leave the nation none. Now, St. Christophers is worth three hundred thousand pounds sterling, and will yield so much: So that to present them with this island, would be just making them a present of three hundred thousand pounds; a sum almost sufficient to make the fortune of an under-South-Sea clerk; but such a sum as this poor nation cannot at present spare.

I hope, therefore, that it will no longer be impudently alledged, that by parting with such gifts, we lose nothing; since that alone is worth nothing, for which nothing can be got. But the case is otherwise here; and from the nature of our publick gaming, and the spirit of the worthy sharpers who direct it, I dare pronounce before-hand, that every scheme which they themselves propose, to make their bubble and their roguery thrive again, will still be built upon the farther expence, upon the farther loss and misery of these unhappy nations.

If our money be gone, thank God, our eyes are left: Sharpened by experience and adversities we can see through disguises, and will be no more amused with moon-shine.

The nation and Parliament have been abused, and they will undoubtedly be revenged; they will not be put off with dark juggling, with knavish projects, to stifle resentments, and divert due vengeance: There is no attending to any new schemes, till the publick robbers are punished, with whom there can never be any accommodation.

To begin then, in the first place, with the criminals, will shew that we are in earnest champions for honesty, for trade, for the nation, all oppressed by money-leaches. All other remedies will be mountebank remedies: It would be madness to concert new schemes, liable to new abuses, without first doing justice to the abusers of the old; impunity for past crimes is a warrant to commit more, especially when they are gainful.

Such mighty mischiefs as these men have done, will be but meanly atoned for by such infamous lives, unless their estates be also confiscated; and even these, great as they are, will repair but part of our misfortunes. But what we can have of them, let us have; their necks and their money.

To begin with any other project, they will take for a confession, that there is a design to save them; and to what that must be owing, we all know: What farther evils it may produce, may even surpass our fears, though already terribly great; but a method of justice presently entered upon, and impartially carried through, will give us patience under our burdens, banish all our fears, give credit to the publick proceedings, and restore hope to the almost despairing people.

G

I am, &c.

No. 5. SATURDAY, December 3, 1720.

A further Call for Vengeance upon the South-Sea Plunderers; with a Caution against false Patriots. [Gordon] ↩

[I-20]

SIR,

This great nation, undone by despicable stock-jobbers and their abettors, has hitherto quietly groaned under the merciless hands of its pillagers, and lived for some months upon the pure hopes of redress. We looked towards the Parliament: His Majesty and his ministry being absent, and busied with the affairs of this kingdom abroad, in the glorious aims of settling the peace of Europe, in strengthening the Protestant interest.

The first part of our hopes is now almost accomplished, the Parliament are just upon meeting; and never, sure, did ever session open with greater expectation, or with more to do: Every thing is turned topsy-turvy; and the nation, thrown into convulsions, is waiting for the healing hand of its representatives.

Many expedients will, no doubt, be offered without doors; calculated, in appearance, to improve the stock, but, in reality, designed to save the directors. This is to begin at the wrong end. To pretend to form schemes for the increasing of credit, before the destroyers, the cannibals of credit, are honestly and openly hung up to its manes, is, in some sort, to confess, that we had our instructions and politicks from the criminals themselves, and our best and only reasons out of their purses.

Or if we be not thus wicked, we should, at best, be miserably weak to fall into such a preposterous method; and whether great and general calamities have their root in roguery or folly, is all one to a nation.

In spite of all the remedies that can be applied, multitudes will still remain undone beyond all remedy: Nay, for aught I can see, there is no practical remedy at all for what is past; so effectual has been the roguery on one side, so rivetted is the ruin on the other.

All, therefore, that seems to me to be left, even to the united wisdom of Great Britain, is the cure of prevention, to stop the progress of the contagion, to take care that those who have already suffered, shall suffer no more, nor make new sufferers: It is certain, that all men have suffered in one sense or other, the criminals excepted. It is hoped that the miserable people will now be honoured with their good company; and that the box on the ear, which wantonly began from them, will in good earnest be returned to them, and end with them. It is some consolation to the inhabitants of a village, who have been bit all round by a mad dog, to see the instrument of the poison, and the author of their pain and danger, honestly hung up, or knocked on the head.

The prevailing woe which has long raged, and still sits hard and heavy upon us, has certainly some authors; the directors are generally taken to be these authors; and if they be duly and publickly punished, they will continue to be taken for the only authors. But if there be nothing done to them, or nothing effectually done, we shall naturally look farther, and make bold to know, that though they have been rogues, yet that others had been greater than they; that others have directed the directors, and were partners in the spoil.

But if they stand single, and are found the only and original plunderers of their country, they will infallibly be given up to publick and crying vengeance; not only by the rules of guilt, but of good policy. A more popular thing cannot be done, nor indeed so popular a thing. The blessings of the people, and the universal affections of Great Britain, will be some of the rewards attending upon those who will be the generous authors of publick justice upon the detestable authors of publick and intense misery.

I will never suppose that any men, or even one man in any publick station, did by any means join with stock-jobbers to undo their country; much less enabled stock-jobbers, to undo their country, and supported them while they were about it. It would be melancholy and terrible, indeed, to imagine that any publick men, at least, any man concerned in the finances, or set over any part of the publick money, by which publick credit is circulated and sustained, should, in defiance of his publick trust, put himself at the head of a conspiracy of stock-jobbers, who were, with merciless and unclean hands, rifling the publick itself, engrossing all its wealth, and destroying at once all publick and private faith.

Such unprecedented treachery, such over-grown guilt, can never be supposed. Our corruptions cannot be yet become so bold and bare-faced, nor we so tame. The thing therefore being so very monstrous, must be impossible, whatsoever suggestions there may be to the contrary; which, were they true, could not fail of calling down double and conspicuous punishment upon such a Verres.

As to those who lately encouraged the scheme, out of an honest purpose to relieve the publick, and pay off its debts, they ought, and no doubt will be the first and the most active to revenge the publick upon those, who, instead of relieving it, have brought the publick into such doleful and dying distress.

By this, they will farther evince the honesty of that purpose, merit still more to conduct our affairs; and their services will undoubtedly be remembered by the honest freeholders of England, at a proper season, to their advantage: Our eyes are upon them, our confidence is in them, and we wish them good success in this great trial of integrity and publick spirit.

I foresee that there will be many loud in their call for publick justice, and yet be the first to prevent it. Their avarice will arm their tongues with zeal, and a proper present disarm it of its eloquence. However, the outside of publick spirit will still be kept on; they will be sure to cry out to the last for punishment, for severe punishment; but they will be as sure to find fault with every expedient proposed for inflicting it. I could name some worthy patriots, of many words, and great weight, who will act this farce rarely. It will not be the first time. What is human life, but a masquerade: And what is civil society, but a mock-alliance between hypocrisy and credulity?

Magna & misera civitas, eodem anno tantas injurias tantumque; pudorem passa, inter Vineos, Fabios, Icelos, Asiaticos, varia & pudenda sorte agebat; donec successere Mutianus, & Marcellus, & magis alii homines quam alii mores.

These are the words of a great ancient, signal for his wisdom and strong observations. Had he lived now, and written in English, he would have written thus:

Oh London! Oh England! Oh my country! How great! And yet how miserable! What reproach, what calamities, what ruin, hast thou sustained? Sustained in the space of one short year; and less than a year! Sustained from the dregs of human kind! From fellows, vile in their original; and as to their spirit, slaves! What opprobrious delusions, what deadly revolutions, hast thou suffered to be brought upon thee, by the ignoble names and servile hands of B — — t, L — — b — — t, H — — h, and the like scum of the vulgar! And after all this, art thou not weary, O my country! of thy own shame? Not yet satiated with

devastation and havock? And wilt thou yet again try the old knavery, managed
by new knaves?

G

I am, &c.

No. 6. SATURDAY, December 10, 1720.

How easily the People are bubbled by Deceivers. Further Caution against deceitful Remedies for the publick Sufferings from the wicked Execution of the South-Sea Scheme.
[Gordon]↩

[I-25]

SIR,

No experience or sufferings can cure the world of its credulity. It has been a bubble from the beginning; nor is it a bit wiser for this discovery, but still runs into old snares, if they have but new names, often whether they have or no.

Self-love beguiles men into false hopes, and they will venture to incur a hundred probable evils, to catch one possible good; nay, they run frequently into distracting pains and expences, to gain advantages which are purely imaginary, and utterly impossible.

Were the passions properly balanced, men would act rationally; but by suffering one passion to get the better of all the rest, they act madly or ridiculously.

Our prevailing passions in England, of late, have been hope, avarice, and ambition; which have had such a headlong force upon the people, that they are become wretched and poor, by a ravenous appetite to grow great and rich. Our fear and caution were postponed; and by a sanguine struggle for what we had not, we lost what we had. Could such courage be inspired by stock-jobbing? A cowardly science of mean tricks and lies!

Every adventurer in this mighty lottery foresaw that many must be losers, and that what was got by one must be lost by another; but every man hoped that fate would be kinder to him in particular, than to a thousand others; and so this mad hope became general, as are the calamities which it has produced.

This shews the little power that reason and truth have over the passions of men, when they run high. In the late revolution in the Alley, figures and demonstration would have told them, and the directors could have told them, that it was phrenzy; that they were pursuing gilded clouds, the composition of vapour and a little sunshine; both fleeting apparitions! Common sense could have told them, that credit is the most uncertain and most fluctuating thing in the world, especially when it is applied to stock-jobbing; that it had long before been exalted higher than it could well stand, even before it was come to twenty above par; and therefore always tottered, and was always tumbling down at every little accident and rumour. A story of a Spanish frigate, or of a few thieves in the dark dens in the Highlands, or the sickness of a foreign prince, or the saying of a broker in a coffee-house; all, or any of these contemptible causes were able to reduce that same credit into a very slender figure, and sometimes within her old bounds: But particularly, they might have seen, that it was now mounted to such an outrageous height, as all the silver and gold in Europe could not support; and therefore, when people came in any considerable number to sell (and to sell was the whole end of their buying), it would have a dreadful fall, even to the crushing of the nation. This has since dolefully happened: Our hopes, which were our ruin, are gone; and now we behold nothing but the face of the mourner.

But in spite of this mischief, produced by credulity, by manifest and ill-grounded credulity, it is much to be feared that some little art and big promises would make us repeat it, and grow mad again. This seems evident, not only from the folly and feebleness of human nature, ever the prey of craft, and ever caught with shadows; but from our endless gaping

after new projects, and our eagerness to run into them. We have been bruised in a mortar, but we are not wiser; while one ruin is yet upon us, we are panting after another, perhaps worked up by the same hands, or by other hands with the same views.

O the weakness and folly of man! It is like a whirlpool, which destroys and drowns not by halves, but when a part is drawn in, the whole follows.

Surely the pleasure is as great,
Of being cheated, as to cheat!

Else men would not be such dupes, as every where they are. Whoever would catch mankind, has nothing to do, but to throw out a bait to their passions, and infallibly they are his property. This secret is well known to corrupt courts, who flatter or frighten their obeying believing vassals into all the excesses of misery and obeisance. By this, standing armies have been maintained; by this, wild wars have been waged; by this, an idle, expensive, absurd, and cruel popish hierarchy has been supported.

Once more, O wretched man! Thou willing instrument of thy own bondage and delusion; even mountebanks know this secret of cajoling thee, and picking thy pocket; nay, worse than mountebanks, stock-jobbers know it.

When a people are undone, it is some consolation to reflect, that they had no hand in their own ruin, or did all that they could to prevent it, by the best counsels that they could take, or by the bravest defence that they could make. But alas, poor England! thou hast not that consolation: Thou hast not fallen by able traitors; thou art not the victim of deep design, or artful treason; nor art thou the price of victory in the field; neither art thou out-witted by the subtle dealers in mystery and distinction, nor in this instance deceived by their false alarms.

No, we have no such palliating reflection to reconcile us to our misery, or to abate its pangs: To our deathless shame, we are the conquest, the purchase of stock-jobbers. The British lions crouch to a nest of owls! Can we survive the remembrance without revenge?

But all this is complaining, will some say; and we want remedies, rather than complaints: To bewail our calamities, is indeed natural; but to extricate ourselves out of them, is necessary. Here are two hundred millions of imaginary property lost, and at least twenty millions of real property plundered from the honest and industrious, and given to sharpers and pick-pockets: Shall these rooks be suffered to enjoy it? And shall the bubbles be redressed out of other men's estates, no ways chargeable with the mischief? Or must we prostitute the publick honour of the nation to draw in other people (no way concerned) to take the bold bargains of rash men and dupes off their hands? But if none of these methods be taken, our cullies must sit down with their loss, or the traitors be forced to disgorge.

If we make new schemes, or diversify the old, till doom's-day, there will be no paying twenty millions without twenty millions, or without what is equivalent to twenty millions; which will be the same thing to the nation as the parting with twenty millions.

The payment therefore will either be a real payment or a sham payment; and in this case, if *caveat emptor* (let the buyer look to it) be a good general rule in the business of bargains and sale, it will be a good rule here too.

If we have any state chemists, who have art enough to make millions evaporate into smoke; yet I must beg leave to doubt their skill at consolidating smoke into gold.

I hope that I shall not be understood, by what I have said, to oppose an attempt to redeem us out of our present wretched condition. On the contrary, I shall be the first to vote that man a statue of gold, who can strike out an honest and skilful expedient for our recovery, which I

own is far past my own skill: I am no candidate for the golden statue.

By all this, I would only caution my countrymen not to be caught again; let them beware of new snares. As to the losers, they have not a great deal to expect; and I can say no more to them here, than that in the countries where the plague rages, the preservation of the whole is the principal care; the infected are, for the most part, left to take care of themselves; and I never heard it suggested, that nine millions of people ought to be exposed to the mortal contagion of that distemper, to preserve a few individuals.

G

I am, &c.

No. 7. SATURDAY, December 17, 1720.

Further Cautions about new Schemes for publick Redress. [Gordon] ↩

[I-30]

SIR,

Beware of the step, will be allowed by all men, who have any skill in human affairs, to be a commendable caution in all proceedings of moment. In how many instances do we see, that things which begin plausibly, end tragically? People have been often enslaved by princes created by themselves for their protection, often butchered by armies raised by themselves for their defence. The late French King, whenever he was going to shed the blood of his people in any wanton war, though undertaken to gratify his lust of power, or to exalt his own house, never failed to let them know, in an edict made on purpose, that it was all for their good and prosperity; that is, they were to suffer slaughter abroad, oppression and famine at home, purely for their own advantage and felicity.

General propositions are, for the most part, dangerous, and intended to support consequences, which, at first view, they do not seem to mean and imply. They are, therefore, generally plausible in appearance, to catch consent; from which consent, when it is once got, advantages are taken, which were not foreseen; and fresh articles are added, which were not known to have been designed.

In the late long war with France, what was more desirable, what more plausible, than peace? A blessing so universally understood to be one, that the lowest vulgar wanted no words nor persuasions to know its excellency! And when we were insulted with this question, What, will you not treat? To have said, No, would have been an answer so invidious, that scarce any man durst make it; yet all wise men then knew, that to consent to a treaty at that time with France, considering the persons and their interests who were to manage it, was to consent to a conspiracy against England in particular, and to plot against all Europe in general: We were stunned with the word peace; nor could we stand it, though we knew it was hatching treason. In short, to treat, as soft a phrase as it was, signified neither more nor less, than to give to old Lewis his wicked will of all Europe, and to the Tories their Pretender.

Take another instance. In the present Spanish war, which, we are assured, wants nothing but a form to conclude it, we cannot forget the loud attestations that were every where given us, that to declare war was sufficient alone to end the war, and to frighten the Spaniards into a peace: And who, among us, would not willingly be at the expence of a piece of paper, and of the herald's lungs, to scare a turbulent and enterprizing court, as was that of Philip, into moderation and quietness? But the obstinacy of Spain, the length of that war, our great charge in men and money to support it, and the condition of our fleet, worn in the service of our allies, or eaten by worms in the Mediterranean, are all sufficient lessons to us, how little we ought to have trusted to such assurances, or to the word of those that gave them.

Take a third instance. Upon the establishing of the present East-India Company, it was reasonably urged, that such a company would be no other than a confederacy of cunning fellows, against fair and general trading, by monopolizing to a few the sole traffick and riches of a great continent. To which it was answered, that there was no such design; but that every man who would subscribe his name in their books, and comply with some easy conditions, would be frankly admitted to share in their trade. But this was all hypocrisy or lying; for no sooner had the projectors by such petty pretences to publick honesty, got the better of

opposition, and cooked up their project, but it was found that their trade was impracticable to all but themselves: Every trader was obliged to come into the joint-stock; and all attempts since, for the publick good, have proved ineffectual against so formidable a society.

We have a fourth instance from the first institution of the South-Sea. It was at first pretended, that every proprietor was to have six per cent for his money, without trouble or deductions; and need not engage in the trade, unless he chose it. This drew in a great multitude to vouch for the scheme, and encourage it; but in passing the bill, it was found that the crafty managers had lopt off one per cent to be applied, as they pretended, to carry on the trade of the company, and all were obliged to join in the chimerical Asiento; by which they have since pillaged the proprietors of a million and a half. *See the vast advantage of losing by trade!* A secret well known to the directors!

The fifth instance may be taken from the same South-Sea. What a rare sugar-plumb to the nation was a scheme so finely calculated to pay off the nation's debts! What a tempting bait was here! Even those who saw whither it mischievously tended, and perceived the deceitful hook under it, could not stand the scorn and rebukes of the many, who swallowed it without seeing it. What fatal devastation and poverty it has since produced, by the unparalleled treachery of the directors, and some that are worse than they, the miserable people feel much more sensibly than I can express, pierced as they are with the keen arrows of merciless villainy, and unrelenting distress. We have undone ourselves to pay our debts, and our debts are not paid. What shall I say? We had once bread, money, and publick faith: But now! What remains to us? I cannot answer. Our grief, our folly, our losses, our dishonour, our cruel usage, are too big for words.

I have said so much, to prove how wary we ought to be in going into new schemes. We ought at least to know the whole of them, before we consent to a part. It will also behoove us to have an eye to the quarter from whence they come; whether they be directors, or their masters, and confederates; or men of fair and upright characters, whose souls are honest, and their hands clean. As to those who are known to have promoted the mighty cheat, and the ruin of their country; their infamy is so glaring, that, since they will not have modesty and remorse enough to hold their tongues, and to forbear meddling with the concerns of a people beggared by them, we ought to mind no more what they say, than the judge did the house-breaker, who, upon his trial, told his lordship, that he would swear the peace against him, for putting him in fear of his life.

The same may be said of those that are fallen in with the guilty, and unexpectedly speak the same note. We guess at their motives. The powerful getters would save themselves, by letting others get as much; and perhaps are glad to divide their gains, to escape punishment.

If any man would be the unsuspected and fair author of a new project, he can recommend it and himself no better, than by shewing it to be honestly consistent with the punishment of our million knaves, the blood-suckers of England. A new scheme, and an inquisition into the management of the old one, may both successfully go on at the same time; and they who say that they cannot, do but own that they are afraid they should. Are they conscious to themselves, that the directors may hope to escape part of their punishment, by fathering upon others a great share of their guilt, or rather the power of being guilty?

What mean some men by saying, we ought to extinguish the fire, before we inquire into the incendiaries? Are they some of these? Or did they furnish out brands to the rest? Or would they give them time to run away? The truth is, the house is already burned down, many are burned to death, all are miserably scorched: The flame has in a manner wasted itself; but those that talk thus, seem eager to revive it, by new devices to stir the embers. All that we can now do, is to build the house again, if we can; and hang those that fired it, which

we are sure we ought. Besides, we have long known who did it; they have been taken in the fact at noon-day, and every day. This thing was not done in a corner, nor at once, nor by one; the villainy was deliberate, gradual, and open.

These gentlemen do however confess, that the house has been set on fire; which confession they would doubtless be glad to avoid, if they could: But the misery is sorely felt, and all Europe are witnesses of it. Can they therefore, after an acknowledgment that the nation has been burned, have the face to be contriving ways to delay the punishment of the burners? Has self-love no share in this? And by the delay of the punishment of others, do they not as good as avow, that they tremble for themselves? For my part, I can see no difference in this case, between delaying it, and frustrating it.

The expedients for retrieving us, if we can be retrieved, are certainly compatible with expedients for revenging us; and the latter will facilitate the former. It will give life to the poor bankrupt heart-broken people, if they see that their destroyers meet due vengeance, and that they are like to be no more the prey of daring parricides.

G

I am, &c.

No. 8. SATURDAY, December 24, 1720.

The Arts of able guilty Ministers to save themselves. The wise and popular Conduct of Queen Elizabeth towards publick Harpies; with the Application. [Gordon] ↩

[I-36]

SIR,

There is not in politicks a more established rule, than, *That when a corrupt and wicked ministry intend to pillage a nation, they make use of vile and contemptible instruments, to gather in their plunder, and allow the miscreants part of it; and when the cry for justice becomes strong and universal, they always hang up their faithful rogues.* By this means they stop the people's mouths, and yet keep the money.

But they act by no rule of good policy, but are, in truth, chargeable with folly, or rather with phrenzy, who dream that they can prevent this cry, by the means that first raised it, and by means that will ever produce it. As well might they attempt to prevent the spreading of a deluge, by damming it up; which would prove the direct method to make a whole country its conquest; for it will then know no bounds, but bear down men, beasts, and cities before it; whereas its force and mischief are easily prevented, if proper channels be opened for it, and its torrent be skilfully directed.

The simple multitude, when most provoked, are easily appeased, if they have but fuel for their rage: They will scarce feel their miseries, if they do but fancy that justice is done upon the authors of their miseries. And whatever they suffer; the hanging of a few sorry knaves, who are but the working-tools of a few greater, will hush all the tumult of their spirits, and reconcile them to patience and wretchedness.

The expedient, therefore, to please them, is constantly practised by all able oppressors. But when, through the ignorance of their pillagers, the course of justice is entirely stopped; when the abused and enraged people can have no remedy, either real or imaginary, nor one victim to their fury, they will naturally and necessarily look higher; and then who can foresee where their vengeance will end?

If a pirate, who robs upon the sea, be hanged for his robbery, every body is satisfied with the death of the offender: But if the action be avowed, and he produce a commission, the state that gave it becomes answerable.

All these secrets in government were excellently understood by Queen Elizabeth's ministry. Out of her history I have therefore copied the following passage, and the following speech.

The Queen, upon her return from a progress, held a Parliament at Westminster; wherein, among other things, several good laws were made for the relief of the poor, and of maimed and disabled soldiers and seamen; against fraudulent guardians and trustees; the cheats and impositions of clothiers; and the robberies and outrages committed upon the borders of the kingdom towards Scotland. But whereas great complaints were made in the lower house, relating to the engrossing practice:

(for it seems there were some, who, under the colour of publick good, but, in reality, to the great damage of the kingdom, had got the Queen's letters patents, for the sole privilege and liberty of vending some particular sorts of wares):

The Queen therefore, to forestall them, published a proclamation, declaring those grants to be null and void; and also left them to be tried at common law. A method which was so acceptable to the lower house, that eighty of that body were appointed to wait upon her Majesty with their humble thanks, which the Speaker was to present in the name of them all. She received them very graciously, and gave her answer in the following speech:

Gentlemen,

I owe you my best thanks and acknowledgments for your respect towards me; not only for your good inclination, but those clear and publick expressions thereof, which have discovered themselves in retrieving me from a mistake, into which I have been betrayed; not so much by the faults of my will, as the error of my judgment. This had unavoidably drawn a blemish upon me, (who account the safety of my people my chief happiness) had you not made me acquainted with the practice of these lewd harpies and horse-leeches. I would sooner lose my heart or hand, than ever consent to allow such privilege to engrossers, as may turn to the detriment of my people. I am not so blinded with the lustre of a crown, as to let the scale of justice be weighed down by that of an arbitrary power. The gay title of a prince may deceive such as know nothing of the secret of governing; as a gilded pill may impose upon the patient: But I am not one of those unwary princes; for I am very sensible, that I ought to govern for the publick good, and not to regard my own particular; and that I stand accountable to another, a greater tribunal. I account myself very happy, that, by God's assistance, I have enjoyed so prosperous a government in all respects, and that he has blessed me with such subjects, for whom I could be contented to lay down my crown and life. I must entreat you, that let others be guilty of what faults or misdemeanors soever, they may not, through any misrepresentation, be laid at my door. I hope the evidence of a good conscience will, in all respects, bear me out. You cannot be ignorant, that the servants of princes have, too often, an eye to their own advantage; that their faults are often concealed from their notice; and that they cannot, if they would, inspect all things, when the weight and business of a whole kingdom lies on their shoulders.

Here is a speech, worthy of the occasion, worthy of a wise prince, worthy of a free people; a speech that has truth, and sense, and spirit in it. We may be sure from the frankness and vigour of it, that the ministers who advised it were no sharers in the guilt and oppression of which it complains: If they had, they would have chosen words more faint and equivocal; they would have shuffled in their assertions; they would have talked more cowardly; they would have kept off from particulars: They could not have hid their guilt and fears. But here their boldness is the effect of their innocence, and prompted by it.

Her Majesty frankly owns, that she was drawn into an error; but that it was only an error of her judgment, she makes manifest by her alacrity and forwardness to punish those harpies and horse-leeches, who, in her name, had abused the publick: She owns it just, that those engrossers should suffer: She owns that the art and end of reigning, is to advance the publick good; and when that good is not attained, she consigns to punishment those rooks and traitors, through whose fault it is not attained. She owns that she has been abused by her servants; who, under her authority, and in the name of the law, had sought their own vile advantages; and she removes from herself all guilt, by giving up the guilty.

Happy Queen! happy in her own qualifications; happy in those of her counsellors: But wise and good as she was, she could not have talked thus, if her ministry had been weak or wicked: Had this been her misfortune, in spite of her sincerity, wisdom and resolution, her speech would have been false, faint, and silly. But her counsellors were able and faithful, and

made England prosper; and if we except some rebellions, and some persecutions, both the doings of hot-headed bigots, her people saw nothing during her whole reign but felicity and sunshine.

This has entailed blessings upon her memory, and praise upon that of her counsellors: And, indeed, the happiness or misery of a people will always be the certain measure of the glory or infamy of their rulers, whenever such happiness or misery is evidently deducible from their management.

The above passage out of Queen Elizabeth's history, I thought not impertinent to our present times: Her people had suffered from harpies and horse-leeches: This shews, that the corruption had not reached the court; the hands of her ministers were clean, else her speech would have taken another turn.

Has England suffered less, in this our day, from harpies and horse-leeches? Surely no: All our losses, pillages, and oppressions, since the Conquest, do not balance the present great calamity: From a profusion of all things, we are reduced to a want of every thing: Heaven avert the pestilence and the famine! I am afraid that the latter begins to be sorely felt by many thousands of our poor, and even the rich complain that they can hardly find money to buy bread.

And shall not our harpies be given up? Shall not their blood and money make an undone nation some small amends for their heavy depredations and matchless villainy? Certainly they must: From a ministry as able, and as innocent, as that of Queen Elizabeth, we may expect the behaviour and publick spirit of Queen Elizabeth's ministry: Having no part in the guilt of harpies, they cannot dread the vengeance due to harpies: They have not raised out of their country's calamities, fortunes great as those calamities; they have no discoveries to dread; they have no guilt to hide; they have not conspired with harpies.

G

I am, &c.

No. 9. SATURDAY, December 31, 1720.

Against the projected Union of the Three Great Companies; and against remitting to the South-Sea Company any Part of their Debt to the Publick. [Trenchard] ↩

[I-42]

SIR,

The most successful deluders and oppressors of mankind have always acted in masquerade; and when the blackest villainies are meant, the most opposite spirit is pretended. Vice acts with security, and often with reputation, under the veil of virtue.

Hence atheists have set up for the greatest piety; and, to cover their own real want of it, have cruelly burned those who really had it. The most merciless tyrants have, in the midst of oppression, set up for the patrons of liberty; and, while their hands were deep in blood, impudently adopted the title of clemency; and publick liberty has almost always been given up by those, who passed for the patrons of publick liberty.

The cheating religious orders of the Church of Rome gain the greatest wealth, by a profession of the strictest poverty. The popish inquisitors, while they deliver over to the flames a poor wretch, already half dead with fears, famine, and torture, beseech and adjure the civil magistrate, who must see it done, by the love of God, and the bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt his life or limb. And our inquisitors at home began their Occasional Bill with a declaration for liberty of conscience; though the purpose of them, and their bill, was to destroy all liberty of conscience.

Companies and joint-stocks are always established for the encouragement and benefit of trade; though they always happen to mar and cramp trade. The Peerage Bill was to be granted as a favour to the Commons of England, by cutting off the Commons of England from all right to peerage. And some people, to save charges to England, are for giving up Gibraltar, which is of such advantage to England; being the security of all our trade. Sweden was once to be destroyed, to preserve the balance of power in the north; and now Sweden must be defended, for the very same reason.

When certain chiefs were at mortal odds, one side opposing (at all adventures) whatever the other projected, it was thought convenient to both sides to come to terms; for one party wanted to fill their coffers, and the other to save their bacon. However, the good of the publick was their sole aim: They, good men! sought no personal advantages, though they have since got considerable ones: But we must believe their sayings, notwithstanding their doings.

Stock-jobbing too must be declared against, whilst the greatest stock-jobbing is promoting. Last year a South-Sea project was to be established to pay off the national debts; and now a project is said to be in embryo, to remit the greatest part of the debt due to the nation by the South-Sea: And if so, the whole nation is to suffer this general loss, out of mere pity to a small part of the nation. Twelve months ago forty millions was not too much to be trusted with one company, high in credit, and its reputation hoisted up by publick authority; but now, when they are bankrupt and undone, and when their directors and undertakers are universally hated and detested, it is to be feared, it seems, that they will become too formidable, if all the stock subscribed into them be continued with them.

There is, therefore, I am told, a project on foot, in Exchange Alley, to deliver up the nation to three companies; and to let them divide us, their cully, among them. In order to prevail upon these three great societies to accept us as a present, to be used as they think fit, I humbly presume that we must behave ourselves as follows: We can do no less than sacrifice the poor halfstarved manufacturers to one of them, and oblige ourselves to lay no restraint upon India callicoos, &c. We must also confirm the clause which makes that society perpetual. New trades, more monopolies, and fresh privileges, must be given to another great and virtuous company, which had made so good use of the old: And the Bank of England, which long preserved its integrity, must be brought into the conspiracy; and without doubt something more must be given them, perhaps the increase of their term.

Now, if this mighty project, this noble design, can be accomplished; I suppose that every one will see, or be prevailed upon to see, the absolute necessity why all past errors, and former management, should be forgot; because publick credit, which depends upon temper and moderation, must not be interrupted by ill-timed enquiries, nor disturbed by publick vengeance. How finely we are to be disposed of; and how safe it is to provoke us!

The projectors of such a publick good must deserve well from their country; and I will give city security, that they shall be no losers by it. Where is the wonder, or ill policy of the plunderers and dishonourers of the nation, if the betrayers of their trust should keep a little ill-begotten wealth, to preserve the publick peace? Without doubt, they will give large shares of their prey to those who have power to let them keep the rest; and will readily help their projectors and coadjutors with their honest skill and endeavours, to form new projects, to get as much as they have done.

There lives in a certain kingdom, a certain gentleman, of no mean importance there at present, who was agent to one who had the custodium of a forfeited estate there, worth twelve thousand pounds a year; and when he gave in his account to his successor, brought the estate some hundreds of pounds in debt to himself. The other resented this with some menacing expressions, but could get no other answer from him, but that he would abide by his account: "However," says he, "if you will be discreet, I will help you to the man that helped me to this account."

But what now, if, after all, there should be a little job in a corner; and if any gentleman, of remarkable merit, should have amends made for his services, sufferings, and losses of late years? Why, there is nothing uncommon in it; for, *who will serve the Lord for nought?* This certainly can be no reason for rejecting a project, which will restore publick credit, fill the Alley again, raise South-Sea stock to three or four hundred, and help the present proprietors to new bubbles; without doing any other mischief, than that of ruining a few thousand families more, and of not paying off the nation's debts.

These, I confess, are potent reasons; and will, without doubt, have their due weight with all persons interested. But, for myself, who am so unfortunate as often to differ from my betters, I can find nothing in this proposal, which has any tendency to help the present company, or to raise credit, in any respect, or to retrieve us from our great and national calamities; but, on the contrary, to plunge the publick inevitably into irretrievable ruin, by making it impossible, by any medium in nature but that of a sponge, to discharge our national burdens: It will, besides, deprive us of our only colourable pretence, which could justify or excuse the late dreadful scheme; and which, I believe, I may safely say, was the only pretence ever offered to excuse it. I think that it will be listing the three great companies, with all the moneyed interest in England, against England; and will, at last, reduce, and even force, all parties not to oppose what I dread to name, and tremble to think of.

The project abovementioned is calculated, we are told, for the advantage of South-Sea, and for the improvement of their stock; and, in order to this, a great part of that stock is to be given away to the Bank of England, and to the East-India Company; without any apparent consideration to themselves, or any other use to the publick, than the uniting the three great companies in one interest; and consequently, the forming such a potent conspiracy against the whole kingdom, as nothing but a total confusion of all things can dissolve. O Companies, Companies! ye bane of honesty, and ruin of trade; the market of jobbers, the harvest of managers, and the tools of knaves, and of traitors!

It is proposed, that the South-Sea is to give the Bank an hundred and twenty pounds for every hundred pounds of stock in the Bank; which stock is said to be but barely worth ninety pounds; even though we should suppose that they had never divided any of their principal: Which, whether they have done it or not, no body but themselves can know: But at this rate, however, they must divide, whenever they are paid off by the government.

But we are told, that they are to be let also into the profits of banking; from which profits, 'tis said, that they are enabled to divide three per cent upon the old capital, besides the five per cent paid them by the government: But, even upon this foot, the greater their capital is, the less they will be able to divide: And consequently, when nine millions are added to their old capital, they will not be able to divide much above one per cent which is not the interest of the money paid in difference between ninety, which is the real value, and an hundred and twenty, which is the nominal value.

Besides, there is no probability that the Bank can continue to make, for the future, the same gain of banking, as heretofore. The trafficking in publick tallies, from whence that gain chiefly arose, will be at an end, unless there be new funds given, and new debts contracted.

The contract proposed by these people, to be made with the other company, is still worse; for, there they are to give a hundred and twenty pounds for a hundred-pound nominal stock, which is suspected to be worth very little; some men being of the opinion, that the greatest part of the ten per cent divided for some years past, has been pocketed out of other people's money, borrowed by the company upon their bonds: And yet for this choice bargain, they are to give six hundred thousand pounds at present, and subject nine hundred thousand pounds more to be disposed of according to the pleasure, skill, and honesty of the present directors. A pretty sum, and doubtless set apart to answer and accomplish some lovely job, which will appear in proper time, and by which the projectors of the scheme, I dare say, will be no losers!

'Tis said too, that the trade of this company may be enlarged; I suppose they mean, by bringing in more India manufactures, to the ruin of our own.

Now all this we are given to understand is for the sole benefit of the South-Sea; and if they have not sense to conceive it aright, a worse thing may befall them: We all know, what directors and their old patrons carry halters about their necks, though they have millions in their pockets; and who would not give away a little of other people's money, to save a great deal of their own, with their lives into the bargain? A special set of traitors, to negotiate for the very being of a kingdom!

But I must tell all these forgers of schemes, and inventors of grievances, that the nation, exhausted by past projects, cannot bear new ones, nor furnish out more millions to glut more harpies. The want of bread, long felt by the poor, begins now to be felt by the rich. The purses therefore of the new conspirators must be filled out of the extortions and depredations of the old, or remain empty: They may rack their invention, sift every topick of knavery, and toss and change their projects as much and as long as they please; but we know that nothing but plain honesty can ever save us; and to those who would practise honesty, plain speech is

best. Let us honestly hang up those who have deceived and undone us, and let us beware of new deceivers and new destroyers: Let us, with a severity equal to our distress, examine what the directors and their masters have embezzled, and lost to their country, by their merciless villainy, and consuming avarice; and let us have the only satisfaction that they can make us, their lives, and their estates: Let, afterwards, a fair valuation be made of their present capital, and let all the world know it; that the purchaser may buy solid substance, and not a fleeting shadow. This is the honest way to restore credit again; this will prevent the roguish part of stock-jobbing; and this will throw the remaining money into trade once more.

But what, may some say, if we should give away from the South-Sea Company some millions to make new friends, and to save our old friends, so long as we can make that company amends out of the publick, for such a loss? A thing easily done! It is only giving them back again the seven millions already due by them to the publick; or at least the greatest part of those seven millions, as the same stand secured upon forty millions; and if we do this, behold the advantage that will accrue from it! We will then be under no necessity of hanging our countrymen, or calling up any to disgorge their honest gains: Besides, it is to be hoped that this proposal will be backed with such powerful motives, as to meet with little opposition.

This calls to my mind a comparison, which I have been for some time very apt to make, between the French projectors and those of another country which I know. The first plunder for the publick; the other plunder the publick: The one robs part of the people for the whole people; the other robs the whole people for a small part of the people.

This comparison may be the subject of another letter to you, if you think fit to print this.

T

I am, &c.

No. 10. Tuesday, January 3, 1721.

The Iniquity of late and new Projects about the South-Sea considered. How fatally they affect the Publick. (Trenchard and Gordon) ↪

[I-51]

SIR,

When we compare one nation with another, and balance the power of both, we are not to consider alone the number of people, or the wealth diffused amongst the people; though number and wealth are undoubtedly the first elements of power in a commonwealth; no more than we are to consider the mere extent of territory, or the mere fertility of soil: But we are chiefly to consider, how much of that wealth can be brought together, how it may be most frugally managed, and how most skilfully applied to the publick emolument and defence.

If, in taxing labour and manufactures, we exceed a certain proportion, we discourage industry, and destroy that labour and those manufactures. The like may be said of trade and navigation; they will bear but limited burdens: And we find by experience, that when higher duties are laid, the product is not increased; but the trade is lost, or the goods are run.

Nor can more be extorted from the gentleman and freeholder, than he can spare from the support of his family, in a way suitable to his former condition.

When impositions exceed these bounds, the history of all ages will convince us, that their produce is only bitterness, murmurings, universal discontents; and their end, generally, rebellion, and an overthrow of the then present establishment, or of public liberty.

If therefore one state, for example, possessed of five times as much true, but scattered, wealth, as another state, cannot for all that, from a defect in its constitution, collect so much from the people as the poorer state can; or, if when collected, does yet trust the same to the disposal of blood-suckers and traitors, who intercept the national wealth, and divert it to private purses; or if it be appropriated, before it be raised, to the payment of former debts; or if it be embezzled in pensions and salaries to mercenary men, for traitorous ends; then is such a state really weaker than the other poorer state, and less capable of defending itself against the other, so much its inferior in outward shew and intrinsic power.

This was the state of Spain for near two hundred years; Spain, the mistress of so many nations, and of a new world, richer in silver and gold than the old; Spain, that from terrifying all Christendom with chains, and from threatening all Europe with universal slavery, reduced itself, by mortgaging its publick revenues, to such a despicable condition, that we have seen, in our days, that once formidable kingdom contended for by two small armies of foreigners, within its own bowels: In which contest the natives themselves were little more than spectators; as is very justly observed by the author of a pamphlet printed last year, and written with a spirit which I pretend not to imitate. Had that pamphlet been generally read, and well weighed, it would have prevented most of the mischiefs which we now lamentably labour under. It is entitled, *Considerations upon the State of the Publick Debts in general, and of the Civil List in particular*. I would recommend it to the reading of every one, who is not ashamed of being an honest man.

It is certain, that all the powerful nations of Europe, who were parties in the two last bloody and expensive wars, were reduced, by mortgaging their publick revenues, to the same low and abject condition; and nothing saved any one of them from all the rest, but that all the rest were in the same state of impotence and distress. They were all miserably weak. That

people, therefore, who can soonest discharge their publick burdens, will give laws to the rest; and either reduce them to subjection and vassalage, or to a necessity of seizing their mortgaged funds.

There are in the world but two ways of clearing a nation of its publick engagements: The one is, by paying them off; the other is, not to pay them at all. When the one cannot be practised, a small skill in politicks will tell us, that the other must.

It is a jest for any man to flatter himself, that any state will not save the whole people, by the ruin of a part of the people, when the ruin of a part is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the whole. This consideration should, methinks, be worth the attention of the gentlemen inhabitants of the Alley. In truth, nothing would exercise their thoughts more, were it not that every one hopes to save one, by cheating another into a hard and knavish bargain. Will men never have done hoping? They forget how they were caught last year in the South-Sea, with all their hopes and their wisdom about them.

It is, doubtless, the last misfortune to a nation, to be beholden to a sponge for the payment of its debts; such a necessity must be a heavy necessity, attended with many sorrowful circumstances, and much sore distress. Nothing but the certain fear of foreign force, or domestick tyranny, can justify it. But even a great calamity is eligible, in comparison of a greater. Every person, therefore, who is a creditor to his country, and has demands upon the publick, is nearly concerned to prevent such great and personal, and indeed general misery; which cannot be at all prevented, but by putting the national debts into a method of being honourably discharged. This is the concern of every honest man; this ought to be the care of every worthy citizen; this will be the task of every guiltless great man.

All innocent men, throughout the world, find a private blessing in the general felicity of the publick; and none but mock-patriots, who foolishly or deliberately can lead kingdoms into ruin; desperate hard-hearted parricides, who can wantonly suck out the vitals of their country, whose fortunes are often the plunder of the publick, whose creatures are conspirators, hired against the publick; I say, none but such traitors can find private joy in publick confusion, or their own security in the slavery of their country. Those, it is true, who earn vengeance by committing mighty crimes, would, doubtless, go on to resemble themselves, and to avoid it, if they could, by committing crimes still more mighty. If any amongst us should be capable of practising such great wickedness to get enormous wealth, such persons, if not prevented, might still practise greater to keep it. A fox pursued by the full cry of the hounds, will run into the dog-kennel for shelter; as at the battle of La Hogue, the French fleet fled through the race of Alderney, and ventured rocks and shelves, to escape from the conquering enemy.

It is a folly, and indeed an infatuation, in any persons interested in the publick funds, to form any schemes, or to fall into any schemes for increasing those funds, or for continuing in them, any longer than is absolutely necessary to pay them their debts: When our neighbouring nations have cleared theirs, we too must clear ours, or we are undone. 'Tis said, indeed, that a revolution in government would certainly and effectually do it, and do it at once; and this I take to be the true reason why so many unthinking men appear to wish it; though I hope it is in vain. God avert so dreadful a catastrophe!

Spain has already discharged itself of its publick burdens, by a general sweep: And behold the effect of this! It again shews its head in the world; again it carries its armies into new countries. Holland lies still, free from new broils, and fresh expence: It politically pleads poverty: It takes all ways in its power to recover its losses; and questionless laughs in its sleeve to see another nation grow more mad, and more in debt every year; to see it every year mortgaging new revenues, and every year engaging in wild wars, to support the interests of a

state of no concernment to it.

But the most terrible instance of all, is that of France: That government, though to the ruin of great multitudes of other people, has almost, if not quite, got rid of its incumbrances and engagements. The whole wealth of that great kingdom is now got into the hands of the publick. From which formidable situation of theirs, is there not room to fear, that as soon as the present confusion is a little abated, they will renew their designs for empire, and throw Europe into arms again? This is an alarming reflection! And what do the gentlemen of the Alley expect from us, under such an ill-boding circumstance? Trade is already burdened as much as it can bear, and perhaps more than it ought to bear: There is scarce a commodity that can be taxed, but is already taxed. We are marked, we are mortgaged from head to foot. They do not surely expect that the Parliament will give ten shillings in the pound upon land, or that it could be raised if they did.

What therefore are we to do in such a calamitous case? Are we to save ourselves at the expence of the gentlemen of the Alley? Or are we to perish together with them? The choice is easy. Can they be so weak, as to form a pretended necessity, to bring their country into such unhappy circumstances; and yet not fear that wise and honest men may take advantage of a real necessity, to get out of such unhappy circumstances?

There is but one thing to be done, to save themselves and their country together; and that is, to put the debts into a method of being certainly and speedily paid off. The present establishment may be saved, though they are undone: But if, through folly or knavery, the establishment sink, they must sink with it. I hope therefore, that they will not be decoyed into any traitorous designs of desperate men: Men, whose characters are but faintly expressed by that of parricides; men, who, had they studied the art of making us miserable, could not have been more accomplished in their trade, nor boast of compleater success. Where is our trade, by which we so long flourished? It is lost. Where is our publick faith, once our own boast, and the envy of foreign nations? It is fled; and one man has no longer any faith in another. Where is our money? Where are our current millions? The people have none. The most part find it hard to buy bread; and many find it impossible. Every man whom you meet complains that he is undone. All our coin is engrossed, pocketed by vile jobbers, their prompters and confederates; publick robbers, who, to keep what they have got, and to escape deserved punishment (if such punishment can possibly be found), would deliver up the wealth and power of England into the griping and polluted hands of a new conspiracy of stock-jobbers, worse than the last, by being more numerous and potent. With these they would combine for common defence, and for publick destruction; with these, contrive new ways to enlarge our miseries, shorten our enjoyments still more, and grind us still smaller; with these, they would form into such a confederacy against their common country, and against common honesty, as would mock even the endeavours of a legislature to dissolve it. Good God! what implacable men! thus mercilessly bent to ruin the very ruins of their country!

What Briton, blessed with any sense of virtue, or with common sense; what Englishman, animated with a publick spirit, or with any spirit, but must burn with rage and shame, to behold the nobles and gentry of a great kingdom; men of magnanimity; men of breeding; men of understanding, and of letters; to see such men bowing down, like Joseph's sheaves, before the face of a dirty *stock-jobber*, and receiving laws from men bred behind counters, and the decision of their fortunes from hands still dirty with sweeping shops!

Surely we shall never suffer this to be our case, and therefore shall never see it. It is ridiculous to think that a nation, free as we are, and bold by being so, will ever submit to such indignities: It is therefore easy to foresee, if once we foolishly take the first step, what will necessarily be the next. One oppression cannot be supported but by another, and a greater; and force and violence alone can do what reason cannot and will not do. These hardships will

produce new wants, and new necessities for money; which money, if such men can have their will, will only be to be had from these companies, and from them only upon hard conditions, and in exchange for new privileges, still tending to the detriment of general trade, and ending in the total ruin of the nation.

The nation will be provoked in proportion as it is distressed; ill usage will be returned with rage: And then, I doubt not, when these projectors have rendered the people distracted, they will tell us, that it will not be safe to venture them with another election. They will do every thing in their power to make the kingdom disaffected; and then urge that disaffection as a good reason not to trust them.

This conduct will produce necessarily more and higher discontents; discontents will make armies necessary; armies will inflame those discontents still more vehemently. I dare think no further. But sure there is no one who loves King George, and his government, but will endeavour to prevent these dismal mischiefs, before it be too late.

No man living laments the calamities brought upon his country, more than I do those brought upon mine: Yet I freely own, that I think the paying off the nation's debts, and restoring, by that means, the kingdom to its power, its grandeur, and its security again, was an end worth all the evils which we have yet suffered;

an end which ought, if possible, to have been purchased with greater than we have yet suffered, if it could not otherwise have been purchased. I think that it ought to have been done, though attended with many ill circumstances; and might have been done, even upon those hard terms, with justice to private men, and honour to the nation. We are not a people without it; nor is it worth while to dispute about the best cabin in a ship that is sinking.

This prospect gave me some pleasure, and some relief to my thoughts, made anxious by the melancholy and importunate clamours of thousands and ten thousands of my distressed countrymen: But when I was told that a project was formed by men of figure, power, and fortune, to give back all, and the only advantage which we were to reap, or could reap, from so many miseries, and which could alone palliate or excuse such a wild and desperate attempt; though this was the only excuse which was ever offered, or can yet be suggested by the wisest men in behalf of it; I confess that I was seized with horror and confusion from such news, and could see nothing before my eyes but total desolation and final ruin.

To tell us, that this is to be done out of tenderness to the miserable, is adding contempt to the injury: It is insulting our understandings, and playing with the publick misfortunes; it is first to make us beggars, then to treat us like idiots. With as much modesty did a grand monarch, who was known to make himself sport, for about half a century, with the lives of men, pretend to ground his desire of peace upon a conscientious inclination to prevent the effusion of Christian blood.

Those who have true compassion, virtue, and tenderness, will shew it upon the properest objects; they will prefer the security and welfare of many millions to the security and welfare of some thousands, though they should be many thousands; especially if the latter prove to have been covetous and unthinking men, caught in the snare which they spread for others: For by these wild bargains no man is undone, but he who intended the favour of being undone to somebody else. These gentlemen, pretending to so much tenderness and compassion, will not at least sacrifice those who always foresaw the mischief, and always opposed it, to the relief of such who contributed to it; who made corrupt applications for an early admittance into the advantage of the secret; who swallowed plumbs in their imaginations, and ridiculed as fools or beggars all that kept at a wise and honest distance.

Pity and compassion are charming and engaging sounds, when rightly applied; but pity and compassion do not consist in protecting criminals from justice, and in suffering the devourers of a nation to go off with the plunder of a nation; nor in oppressing the people over again, to make the loser amends: Neither do they consist in giving away the publick treasure of nations to private men, for no reason, or for very bad reasons; nor in engaging a kingdom in wild and romantick expences, to serve wild and romantick purposes; neither do they consist in sacrificing the trade and manufacture of a whole people, and in consequence the bread of a whole people, to the destructive interests of societies of stock-jobbers, combined with publick plunderers for mutual defence.

Our wise and disinterested legislature mean other things; they have told us, that they will not relieve one part of the distressed and deluded bubbles, to the detriment of others, who have as much pretence to relief as themselves; and it is impossible to imagine that they will give up the unoffending and almost despairing people (whose interests they are chosen to assert) to repair the losses of unwary men, and to put thirty millions in the pockets of twenty stock-jobbers.

Can it be supposed, that the Parliament will refuse to make void hasty and private bargains, founded in corruption and fraud, and made without any one honest consideration? And shall this refusal be made for the publick good? And yet shall that very Parliament be thought capable of making void a publick bargain, made for the publick good, with the greatest deliberation, and upon the weightiest motives in the world? Which bargain was indeed the chief, if not the only cause, that drew upon us our present great calamities.

But we are told by the projectors, that the company is not able to pay the publick the sum stipulated; and the King must lose his right, where his right is not to be had. This is impudently as well as stupidly said; for the security is already in the hands of the publick: The nation owes the company near forty millions, and nothing is necessary but to stop the payment of seven.

But it is farther urged by the projectors, that the company will be undone, if so much be stopped from them; and I aver, that the nation is undone, if it be not stopped.

Here a very pleasant observation offers itself: For this very same project, which would mercifully remit to the South-Sea Company the seven millions due by them to the publick, is intended to raise a hundred pounds of their capital stock to three or four hundred pounds in value, I will suppose only to three hundred; and even then their present capital being about twenty-six millions, the whole will be worth about eighty millions; and surely, if the publick give them such an immense advantage, they may well afford to pay the small sum of seven millions due to the publick out of it. Our own laws, and the laws of every country in the world, give precedence to the prerogative, in the business of debtor and creditor; and always secure the debts due to the publick, whatever becomes of those due to private men. Surely we shall not reject the wisdom of nations, and invert the maxims of government, that while we confirm the bargains of particular men, we destroy those made for the benefit of all the men in the kingdom.

But there is yet something more absurd in this project: For the bargain was made with the old company, who were to give three millions and a half, certain, to the publick; and about three millions more, if they could purchase in the annuitants: Which sum they could have afforded to the publick, if they could but have raised their stock thirty per cent upon the whole stock so united: But we have, in fact, seen its imaginary value increased, at one time, more than two hundred millions; which has enabled those in the secret to carry off more than twenty, if not thirty millions.

Valuing the stock, at present, at two hundred, which is less than the stock sells for, the old capital alone is advanced near twelve millions above its first value, and consequently is able to pay seven, without the assistance of the new subscribers: And, if the projectors of the scheme advance the stock to three or four hundred, as they pretend that they will; then the first contractors, and those who stand in their places, will double or treble their capital; though they alone were to pay the publick the poor consideration which has enabled them to do so.

Hard fate of poor England, to be thus the last regarded, even in schemes and deliberations which purely regard England! Private men, who have been bubbled, are to be pitied, but must private men, who have contributed to the publick ruin, and their own, be regarded preferably to the publick? And must publick compassion be shewn to private dupes, rather than to the publick itself?

Poor England! What a name art thou become! A name of infatuation and misery! How art thou fallen! how plundered! And those that have done it, would, to keep their spoil, agree to assist others to squeeze out thy last dregs, and to suck out thy remaining blood. How passive do they think thee! How tame would they make thee! An easy prey for devourers; who, while they hold thee fast, and gripe thee hard with iron claws, aggravate thy misery, by mocking it, and insolently talk of compassion.

What keener indignities can they do us, than thus to jest with us, while we are gasping, while we are expiring, in the midst of the pangs and convulsions into which they have wantonly and wickedly thrown us!

Odd is that compassion which arises from guilt and avarice; and with how much modesty would they christen, with the deluding title of pity, that conduct, which would prove in effect to be only impunity to the murderers of our prosperity, and the manglers of their country! Thus would they insult our understanding, and deal with us as if we had none.

How long shall we suffer under this pungent usage? this painful disgrace to our sense and our spirit? Patience under indignities, invites fresh indignities. We see our parricides do, as it were, take pains to invent new miseries for us. A hard task! considering those that they have already accomplished. Nay, they act as if they despaired of making us desperate.

They may be mistaken. And indeed, in the whole string of their politicks, I could never discover any one symptom of their skill in human nature, except that which they learned from brokers and pedlars in stocks.

In truth, matters are come to that pass, that an endeavour to make them worse, may probably make them better: *Res nolunt male administrari*. All men suffer; all men are alarmed: Resentment rages high, and gathers thick from all quarters; and though it may seem big with some terrible event, yet it may be prevented by anticipation.

Our eyes are upon the Parliament, and so are the eyes of Europe. We have begun to conceive hope from the bold and upright spirit which appears in our representatives to right us and to revenge us. They have, indeed, a great and unprecedented opportunity given them, of securing to themselves, in the hearts of all Englishmen, a monument of grateful praise and publick spirit, and of perpetuating that praise in the memory of every Briton, till time shall be no more.

T and G

I am, &c.

No. 11. SATURDAY, January 7, 1721.

The Justice and Necessity of punishing great Crimes, though committed against no subsisting Law of the State. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[I-66]

SIR,

Salus populi suprema lex esto: That the benefit and safety of the people constitutes the supreme law, is an universal and everlasting maxim in government; It can never be altered by municipal statutes: No customs can change, no positive institutions can abrogate, no time can efface, this primary law of nature and nations. The sole end of men's entering into political societies, was mutual protection and defence; and whatever power does not contribute to those purposes, is not government, but usurpation.

Every man in the state of nature had a right to repel injuries, and to revenge them; that is, he had a right to punish the authors of those injuries, and to prevent their being again committed; and this he might do, without declaring before-hand what injuries he would punish. Seeing therefore that this right was inherent in every private man, it is absurd to suppose that national legislatures, to whom every man's private power is committed, have not the same right, and ought not to exercise it upon proper occasions.

Crimes being the objects of laws, there were crimes before there were laws to punish them; and yet from the beginning they deserved to be punished by the person affected by them, or by the society, and a number of men united with him for common security, though without the sentence of a common judge (called by us the magistrate) formally appointed to condemn offenders.

Laws, for the most part, do not make crimes, but suit and adapt punishments to such actions as all mankind knew to be crimes before. And though national governments should never enact any positive laws, never annex particular penalties to known offences; yet they would have a right, and it would be their duty to punish those offences according to their best discretion; much more so, if the crimes committed are so great, that no human wisdom could foresee that any man could be wicked and desperate enough to commit them.

Lawyers distinguish betwixt *malum prohibitum* and *malum in se*; that is, between crimes that are so in their own nature, and crimes that owe their pravity to a disobedience to positive laws. Of the former sort are all those actions, by which one man hurts another in his reputation, his person, or his fortune; and those actions are still more heinous, if they injure, or are intended to injure, the whole society.

The latter sort consists of such crimes as result from what legislatures enact for the particular benefit of private societies; as laws concerning the regularity of trade, the manner of choosing magistrates, local orders; and from such positive institutions, as receive their force alone from the powers that enact them. Now those crimes were not so before they were declared so; and consequently, no man before was under any obligation to avoid them.

It would be very severe and unjust to punish any man for an undesigned transgression of the latter sort; that is, for such action as he thought that he might lawfully and honestly do, and which he had never notice given him not to do. But to infer from thence, that a villain may despise all the laws of God and nature, ruin thousands of his fellow-subjects, and overturn nations with impunity, because such villainy was too monstrous for human foresight and prevention, is something so absurd, that I am ashamed to confute it.

This is nothing less than asserting, that a nation has not a power within itself to save itself: That the whole ought not to preserve the whole: That particular men have the liberty to subvert the government which protects them, and yet continue to be protected by that government which they would destroy: That they may overturn all law, and yet escape by not being within the express words of any particular law.

There are crimes so monstrous and shocking, that wise states would not suffer them to stand in their statute books; because they would not put such an indignity upon human nature, as to suppose it capable of committing them. They would not mention what they imagined would never be practised. The old Romans, therefore, had no law against parricide; yet there was no want of punishment for parricides from the want of law: Those black and enormous criminals were sewed up in a sack, and thrown into the Tiber.

In Holland, there was no law against men's breaking fraudulently; yet the first man who was known to do so, was immediately executed, and his estate divided among his creditors.

In England, 'tis said, there was no law, till lately, against the burning of ships; yet, if any man had burned the Royal Navy of England, lying at anchor, ought not his crime, which it seems was not felony, to have been declared high-treason?

Many nations have had particular officers appointed on purpose to punish uncommon crimes, which were not within the reach of ordinary justice. The Romans had a dictator; a great and extraordinary magistrate, vested with an extraordinary power, as he was created on extraordinary exigencies; and his commission was limited only by the publick good, and consisted in a very short direction, *Nequid detrimenti respublica capiat*; in English, *To save the state*.

This powerful officer was once created on purpose to put to death Spurius Maelius, for giving *gratis* to the people a large quantity of corn, in a time of famine. This liberality of his was construed by the senate, an ambitious bribe to catch the hearts of the multitude, in order to seize their liberties. *Spurius Maelius—praedives, rem utilem pessimo exemplo, pejore consilio est aggressus*. He undertook a publick and plausible thing, but of ill example, and with a worse design. *Largitiones frumenti facere instituit*. His avowed pretence was to relieve the poor; *Plebemque hoc munere delinitam, quacunq; incederet conspectus alatusque supra modum hominis privati, secum trahere*. He cajoled the people, intending to enslave them; and growing too powerful for a subject, became terrible to the common liberty, which is supported by equality: *Ipse, ut est humanus animus insatiabilis eo quod fortuna spondet, ad altiora & non concessa tendere*: The mind of man is restless, and cannot stand still, nor set bounds to its pursuits. It is not to be expected that one of our million men (and they say that we have several) will sit down and be content with his millions, though he were allowed to keep them (which God forbid!). He will be making new pushes for new acquisitions, having such ample means in his hands. Spurius Maelius would at first have been content with the consulate, or chief magistracy in ordinary; but because he found that even that could not be got without force, he thought that the same force would as well carry him higher, and make him king. *Et quoniam consulatus quoque eripiendus invitis patribus esset, de regno agitare*. The traitor had been suffered to carry a great point; he had abused the publick, and deceived the people. The Senate, therefore, took him to task: and there being no law subsisting, by which he could be put to death—*Consules legibus constricti, nequaquam tantum virium in magistratu ad eam rem pro atrocitate vindicandum quantum animi haberent*; they therefore created a dictator, an officer with power, for a time, to suspend laws, and make laws. The occasion was great—*Opus esse non forti solum viro, sed etiam libero, exsoluto que legum vinculis*. L. Quincius Cincinnatus was the man; a true and brave old republican, who worthily and boldly did his work, and by the hands of his master of the horse slew the mighty traitor, impudently imploring the publick faith, to which he was a sworn enemy; and complaining of

the power of oppression, when the shameless villain had been only seeking a power to oppress. *Fidem plebis Romanae implorare; & opprimi se consensu patrum dicere*. He knew that his villainies were out of the reach of the law, and he did not dream of an extraordinary method of punishing them by the Roman parliament. But he was deceived; and the dictator tells the people, that being a sort of an outlaw, he was not to be proceeded with as with a citizen of Rome: *Nec cum eo tanquam cum cive agendum fuisse*. An unusual death was due to his monstrous wickedness: *Non pro scelere id magis quam pro monstro habendum*. Nor was his blood alone, says the wise dictator, sufficient to expiate his guilt, unless we also pull down his house, where such crying crimes were first conceived; and confiscate to the publick use his estate and his treasures, the price and means of the publick ruin. And his estate was accordingly given to the publick—*Nec satis esse sanguine ejus expiatum, nisi tecta parietesque, inter quae tantum amentiae conceptum esset, dissiparentur; bonaque contacta pretiis regni mercandi publicarentur; jubere itaque questores, vendere ea bona & in publicum redigere*: The treasury had them for the use of the publick.

Thus did the great, the wise, and the free Romans punish this extraordinary knave, by a power that was not ordinary. They likewise exerted it upon other occasions; nor were they the only people that did so.

The Athenians, grown jealous by having lost their liberties, by the usurpation of a private, but too powerful citizen, durst never trust this great power to any single magistrate, or even to a council. They would not, however, part with it, but reserved it to the whole body of the people, agreeably to the nature of a popular government. In this jealous state, it was a crime to be popular, much more to affect popularity: They would not allow a man to have it in his power to enslave his country. And, indeed, it is wisdom in a state, and a sign that they judge well, to suppose, that all men who can enslave them, will enslave them. Generosity, self-denial, and private and personal virtues, are in politicks but mere names, or rather cant-words, that go for nothing with wise men, though they may cheat the vulgar. The Athenians knew this; and therefore appointed a method of punishing great men, though they could prove no other crime against them but that of being great men. This punishment was called the *ostracism*, or the sentence of a majority in a ballot by oyster-shells; by which a suspected citizen was adjudged to banishment for ten years. They would not trust to the virtue and moderation of any private subject, capable, by being great, to be mischievous; but would rather hurt a private subject, than endanger the publick liberty. Worthy men are thought to have suffered unjustly by this ostracism; and it may be true, for aught that I know; but still it secured the publick, and long secured it. Weak and babbling men, who penetrate no deeper than words, may blame this politick severity in the commonwealth of Athens; but it is justified, in that it was politick.

In Venice, a wise, ancient, and honourable republick, there is a Council of Ten, which exercises this extraordinary power: Every arbitrary prince in the world exercises it; and every free state in the world has an undoubted right to exercise it, though they have never delegated their power to particular magistrates to exercise it for them.

In England, indeed, we have not delegated this power at all, because we very well know who must have had it, and what use would be made of it. The legislature, therefore, has reserved this power to itself, and has an undoubted right to exercise it; and has often done so upon extraordinary occasions. It ought indeed to be exercised but upon extraordinary occasions. Jove's thunderbolts were only launched against such as provoked the thunderbolts of Jove.

I shall, in my next letter to you, apply these general maxims of government to our own particular constitution, and to the present occasion, which calls aloud for Jove's help and thunder.

No. 12. SATURDAY, January 14, 1721.

Of Treason: All Treasons not to be found in Statutes. The Right of the Legislature to declare Treasons. [Trenchard] ↩

[I-74]

SIR,

Treason, properly so called, in Latin, *Crimen laesae majestatis*, is in all countries the same: It is an endeavour to subvert, or to do some notable mischief to the publick; of which every man is a part, and with which he has joined himself for mutual defence, under what form soever the administration is exercised. I own, that lesser crimes aresometimes called by the same name, and subjected to the same punishment.

An attempt to destroy the chief magistrate of a commonwealth, or the general of an army in the field, or the governor of a town during a siege, are certainly treasons every where; because in such attempts, when they succeed, are often involved the ruin of states. They also are doubtless guilty of high treason, who, being entrusted with the wealth, security, and happiness of kingdoms, do yet knowingly pervert that trust, to the undoing of that people whom they are obliged, by undeserved rewards, as well as by all the ties of religion, justice, honour, and gratitude, to defend and protect.

'Tis the same, if any number of men, though in a lesser trust, or in no trust at all, should deliberately and knowingly destroy thousands of their fellow-subjects, and overturn the trade and publick credit of the nation, to enrich themselves and their accomplices.

These, and crimes of the like nature, are treasons from the nature of things themselves, antecedent to all laws that call them so; and will be treasons, though laws gained by subordination should call them otherwise: And every state has a right to treat those who commit them, as traitors and parricides. In truth, there are as many of these kinds of treasons, as there are different methods of conspiring against kingdoms; and the criminals, though ever so great, deserve death and confiscation; that is, they ought to be destroyed by the people whom they would destroy.

The great principal of self-preservation, which is the first and fundamental law of nature, calls for this procedure; the security of commonwealths depends upon it; the very being of government makes it necessary; and whatever is necessary to the publick safety, is just.

The fate of millions, and the being of states, must not stand and fall by the distinctions of monks, coined in colleges, or by the chicane of petty-foggers; who would bring every thing within the narrow verge of their own knowledge, under their own jurisdiction and cognizance; and would determine all things by the rules of inferior judicatures, the gibberish of private practisers, and the sayings of old women, or of those who are like old women; whose brains are addled by being long jumbled and always turned round within the scanty circle of private courts, not daring to venture at a bold and free thought out of them, however self-evident; like some carriers' horses, that are used to a track, and know not how to travel in an open road.

But questions of this kind belong *ad aliud examen*, and ought to be brought before an higher tribunal: The legislature are the only proper and safe judges: What is done against all, should be judged by all. Nor are their resolutions to be confined by any other rule than *Quid est utile, quid honestum*, general justice, and the general good. Religion, virtue, common sense, and the publick peace and felicity, are the only counsel to be admitted either for the

publick or the prisoners.

The conspirators against mankind ought to know, that no subterfuges, or tergiversations; no knavish subtilties, or pedantic quirks of lawyers; no evasions, skulkings behind known statutes; no combinations, or pretended commissions, shall be able to screen or protect them from publick justice. They ought to know, that there is a power in being that can follow them through all the dark labyrinths and doubling meanders; a power that can crush them to pieces, though they change into all the shapes of Proteus, to avoid the fury of Hercules: a power, confined by no limitation, but that of publick justice and the publick good; a power, that does not follow precedents, but makes them; a power, which has this for its principle, that extraordinary crimes ought not to be tried by ordinary rules, and that unprecedented villainies ought to have unprecedented punishments.

But though in all governments, this great power must exist somewhere, yet it can rarely be delegated with prudence to inferior magistrates; who, out of ambition, revenge, or faction, or for bribes and preferments, or out of fear and flattery, or in concert with the ill measures or selfish intrigues of statesmen, may pervert so dangerous a trust to the destruction of those whom it was intended to preserve.

This particularly has been the case of England: We know by what means judges were often made, and from what conduct they expected farther preferment, and from whom they looked for protection: For this reason they were, and ought to be, confined in their jurisdiction relating to treason, and the manner of trying it.

Undoubtedly every intention manifested by act to destroy the constitution and government, was treason by the common law of England. But why do I say of England, since it is, and ever was, treason in every country throughout the world? This treason equally extends to those, who would subvert either house of Parliament, or the rights and privileges of the people, as to those who attempt to destroy the person of the King, or dethrone him. And indeed, what can be more absurd, than to suppose it to be the highest crime to attempt to destroy one man, for no other reason but that he is King; and yet not to suppose it the highest crime to destroy that people for whose benefit alone he was made King, and for whose sake indeed there ever was such a thing in the world?

But though this proposition was self-evident, and must ever be assented to as soon as mentioned, yet, by the flattery of priests and servile lawyers, the *salus populi*, or security of the state, soon came to signify only the unbounded power and sovereignty of the prince; and it became treason to hinder one, constituted, and grandly maintained out of the people's labour and wealth, for the publick safety, from destroying the publick safety. Our ancestors found, by lamentable experience, that unworthy men, preferred by corrupt ministers for unworthy ends, made treasons free only of the court; that the least attempt to oppose unlimited and unlawful authority, was often called treason; and that the highest treasons of all, which were those against the commonwealth, might be committed with impunity, applause, and rewards.

It was therefore high time to apply an adequate remedy to an enormous mischief, which struck at the whole state, and at the fortunes and lives of every subject in England. The statute therefore of the 25th of Edward III was enacted, which enumerates the several species or kinds of treasons, which shall continue to be esteemed treasons, and be adjudged so by the King's justices; and are chiefly those which relate to the King's person, his family, and dignity: These the Parliament thought they might safely trust to the examination of the King's judges, under such limitations and regulations as the act presents.

But it is plain, from the same act, that they did not intend to confine all treasons to those recited there, because it is declared in the following words, *viz.*

If any other case supposed treason, not before specified, shall happen before any justices, they shall stay judgment, till the cause be shewed before the Parliament, whether it ought to be judged treason or not.

So that here is a plain declaration of the legislature (if any man can possibly think such a declaration wanting) that other crimes were treason, and ought to be punished as treason (though not by the King's judges), besides those recited in the act; which were, as has been said, designed only to extend to treasons which were committed against our Lord the King, and his Royal Majesty, as the act expressly says. And 'tis evident, from the whole tenor of it, that it was intended purely to restrain the unlimited and exorbitant jurisdiction assumed by the King's courts, in declaring treasons, and sacrificing by that means, whom they pleased to unlawful power.

But as to the highest and most heinous treasons of all, such as were treasons against the legislature, and against the whole body of the people, for whose safety alone there were any treasons against the King at all, seeing that their safety was, in a great measure, included in his; the Parliament reserved the judgment of every such treason to themselves: They did not alter what was treason, but the judges of it. They knew that treasons against the constitution could seldom be committed but by ministers and favourites of princes, protected by power, and sheltered by authority; and that therefore it would be absurd to trust the punishment of such potent knaves, and criminal favourites, to judges made by themselves; judges, who would neither have inclination, figure, or character, to reach crimes countenanced, and perhaps authorized, by a Richard II or Edward II.

Such crimes, therefore, were the proper objects of the awful power of a legislature; who will always be supported by the people whom they represent, when they exert themselves for the interest of that people. A power, so supported, can make the loftiest traitor quake. It can fetch corrupt ministers out of their dark recesses, and make their heads a victim to publick vengeance. Every wise and good king will lend a willing ear to their dutiful remonstrances; he will hearken to the importunate cries of his people, and readily deliver up the authors of their misery.

One great part of their care, therefore, has ever been, to call those to an account, who have abused the favour of their royal master, and endeavoured to make him little and contemptible to his people; weakening, by such means, his authority, and hazarding his person. This the people, whom they represented, thought they had a right to expect and demand from them; and this justice they have often done to their King and country.

An excellent *Discourse concerning Treasons and Bills of Attainder* was published soon after his Majesty's accession to the throne, and shewed unanswerably, that our Parliaments, in almost every reign since the Conquest, claimed and exercised this right, upon extraordinary occasions; and none ever, till lately, opposed it, but the criminals who were to suffer by it, and their party: Some gentlemen now living can give the best account, why that book, and the cries of every honest man, had not their desired effect. I hope that no man will be deluded again by any practising the same arts, and for the same reasons too.

The length of this letter will not allow me to draw from all these reasonings upon treason such applications as I promised in my last, and intended in this. I shall therefore defer these applications to another, and perhaps more proper, occasion. In the mean while, I observe with pleasure the noble spirit shewn by our legislature, to punish, with an exemplary severity, the murderers of our credit, and the publick enemies of our liberty and prosperity. This revives every drooping heart, and kindles joy in every face, in spite of all our miseries. And this brings terror, trembling, and paleness upon the guilty; to see death and destruction pursuing them close, and besetting them hard on every side. They are in the circumstances and the agonies of the guilty Cain, who justly feared that every man whom he met would kill him,

though there was no law then in being against murder.

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I am, &c.

No. 13. SATURDAY, January 21, 1721.

The Arts of misleading the People by Sounds. [Trenchard] ↪

[I-82]

SIR,

In surveying the state of the world, one is often at a great loss, whether to ascribe the political misery of mankind to their own folly and credulity, or to the knavery and impudence of their pretended managers. Both these causes, in all appearance, concur to produce the same evil; and if there were no bubbles, there would be no sharpeners.

There must certainly be a vast fund of stupidity in human nature, else men would not be caught as they are, a thousand times over, by the same snare; and while they yet remember their past misfortunes, go on to court and encourage the causes to which they were owing, and which will again produce them.

I will own, however, that government makes more fools, and more wise men, than nature makes; and the difference between nation and nation, in point of virtue, sagacity, and arms, arises not from the different genius of the people; which, making very small allowances for the difference of climate, would be the same under the same regulations; but from the different genius of their political constitutions: The one, perhaps, making common sense dangerous, and enquiries criminal; cowering the spirits of men, and rebuking the sallies of virtue; while the other, at the same time, encourages the improvement of the understanding, rewards the discovery of truth, and cultivates, as a virtue, the love of liberty and of one's country.

Yet even in countries where the highest liberty is allowed, and the greatest light shines, you generally find certain men, and bodies of men, set apart to mislead the multitude; who are ever abused with words, ever fond of the worst of things recommended by good names, and ever abhor the best things, and the most virtuous actions, disfigured by ill names. One of the great arts, therefore, of cheating men, is, to study the application and misapplication of sounds—a few loud words rule the majority, I had almost said, the whole world.

Thus we have heard from our fathers, and seen in our own days, that contemptible insects, born in poverty, educated by charity, and often from cleaning their masters' shoes, preferred unexpectedly and undeservedly to offices and preferments in the Church, have had the front to call themselves the Church itself, and every one its enemy, who despised their meanness, exposed their reverend knavery, and laughed at their grimace.

And thus we have been told of the times, and some men now living remember to have seen them, when unworthy men, who, by faction and treachery, by mean compliances with power, or by insolently daring of authority, having raised themselves to wealth and honours, and to the power of betraying some considerable trust, have had the provoking sauciness to call themselves the government, and their own rogueries his then Majesty's measures; and the next thing was, to pronounce all those enemies to his then Majesty, who would endeavour to rescue their abused King and sinking country out of their devouring and polluted claws.

In King Charles I's time, the great Earl of Strafford and little Archbishop Laud told the nation, that his Majesty's measures were, governing without Parliaments, a power without reserve in the state, a flaming popish hierarchy in the Church, absolute and abject submission in the people, and a barbarian army of Irish papists to support and insure all these worthy measures. But the untimely death of one of these offenders, and the imprisonment of the

other, broke all those fine measures.

In the reign of Charles II Pensionary Parliaments, a general depravation of manners, guards increased into armies, and popish religion and a popish successor, popish leagues and Protestant wars, were called by wicked men his Majesty's measures; and all honest men and good subjects were called his Majesty's enemies: And, when that prince saw that these measures of his ministry created endless jealousies to his people, and endless uneasiness to himself, and when he resolved to take other measures of his own, it is thought that they put a short end to all his measures.

When King James came to the crown, though, setting bigotry apart, he had some royal virtues, being a prince of industry and good oeconomy; yet he suffered himself to be governed by a set of sycophants, many of them as foolish as they were mischievous. The establishment of bare-faced Romish popery in the Church, and a lawless tyranny in the prince, became then his Majesty's measures; the ministers, who advised and promoted them, called themselves the government; and whoever opposed his reason, his honesty, and his publick spirit, against those traitors to the publick, was charged with flying in the face of the government, and opposing his Majesty's measures. In what these measures ended, is well known: They cost his Majesty his kingdoms, and made him an honourable beggar in France all his life for his daily bread.

King William, when he came to the crown, brought with him the hearts, and hands, and the good wishes of every honest man in England; and was supported by these men through a tedious and expensive war, unknown to our ancestors; which, when he had finished, and the exhausted people expected some relaxations from their sufferings, they were given to know by some court parasites that his Majesty's measures was a standing army in time of peace, under the inspection of Parliaments. This unexpected spirit in the court gave such jealousy to those who were best affected to his Majesty's person and government, that with grief I call to mind the difficulties and anxieties which that great prince felt ever afterwards to the end of his reign.

As to Queen Anne, I shall say no more, than that it is shrewdly suspected, that what her Majesty's ministry had the insolence to call her Majesty's measures, broke her Majesty's heart.

Let mankind therefore learn experience from so many misfortunes, and bear no longer to hear the worst things called by the best names; nor suffer hereafter the brightest and most conspicuous virtues of the wisest and most beneficent princes, to be sullied by actions which they do not countenance, nor even know of. Let them not permit the vices of the worst of servants to be laid at the door of the best of masters.

We, in this land, are very sure that we are blessed with the best King in the world, who desires of his people nothing but their own greatness and felicity: A prince, ready to prevent their wishes, and to give them more than their duty ought to suffer them to ask. Let us shew our duty to this our great and benevolent sovereign; let us endeavour to alleviate his cares, and ease him of all ungrateful burdens; let us take upon ourselves the heavy labour of cleansing the Augean stables, and of cutting off all the Hydra's heads at once.

The law tells us, that the King can do no wrong: And, I thank God, we have a King that would not, if he could. But the greatest servants to princes may do wrong, and often have done it; and the representatives of the people have an undoubted right to call them to an account for it.

In truth, every private subject has a right to watch the steps of those who would betray their country; nor is he to take their word about the motives of their designs, but to judge of their designs by the event.

This is the principle of a *Whig*, this the doctrine of liberty; and 'tis as much knavery to deny this doctrine, as it is folly to ridicule it. Some will tell us, that this is setting up the mob for statesmen, and for the censurers of states. The word *mob* does not at all move me, on this occasion, nor weaken the grounds which I go upon. It is certain, that the whole people, who are the publick, are the best judges, whether things go ill or well with the publick. It is true, that they cannot all of them see distant dangers, nor watch the motions, and guess the designs, of neighbouring states: But every cobbler can judge, as well as a statesman, whether he can fit peaceably in his stall; whether he is paid for his work; whether the market, where he buys his victuals, be well provided; and whether a dragoon, or a parish-officer, comes to him for his taxes, if he pay any.

Every man too, even the meanest, can see, in a publick and sudden transition from plenty to poverty, from happiness to distress, whether the calamity comes from war, and famine, and the hand of God; or from oppression, and mismanagement, and the villainies of men. In short, the people often judge better than their superiors, and have not so many biases to judge wrong; and politicians often rail at the people, chiefly because they have given the people occasion to rail: Those ministers who cannot make the people their friends, it is to be shrewdly suspected, do not deserve their friendship; it is certain, that much honesty, and small management, rarely miss to gain it. As temporal felicity is the whole end of government; so people will always be pleased or provoked, as that increases or abates. This rule will always hold. You may judge of their affection, or disaffection, by the burdens which they bear, and the advantages which they enjoy. Here then is a sure standard for the government to judge of the people, and for the people to judge of the government.

Blessed be God, and thanks to our sovereign, who has given us a ministry that makes all these cautions unnecessary; who will baffle all calumny, and remove all suspicion of guilt from themselves (if any such suspicion can be), by being foremost to pursue the guilty; and will, doubtless, take double vengeance upon any in publick authority (if any such can be found), who shall appear to have contributed to our publick misfortunes; and, in fine, will promote and encourage a rigorous and strict enquiry, wherever any suspicion is given that enquiry ought to be made.

Such conduct will disperse our fears, restore our credit, give bread to our poor, make trade and manufacture flourish again; and, in some measure, compensate for all our past evils, by giving us a lasting prospect of our future plenty, peace, and felicity.

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I am, &c.

No. 14. SATURDAY, January 28, 1721.

The unhappy State of despotick Princes, compared with the happy Lot of such as rule by settled Laws. How the latter, by abusing their Trust, may forfeit their Crown.
[Trenchard] ↩

[I-88]

SIR,

The best, the wisest, and the most courageous of despotick princes, have frequently lamented the unhappy condition into which their greatness betrayed them. Being often born in purple, and educated in pride and luxury, they seldom can have any feeling of the calamities which the rest of the world suffer. They are, besides, surrounded, for the most part, by the falsest, the most ambitious, and the basest of all men; with such men's eyes they must therefore see, with such men's ears they must likewise hear.

I cannot, in truth, see how, in the nature of things, it can be otherwise: For the mean fawning, the servile flatteries, the deceitful correspondences, the base ingratitude to old benefactors, and the slavish compliances with new friends, and all the other arts and treacheries, which are necessary to be put in practice, in order to rise in such courts, or indeed to become heads of parties even in free governments, make it almost impossible for a truly great or virtuous man to attain to those stations.

A good man will choose to live in an innocent obscurity, and enjoy the internal satisfaction resulting from a just sense of his own merit, and virtue, rather than aim at greatness, by a long series of unworthy arts, and ignoble actions; whilst the ambitious, the cruel, the rapacious, the false, the proud, the treacherous part of mankind, will be ever thrusting themselves forward, and endeavouring to sparkle in courts, as well as in the eyes of the unthinking crowd; and, to make themselves necessary, will be continually either flattering or distressing princes.

Nor can it be expected that men, who have been raised to power by such execrable means, should ever use it to the benefit of mankind, or to any good end. They will always proceed in the same steps where they began; and use, for the support of their greatness, the same vile measures by which they acquired their greatness, till they have at length sacrificed all things in heaven and earth to their ambition.

There is a fine passage, to this purpose, in the short history of the Emperor Aurelian by Vopiscus:

Et quaeritur quidem quae res malos principes faciat: Jam primum, licentia, deinde rerum copia, amici improbi, satellites detestandi, eunuchi avarissimi, aulici vel stulti et detestabiles, & (quod negari non potest) rerum publicarum ignorantia. Sed ego a patre meo audivi, Dioclesianum principem, jam privatum, dixisse, nihil esse difficilius quam bene imperare. Collegunt se quatuor vel quinque, atque unum consilium ad decipiendum principem capiunt: Dicunt quod probandum sit. Imperator, qui domi clausus est, vera non novit. Cogitur hoc tantum scire quod illi loquuntur: Facit iudices quos fieri non oportet; amovet a republica quos debebat obtinere. Quid multa? Ut Dioclesianus ipse dicebat, bonus, cautus, optimus venditur imperator. Histor. August. Scriptor. Tom. II. p. 531, 532.

“My friends,” (says the great Emperor Dioclesian, to those who advised him to resume the empire)

you little know how difficult an undertaking it is to perform the duty of a Roman emperor, and to reign well. The few who have access to him, will cabal and conspire together, and unite in their counsels to deceive and betray him. They will study how to flatter him, and never tell him what it is their duty to tell him, and what is his interest to know; but only what they think will best please him. They will shut him up, and, as it were, imprison him in his palace; and no one shall be admitted to his ear, but by their leave, and in their presence. So that he shall never know the condition of his affairs, or be informed of the cries of his people, or, indeed, of any thing but what they think fit to tell him: By their means he shall prefer undeserving men to the best posts of the empire, and disgrace the most worthy of his subjects, and the most devoted to his interest. But why should I labour this point any more, when even the good, the most discerning, when the best and ablest emperors are bought and sold?

But Dioclesian was an arbitrary prince, whose will was a law to his subjects. But it is far otherwise in limited monarchies, where the prince governs his people by fixed rules and known statutes; and where his faithful States have a right to represent freely, though humbly, their grievances to him, and by his authority to call to account, and punish, such betrayers as are before described.

Happy therefore is that prince, happy in the love of his subjects, happy in the just applause and dutiful acknowledgment of millions of his fellow-creatures, who derive their felicity from him! Thrice happy is that people, where the constitution is so poised and tempered, and the administration so disposed and divided into proper channels, that the passions and infirmities of the prince cannot enter into the measures of his government; where he has in his power all the means of doing good, and none of doing ill; where all beneficent and gracious actions are owned to flow from his clemency and goodness, and where inferior machines are answerable for all such conduct as may prejudice the publick.

Such a government does, in some sense, resemble that of heaven itself, where the sovereign disposer of all things can neither will nor do any thing but what is just and good: He is restrained, by the excellency of his own nature, from being the author of evil; and will call to a severe account all those, who would impute their own unrighteousness to his orders or influence.

Such is the monarchy of England, where the sovereign performs every act of his regal office by his authority, without the fatigue and anxiety of executing the troublesome parts of it in his person. The laws are chosen and recommended to him by his Parliament; and afterwards executed by his judges, and other ministers of justice: His great seal is kept by his chancellor: His naval power is under the direction of his high admiral: And all acts of state and discretion are presumed to be done by the advice of his council. All which officers are answerable for their misbehaviour, and for all actions done within their several provinces, which they have advised or could have prevented by giving their advice, or by making timely and humble remonstrances; which they are obliged to shew that they have done.

His leagues, his commands, and even his authentick speeches, are records. His high office consists in approving laws chosen by common consent; in executing those laws, and in being the publick guardian of the publick safety: And all private orders, which are inconsistent with these great duties, are not the orders of the crown; nor are the actions done in pursuance of them, the actions of the King, but the actions of those that do them. He can do no wrong himself, nor give authority to any one else to do wrong. Every act of his must be lawful, because all unlawful acts are not his. He can give no commands, as a man, which shall interfere with those which he gives as a King. His private will cannot control his publick will. He commands, as a King, his chancellor, and judges, to act according to his known laws; and no private orders to do otherwise can be valid.

The nation has ever acted upon these maxims, and preserved such a dutiful respect to the royal Majesty, as never to suffer any guilt to be laid to him; but has always heaped double vengeance upon such miscreants as would insinuate, that their crimes were approved or countenanced by their royal master.

Here is all the precaution which can be taken by human wisdom to make a happy prince and a happy people. The prince is restrained in nothing, but from doing mischief to his subjects, and consequently to himself; their true interest being ever the same: And the people can never have any motive to refuse just allegiance to their prince, whilst the ligaments of the constitution are preserved entire; that is, whilst parliaments are suffered to meet, and the courts of justice remain open, and such force is not used against them as dissolves all relation. All the subjects of such a prince highly honour, and almost worship, him. He has a vast revenue to support the splendor and magnificence of his court at home, and his royal dignity abroad: He has the power of disposing of all offices: All honours flow from him: His person is sacred, and not answerable for any events: He cannot be accountable for any wrong, which he is incapable of doing; and those who do it, shall be punished by his authority, even though it be supposed possible that they could, by false mis-representations, deceive him far enough to approve it.

The examples of Richard II who, as our histories tell us, was deposed by the States of his kingdom, and of the late King James, are no instances to disprove the truth of this assertion: For neither of them was deposed by his people before he first deposed himself. No champions for tyranny, or dogmatizers for unlimited dominion, have yet asserted, that a prince may not resign his crown by the consent of his people, when he declines to hold it any longer upon the conditions on which he first accepted it.

Suppose a prince, in any limited monarchy, should make a publick declaration to the States of his kingdom, that, Whereas the crown descended to him by the laws of that country, and that all the power which he was possessed of was conferred upon him by those laws; That he well knew that the preservation of those laws, which he had sworn to observe, and the general good of his people, were the sole considerations of his enjoying that high dignity; and yet, notwithstanding, he refused to hold it any longer, upon the terms upon which he had first accepted it, and sworn to observe; but that he now renounced that title, and would govern them hereafter by his sole will and pleasure: I say, if any should do this, the advocates for lawless power would do well to tell us, whether such a prince did not make as effectual a renunciation and resignation of his government, as if he disabled himself, and resigned it for his ease, or from the satiety of power. And if they allow that he may do all this by words spoken to express his intentions, I should be glad to know, from these men of distinctions, why he may not do it by a series of actions, which will more effectually discover and declare his inward intentions, and may therefore be more depended on than any words can possibly be?

I call upon the two famous universities of this land for an answer: And, till I have a full one, shall continue to believe, that what was done, in regard to the abdication of the late King James, was just and necessary to be done upon the fundamental principles of government; and, that all his successors since have been rightful and lawful Kings and Queens of this realm; and I particularly glory to say, that no prince has ever better deserved that high title, than our present great and glorious sovereign, King George.

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I am, &c.

No. 15. SATURDAY, February 4, 1721.

Of Freedom of Speech: That the same is inseparable from publick Liberty. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[I-96]

SIR,

Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as publick liberty, without freedom of speech: Which is the right of every man, as far as by it he does not hurt and control the right of another; and this is the only check which it ought to suffer, the only bounds which it ought to know.

This sacred privilege is so essential to free government, that the security of property; and the freedom of speech, always go together; and in those wretched countries where a man cannot call his tongue his own, he can scarce call any thing else his own. Whoever would overthrow the liberty of the nation, must begin by subduing the freedom of speech; a thing terrible to publick traitors.

This secret was so well known to the court of King Charles I that his wicked ministry procured a proclamation to forbid the people to talk of Parliaments, which those traitors had laid aside. To assert the undoubted right of the subject, and defend his Majesty's legal prerogative, was called disaffection, and punished as sedition. Nay, people were forbid to talk of religion in their families: For the priests had combined with the ministers to cook up tyranny, and suppress truth and the law. While the late King James, when Duke of York, went avowedly to mass; men were fined, imprisoned, and undone, for saying that he was a papist: And, that King Charles II might live more securely a papist, there was an act of Parliament made, declaring it treason to say that he was one.

That men ought to speak well of their governors, is true, while their governors deserve to be well spoken of; but to do publick mischief, without hearing of it, is only the prerogative and felicity of tyranny: A free people will be shewing that they are so, by their freedom of speech.

The administration of government is nothing else, but the attendance of the trustees of the people upon the interest and affairs of the people. And as it is the part and business of the people, for whose sake alone all publick matters are, or ought to be, transacted, to see whether they be well or ill transacted; so it is the interest, and ought to be the ambition, of all honest magistrates, to have their deeds openly examined, and publickly scanned: Only the wicked governors of men dread what is said of them; *Audivit Tiberius probra queis lacerabitur, atque percussus est.* The publick censure was true, else he had not felt it bitter.

Freedom of speech is ever the symptom, as well as the effect, of good government. In old Rome, all was left to the judgment and pleasure of the people; who examined the publick proceedings with such discretion, and censured those who administered them with such equity and mildness, that in the space of three hundred years, not five publick ministers suffered unjustly. Indeed, whenever the commons proceeded to violence, the great ones had been the aggressors.

Guilt only dreads liberty of speech, which drags it out of its lurking holes, and exposes its deformity and horror to day-light. Horatius, Valerius, Cincinnatus, and other virtuous and undesigning magistrates of the Roman commonwealth, had nothing to fear from liberty of speech. Their virtuous administration, the more it was examined, the more it brightened and gained by enquiry. When Valerius, in particular, was accused, upon some slight grounds, of

affecting the diadem; he, who was the first minister of Rome, did not accuse the people for examining his conduct, but approved his innocence in a speech to them; he gave such satisfaction to them, and gained such popularity to himself, that they gave him a new name; *inde cognomen factum Publicolae est*; to denote that he was their favourite and their friend. *Latae deinde leges. Ante omnes de provocatione, adversus magistratus ad populum*, Livii lib. ii. cap. 8.

The best princes have ever encouraged and promoted freedom of speech; they knew that upright measures would defend themselves, and that all upright men would defend them. Tacitus, speaking of the reigns of some of the princes above-mention'd, says with ecstasy, *Rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quae velis, & quae sentias dicere liceat*: A blessed time, when you might think what you would, and speak what you thought!

The same was the opinion and practice of the wise and virtuous Timoleon, the deliverer of the great city of Syracuse from slavery. He being accused by Demoenetus, a popular orator, in a full assembly of the people, of several misdemeanors committed by him while he was general, gave no other answer, than that he was highly obliged to the gods for granting him a request that he had often made to them; namely, that he might live to see the Syracusians enjoy that liberty of speech which they now seemed to be masters of.

And that great commander, M. Marcellus, who won more battles than any Roman captain of his age, being accused by the Syracusians, while he was now a fourth time consul, of having done them indignities and hostile wrongs, contrary to the League, rose from his seat in the Senate, as soon as the charge against him was opened, and passing (as a private man) into the place where the accused were wont to make their defence, gave free liberty to the Syracusians to impeach him: Which, when they had done, he and they went out of the court together to attend the issue of the cause: Nor did he express the least ill-will or resentment towards these his accusers; but being acquitted, received their city into his protection. Had he been guilty, he would neither have shewn such temper nor courage.

I doubt not but old Spencer and his son, all honest men in England. They dreaded to be called traitors, because they were traitors. And I dare say, Queen Elizabeth's Walsingham, who deserved no reproaches, feared none. Misrepresentation of publick measures is easily overthrown, by representing publick measures truly: When they are honest, they ought to be publickly known, that they may be publickly commended; but if they be knavish or pernicious, they ought to be publickly exposed, in order to be publickly detested.

To assert, that King James was a papist and a tyrant, was only so far hurtful to him, as it was true of him; and if the Earl of Strafford had not deserved to be impeached, he need not have feared a bill of attainder. If our directors and their confederates be not such knaves as the world thinks them, let them prove to all the world, that the world thinks wrong, and that they are guilty of none of those villainies which all the world lays to their charge. Others too, who would be thought to have no part of their guilt, must, before they are thought innocent, shew that they did all that was in their power to prevent that guilt, and to check their proceedings.

Freedom of speech is the great bulwark of liberty; they prosper and die together: And it is the terror of traitors and oppressors, and a barrier against them. It produces excellent writers, and encourages men of fine genius. Tacitus tells us, that the Roman commonwealth bred great and numerous authors, who writ with equal boldness and eloquence: But when it was enslaved, those great wits were no more. *Postquam bellatum apud Actium; atque omnem potestatem ad unum conferri pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere*. Tyranny had usurped the place of equality, which is the soul of liberty, and destroyed publick courage. The minds of men, terrified by unjust power, degenerated into all the vileness and methods of servitude:

Abject sycophancy and blind submission grew the only means of preferment, and indeed of safety; men durst not open their mouths, but to flatter.

Pliny the Younger observes, that this dread of tyranny had such effect, that the Senate, the great Roman Senate, became at last stupid and dumb: *Mutam ac sedentariam assentiendi necessitatem*. Hence, says he, our spirit and genius are stupified, broken, and sunk for ever. And in one of his epistles, speaking of the works of his uncle, he makes an apology for eight of them, as not written with the same vigour which was to be found in the rest; for that these eight were written in the reign of Nero, when the spirit of writing was cramped by fear; *Dubii sermonis octo scripset sub Nerone—cum omne studiorum genus paulo liberius & erectius periculosum servitus fecisset*.

All ministers, therefore, who were oppressors, or intended to be oppressors, have been loud in their complaints against freedom of speech, and the licence of the press; and always restrained, or endeavoured to restrain, both. In consequence of this, they have brow-beaten writers, punished them violently, and against law, and burnt their works. By all which they shewed how much truth alarmed them, and how much they were at enmity with truth.

There is a famous instance of this in Tacitus: He tells us, that Cremutius Cordus, having in his *Annals* praised Brutus and Cassius, gave offence to Sejanus, first minister, and to some inferior sycophants in the court of Tiberius; who, conscious of their own characters, took the praise bestowed on every worthy Roman, to be so many reproaches pointed at themselves: They therefore complained of the book to the Senate; which, being now only the machine of tyranny, condemned it to be burnt. But this did not prevent its spreading. *Libros cremandos censuere patres; sed manserunt occultati & editi*: Being censured, it was the more sought after. “From hence,” says Tacitus, “we may wonder at the stupidity of those statesmen, who hope to extinguish, by the terror of their power, the memory of their actions; for quite otherwise, the punishment of good writers gains credit to their writings:” *Nam contra, punitis ingeniis, gliscit auctoritas*. Nor did ever any government, who practised impolitick severity, get any thing by it, but infamy to themselves, and renown to those who suffered under it. This also is an observation of Tacitus: *Neque aliud [externi] reges, [aut] qui ea[dem] saevitiae usi sunt, nisi dedecus sibi, atque gloriam illis peperere*.

Freedom of speech, therefore, being of such infinite importance to the preservation of liberty, every one who loves liberty ought to encourage freedom of speech. Hence it is that I, living in a country of liberty, and under the best prince upon earth, shall take this very favourable opportunity of serving mankind, by warning them of the hideous mischiefs that they will suffer, if ever corrupt and wicked men shall hereafter get possession of any state, and the power of betraying their master: And, in order to do this, I will shew them by what steps they will probably proceed to accomplish their traitorous ends. This may be the subject of my next.

Valerius Maximus tells us, that Lentulus Marcellinus, the Roman consul, having complained, in a popular assembly, of the overgrown power of Pompey; the whole people answered him with a shout of approbation: Upon which the consul told them, “Shout on, gentlemen, shout on, and use those bold signs of liberty while you may; for I do not know how long they will be allowed you.”

God be thanked, we Englishmen have neither lost our liberties, nor are in danger of losing them. Let us always cherish this matchless blessing, almost peculiar to ourselves; that our posterity may, many ages hence, ascribe their freedom to our zeal. The defence of liberty is a noble, a heavenly office; which can only be performed where liberty is: For, as the same Valerius Maximus observes, *Quid ergo libertas sine Catone? non magis quam Cato sine libertate*.

No. 16. SATURDAY, February 11, 1721.

The Leaders of Parties, their usual Views. Advice to all Parties to be no longer misled.
[Gordon]↩

[I-104]

SIR,

The wise Sancho Pancha desired that his subjects, in the promised island, might be all blacks, because he would sell them. And this seems to be the first modest, and, as I think, the only reasonable desire of the leaders of all parties; for no man will be at the expence and fatigue of body and conscience, which is necessary to lead a faction, only to be disturbed and annoyed by them.

A very great authority has told us, [*] that “‘Tis worth no man's time to serve a party, unless he can now and then get good jobs by it.” This, I can safely say, has been the constant principle and practice of every leading patriot, ever since I have been capable of observing publick transactions; the *primum mobile*, the *alpha* and *omega* of all their actions: They all professed to have in view only the publick good; yet every one shewed he only meant his own; and all the while the great as well as little mob, the *procerum turba mobilium*, contended as fiercely for their leaders, as if their happiness or misery depended upon the face, the clothes, or title of the persons who robbed and betrayed them. Thus the highwayman said to the traveller, “Pray, Sir, leave your watch and money in my hands; or else, by G —, you will be robbed.”

Pound a fool in a mortar, and he comes out never the wiser; no experience will make the bulk of mankind so, or put them upon their guard; they will be caught over and over again by the same baits and stale stratagems: No sooner is a party betrayed by one head, but they rail at him, and set up another; and when this has served them in the same manner, they choose a third; and put full confidence in every one of them successively, though they all make the same use of their credulity; that is, put a price upon their calves' heads, and sell them; which, however, they have the less reason to complain of, because they would have all done the same.

I assure you, Sir, that I have not the least hopes in this letter to make men honester, but I would gladly teach them a little more wit; that is, I would advise any one who is contented to be sold, that he receive the money himself, and take good care of one, whatever becomes of his neighbours; as some discreet persons have lately done. Whatever bargains are struck up amongst the betrayers of their country, we must find the money, and pay both sides. How wise and advantageous would it then be for us, not to interest ourselves in the agreements or squabbles of ambitious men, who are building their fortunes upon our ruin? Once upon a time, a French ambassador desired an audience of the Grand Vizier, and in pompous French fustian notified to him, that his master had won a great victory over the Germans; to which that wise minister answered laconically, “What is it to me, if the whole herd of unbelievers, like dogs, mutually worry one another, so that my master's head be safe?”

This letter of advice is not intended for those who share already in the publick spoils, or who, like jackals, hunt down the lion's prey, that they may have the picking of the bones, when their masters are glutted. But I would persuade the poor, the injured, the distressed people, to be no longer the dupes and property of hypocrites and traitors. But very few can share in the wages of iniquity, and all the rest must suffer; the people's interest is the publick interest; it signifies the same thing: Whatever these betrayers of their country get, the people

must lose; and, what is worse, must lose a great deal more than the others can get; for such conspiracies and extortions cannot be successfully carried on, without destroying or injuring trade, perverting justice, corrupting the guardians of the public liberty, and the almost total dissolution of the principles of government.

Few can receive the advantages arising from public misfortunes; and therefore methinks few should desire them. Indeed, I can easily see how men of desperate circumstances, or men guilty of desperate crimes, can find their account in a general confusion of all things. I can see how those priests, who aim at tyranny, can find their interest in the loss of public liberty, in the restraint of the press, and in introducing a religion which destroys Christianity: There are reasons too at hand, why ambitious men should, *per fas & nefas*, grasp at the possession of immense wealth, high honours, and exorbitant power: But that the gentry, the body of the people in a free nation, should become tools and instruments of knaves and pick-pockets; should list themselves in their quarrels, and fight their battles; and this too, often at the expence, and by the violation of goodneighbourhood, near relation, private friendship: That men of great estates and quality, for small and trifling considerations, and sometimes none at all, should promote wild, villainous projects, to the ruin of themselves and country, by making precarious their own titles to their lives, estates, and liberties, is something so stupendous, that it must be thought impossible, if daily experience did not convince us that it is more than possible.

I have often seen honest Tories foolishly defending knavish Tories; and untainted Whigs protecting corrupt Whigs, even in instances where they acted against the principles of all Whigs; and by that means depreciated Whiggism itself, and gave the stupid herd occasion to believe that they had no principles at all, but were only a factious combination for preferment and power.

It is high time, at last, for the bubbles of all parties, for Whigs and Tories, for High Church and Low Church, to come to an *éclaircissement*, and no longer suffer themselves to be bought and sold by their drivers: Let them cease to be calves and sheep, and they will not be used like calves and sheep. If they can be persuaded now and then to confer notes, they will find, that for the most part the differences between them are not material; that they take only different measures to attain the same ends; that they have but one common interest, which is the interest of their country; and that is, to be freed from oppression, and to punish their oppressors: Whose practice, on the contrary, will always be to form parties, and blow up factions to mutual animosities, that they may find protection in those animosities.

Let us not therefore, for the time to come, suffer ourselves to be engaged in empty and pernicious contentions; which can only tend to make us the property and harvest of pickpockets: Let us learn to value an honest man of another party, more than a knave of our own: Let the only contention be, who shall be most ready to spew out their own rogues; and I will be answerable that all other differences will soon be at an end. Indeed, there had been no such thing as party now in England, if we had not been betrayed by those whom we trusted.

Through the villainy and knavish designs of leaders, this nation has lost several glorious opportunities of rescuing the constitution, and settling it upon a firm and solid basis: Let us not therefore, by the like practices, lose the present favourable offer: Let us make earnings of our misfortunes, and accept our calamities as an opportunity thrown into our laps by indulgent providence, to save ourselves; and not again foolishly and ungratefully reject and spurn at the intimations and invitations of heaven, to preserve our prince and country.

Machiavel tells us, that no government can long subsist, but by recurring often to its first principles; but this can never be done while men live at ease and in luxury; for then they cannot be persuaded to see distant dangers, of which they feel no part. The conjunctures

proper for such reformatations, are when men are awakened by misfortunes, and frightened with the approach and near view of present evils; then they will wish for remedies, and their minds are prepared to receive them, to hear reasons, and to fall into measures proposed by wise men for their security.

The great authority just quoted informs us what measures and expedients are necessary to save a state under such exigencies: He tells us, that as a tyranny cannot be established but by destroying Brutus; so a free government is not to be preserved but by destroying Brutus's sons. Let us therefore put on a resolution equal to the mighty occasion: Let us exert a spirit worthy of Britons, worthy of freemen who deserve liberty. Let us take advantage of the opportunity, while men's resentments boil high, whilst lesser animosities seem to be laid aside, and most men are sick of < party and party-leaders; and let us, by all proper methods, exemplarily punish the parricides, and avowed enemies of all mankind.

Let neither private acquaintance, personal alliance, or party combination, stand between us and our duty to our country: Let all those who have a common interest in the publick safety, join in common measures to defend the publick safety: Let us pursue to disgrace, destruction, and even death, those who have brought this ruin upon us, let them be ever so great, or ever so many: Let us stamp and deep engrave, in characters legible to all Europe at present, and to all posterity hereafter, what vengeance is due to crimes, which have no less objects in view than the ruin of nations, and the destruction of millions: They have made many bold, desperate, and wicked attempts to destroy us; let us strike one honest and bold stroke to destroy them.

Though the designs of the conspirators should be laid as deep as the center, though they should raise hell itself in their quarrel, and should fetch legions of votaries from thence to avow their proceedings; yet let us not leave the pursuit, till we have their skins and estates: We know, by past experience, that there are those amongst us, who will be glad to quit the chase, when our villains, like beavers, drop what they are usually hunted for; but the nation is now too much provoked, and too much injured, to suffer themselves to be again so betrayed.

We have heaven to direct us, a glorious King to lead us, and a wise and faithful Parliament to assist and protect us: Whilst we have such a King, and such a Parliament, every worthy Briton cries out aloud,

Manus haec inimica tyrannis
Ense petit placidam, sub libertate quietem.

T

I am, &c.

No. 17. SATURDAY, February 18, 1721.

What Measures are actually taken by wicked and desperate Ministers to ruin and enslave their Country. [Trenchard] ↩

[I-111]

SIR,

As under the best princes, and the best servants to princes alone, it is safe to speak what is true of the worst; so, according to my former promise to the publick, I shall take the advantage of our excellent King's most gentle government, and the virtuous administration of an uncorrupt ministry, to warn mankind against the mischiefs which may hereafter be dreaded from corrupt ones. It is too true, that every country in the world has sometimes groaned under that heavy misfortune, and our own as much as any; though I cannot allow it to be true, what Monsieur de Witt has long since observed, that the English court has always been the most thievish court in Europe.

Few men have been desperate enough to attack openly, and barefaced, the liberties of a free people. Such avowed conspirators can rarely succeed: The attempt would destroy itself. Even when the enterprize is begun and visible, the end must be hid, or denied. It is the business and policy of traitors, so to disguise their treason with plausible names, and so to recommend it with popular and bewitching colours, that they themselves shall be adored, while their work is detested, and yet carried on by those that detest it.

Thus one nation has been surrendered to another under the fair name of mutual alliance: The fortresses of a nation have been given up, or attempted to be given up, under the frugal notion of saving charges to a nation; and commonwealths have been trepanned into slavery, by troops raised or increased to defend them from slavery.

It may therefore be of service to the world, to shew what measures have been taken by corrupt ministers, in some of our neighbouring countries, to ruin and enslave the people over whom they presided; to shew by what steps and gradations of mischief nations have been undone, and consequently what methods may be hereafter taken to undo others: And this subject I rather choose, because my countrymen may be the more sensible of, and know how to value the inestimable blessing of living under the best prince, and the best established government in the universe, where we have none of these things to fear.

Such traitors will probably endeavour first to get their prince into their possession, and, like Sejanus, shut him up in a little island, or perhaps make him a prisoner in his court; whilst, with full range, they devour his dominions, and plunder his subjects. When he is thus secluded from the access of his friends, and the knowledge of his affairs, he must be content with such misrepresentations as they shall find expedient to give him. False cases will be stated, to justify wicked counsel; wicked counsel will be given, to procure unjust orders. He will be made to mistake his foes for his friends, his friends for his foes; and to believe that his affairs are in the highest prosperity, when they are in the greatest distress; and that publick matters go on in the greatest harmony, when they are in the utmost confusion.

They will be ever contriving and forming wicked and dangerous projects, to make the people poor, and themselves rich; well knowing that dominion follows property; that where there are wealth and power, there will be always crowds of servile dependents; and that, on the contrary, poverty dejects the mind, fashions it to slavery, and renders it unequal to any generous undertaking, and incapable of opposing any bold usurpation. They will squander away the publick money in wanton presents to minions, and their creatures of pleasure or of

burden, or in pensions to mercenary and worthless men and women, for vile ends and traitorous purposes.

They will engage their country in ridiculous, expensive, fantastical wars, to keep the minds of men in continual hurry and agitation, and under constant fears and alarms; and, by such means, deprive them both of leisure and inclination to look into publick miscarriages. Men, on the contrary, will, instead of such inspection, be disposed to fall into all measures offered, seemingly, for their defence, and will agree to every wild demand made by those who are betraying them.

When they have served their ends by such wars, or have other motives to make peace, they will have no view to the publick interest; but will often, to procure such peace, deliver up the strong-holds of their country, or its colonies for trade, to open enemies, suspected friends, or dangerous neighbours, that they may not be interrupted in their domestick designs.

They will create parties in the commonwealth, or keep them up where they already are; and, by playing them by turns upon each other, will rule both. By making the Guelfs afraid of the Ghibelines, and these afraid of the Guelfs, they will make themselves the mediums and balance between the two factions; and both factions, in their turns, the props of their authority, and the instruments of their designs.

They will not suffer any men, who have once tasted of authority, though personally their enemies, and whose posts they enjoy, to be called to an account for past crimes, though ever so enormous. They will make no such precedents for their own punishment; nor censure treason, which they intend to commit. On the contrary, they will form new conspiracies, and invent new fences for their own impunity and protection; and endeavour to engage such numbers in their guilt, as to set themselves above all fear of punishment.

They will prefer worthless and wicked men, and not suffer a man of knowledge or honesty to come near them, or enjoy a post under them. They will disgrace men of virtue, and ridicule virtue itself, and laugh at publick spirit. They will put men into employments, without any regard to the qualifications for those employments, or indeed to any qualifications at all, but as they contribute to their designs, and shew a stupid alacrity to do what they are bid. They must be either fools or beggars; either void of capacity to discover their intrigues, or of credit and inclination to disappoint them.

They will promote luxury, idleness, and expence, and a general depravation of manners, by their own example, as well as by connivance and publick encouragement. This will not only divert men's thoughts from examining their behaviour and politicks, but likewise let them loose from all the restraints of private and publick virtue. From immorality and excesses they will fall into necessity; and from thence into a servile dependence upon power.

In order to this, they will bring into fashion gaming, drunkenness, gluttony, and profuse and costly dress. They will debauch their country with foreign vices, and foreign instruments of vicious pleasures; and will contrive and encourage publick revels, nightly disguises, and debauched mummeries.

They will, by all practicable means of oppression, provoke the people to disaffection; and then make that disaffection an argument for new oppression, for not trusting them any further, and for keeping up troops; and, in fine, for depriving them of liberties and privileges, to which they are entitled by their birth, and the laws of their country.

If such measures should ever be taken in any free country, where the people choose deputies to represent them, then they will endeavour to bribe the electors in the choice of their representatives, and so to get a council of their own creatures; and where they cannot

succeed with the electors, they will endeavour to corrupt the deputies after they are chosen, with the money given for the publick defence; and to draw into the perpetration of their crimes those very men, from whom the betrayed people expect the redress of their grievances, and the punishment of those crimes. And when they have thus made the representatives of the people afraid of the people, and the people afraid of their representatives; then they will endeavour to persuade those deputies to seize the government to themselves, and not to trust their principals any longer with the power of resenting their treachery and ill-usage, and of sending honest and wiser men in their room.

But if the constitution should be so stubbornly framed, that it will still preserve itself and the people's liberties, in spite of all villainous contrivances to destroy both; then must the constitution itself be attacked and broken, because it will not bend. There must be an endeavour, under some pretence of publick good, to alter a balance of the government, and to get it into the sole power of their creatures, and of such who will have constantly an interest distinct from that of the body of the people.

But if all these schemes for the ruin of the publick, and their own impunity, should fail them; and the worthy patriots of a free country should prove obstinate in defence of their country, and resolve to call its betrayers to a strict account; there is then but one thing left for such traitors to do; namely, to veer about, and, by joining with the enemy of their prince and country, complete their treason.

I have somewhere read of a favourite and first minister to a neighbouring prince, long since dead, who played his part so well, that, though he had, by his evil counsels, raised a rebellion, and a contest for the crown; yet he preserved himself a resource, whoever got the better: If his old master succeeded, then this Achitophel, by the help of a baffled rebellion, ever favourable to princes, had the glory of fixing his master in absolute power: But, as his brave rival got the day, Achitophel had the merit of betraying his old master to plead; and was accordingly taken into favour.

Happy therefore, thrice happy, are we, who can be unconcerned spectators of the miseries which the greatest part of Europe is reduced to suffer, having lost their liberties by the intrigues and wickedness of those whom they trusted; whilst we continue in full enjoyment of ours, and can be in no danger of losing them, while we have so excellent a King, assisted and obeyed by so wise a Parliament.

T

I am, &c.

No. 18. SATURDAY, February 25, 1721.

The terrible Tendency of publick Corruption to ruin a State, exemplified in that of Rome, and applied to our own. [Trenchard] ↩

[I-117]

SIR,

Venalis civitas mox peritura si emptorum invenias! “Mercenary city, ripe for destruction, and just ready to deliver up thyself, and all thy liberties, to the first bidder, who is able to buy thee!” said the great King Jugurtha, when he was leaving Rome. Rome the nurse of heroes, the mistress of nations, the glory of empires, and the source, the standard, and pattern of virtue and knowledge, and, indeed, of every thing which ever was praise-worthy and valuable amongst men, was soon after fallen, fallen ten thousand thousand fathoms deep in the abyss of corruption and impiety: No more of that publick spirit appeared, that rendered it amiable, as well as terrible, to the world: It had conquered by its virtue more than its arms: It had commanded a willing subjection from the numerous nations, who readily acknowledged its superior genius and natural right to empire, and afterwards their own condition to be graced by the dignity of such a mistress.

“But” (says the Abbot Vertot)

about this time another nation seemed to appear upon the stage: A general corruption soon spread itself through all degrees of the state: Justice was publickly sold in the tribunals: The voices of the people went to the highest bidder; and the consuls, having obtained that great post by intrigues, or by bribery, never now made war but to enrich themselves with the spoils of nations, and often to plunder those very provinces, which their duty bound them to protect and defend. The provinces were obliged to supply these prodigious expences: The generals possessed themselves of the revenues of the commonwealth; and the state was weakened in proportion as its members became powerful. It was sufficient colour for rifling the people, and laying new imposts, if they did but give those exactions a new name.

There arose on a sudden, and as it were by enchantment, magnificent palaces, whose walls, roofs, and ceilings were all gilded: It was not enough that their beds and tables were all of silver; that rich metal must also be carved and adorned with *basso relievo*'s, performed by the most excellent artists. All the money of the state was in the hands of the great men, the publicans, and certain freed-men richer than their masters.

He says,

It would make a volume to represent the magnificence of their buildings, the richness of their habits, the jewels they wore, the prodigious number of slaves, freed-men, and clients, by which they were constantly attended, and especially the expence and profusion of their tables: They were not contented, if, in the midst of winter, the Falernian wine that was presented them was not strewed with roses; and cooled in vessels of gold in summer: Their side-boards groaned under the weight and load of plate, both silver and gold: They valued the feast only by the costliness of the dishes that were served up; pheasants must be fetched for them through all the dangers of the sea; and, to complete their corruption, after the conquest of Asia, they began to introduce women-singers and dancers into their entertainments.

“What defenders of liberty,” says he,

are here? What an omen of approaching slavery? None could be greater, than to see valour less regarded in a state than luxury? to see the poor officer languishing in the obscure honours of a legion, whilst the grandees concealed their cowardice, and dazzled the eyes of the publick, by the magnificence of their equipage, and the profusion of their expence.

But what did all this profusion and magnificence produce? Pleasure succeeded in the room of temperance, idleness took place of the love of business, and private regards extinguished that love of liberty, that zeal and warmth, which their ancestors had shewn for the interest of the publick; luxury and pride became fashionable; all ranks and orders of men tried to outvie one another in expence and pomp; and when, by so doing, they had spent their private patrimonies, they endeavoured to make reprisals upon the publick; and, having before sold every thing else, at last sold their country.

The publick treasure was squandered away, and divided amongst private men; and new demands made, and new taxes and burdens laid upon the people, to continue and support this extravagance. Such conduct in the great ones occasioned murmurings, universal discontent, and at last civil wars. The people threw themselves under different heads or leaders of parties, who all aspired to make themselves masters of the commonwealth, and of the publick liberty; and, during the struggle, Rome and all Italy was but one slaughter-house. Thousands, hundreds of thousands, fell sacrifices to the ambition of a few: Rivers of blood ran in the publick streets, and proscriptions and massacres were esteemed sport and pastime; till at length two thirds of the people were destroyed, and the rest made slaves to the most wicked and contemptible wretches of mankind.

Thus ended the greatest, the noblest state that ever adorned the worldly theatre, that ever the sun saw: It fell a victim to ambition and faction, to base and unworthy men, to parricides and traitors; and every other nation must run the same fortune, expect the same fatal catastrophe, who suffer themselves to be debauched with the same vices, and are actuated by the same principles and passions.

I wish I could say, that the Abbot Vertot's description of the Roman state, in its last declension, suited no other state in our own time. I hope that we ourselves have none of these corruptions and abuses to complain of: I am sure, if we have, that it is high time to reform them, and to prevent the dismal evils which they threaten. It is wild to think that there is any other way to prevent the consequence, without preventing the corruption, and the causes which produce it: Mankind will be always the same, will always act within one circle; and when we know what they did a thousand years ago in any circumstance, we shall know what they will do a thousand years hence in the same. This is what is called experience, the surest mistress and lesson of wisdom.

Let us therefore grow wise by the misfortunes of others: Let us make use of the Roman language, as a vehicle of good sense, and useful instruction; and not use it like pedants, priests, and pedagogues. Let their virtues and their vices, and the punishment of them too, be an example to us; and so prevent our miseries from being an example to other nations: Let us avoid the rocks upon which they have suffered shipwreck, and set up buoys and sea-marks to warn and guide posterity. In fine, let us examine and look narrowly into every part of our constitution, and see if any corruptions or abuses have crept or galloped into it. Let us search our wounds to the core, without which it is beyond the power of surgery to apply suitable remedies.

Our present misfortunes will rouse up our spirits, and, as it were, awaken us out of a deep lethargy. It is true, indeed, that they came upon us like a storm of thunder and lightning in a clear sky, and when the heavens seemed more serene; but the combustible matter was prepared before: Steams and exhalations had been long gathering from bogs and jakes; and

though they some time seemed dispersed and far removed by the heat of a warm sun, yet the firmament was all the while impregnating with fire and brimstone; and now, on a sudden, the clouds thicken, and look black and big on every side, and threaten us with a hurricane.

Let us therefore act the part of skilful pilots, and call all hands to labour at the oars and at the ropes: Let us begin with throwing all our luggage and useless trumpery over-board; then let us lower or take down all superfluous sails, to prevent the boat from being upset; and when we have done all in our power to save the ship, let us implore the assistance of heaven; and I doubt not but we shall out-ride the storm.

Quid times? Caesarem vehis. We have King George on board, and at the helm; the favourite of heaven, and the darling of all good men; who not only gives us full leave, but encourages and assists us, to save ourselves: He will not, like some weak princes amongst his predecessors, screen guilty great men, suffer the faults of others to be laid at his door, nor permit his authority to be prostituted to patronize criminals; nor interpose and stand between his people's just resentment and the punishment of worthless favourites, of which sort of cattle he has none; so that it is our own fault if we are not happy, great, and free.

Indeed, we owe that justice and duty to our great benefactor, as not only fairly and impartially to represent to him our circumstances, and how we came into them; but to do all in our power to put our constitution on such a bottom, if any thing be wanting to it, that he may have the honour and pleasure of reigning over a free and happy people. This will be to make our gift complete, in presenting him with a crown, not beset with any difficulties; a glorious crown, and not to mock him with one of thorns.

I shall soon, in some other letter, offer my thoughts from what sources these mischiefs have flowed upon us, and what methods I conceive are essentially necessary to retrieve them.

T

I am, &c.

No. 19. SATURDAY, March 4, 1721.

The Force of popular Affection and Antipathy to particular Men. How powerfully it operates, and how far to be regarded. [Gordon] ↩

[I-124]

SIR,

Opinion and reputation have often the greatest share in governing the affairs of the world. Misled by the great bias of superstition, every where found in human nature, or by ignorance and prejudices, proceeding as often from education itself, as from the want of it, we often take the appearance of things for things themselves, mistake our own imaginations for realities, our delusions for certainties and truth. A very small part of mankind is exempted from the delusive influence of omens, presages, and prognosticks.

These and the like superstitions enter into every scene of private and publick life: Gamesters throw away the cards and dice which they had lost by, and call for others, without any other preference than that they are not the same: Gardeners pretend to plant trees in a fortunate season: Many people will not marry, or do any business, but on certain days accounted prosperous: Even generals have had their fortunate and unfortunate times and seasons; and have often declined coming to battle, when the advantage was apparently on their side, merely because the day, or time of the day, was ill-boding.

Now, though all the whimsies of this kind have no foundation, but in opinion; yet they often produce as certain and regular events, as if the causes were adequate in their own nature to the events. The opinion of a physician or a medicine, does often effect the cure of a patient, by giving his mind such ease and acquiescence as can alone produce health. The opinion of a general, or of a cause, makes an army fight with double vigour; and a confidence in the wisdom and integrity of governors, makes a nation exert its utmost efforts for its own security; whereas by a distrust of its rulers, it often sinks into an universal indifference and despondency. The change alone of a general, or of a minister, has often changed the fortune and disposition of a people, even where there has been no superior endowments in the successor; for if they can be made to believe, that their misfortunes are owing to the ill conduct or ill genius of those who command them, the removal of the supposed cause of their misfortunes will inspire them with new courage and resolution; which are almost always rewarded with success and victory.

From hence the most famous legislators, princes and generals have endeavoured to instill into their followers an opinion of their being more than human, as being descended from, or related to, some god; or have asserted a familiar communion with the gods, a right to explain their wills, and to execute their commands. By these means they obtained an unlimited confidence in their abilities, a cheerful submission to their authority, an assurance of success under their conduct.

Where personal virtues and qualifications, by which the above pretensions are supported, are wanting, as in the successive eastern monarchies; other arts are used to gain admiration, to draw reverence to the persons of their princes, and blind obedience to their power. Those stately tyrants are, for the most part, shut up in their palaces, where every thing is august about them: They seldom shew themselves abroad to their people; and when they do, it is in the most awful and astonishing manner, attended by numerous guards, richly habited, and armed; whilst their own persons are covered with gold and pearl, and glittering with diamonds; and perhaps the horses and elephants they ride on are all in a blaze of gold and

precious stones.

The demure faces and deep silence of their ministers and attendants, contribute to spread the general awe; which is still heightened by the solemn clangor of trumpets, and other warlike sounds. All this prepares the gaping and enchanted multitude to swallow, with equal credulity and wonder, the plausible stories artfully given out amongst them, of the sublime and celestial qualities of their emperors, insomuch that even their very images are worshipped.

Indeed, in countries where liberty is established, and people think for themselves, all the above arts and pretences would be ridiculous, and such farce and grimace would be laughed at. The people have sense enough to know, that all this profusion and wealth are their own spoils; that they must labour and want, that others may be idle and abound; and they will see that their poverty is increased, and their miseries aggravated and mocked, by the pomp and luxury of their masters.

Amongst such people virtuous and just actions, or the appearance of virtuous and just actions, are the only ways of gaining esteem, reverence, and submission. They must see, or fancy they see, that the views and measures of their governors tend honestly and only to the publick welfare and prosperity, and they must find their own account in their obedience. A prince who deals thus with his people, can rarely be in danger from disaffected subjects, or powerful neighbours; his faithful people will be his constant guard; and, finding their own security in his government, will be always ready at his call to take effectual vengeance upon those who shall attempt to oppose or undermine his just authority.

However, the wisest and most free people are not without their superstitions and their foibles; and prudent governors will take advantage of them, and endeavour to apply them to the publick benefit. The Romans themselves had their *dies fastos & nefastos*, their fortunate and unfortunate generals; and sometimes empty names have been esteemed endowments and merit. Another Scipio was appointed by the Romans to demolish Carthage, which was first subdued by the great Scipio; and the Athenians called for another Phormio for their war at Lepanto.

Generals and ministers have been oftentimes disgraced, even by wise nations, for making unfortunate expeditions, or for unfortunate conduct in directing the publick affairs, when there was no deceit or want of virtue, in those generals and ministers; for if a nation or an army take an universal, though an unreasonable disgust at one or a few men, it is ridiculous to bring his or their interest in balance with the satisfaction and affections of millions, or much less than millions. Prudent princes therefore have been always extremely cautious how they employed men in any considerable station, who were either odious or contemptible, even though it happened that they were innocently and unfortunately so.

Indeed this can seldom happen; for a virtuous and modest man will never thrust himself into the service of his prince, nor continue longer in it than he is acceptable to the people: He will know that he can do no real good to a country, which will receive no good at his hands; that the publick jealousy will misrepresent his whole conduct, render his best designs abortive, his best actions useless; that he will be a clog and a dead weight upon the affairs of his prince; and that the general distaste taken at him, will, by degrees, make his prince the object of general distaste.

But when ministers have deservedly incurred the general hatred; when they have been known to have employed their whole power and interest in opposition to the publick interest; when, being trusted with a nation's affairs, they have desperately projected, and obstinately pursued, schemes big with publick ruin; when they have weakened the authority of their prince to strengthen their own, and endangered his safety for the security of their own heads,

and the protection of their crimes; when they have thriven by the publick ruin; and, being the known authors of universal calamities, have become the proper objects of such universal detestation, as not to have one real friend in their country, or one sincere advocate even amongst the many that they have bribed to be so: If, after all this, they will go on to brave a nation which they have before ruined, confidently continue at the head of affairs, and obstinately persist to overturn their king and country; this, I say, is aggravating their crimes, by an insolence which no publick resentment can equal.

This was the case of England under the influence of Gaveston and the two Spencers; and this was the case of the Netherlands under the administration of the Duke of Alva; which ministers severally ruined their masters and their country. Nations under such woeful conduct, and unlucky constellations, are often driven into revolts, or lose all courage to defend themselves, either against the attacks from their native traitors, or foreign invaders.

This is famously verified in the story of the Decemviri, a college of magistrates created by the Romans for one year, to compile and establish a body of laws. This term was thought long enough, and undoubtedly was so; but these designing men, under the plausible colour of adding two more tables to the ten already finished and published got their sitting prolonged for another year: Nor at the expiring of that, though the two tables were added, did they dissolve themselves; but, in defiance of the people who chose them, and now every where murmured against them, as well as suffered by them, continued their authority.

The city of Rome saw itself under a new government; *Deploratur in perpetuum libertas, nec vindex quisquam extitit, aut futurus videtur*: The constitution was gone; and though all men complained, yet none offered to help. Whilst the Romans were thus desponding at home, they were despised abroad: The neighbouring nations were provoked, that dominion should still subsist in a city, where liberty subsisted no longer. The Roman territories therefore were invaded by the Sabines and Aequians. This terrified the faction; but I do not find that it troubled the people, who neither feared nor hated foreign invaders half so much as their own domestick traitors. The desperate parricides determined rather to sacrifice their country, than lose their places; so to war they went, but with miserable success. They managed the war no better than they did the state; and had no more credit in the camp than in the city: The soldiers would not fight under the detested leaders, but ran away before the enemy, and suffered a shameful rout.

Nor did this loss and disgrace, at once unusual and terrible to Rome, at all move the traitors to resign: They went on misgoverning and debauching, till, the measures of their wickedness being full, they were driven out of their posts by the vigour of the state, and the assistance of the people. The two chief traitors were cast into prison, the rest into banishment.

This soon happily changed the state of affairs, and the spirit of the people; who, having got at length an honest administration, and governors whom they loved and trusted, quickly beat the enemy out of the territories of Rome, that very enemy, who in other circumstances had beaten them.

G

I am, &c.

No. 20. SATURDAY, March 11, 1721.

Of publick Justice, how necessary to the Security and Well-being of a State, and how destructive the Neglect of it to the British Nation. Signal Instances of it. [Trenchard] [↪](#)

[I-131]

SIR,

Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos; to pay well, and hang well, to protect the innocent, and punish the oppressors, are the hinges and ligaments of government, the chief ends why men enter into societies. To attain these ends, they have been content to part with their natural rights, a great share of their substance and industry: To quit their equality, and submit themselves to those who had before no right to command them: For this millions live willingly in an innocent and safe obscurity, to make a few great men, and enable them, at their expence, to shine in pomp and magnificence.

But all this pageantry is not designed for those who wear it. They carry about them the dignity of the commonwealth: The honours which they receive are honours paid to the publick, and they themselves are only the pillars and images upon which national trophies are hung; for when they are divested of these insignia, no more respect and homage is due to them, than what results from their own virtue and merit. Yet such is the depravity of human nature, that few can distinguish their own persons from the ensigns and ornaments which they wear, or their duty from their dignity: There seems to be a judgment upon all men in certain stations, that they can never think of the time when they have been, or may again be, out of them.

A good magistrate is the brightest character upon earth, as being most conducive to the benefit of mankind; and a bad one is a greater monster than ever hell engendered: He is an enemy and traitor to his own species. Where there is the greatest trust, the betraying it is the greatest treason. The fascies, the judge, and the executioner, do not make the crime, but punish it; and the crime is never the less, though it escape the vengeance due to it. Alexander, who robbed kingdoms and states, was a greater felon than the pirate whom he put to death, though no one was strong enough to inflict the same punishment upon him. It is no more just to rob with regiments or squadrons, than by single men or single ships; for unless we are determined by the justice of the action, there can be no criterion, boundary, or fixed mark, to know where the thief ends, and the hero begins.

Must little villains then submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state?

Shall a poor pick-pocket be hanged for filching away a little loose money; and wholesale thieves, who rob nations of all that they have, be esteemed and honoured? Shall a roguery be sanctified by the greatness of it; and impunity be purchased, by deserving the highest punishment? This is inverting the nature of things, confounding virtue and vice, and turning the world topsy-turvy.

Men who are advanced to great stations, and are highly honoured and rewarded at the publick cost, ought to look upon themselves as creatures of the publick, as machines erected and set up for publick emolument and safety. They ought to reflect, that thousands, ten thousands of their countrymen, have equal, or perhaps greater, qualifications than themselves; and that blind fortune alone has given them their present distinction: That the estate of the freeholder, the hazard of the merchant, and the sweat of the labourer, all

contribute to their greatness; and when once they can see themselves in this mirror, they will think nothing can be too grateful, nothing too great or too hazardous to be done for such benefactors.

They will consider, that no uncommon application, or distinguishing abilities, will justify this superiority; that many of their fellow-subjects, possessing equal merit, take much more pains for much less considerations; nay, that the business of their own employment is mostly executed by inferior officers, for small rewards; and, consequently, that their great appointments are given to secure their fidelity, and put them far above and out of the reach of bribery and corruption: They ought not to have a thought which is mean or little: Their minds are not to be in the dirt, whilst their heads are in the clouds: They ought to infuse and inspire virtue, resolution, and publick spirit, into the inactive mass, and be illustrious examples of every great and noble quality.

But if they can sink so low beneath themselves; if they can so far descend from the dignity of their characters; if they can choose so to grovel upon the earth, when they may ascend to the heavens; and be so poor and abject, as to combine and confederate with pick-pockets and common rogues; betray their most solemn trusts, and employ all their power and credit to destroy that people, whom they have every motive which heaven and earth can suggest to protect and defend: Then, I say, such wretches ought to be the scorn and detestation of every honest man; and new kinds of vengeance, new tortures, and new engines of misery ought to be invented to make their punishments as much exceed common punishments, as their crimes exceed those of the worst sort of common malefactors, and as their rewards surpass those of the best and worthiest citizens in other stages of life and circumstances of fortune.

There is no analogy between the crimes of private men and those of publick magistrates: The first terminate in the death or sufferings of single persons; the others ruin millions, subvert the policy and oeconomy of nations, and create general want, and its consequences, discontents, insurrections, and civil wars, at home; and often make them a prey to watchful enemies abroad. But amongst the crimes which regard a state, *peculatus*, or robbing the publick, is the greatest; because upon the careful and frugal administration of the public treasure the very being of the commonwealth depends. It is what my Lord Coke calls it, *tutela pacis, & firmamentum belli*; and the embezzling of it is death by the civil law, and ought to be so by all laws. It is the worst sort of treason, as it draws all other sorts of treason after it: It disconcerts all the measures of government, and lays the ground-work of seditions, rebellions, and all kinds of publick miseries.

But these, as well as all other crimes which affect the publick, receive their aggravation from the greatness of the persons who commit them; not only as their rewards are larger, and their temptations less, but as their example recommends, and, as it were, authorizes and gives a licence to wickedness. No one dares to punish another for an offence which he knows, and the other knows, that he every day commits himself. One great man, who gets an hundred thousand pounds by cheating the publick, must wink and connive at ten others who shall wrong it of ten thousand pounds each; and they at ten times as many more, who shall defraud it of one thousand; and so on in lesser progression, till the greatest part of the publick revenue is swallowed and devoured by great and little plunderers.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to the security and happiness of any state, to punish, in the most exemplary manner, all those who are entrusted by it, and betray that trust: It becomes the wisdom of a nation, to give ten thousand pounds to purchase a head, which cheats it of six-pence. Valerius Maximus calls severity the sure preserver and avenger of liberty: It is as necessary for the preventing of tyranny, as for the support of it. After the death of the sons of Brutus, executed by the command of their own father, and in his presence, we

hear no more of any conspirators in Rome to restore the Tarquins; and had Marius, Caesar, and other corrupters of the people, met with the same punishment, that glorious commonwealth might have subsisted to this day. Lenity to great crimes is an invitation to greater; whereas despair of pardon, for the most part, makes pardon useless. If no mercy were shewn to the enemies of the state, no state would be overturned; and if small or no punishment be inflicted upon them, no state can be safe.

Happy, happy had it been for this unhappy people, if these important and essential maxims of government had been duly regarded by our legislators at the Revolution (and I wish too, that the sincere and hearty endeavours of our present legislators to punish the betrayers of the late unfortunate Queen had met the desired success): For I doubt that all our misfortunes have flowed from these sources, and are owing to these disappointments.

All Europe saw, and all good men in it lamented to see, a mighty nation brought to the brink of destruction by weak and con-temptible instruments; its laws superseded, its courts of justice corrupted, its legislature laid aside, its liberties subverted, its religion overturned, and a new one almost introduced, and a violent and despotick government assumed, which was supported by legions and an armed force: They saw this brave people rise under the oppression, and, like Antaeus, gather strength by their late fall: They called for the assistance of the next heir to the crown, to avenge himself and them; and when they had, by his assistance, removed the usurpation, they rewarded him with the immediate possession of the crown. But when they had all the desired success, and subdued all that they had fought with; they soon found, that, by the treachery and corruption of their leaders, they had lost all that they had fought for.

Instead of compleating their deliverance, and punishing the authors of their calamities, and sacrificing them to the Manes of their once lost liberties; upon the most diligent search, there was not a guilty person to be found; not one who had contributed to their misfortunes. Three kingdoms had been undone by mal-administra-tion, and no body had a hand in it. This tergiversation gave fresh heart and courage to the despairing faction: Some imputed it to weakness and fear; others to a consciousness of guilt for what we had done; and all cried out aloud, that if there were no criminals, there could be no crimes; whilst all honest men stood amazed and covered with shame and confusion at these proceedings.

All the while our new betrayers rioted in their sun-shine, laughed at the unseasonable simplicity and folly of a few Whimsi-cals, who did not know what a revolution was good for: They would not make a rod for themselves: On the contrary, numberless were their projects and stratagems to amass riches, and increase their power. They encouraged and protected a general prodigality and corruption, and so brought the kingdom into the greatest necessities; then took advantage of those necessities: They got publick money into their hands, and then lent that money to the publick again for great premiums, and at great interest, and afterwards squandered it away to make room for new projects: They made bargains for themselves, by borrowing in one capacity what they lent in another; and, by a use of their prior intelligence, and knowledge of their own intentions, they wholly governed the national credit, and raised and depressed it at their pleasure, and as they saw their advantage; by which means they beggared the people, and mortgaged all the lands and the stock of the kingdom, though not (like the righteous Joseph) to their master, but to themselves.

Thus the Revolution and the principles of liberty ran backwards again. The banished Tarquin conceived new hopes, and made new attempts for a restoration: All who had shared in the benefits of the former wicked administration; all those who had ever been avowed enemies to an equal government, and impartial liberty; all the grim inquisitors, who had assumed an uncontrollable sovereignty over the free and ungovernable mind, men who have ever pretended a divine right to roguery, united in his interest: With these joined the riotous,

the debauched, the necessitous, the poor deluded bigots, as well as all such who had not received rewards equal to their fancied merit, and would not bear to see others revel in advantages, which their own ambition and covetousness had before swallowed for themselves.

This formidable party combined against the new established government, made earnings of the miscarriages and corruptions of those miscreants, who, by their vile and mercenary conduct, betrayed the best prince and best cause in the world, and several times had almost overturned the new restored liberty; but that the gratitude and personal love of the people to that great prince, and the fresh and lively remembrance of the evils which they have suffered, or had been like to have suffered, from the abdicated family, still preserved him upon the throne, in spite of all attempts to the contrary. However, proper advantages were not taken, neither in this nor the following reign, from the many defeats of this restless faction, to settle the Revolution upon such a basis, as not to be shaken but together with the foundations of the earth. There was always a lion in the way; the figure or the number of the conspirators, or the difficulty of discovery, or their interest, alliance, or confederacy with men in power, were the reasons whispered; but the true one was concealed, namely, that one guilty person durst not heartily prosecute another: The criminals had stories to tell, secrets not to be divulged; for an innocent and virtuous man alone dares undertake to bring a great villain to deserved punishment: None but a Brutus could have destroyed Brutus's sons.

Nothing was ever done to rectify or regulate the education of youth, the source of all our other evils; but schools of literature were suffered to continue under the direction of the enemies to all sound literature and publick virtue: Liberty, being deserted by her old friends, fell of course into the hands of her enemies; and so liberty was turned upon liberty: By these means the discontents were fomented, the evils still increased, and the conspirators still went on. They had now got new tools to work with, just forged, and sent glowing hot from the universities: A new generation arose and appeared upon the publick stage, who had never seen or felt the misfortunes which their fathers groaned under, nor believed more of them than what they had learned from their tutors: So that all things seemed prepared for a new revolution; when we were surprized by a voice from heaven, which promised us another deliverance.

We have at last, by the bounteous gift of indulgent providence, a most excellent King, and a wise and uncorrupt Parliament; and yet—but what shall I say, or what shall be left unsaid? I will go on. We have a prince, I say, who is possessed of every virtue which can grace and adorn a crown; a Parliament too, than whom England has never chosen one better disposed to do all those things which every honest man in it wished, and called for; and yet—by the iniquity of the times, or the iniquities of particular men, we are still to expect our deliverance; though I hope that we shall not expect it long.

Publick corruptions and abuses have grown upon us: Fees in most, if not in all, offices, are immensely increased: Places and employments, which ought not to be sold at all, are sold for treble values: The necessities of the publick have made greater impositions unavoidable, and yet the publick has run very much in debt; and as those debts have been increasing, and the people growing poor, salaries have been augmented, and pensions multiplied; I mean in the last reign, for I hope that there have been no such doings in this.

Our common rogues now scorn little pilferings, and in the dark; 'tis all publick robbery, and at noon-day; nor is it, as formerly, for small sums, but for the ransom of kings, and the pay of armies: Figures of hundreds and thousands have lost their use in arithmetick: Plumbs [*] alone are thought worth gathering; and they no longer signify hundreds of thousands, but millions: One great man, who is said in a former reign to have plundered a million and a half, has made his successors think as much to be their due too: Possession of great sums is

thought to give a title to those sums; and the wealth of nations is measured out and divided amongst private men, not (as by the West-India pirates) with shovels, but by waggons.

The dregs of the people, and the scum of the Alley, can buy Italian and German sovereigns out of their territories; and their levees have been lately crowded with swarms of dependent princes, like Roman consuls, and Eastern monarchs; and I am told, that some of them have been seen ascending to, and descending from, their chariots, while they leaned upon the necks of prostrate grandees. Oh liberty! stop thy flight. Oh virtue! be something more than a name and empty sound: Return, oh return! inspire and assist our illustrious legislators in the great work which they have so generously undertaken! Assist, assist, if it be but to save those who have always devoutly worshipped thee, and have paid constant incense at thy altars.

But what shall be done! Where is the remedy for all these evils? We hope for it, we expect it, we see it; and we call for it, from the healing hands of our most gracious King, and his dutiful Parliament. There is a crisis in the health of governments, as well as of private persons. When distempers are at the worst, they must mend, or the patient die: And when the case is desperate, bold and resolute methods must be taken, or he will be suffered to die, for fear of his dying. What then is the remedy? We must begin with letting out some of our adulterate and corrupt blood, one drop of which is enough to contaminate the ocean: We must first take full vengeance of all those whom we can discover to be guilty, and use them as citizens do shoplifters; that is, make those who are caught pay for all that is stolen. Let us not, oh let us not suffer the sins of all Israel to be at this time of day laid upon the head of the scape-goat!

When we have taken this first and necessary step, to prevent an apoplexy or malignant eruptions, let us prescribe strong emeticks, proper sudorificks, and effectual purgatives, to bring up or throw off the noxious juices and morbifick matter that oppresses us, and so wholly to eradicate the causes of our distemper. But, above all, let us avoid the beginning with lenitives and palliating medicines, which will only cover and foment our evils, make them break out more violently, at last perhaps turn into dangerous swellings and epidemical plague sores; and by such means spread a general infection: Let us not suffer any of our great or little rogues to escape publick vengeance.

When we have, by these vigorous methods, removed the peccant humors which are the springs and sources of our distemper, let us use proper applications, gentle remedies, and wholesome diet, to correct and rectify the mass of remaining blood, to invigorate and renew our constitution, restore it to its first principles, and make it sound and active again: Let us see where it abounds, and where it wants; whether the sanguine, the phlegmatick, or the bilious predominates, and reduce them all to a proper balance: Let us look back and examine strictly, by what neglect, by what steps and gradations of intemperance or folly, we are brought into the present condition, and resolve to avoid them for the future.

Let us try no more projects, no more knavish experiments; let us have no more quacking, no more to do with empiricks. Let us act openly and above-board for the publick interest, and not hang out false colours, to catch unwary preys. Let us plainly tell at first what we mean, and all that we mean: If it be honest and advantageous, every good man will defend it, and assist in it; if otherwise, it ought not to be defended at all.

This is the way, and the only way, to preserve and continue the inestimable blessing of our present establishment: Let the people see the benefit of the change, and there is no fear that they will be against their own interest; but state-quacks may harangue and swear till they are black in the face, before they will persuade any one to believe that he is in perfect health, who feels himself sick at heart. Men in such circumstances are always restless, always

tumbling about from side to side, changing every posture for present ease; and so often bring death upon themselves, by trying preposterous remedies to avoid it.

T

I am, &c.

No. 21. SATURDAY, March 18, 1721.

A Letter from John Ketch, Esq. asserting his Right to the Necks of the over-grown Brokers. [Gordon] ↩

[I-144]

SIR,

In a general call for justice from an injured nation, I beg leave to put in my voice, being myself an eminent sufferer in the ill fate of my country, which no otherwise gains than as I do, by the exaltation of rogues. Our interests, in this respect, are the same. And as it would be very hard that the blood-suckers of the people should not make the people some amends, by restoring the blood that they have sucked; so it would be as hard that I, who am the finisher of justice, should not have justice done me.

From my best observation upon publick affairs, last summer, I promised myself that I should certainly have full hands this last winter; I therefore applied myself with singular diligence to gain the utmost perfection and skill in the calling wherein God and the law hath placed me: For, I did not think it at all laudable, or agreeable to a good conscience, to accept a post, without proper talents and experience to execute the same, however customary and common such a practice might be: And therefore, without presuming to follow the illustrious example of my betters, in this matter, I thought it became me to become my post. In truth, Sir, if this maxim had prevailed, where it should have prevailed; and if my brethren in place had as well understood, and as honestly executed, their several truths, as I do mine, we should have had a very different face of things, nor would I have had occasion for journeymen.

Thus, Sir, I was firmly and honestly resolved, that the execution of justice should not stick with me, where-ever else it stuck. Moreover, at a time when every thing, but honesty, bore a double price, I bought up a great quantity of silken halters, for the sole use and benefit of any of our topping pick-pockets, who should be found to have noble or genteel blood about them, N. B. This compliment was not intended for the directors, who must expect to wear the same valedictory cravat which is worn by small felons, who come under my hands every Sessions: But I have set apart a good round quantity of these delicate silken turnovers for the benefit and decoration of divers worthy gentlemen, whom I have marked out for my customers in the — — —; whom it would not be good breeding in me, as yet, to name; but I hope they will prove rare chaps.

I did likewise bespeak, at least, a dozen curious axes, spick and span new, with rare steel edges; the fittest that could be made, for dividing nobly betwixt the head and the shoulders of any dignified and illustrious customer of mine, who has, either by birth or by place, a right to die at the east end of the town.

Now, Sir, it unluckily happens, that I cannot pay for any of the implements of national justice, and of my trade, till I have used them: And my creditors, though they own me to be an honest man, yet, wanting faith in all publick officers, begin to fear that I shall never pay for them at all. It is, in truth, a sensible discouragement to them and me, that I have so little to do this winter, when there appear'd so much to be done in my way. Sure never poor deserving hangman had such a shameful vacation!

As having a post, I have consequently the honour of being a true member of the Church of England, as by law established; and therefore under these disappointments I comfort myself with some patience, and more beer. I have, besides that, this further consolation, that

if our canary birds find wings to escape me, neither the blame nor the shame shall lie at my door.

You see, Sir, I have merit; and yet you see I labour under discouragements enough to scare any successor of mine from accepting this neglected and pennyless post, till he has a sufficient sum of money in hand paid, and a good pension for life, as is usual upon less occasions, together with ample provision for his children after him.

But, in spite of all these discouragements, I am determined to live in hopes of some topping customers before the Sessions is ended: The publick and I must certainly get at last: God knows we have been eminent sufferers; we have been defrauded on every side.

Being bred a butcher, I can comfort my said customers with an assurance, that I have a delicate and ready hand at cutting and tying; so let them take heart, the pain is nothing, and will be soon over; I am only sorry 'tis so long a coming: No man can be pleased with being defrauded of his just dues.

I have one consolation, Sir, which never leaves me; namely, that though my post has not been so profitable a one as for some time past it should have been, yet it has been a safe one. I doubt not but many of my brethren in place would be glad if they could say as much. I am moreover of opinion, that my post has, for a year past, been one of the most honest and creditable posts in England; nor would I change circumstances or character with some that hold their heads very high, and may hold them higher still before I have done with them. I am sure it cannot be denied, that the hangman of London has for the above space of time been a reputable officer, in comparison. The truth is, that they have got more money than I, but I have more reputation than they; and I hope soon to go snacks with some of them in their money.

I know that knaves of state require a great deal of form and ceremony before they are committed to my care; so that I am not much surprized, that I have not yet laid my hands upon certain exalted criminals. I hope, however, that, when they come, a good number will come at once. But there is a parcel of notorious and sorry sinners, called *brokers*: Fellows of so little consequence, that few of them have reputation enough to stand candidates for my place, were the same vacant (which God forbid!), and yet rogues so swollen with guilt, that poor Derwentwater and Kenmure (my two last customers) were babes and petty larceners to them. Now these are the hang-rogues with whom I would be keeping my hand in use.

Sir, I have been with counsel about them, and my lawyer stands amazed that I have not had them already: "But," says he, "Mr. Ketch, I foresaw that the brokers were only the pimps of great rogues, who were themselves the pimps of greater: So that were these vermin to go up to Tyburn, they would draw many more after them, who would likewise draw others. So, depend upon it, the lion, if it can, will save the jackal. And hence it proceeds, Mr. Ketch, that though it be hard, yet it is not strange, that those rogues, whom all men wish in your hands, are not yet there."

He then told me how the brokers have violated that act of Parliament, which allows them but two shillings and sixpence for transacting a hundred pounds stock, by taking, or rather exacting twenty shillings, and sometimes five pounds. I hope, when I come to strip them, or to commute for stripping them, that I shall be allowed to mete out to them the same measure.

He told me likewise, that during the reign of roguery, they sold for no body but the directors, and their betters; whereas they were obliged in duty to have sold for all men alike, who employed them. Their office is an office of trust, as well as that of the directors. They act, or ought to act, under the restrictions of an act of Parliament, under the sacred obligation of an oath, and under the ties and penalties of a bond; by all which they are obliged to

discharge their duty impartially betwixt man and man, and for one man as soon as another. Now it is well known, that they broke their trust to the publick; that they ceased to be common and indifferent officers in the Alley; and yet retaining the name and pretence of their office (by which they also retained the power of deceiving), they became only spies and liars for the directors and their managers, and sellers for them only. They were therefore criminals of the first class, and principal agents in the publick mischief; for, had they not acted thus for one side alone, the directors could not have sold out much at high prices, nor would others have bought in at those prices: So that they are to be considered not only as the instruments of greater traitors, though in that character they are liable to be hanged; but as wilful and deliberate confederates with those traitors; and, consequently, merit every punishment which those higher traitors merit.

My counsel said too, that there were some crimes of so high and malignant a nature, that, in the perpetration of them, all accessories were considered as principals; that those who held a man till he was murdered, were murderers; that those who voluntarily held a candle to others, who robbed a house, were themselves robbers; and that in committing of treason, all are traitors who have had a hand in that treason.

He said, that the brokers were free agents, independent of all companies, and no more attached, in point of duty, to the South-Sea, than to any other; that being *sui juris* (as he called it) they could not excuse their wicked dealings by the pretended commands and authority of any superiors, as some of the South-Sea officers might plead, for that the directors were not their superiors; that their rogueries therefore were voluntary and deliberate rogueries; and that having wilfully sinned with the directors, they ought in justice to suffer with the directors, and hang with them.

He told me, that having share of the gain of villainy with the directors, they ought to have their share of the halter too. They transacted great sums for themselves; though the law, which established them, enacts, that they shall neither buy nor sell for themselves; which is highly reasonable; for how can any man transact honestly for another, whilst he is selling to him his own stock?

He said, that they deceived every man into his own ruin; and ruined the nation, to enrich the directors and themselves: They sold their own stock, and that of the directors, under false and fictitious names, contrary to the obligation of their bond to the City, which obliges them to declare the name of the seller to the buyer, as well as the name of the buyer to the seller; for they knew that no man would have been willing to buy, had he known that the brokers and directors were in haste to sell. Thus they used false dice, and blinded men's eyes, to pick their pockets. "And surely, Mr. Ketch," says the counsellor, "if he who picks a man's pocket is to be hanged, the rogues that pick the pockets of the whole country, ought to be hanged, drawn, and quartered."

But what was most remarkable of all in what the counsellor told me, and what indeed gives me most heart, is, that unless the brokers are hanged, it will be scarce possible that any body else should be hanged. If this be true, their doom is certain, and I shall be able to support my squireship before Easter: For, surely, we shall never save mighty knaves, for the sake of saving little ones; and if so be it is determin'd to gratify the nation with a competent store of hanging and beheading, certainly we must do every thing necessary thereunto.

"Now," says my counsel, "if the brokers do not discover the secrets which they best know, but which they will never discover, if they can save their necks and purses without doing it; then, I doubt me, justice will be impotent for want of evidence. But if they find that they can save nothing by their silence, they will tell all to save something. They are hardened rogues; and, by false oaths, and under-hand dealing, will screen all that are as bad as

themselves; but gripe them well, and ten to one but you squeeze the truth out of them.”

“For all which reasons, Mr. Ketch,” continued he, “I hope soon to give you joy of the brokers, as well as of better customers.” And so he dismissed me, without taking a fee; for he told me, that he considered me as an eminent sufferer, by having as yet got nothing, where he wished that I had, before this time, got a great deal.

This, Sir, is the substance of what passed between us; for which I am so much obliged to him, that if ever he falls in my way, I'll use him with the like generosity; and I will owe you, Mr. Journalist, the same favour, if you will be so kind to publish this.

If you knew me, Sir, you would own that I have valuable talents, and am worth your acquaintance. I am particularly possessed of a praiseworthy industry, and an ardent desire of business. In truth, I care not to be idle; and yet it cruelly happens, that I have but one busy day in six weeks, and even then I could do twice as much. Besides, having a tender heart, it really affects me with pity, to be obliged to strangle so many innocents every Sessions; poor harmless offenders, that only commit murders, and break open houses, and rob men of guineas and half crowns; while wholesale plunderers, and mighty rogues of prey, the avowed enemies and hangmen of honesty, trade and truth, the known promoters of villainy, and the merciless authors of misery, want, and general ruin, go on to ride in coaches and six, and to defy a people whom they have made poor and desperate; potent parricides, who have plundered more from this kingdom in six months than all the private thieves and highwaymen ever did, or could do, since the creation.

Sir, I repeat it, that the hanging of such poor felons only, as things now stand, is, comparatively, shedding innocent blood: And so, for the ease of my mind, I beg that I may have those sent me, whom I may truss up with a safe conscience. My teeth particularly water, and my bowels yearn, at the name of the brokers; for God's sake, let me have the brokers.

Upon the whole, Sir, I have reason to hope, from the present spirit raised in the nation (and, they say, it is in a great measure owing to you, that there is such a spirit raised), I say, I hope soon to have the fingering of the throats of these traitors, who have fingered all the money in the nation. Their own guilt, and the incessant cry of the people, will weigh them down, in spite of all arts and screens.

N. B. I have a nice hand at touching a neck of quality; and when any customers come, I shall be ready to give you joy of it, as well as to receive the like from you. Who am,

G

Sir,

your loving friend,

JOHN KETCH

No. 22. SATURDAY, March 25, 1721.

The Judgment of the People generally sound, where not misled. With the Importance and Probability of bringing over Mr. Knight. (Trenchard and Gordon) ↩

[I-153]

SIR,

From the present spirit of this nation, it is still further evident to me, what I have always thought, that the people would constantly be in the interests of truth and liberty, were it not for external delusion and external force. Take away terror, and men never would have been slaves: Take away imposture, and men will never be dupes nor bigots. The people, when they are in the wrong, are generally in the wrong through mistake; and when they come to know it, are apt frankly to correct their own faults. Of which candour in them Machiavel has given several instances, and many more might be given.

But it is not so with great men, and the leaders of parties; who are, for the most part, in the wrong through ambition, and continue in the wrong through malice. Their intention is wicked, and their end criminal; and they commonly aggravate great crimes by greater. As great dunces as the governors of mankind often are (and God knows that they are often great enough), they are never traitors out of mere stupidity.

Machiavel says, That no wise man needs decline the judgment of the people in the distribution of offices and honours, and such particular affairs (in which I suppose he includes punishment) for in these things they are almost infallible.

I could give many instances where the people of England have judged and do judge right; as they generally would, were they not misled. They are, particularly, unanimous in their opinion, that we ought by no means to part with Gibraltar; and this their opinion is grounded upon the same reasons that sway the wisest men in this matter.

They likewise know, that an English war with Muscovy would be downright madness; for that, whatever advantage the same might be to other countries, it would grievously hurt the trade and navy of England, without hurting the Czar.

They know too, that a squabble between Spain and the Emperor about Italy, could not much affect England; and that therefore, were we to go to war with either, upon that account, as things now stand, it could not be for the sake of England.

They know, that our men of war might be always as honestly employed in defending our trade, by which our country subsists, from the depredations of pirates, as in conquering kingdoms for those to whom the nation is nothing obliged, or in defending provinces with which the nation has nothing to do, and from which it reaps no advantage.

They know, that it is of great concernment to any people, that the heir apparent to their crown be bred amongst them; not only that he may be reconciled, by habit, to their customs and laws, and grow in love with their liberties; but that, at his accession to the throne, he may not be engrossed and beset by foreigners, who will be always in the interest of another country; and, consequently, will be attempting to mislead him into measures mischievous to his kingdom, and advantageous to themselves, or their own nation.

The people know, that those are the best ministers, who do the most good to their country, or rather the least mischief: They can feel misery and happiness, as well as those that govern them; and will always, in spite of all arts, love those that do them a sensible good, and

abhor, as they ought, those that load them with evils. Hence proceeds the popularity, and the great unenvied characters, of our present governors; who, besides the memorable and prosperous projects which they have brought to maturity, for the good of Great Britain and Ireland, would likewise have obliged us with another present, [*] but very few years since, which would have completed all the rest, if we had had the courtesy to have accepted it.

It is certain, that the people, when left to themselves, do generally, if not always, judge well; we have just now a glaring instance of it in the loud and unanimous call of all men, that Mr. Knight may be brought over; I say, the call of all men, except the directors and their accomplices, nay, the people judge well, as to the cause of his going away; they more than guess for whose sake, and by whose persuasion, he went; and they are of opinion, that, were he here, the trials of guilt in the House of Commons would be much shorter, and the Tower of London still more nobly inhabited. I am indeed surprized that he is not already in London, considering of what consequence it is to have him here, both to publick and to private men.

Whether the directors and their masters shall be punished or no, is to me one and the same question, as to ask, whether you will preserve your constitution or no; or, whether you will have any constitution at all? It is a contention of honesty and innocence with villainy and falsehood; it is a dispute whether or no you shall be a people; it is a struggle, and, if it be balked, will, in all probability, be the last struggle for old English liberty. All this is well understood by the people of England.

Now, though the inferior knaves are in a fair way of being hanged, yet our top-traitors, having transacted all their villainies in the South-Sea with Mr. Knight alone, or with Mr. Knight chiefly, will think themselves always safe, so long as they can keep him abroad; and while he continues abroad, the nation's vengeance can never be half complete.

As to my own particular, I am so sanguine in this affair, that the very reasons commonly given why he will not be brought over, are to me very good reasons why he will be brought over: I cannot but wonder to hear any doubts about it. I am sure, that those who suggest such doubts, must suggest with the same breath very terrible crimes against some very considerable men.

The business of bringing over Mr. Knight is become the business of the ministry, and incumbent on them only. It is become their duty to their master King George, as they would preserve entirely to him the affections of a willing and contented people, by shewing them, that in consideration of their mighty wrongs (which the said ministry did all in their power to prevent) they shall have all fair play for justice and restitution. And it is in this respect too become the duty of the ministry to the people, whose humours it is their business to watch, whose interest it is their business to study, as much as the interest of the King himself; and it must be owned, to the praise of the present set, that they have constantly consulted and pursued the one as much as the other, with equal skill and honesty; and so far King and people are equally obliged to them.

As to the personal interests of the ministers themselves, I say nothing, the same being supposed always firmly linked with the other two; as doubtless it is at present. Let me only add here, that the bringing over Mr. Knight is a duty which they owe to themselves, their own characters being intimately concerned in it; otherwise. . . .

People indeed begin to say, that the suppressing of evi-dence ought to be taken for evidence, as in the case of Mr. Aislabie, who burned the book which contained the evidence. There is a noble person too, said to be mentioned in the report of the Committee, not to his advantage; but, I thank God, now fully vindicated by patriots as incorrupt as himself, upon the fullest proof of his innocence; and if his acquittal did not meet the universal concurrence of all present, it could be owing only to Mr. Knight's not being at hand to speak what he

knew: Had he made his appearance, there had never been a division upon the question, but all would have been then as unanimous in their sentiments about that great man's integrity and clean hands, as all the rest of the kingdom at present are. However, reputation is so nice a thing, that it cannot be made too clear; and therefore we are sure of the hearty assistance of this illustrious patriot to bring over Mr. Knight, if possible, to make his vindication yet more complete.

It is also the interest of another great person, equal to the first in power and innocence, and who, without doubt, has taken common measures with him for the publick good, and will equally share in the grateful applause of good men, and the reproach of bad; for no degrees of virtue will put any one beyond the reach of envy and calumny, and therefore we cannot be sure that his strenuous and barefaced protection of innocent and oppressed virtue will not be misinterpreted by popular clamour, which often misapplies established and well-known truths; as, that no one who has not part of the gain, will adopt part of the infamy; that it is the property of innocence to abhor guilt in others, as well as not to practise the same itself, and to punish as well as to hate it; that no man who is not a thief, will be an advocate for a thief; that rogues are best protected by their fellows; and that the strongest motive which any man can have for saving another from the gallows, is the fear of the same punishment for the same crimes: And though these, and a thousand other such unwarrantable imputations, ought not, and have not made the least impression upon one conscious of his own virtue; yet it is every man's duty, as well as interest, to remove the most distant causes of suspicion from himself, when he can do it consistent with his publick duty; and therefore we are equally sure of this great man's endeavours too for bringing over Mr. Knight.

Even some of our legislators themselves have not been free from calumny, who are all concerned to have their characters vindicated; and therefore we may be sure will, in the highest manner, resent any prevarication, or trifling chicane, if such a procedure could be possibly supposed in an affair of this nice importance to all England, as well as to many of themselves.

Nay, the whole Parliament of England, who have generously undertaken the scrutiny of the late black knaveries, and the punishment of the knaves, are nearly concerned to see Mr. Knight brought over. They find, in their enquiries, his testimony often referred to, and that the evidence is not complete without him. They know already a good deal of what he could say; and I doubt not but he could say more than they know. They have once addressed his Majesty already, about bringing him over; and I suppose will again, if he do not come speedily. The business of the whole nation does, as it were, stand still for it; seeing it is become the business and expectation of the whole nation.

As to remoras from abroad, I cannot see room for any. Quite otherwise; I always thought it very fortunate for England, that Mr. Knight fell into the Emperor's hands; a prince, for whom we have done such mighty, such heroick favours; for whom we consumed our fleet in the Mediterranean, for whom we guarantee'd Italy, for whom we preserved and conquered kingdoms; a prince, in fine, for whose service we have wasted years, fleets, and treasures: And can it be alledged or supposed, with the appearance of common sense, that this great prince, the strict friend, old confederate, and fast ally of England; a prince, who has been, as it were, the ward of England, and brought up in its arms; supported by its interest and counsels, protected and aggrandized by its fleets and armies, will, against all the principles of good policy, against all the ties of gratitude and honour, fly in the face of his friends and benefactors, by refusing to deliver up to this nation and this King, a little criminal, small in his character, but great in his crimes and of the utmost consequence to England in the pursuit of this great enquiry, which merits the consideration; and commands the attention of every Englishman.

We could draw up a long, a very long list of good deeds done, and expensive favours shewn, to the Emperor; without being afraid of being put out of countenance by any German catalogue of returns made us from Vienna. Perhaps there may have been some courtesies procured from thence by England; but we would ask, whether they were intended or procured for England? It seems to me, that this is the first time of asking for ourselves: And shall we, this first time, be denied? Will such an humble mite be refused for millions frankly bestowed, and bestowed beyond all conjecture and expectation? It cannot be; nor, if it could, ought it to be borne. We know how to shew, that we have sense as well as power, and resentment as well as liberality.

The Emperor therefore cannot be suspected in this matter; I dare say that he will comply with our demands, as soon as they are made, whatever they be. He will not put such contempt upon us, who have purchased more respect at his hands. Besides, it is confidently asserted, that Mr. Knight longs to be at home; which I am apt to believe: He knows, that the kind counsel given him, to go away, was not given him for his own sake; and has reason to fear, that those who sent him away, will keep him away. There is laudanum in Flanders, as well as in England; and that or a poignard may thwart his best inclinations to return. If that should happen, we are at liberty to think the worst; and, I doubt, we cannot think too bad. Unhappy man! he was not a knave for himself alone; and I am apt to believe, were he here, that he would honestly betray those men to the publick, for whom he wickedly betrayed the publick.

Thus then, in all likelihood, neither the Emperor nor Mr. Knight are to be blamed, if Mr. Knight does not return. But, whether he be willing or no, the Emperor has no right, no pretence to keep him. Who will then be to blame, if the universal cry of justice, and of the nation, should not have its effect? The question is easy, were the answer prudent to give. In truth, there needs no answer; all mankind will know how to solve this difficulty.

An honourable messenger has been gone near six weeks, and yet the Commons have occasion to address his Majesty to know what answer he has sent. Wonderful, in a case that is of so much importance, and which requires so much expedition, and so little ceremony! I have sometimes thought a courier must needs have been dispatched to England about it long since, but that he was way-laid, and murdered by our conspirators and their agents upon the road. This may seem a strange fancy; but, without being very aged, I have lived long enough to think nothing strange. I have not been once amazed these six months.

In the mean time, the business of the Committee, which is the business of Great Britain, is like to stand still. Those gentlemen have done their duty; and if their evidence be not complete (which however they deny), the fault is not chargeable on them, but they are answerable who keep them from better. This is a reproach not like to be wiped off, but by bringing over Mr. Knight; and then, perhaps, they that deserve it may dread a far worse thing. Here is the riddle, and the solution of the riddle. There are those amongst us, who, clothed as they are with infamy, and cursed and detested by their fellow-creatures universally, do yet dread a greater evil. So precious and prevailing is the love of life! Continue me mine, sweet heaven, upon better terms, or not at all!

I shall conclude, by repeating an observation which I have already made in this letter; namely, that the suppressing the best evidence, contains in it the strongest evidence; and those men will stand condemned, who, in trials of innocence and guilt, stop the mouths of their judges, and deprive the accusers of their witnesses.

T and G

I am, &c.

No. 23. SATURDAY, April 1, 1721.

A memorable Letter from Brutus to Cicero, with an explanatory Introduction. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[I-163]

SIR,

I am going to present you, and the town by your means, with the most valuable performance of all antiquity: It is not likely that it ever had, or ever will have, its fellow. The author of it was, perhaps, the most amiable character, the most accomplished man, that ever the world saw.

Excellent Brutus! of all human race
The best!

Cowley

He was the author of that glorious letter, which I now send you in English. It was written by the greatest man upon the noblest subject; BRUTUS upon LIBERTY. It was sent to Cicero, and the occasion this, as I find it very well explained by Monsieur Soreau, and prefixed to his French translation of Brutus's letters.

Octavius Caesar, afterwards called Augustus, having defeated Mark Anthony before Modena, and by that means raised the siege of that place, began now to conceive higher designs than he had yet shewn: He had hitherto declared for the commonwealth, and seemed to act for it; the Senate having trusted him with an army, by the persuasion and interest of Cicero. But after this victory over Anthony, he began to set up for himself, and to meditate the revenge of his uncle, and father by adoption, Julius Caesar; and, finally, to pave himself a way for absolute monarchy. He knew well, that Brutus and Cassius would never, while they lived, suffer him to possess what they would not suffer the first Caesar to enjoy; and therefore, to succeed his uncle, he must destroy them.

But Cicero, who equally loved and admired Brutus, and pretended to great power over the mind of the young Caesar, undertook to write to him in favour of the patrons of liberty, who slew his uncle, to seek their pardon; especially a pardon for Brutus, that he might return to Rome, and be there in safety. This letter of Cicero's contained in it also thanks to Octavius for his services to the Republick, and was entirely unknown to Brutus; but being informed of it by Atticus, he took extreme offence at this step of Cicero's, which seemed to him a confession of sovereignty in Octavius, by not only owning him master of the lives of the Romans in general, but of his too, who was the deliverer of the Romans, and scorned to owe life to Octavius.

Brutus had another spirit, and other views: He remembered the bold and free words of the great Cato, his uncle, to those of his friends who offered to procure for him the mercy of Caesar, by throwing themselves, on his behalf, at Caesar's feet. "No," says Cato, "I scorn to be beholden to tyranny. I am as free as Caesar; and shall I owe my life to him, who has no right even to my submission."

Brutus found reason to resent, that Cicero should, without his knowledge, thus treat him as a criminal, and Caesar as a sovereign, by begging of Caesar mercy for Brutus. That resentment gave occasion to this letter; in which he treats Octavius as a raw lad, and Cicero as a weak and fearful man. The reasoning through the whole shews Brutus to have been animated by a most sublime and glorious spirit of virtue and liberty; and is so stupendously

strong, that his eloquence must have been great as his soul; and yet that great soul was not so dear to him as his liberty.

I am, &c.

BRUTUS TO CICERO

“I have seen, by the favour of Atticus, that part which concerns me in your letter to Octavius. The affection which you there express for my person, and the pains which you take for my safety, are great; but they give me no new joy: Your kind offices are become as habitual for me to receive, as for you to bestow; and, by your daily discourse and actions on my behalf, I have daily instances of your generous regard for myself and my reputation.

“However, all this hinders not but that the above-mentioned article of your letter to Octavius pierced me with as sensible a grief as my soul is capable of feeling. In thanking him for his services to the Republick, you have chosen a style which shews such lowness and submission, as do but too clearly declare, that you have still a master; and that the old tyranny, which we thought destroyed, is revived in a new tyrant. What shall I say to you upon this sad head? I am covered with confusion for your shameful condition, but you have brought it upon yourself; and I cannot help shewing you to yourself in this wretched circumstance.

“You have petition’d Octavius to have mercy upon me, and to save my life. In this you intend my good, but sought my misery, and a lot worse than death, by saving me from it; since there is no kind of death but is more eligible to me than a life so saved. Be so good to recollect a little the terms of your letter! and having weighed them as you ought, can you deny that they are conceived in the low style of an humble petition from a slave to his haughty lord, from a subject to a king? You tell Octavius, that you have a request to make him, and hope that he will please to grant it; namely, to save those citizens who are esteemed by men of condition, and beloved by the people of Rome. This is your honourable request; but what if he should not grant it, but refuse to save us? Can we be saved by no other expedient? Certainly, destruction itself is preferable to life by his favour!

“I am not, however, so desponding, as to imagine that heaven is so offended with the Roman people, or so bent upon their ruin, that you should thus choose, in your prayers, to apply rather to Octavius, than to the immortal gods, for the preservation, I do not say of the deliverers of the whole earth, but even for the preservation of the meanest Roman citizen. This is a high tone to talk in, but I have pleasure in it: It becomes me to shew, that I scorn to pray to those whom I scorn to fear.

“Has then Octavius power to save us, or destroy us? And while you thus own him to be a tyrant, can you yet own yourself his friend? And while you are mine, can you desire to see me in Rome, and at the mercy of an usurper? And yet, that this would be my case you avow, by imploring from a giddy boy, my permission to return. You have been rendering him a world of thanks, and making him many compliments; pray, how come they to be due to him, if he yet want to be petitioned for our lives, and if our liberty depend upon his sufferance? Are we bound to think it a condescension in Octavius, that he chooses that these our petitions should rather be made to him than to Anthony? And are not such low supplications the proper addresses to a tyrant? And yet shall we, who boldly destroyed one, be ever brought basely to supplicate another? And can we, who are the deliverers of the commonwealth, descend to ask what no man ought to have it in his power to give?

“Consider the mournful effects of that dread and despondency of yours in our publick struggles; in which, however, you have too many to keep you in countenance. The commonwealth has been lost, because it was given for lost. Hence Caesar was first inspired

with the lust of dominion; hence Mark Anthony, not terrified by the doom of the tyrant, pants and hurries on to succeed him in his tyranny; and hence this Octavius, this green usurper, is started into such a pitch of power, that the chiefs of the commonwealth, and the saviours of their country, must depend for their breath upon his pleasure. Yes, we must owe our lives to the mercy of a minor, softened by the prayers of aged Senators!

“Alas, we are no longer Romans! If we were, the virtuous spirit of liberty would have been an easy over-match for the traitorous attempts of the worst of all men grasping after tyranny; nor would even Mark Anthony, the rash and enterprising Mark Anthony, have been so fond of Caesar's power, as frightened by Caesar's fate.

“Remember the important character which you sustain, the great post which you have filled: You are a senator of Rome, you have been consul of Rome; you have defeated conspiracies, you have destroyed conspirators. Is not Rome still as dear to you as she was? Or, is your courage and vigilance less? And is not the occasion greater? Or, could you suppress great traitors, and yet tolerate greater? Recollect what you ought to do, by what you have done. Whence proceeded your enmity to Anthony? Was it not, that he had an enmity to liberty, had seized violently on the publick, assumed the disposal of life and death into his own hands, and set up for the sole sovereign of all men? Were not these the reasons of your enmity, and of your advice, to combat violence by violence; to kill him, rather than submit to him? All this was well. But why must resistance be dropped, when there is a fresh call for resistance? Has your courage failed you? Or, was it not permitted to Anthony to enslave us, but another may? As if the nature of servitude were changed, by changing names and persons. No, we do not dispute about the qualifications of a master; we will have no master.

“It is certain, that we might, under Anthony, have had large shares with him in the administration of despotick power; we might have divided its dignities, shone in its trappings. He would have received us graciously, and met us half way. He knew that either our concurrence or acquiescence would have confirmed him monarch of Rome; and at what price would he not have purchased either? But all his arts, all his temptations, all his offers, were rejected; liberty was our purpose, virtue our rule: our views were honest and universal; our country, and the cause of mankind.

“With Octavius himself there is still a way open for an accommodation, if we choose it. As eager as the name of Caesar has made that raw stickler for empire to destroy those who destroyed Caesar; yet, doubtless, he would give us good articles, to gain our consent to that power to which he aspires, and to which, I fear, he will arrive: Alas! what is there to hinder him? While we only attend to the love of life, and the impulses of ambition; while we can purchase posts and dignities with the price of liberty, and think danger more dreadful than slavery, what remains to save us?

“What was the end of our killing the tyrant, but to be free from tyranny? A ridiculous motive, and an empty exploit, if our slavery survive him! Oh, who is it that makes liberty his care? Liberty, which ought to be the care of all men, as 'tis the benefit and blessing of all! For myself, rather than give it up, I will stand single in its defence. I cannot lose, but with my life, my resolution to maintain in freedom my country, which I have set free: I have destroyed a veteran tyrant; and shall I suffer, in a raw youth, his heir, a power to control the senate, supersede the laws, and put chains on Rome? A power, which no personal favours, nor even the ties of blood, could ever sanctify to me; a power, which I could not bear in Caesar; nor, if my father had usurped it, could I have borne in him.

“Your petition to Octavius is a confession, that we cannot enjoy the liberty of Rome without his leave; and can you dream that other citizens are free, where we could not live free? Besides, having made your request, how is it to be fulfilled? You beg him to give us our

lives; and what if he do? Are we therefore safe, because we live? Is there any safety without liberty? or rather, can we poorly live, having lost it, and with it our honour and glory? Is there any security in living at Rome, when Rome is no longer free? That city, great as it is, having no security of her own, can give me none. No, I will owe mine to my resolution and my sword; I cannot enjoy life at the mercy of another. Caesar's death alone ascertained my liberty to me, which before was precarious: I smote him, to be safe. This is a Roman spirit; and whithersoever I carry it, every place will be Rome to me; who am Roman enough to prefer every evil to chains and infamy, which to a Roman are the highest of all evils. I thought that we had been released from these mighty evils, by the death of him who brought them upon us; but it seems that we are not; else why a servile petition to a youth, big with the name and the ambition of Caesar, for mercy to those patriots, who generously revenged their country upon that tyrant, and cleared the world of his tyranny? It was not thus in the commonwealths of Greece, where the children of tyrants suffered, equally with their fathers, the punishment of tyranny.

“Can I then have any appetite to see Rome? Or, can Rome be said to be Rome? We have slain our tyrant, we have restored her ancient liberty: But they are favours thrown away; she is made free in spite of herself; and though she has seen a great and terrible tyrant bereft of his grandeur and his life, by a few of her citizens; yet, basely desponding of her own strength, she impotently dreads the name of a dead tyrant, revived in the person of a stripling.

“No more of your petitions to your young Caesar on my behalf; nor, if you are wise, on your own. You have not many years to live; do not be shewing that you over-rate the short remains of an honourable life, by making preposterous and dishonourable court to a boy. Take care that by this conduct you do not eclipse the lustre of all your glorious actions against Mark Anthony: Do not turn your glory into reproach, by giving the malicious a handle to say, that self-love was the sole motive of your bitterness to him; and that, had you not dreaded him, you would not have opposed him: And yet will they not say this, if they see, that, having declared war against Anthony, you notwithstanding leave life and liberty at the mercy of Octavius, and tolerate in him all the power which the other claimed? They will say that you are not against having a master, only you would not have Anthony for a master.

“I well approve your praises given to Octavius for his behaviour thus far; it is indeed praiseworthy; provided his only intention has been to pull down the tyranny of Anthony, without establishing a tyranny of his own. But if you are of opinion, that Octavius is in such a situation of power, that it is necessary to approach him with humble supplications to save our lives, and that it is convenient he should be trusted with this power; I can only say, that you lift the reward of his merits far above his merits: I thought that all his services were services done to the Republick; but you have conferred upon him that absolute and imperial power which he pretended to recover to the Republick.

“If, in your judgment, Octavius has earned such laurels and recompences for making war against Anthony's tyranny, which was only the effects and remains of Caesar's tyranny; to what distinctions, to what rewards, would you intitle those who exterminated, with Caesar, the tyranny of Caesar, for which they felt the blessings and bounty of the Roman people! Has this never entered into your thoughts? Behold here how effectually the terror of evils to come extinguishes in the minds of men all impressions of benefits received? Caesar is dead, and will never return to shackle or frighten the city of Rome; so he is no more thought of, nor are they who delivered that city from him. But Anthony is still alive, and still in arms, and still terrifies; and so Octavius is adored, who beat Anthony. Hence it is that Octavius is become of such potent consequence, that from his mouth the Roman people must expect our doom, the doom of their deliverers! And hence it is too, that we (those deliverers) are of such humble consequence, that he must be supplicated to give us our lives!

“I, as I said, have a soul, and I have a sword; and am an enemy to such abject supplications; so great an enemy, that I detest those that use them, and am an avowed foe to him that expects them. I shall at least be far away from the odious company of slaves; and where-ever I find liberty, there I will find Rome. And for you that stay behind, who, not satiated with many years, and many honours, can behold liberty extinct, and virtue, with us, in exile, and yet are not sick of a wretched and precarious life; I heartily pity you. For myself, whose soul has never ebbed from its constant principles, I shall ever be happy in the consciousness of my virtue; owing nothing to my country, towards which I have faithfully discharged my duty, I shall possess my mind in peace; and find the reward of well-doing in the satisfaction of having done it. What greater pleasure does the world afford, than to despise the slippery uncertainties of life, and to value that only which is only valuable, private virtue, and publick liberty; that liberty, which is the blessing, and ought to be the birthright, of all mankind?

“But still, I will never sink with those who are already falling; I will never yield with those who have a mind to submit: I am resolved to be always firm and independent: I will try all expedients, I will exert my utmost prowess, to banish servitude, and set my country entirely free. If fortune favour me as she ought, the blessing and joy will be every man's; but if she fail me, and my best endeavours be thrown away, yet still I will rejoice single; and so far be too hard for fortune. What, in short, can my life be better laid out in, than in continual schemes, and repeated efforts, for the common liberty of my country?

“As to your part in this crisis, my dear Cicero, it is my strongest advice and request to you, not to desert yourself: Do not distrust your ability, and your ability will not disappoint you; believe you can remedy our heavy evils, and you will remedy them. Our miseries want no encrease: Prevent, therefore, by your vigilance, any new accession. Formerly, in quality of consul, you defeated, with great boldness, and warmth for liberty, a formidable conspiracy against Rome, and saved the commonwealth; and what you did then against Catiline, you do still against Anthony. These actions of yours have raised your reputation high, and spread it far; but it will be all tarnished or lost, if you do not continue to shew an equal firmness upon as great an occasion; let this render all the parts of your life equal, and secure immortality to that glory of yours, which ought to be immortal.

“From those, who, like you, have performed great actions, as great or greater are expected: By shewing that they can serve the publick, they make themselves its debtors; and it is apt to exact strict payment, and to use them severely if they do not pay: But from those who have performed no such actions, we expect none. This is the difference betwixt the lot of unknown talents, and of those which have been tried; and the condition of the latter is no doubt the harder. Hence it is, that though, in making head against Anthony, you have merited and received great and just praises, yet you have gained no new admiration: By so doing, you only continued, like a worthy consular, the known character of a great and able consul. But if now at last you begin to truckle to one as bad as him; if you abate ever so little in that vigour of mind, and that steady courage, by which you expelled him from the senate, and drove him out of Rome; you will never reap another harvest of glory, whatever you may deserve; and even your past laurels will wither, and your past renown be forgot.

“There is nothing great or noble in events, which are the fruit of passion or chance: true fame results only from the steady perseverance of reason in the paths and pursuits of virtue. The care, therefore, of the commonwealth, and the defence of her liberties, belong to you above all men, because you have done more than all men for liberty and the commonwealth: Your great abilities, your known zeal, your famous actions, with the united call and expectation of all men, are your motives in this great affair; would you have greater?

“You are not, therefore, to supplicate Octavius for our safety; do a braver thing, owe it to your own magnanimity. Rouse the Roman genius within you; and consider that this great and free city, which you more than once saved, will always be great and free, provided her people do not want worthy chiefs to resist usurpation, and exterminate traitors.”

G

No. 24. SATURDAY, April 8, 1721.

Of the natural Honesty of the People, and their reasonable Demands. How important it is to every Government to consult their Affections and Interest. [Gordon] ↩

[I-177]

SIR,

I have observed, in a former letter, that the people, when they are not misled or corrupted, generally make a sound judgment of things. They have natural qualifications equal to those of their superiors; and there is oftener found a great genius carrying a pitch-fork, than carrying a white staff. The poor cook preferred by the Grand Seignior to be his first vizier, in order to cure the publick disorder and confusion occasioned by the ignorance, corruption, and neglect of the former ministry, made good effectually his own promise, and did credit to his master's choice: He remedied the publick disorders, and proved, says Sir Paul Ricaut, an able and excellent minister of state.

Besides, there are not such mighty talents requisite for government, as some, who pretend to them without possessing them, would make us believe: Honest affections, and common qualifications, are sufficient; and the administration has been always best executed, and the publick liberty best preserved, near the origin and rise of states, when plain honesty and common sense alone governed the publick affairs, and the morals of men were not corrupted with riches and luxury, nor their understandings perverted by subtleties and distinctions. Great abilities have, for the most part, if not always, been employed to mislead the honest, but unwary, multitude, and to draw them out of the open and plain paths of publick virtue and public good.

The people have no bias to be knaves; the security of their persons and property is their highest aim. No ambition prompts them; they cannot come to be great lords, and to possess great titles, and therefore desire none. No aspiring or unsociable passions incite them; they have no rivals for place, no competitor to pull down; they have no darling child, pimp, or relation, to raise: they have no occasion for dissimulation or intrigue; they can serve no end by faction; they have no interest, but the general interest.

The same can rarely be said of great men, who, to gratify private passion, often bring down publick ruin; who, to fill their private purses with many thousands, frequently load the people with many millions; who oppress for a mistress, and, to save a favourite, destroy a nation; who too often make the publick sink and give way to their private fortune; and, for a private pleasure, create a general calamity. Besides, being educated in debauchery, and pampered in riot and luxury, they have no sense of the misfortunes of other men, nor tenderness for those who suffer them: They have no notion of miseries which they do not feel. There is a nation in Europe, which, within the space of an hundred years last past, has been blessed with patriots, who, void of every talent and inclination to do good, and even stunted in their ability for roguery, were forced to be beholden, for most of the mischief which they did, to the superior arts and abilities of humble rogues and brokers.

The first principles of power are in the people; and all the projects of men in power ought to refer to the people, to aim solely at their good, and end in it: And whoever will pretend to govern them without regarding them, will soon repent it. Such feats of errantry may do perhaps in Asia: but in countries where the people are free, it is madness to hope to rule them against their wills. They will know, that government is appointed for their sakes, and will be saucy enough to expect some regard and some good from their own delegates. Those nations

who are governed in spite of themselves, and in a manner that bids defiance to their opinions, their interests, and their understandings, are either slaves, or will soon cease to be subjects.

Dominion that is not maintained by the sword, must be maintained by consent; and in this latter case, what security can any man at the head of affairs expect, but from pursuing the people's welfare, and seeking their good-will? The government of one for the sake of one, is tyranny; and so is the government of a few for the sake of themselves: But government executed for the good of all, and with the consent of all, is liberty; and the word *government* is profaned, and its meaning abused, when it signifies any thing else.

In free countries the people know all this. They have their five senses in as great perfection, as have those who would treat them as if they had none. They are not wont to hate their governors, till their governors deserve to be hated; and when this happens to be the case, not absolute power itself, nor the affections of a prince invested with it, can protect or employ ministers detested by the people. Even the Grand Seignior, with all his boundless authority, is frequently forced to give up his first minister (who is sometimes his son-in-law, or brother-in-law) a sacrifice to appease the people's rage.

The people, rightly managed, are the best friends to princes; and, when injured and oppressed, the most formidable enemies. Princes, who have trusted to their armies or their nobility, have been often deceived and ruined; but princes, who have trusted wholly to the people, have seldom been deceived or deserted: The reason is, that in all governments, which are not violent and military, the people have more power than either the grandees or the soldiery; and their friendship is more sincere, as having nothing to desire but freedom from oppression. And whilst a prince is thus beloved by his people, it will rarely happen that any can be so rash and precipitate as to conspire against him; and such conspiracies have never the intended success: but, as Machiavel well observes, When the people are dissatisfied, and have taken a prejudice against their governors, there is no thing nor person that they ought not to fear.

It is therefore of vast importance to preserve the affections of the people even in those governments where they have no share in the administration. The wise states of Holland are so apprized of the truth of this maxim, that they have preserved themselves and their state by religiously observing it. Their government consists of many little aristocracies, where the magistrates choose each other, and the people have nothing to do; but in spirit and effect it is a democracy, and the dispositions and inclinations of the people have above all things the greatest weight in their counsels. The jealousy of the people makes a vigilant magistracy, who are honest out of fear of provoking them, and, by never doing it, are in great safety.

But, thanks be to heaven and our worthy ancestors, our liberties are better secured. We have a constitution, in which the people have a large share: They are one part of the legislature, and have the sole power of giving money; which includes in it every thing that they can ask for the publick good; and the representatives, being neither awed nor bribed, will always act for their country's interest; their own being so interwoven with the people's happiness, that they must stand and fall together.

But what if our delegates should not be suffered to meet; or, when met, should be so awed by force (as formerly in Denmark) or so corrupted by places and pensions (as in the reign of Charles II) as to be ready to give up publick liberty, and betray the interest of their principals to secure their own? This we may be sure can never happen under his Majesty's most just and gentle reign: However, it has happened formerly; and what has been, may be again in future reigns.

What, in such a case, is to be done? What remedies have our laws provided against so fatal a mischief? Must the people patiently crouch under the heaviest of all evils? Or has our constitution pointed out the means of redress? It would be absurd to suppose that it has not; and, in effect, the people have a legal remedy at hand: It is their undoubted right, and acknowledged to be so in the Bill of Rights passed in the reign of King Charles I and since, by the Act of Settlement of the crown at the Revolution; humbly to represent their publick grievances, and to petition for redress to those whose duty it is to right them, or to see them righted: And it is certain, that in all countries, the people's misfortunes are greater or less, in proportion as this right is encouraged or checked.

It is indeed the best and only just way that they can take to breathe their grievances; and whenever this way has been taken, especially when it has been universally taken, our kings have always accepted so powerful an application. Our parliaments too, who are the keepers and barriers of our liberty, have shewn themselves ready and willing to receive the modest complaints and representations of their principals, and to apply quick remedies to the grievances contained in them. It has, indeed, been always thought highly imprudent, not to say dangerous, to resist the general groans and entreaties of the people, uttered in this manner.

This has been a method, which has always had great weight with good men, and has been always a great terror to bad. It has therefore always been encouraged or discouraged, according to the innocence or guilt of men in power. A prince, who minds the welfare and desires the affections of his subjects, cannot wish for a better expedient to know how his servants are approved, and how his government is liked, than by this way of countenancing his people in laying their hearts, their wishes, and their requests before him; and ministers never can be averse to such representations of the complaints of the people, unless they have given the people occasion to complain.

Titus and Trajan, conscious of their own virtuous administration, and worthy purposes, courted addresses and informations of this kind, from their subjects: They wisely knew, that if the Roman people had free leave to speak, they would not take leave to act; and that, whilst they could have redress, they would not seek revenge.

None but desperate parricides will make the people desperate.

G

I am, &c.

No. 25. SATURDAY, April 15, 1721.

Considerations on the destructive Spirit of arbitrary Power. With the Blessings of Liberty, and our own Constitution. [Gordon] ↩

[I-184]

SIR,

The good of the governed being the sole end of government, they must be the greatest and best governors, who make their people great and happy; and they the worst, who make their people little, wicked, and miserable. Power in a free state, is a trust committed by all to one or a few, to watch for the security, and pursue the interest, of all: And, when that security is not sought, nor that interest obtained, we know what opinion the people will have of their governors.

It is the hard fate of the world, that there should be any difference in the views and interests of the governors and governed; and yet it is so in most countries. Men who have a trust frankly bestowed upon them by the people, too frequently betray that trust, become conspirators against their benefactors, and turn the sword upon those who gave it; insomuch that in the greatest part of the earth, people are happy if they can defend themselves against their defenders.

Let us look round this great world, and behold what an immense majority of the whole race of men crouch under the yoke of a few tyrants, naturally as low as the meanest of themselves, and, by being tyrants, worse than the worst; who, as Mr. Sidney observes, use their subjects like asses and mastiff dogs, to work and to fight, to be oppressed and killed for them. Even the good qualities and courage of such subjects are their misfortune, by strengthening the wicked hands of their brutal masters, and strengthening their own chains. Tyrants consider their people as their cattle, and use them worse, as they fear them more. Thus the most of mankind are become the wretched slaves of those, who are or should be their own creatures; they maintain their haughty masters like gods, and their haughty masters often use them like dogs: A fine specimen of gratitude and duty!

Yet this cruel spirit in tyrants is not always owing naturally to the men, since they are naturally like other men; but it is owing to the nature of the dominion which they exercise. Good laws make a good prince, if he has a good understanding; but the best men grow mischievous when they are set above laws. Claudius was a very harmless man, while he was a private man; but when he came to be a tyrant, he proved a bloody one, almost as bloody as his nephew and predecessor Caligula; who had also been a very good subject, but when he came to be the Roman emperor, grew the professed executioner of mankind.

There is something so wanton and monstrous in lawless power, that there scarce ever was a human spirit that could bear it; and the mind of man, which is weak and limited, ought never to be trusted with a power that is boundless. The state of tyranny is a state of war; and where it prevails, instead of an intercourse of confidence and affection, as between a lawful prince and his subjects, nothing is to be seen but jealousy, mistrust, fear, and hatred: An arbitrary prince and his slaves often destroy one another, to be safe: They are continually plotting against his life; he is continually shedding their blood, and plundering them of their property.

Cuncta ferit, dum cuncta timet.

I think it was Justinian, the Emperor, who said, "Though we are above the law, yet we live according to the law." But, by his Majesty's favour, there was more turn than truth in the saying; for princes that think themselves above law, act almost constantly against all law; of which truth Justinian himself is a known instance. Good princes never think themselves above it.

It is an affecting observation, that the power given for the protection of the world, should, in so many places, be turned to the destruction of it.

As if the law was in force for their destruction, and not for their preservation; that it should have power to kill, but not to protect, them: A thing no less horrid, than if the sun should burn us without lighting us, or the earth serve only to bury, and not feed and nourish us,

says Mr. Waller in a speech of his in Parliament.

Despotick power has defaced the Creation, and laid the world waste. In the finest countries in Asia, formerly full of people, you are now forced to travel by the compass: There are no roads, houses, nor inhabitants. The sun is left to scorch up the grass and fruits, which it had raised; or the rain to rot them: The gifts of God are left to perish; there being none of his creatures, neither man nor beast, left to use and consume them. The Grand Seignior, who (if we may believe some sanctified mouths, not addicted to lying) is the vicegerent of heaven, frustrates the bounty of heaven; and, being the father of his people, has almost butchered them all. Those few (comparatively very few) who have yet survived the miserable fate of their brethren, and are reserved for sacrifices to his cruelty, as occasion offers, and his lust prompts him, live the starving and wretched property of ravenous and bloody bashaws; whose duty to their master, as well as their own avarice, obliges them to keep the people, over whom they preside, poor and miserable.

But neither bashaws, nor armies, could keep that people in such abject slavery, if their priests and doctors had not made passive obedience a principle of their religion. The holy name of God is profaned, and his authority belied, to bind down wretchedness upon his creatures, and to secure the tyrant that does it. The most consummate of all wickedness, and the highest of all evils, are sanctified by the teachers of religion, and made by them a part of it. Yes, Turkish slavery is confirmed, and Turkish tyranny defended, by religion!

Sir Paul Ricaut tells us, that the Turks maintain, "That the Grand Seignior can never be deposed, or made accountable for his crimes, whilst he destroys carelessly of his subjects under a hundred a day": 'Tis made martyrdom to die submissively by the hand of the tyrant; and some of his highest slaves have declared that they wanted only that honour to complete their felicity. They hold, that it is their duty to submit, though their tyrant "command a whole army of them to precipitate themselves from a rock, or to build a bridge with piles of their bodies for him to pass a river, or to kill one another to afford him pastime and pleasure."

Merciful God! Is this government! And do such governors govern by authority from thee!

It is scarce credible what Monsieur de L'Estoille tells us: He says he travelled in the Indies for above twenty days together, through lanes of people hanged upon trees, by command of the King; who had ordered above a hundred thousand of them to be thus murdered and gibbeted, only because two or three robberies had been committed amongst them. Bayle, *Reponse aux Quest. d'un Provinc.* tom. I. p. 595.

It is one of the great evils of servitude, that let the tyranny be ever so severe, 'tis always flattered; and the more severe 'tis, the more 'tis flattered. The oppressors of mankind are flattered beyond all others; because fear and servitude naturally produce, as well as have recourse to, flattery, as the best means of self-preservation; whereas liberty, having no occasion for it, scorns it. Sir Paul Ricaut ascribes the decay of the Ottoman Empire to the force of flattery, and calls the Turkish court, a prison and banniard of slaves.

Old Muley, the Lord's anointed of Morocco, who it seems is still alive, is thought to have butchered forty thousand of his subjects with his own hands. Such a father is he of his people! And yet his right to shed human blood being a genuine characteristick of the church of Morocco, as by law established, people are greedy to die by his hand; which, they are taught to imagine, dispatches them forthwith to paradise: Insomuch that, though, as I am told, every time he mounts his horse, he slices off the head of the slave that holds his stirrup, to shew that he is as good an executioner as he is a horseman, yet there is a constant contention among his slaves, who shall be the happy martyr on that occasion; so that several of them crowding to his stirrup at once, for the gracious favour, his Majesty has sometimes the honour to cut off two heads, and to make two saints, with one blow.

The exercise of despotick power is the unrelenting war of an armed tyrant upon his unarmed subjects: it is a war of one side, and in it there is neither peace nor truce. Tacitus describes it, *Saeva jussa, continuas accusationes, fallaces amicitias, perniciem innocentium*: "Cruel and bloody orders, continual accusations, faithless friendships, and the destruction of innocents." In another place he says, that

Italy was one continual shambles, and most of its fair cities were defaced or overthrown; Rome itself was in many places laid in ashes, with the greatest part of its magnificent buildings: virtue was despised, and barefaced debauchery prevailed. The solitary islands were filled with illustrious exiles, and the very rocks were stained with slaughters: but, in the city itself, cruelty raged still more; it was dangerous to be noble, it was a crime to be rich, it was capital to have borne honours, and high treason to have refused them; and for virtue and merit, they brought sure and sudden destruction.

These were some of the ravages of absolute dominion! And as to the common people, the same author says, "They were debauched and dispirited, and given up to idleness and seeing shews." *Plebs sordida circo & theatris sueta*.

Oh! abject state of such as tamely groan
Under a blind dependency on one!

This is a sort of government, which is too great and heavy a curse for any one to wish, even upon those who are foolish enough, or wicked enough, to contend for its lawfulness; or, which is the same thing, for submission to it: But surely, if ever any man deserved to feel the merciless gripes of tyranny, it is he who is an advocate for it. Phalaris acted justly, when he hanelled his brazen bull with the wretch who invented it.

As arbitrary power in a single person has made greater havock in human nature, and thinned mankind more, than all the beasts of prey and all the plagues and earthquakes that ever were; let those men consider what they have to answer for, who would countenance such a monstrous evil in the world, or would oppose those that would oppose it. A bear, a lion, or a tiger, may now and then pick up single men in a wood, or a desert; an earthquake sometimes may bury a thousand or two inhabitants in the ruins of a town; and the pestilence may once in many years carry off a much greater number: But a tyrant shall, out of a wanton personal passion, carry fire and sword through a whole continent, and deliver up a hundred thousand of his fellow creatures to the slaughter in one day, without any remorse or further

notice, than that they died for his glory. I say nothing of the moral effect of tyranny; though 'tis certain that ignorance, vice, poverty, and vileness, always attend it.

He who compares the world now with what it was formerly, how populous once, how thin now; and considers the cause of this doleful alteration, will find just reason to fear, that spiritual and temporal tyranny, if they go on much longer, will utterly extinguish the human race. Of Turkey I have spoken already: The great continent of America is almost unpeopled, the Spaniards having destroyed, 'tis thought, about forty millions of its natives; and for some kingdoms in Europe, especially towards the north, I do not believe that they have now half the inhabitants that they had so lately as a hundred years ago.

Blessed be God, there are still some free countries in Europe, that abound with people and with plenty, and England is the foremost. This demonstrates the inestimable blessing of liberty. Can we ever over-rate it, or be too jealous of a treasure which includes in it almost all human felicities? Or can we encourage too much those that contend for it, and those that promote it? It is the parent of virtue, pleasure, plenty, and security; and 'tis innocent, as well as lovely. In all contentions between liberty and power, the latter has almost constantly been the aggressor. Liberty, if ever it produce any evils, does also cure them: Its worst effect, licentiousness, never does, and never can, continue long. Anarchy cannot be of much duration: and where 'tis so, it is the child and companion of tyranny; which is not government, but a dissolution of it, as tyrants are the enemies of mankind.

Power is like fire; it warms, scorches, or destroys, according as it is watched, provoked, or increased. It is as dangerous as useful. Its only rule is the good of the people; but because it is apt to break its bounds, in all good governments nothing, or as little as may be, ought to be left to chance, or the humours of men in authority: All should proceed by fixed and stated rules, and upon any emergency, new rules should be made. This is the constitution, and this the happiness of Englishmen; as hath been formerly shewn at large in these letters.

We have a constitution that abhors absolute power; we have a King that does not desire it; and we are a people that will never suffer it: No free people will ever submit to it, unless it steal upon them by treachery, or they be driven into it by violence. But a state can never be too secure against this terrible, this last of all human evils; which may be brought upon them by many causes, even by some that at first sight do not seem to threaten any such thing: And of all those causes, none seems more boding than a general distress, which certainly produces general discontent, the parent of revolutions; and in what such a circumstance of affairs may end, no man can ever foresee: Few are brought about without armies; a remedy almost always worse than the disease. What is got by soldiers, must be maintained by soldiers; and we have, in this paper, already seen the frightful image of a military government; a government, which, at best, is violent and bloody, and eternally inconsistent with law and property.

It is therefore a dreadful wickedness to have any share in giving occasion for those discontents, which are so apt to burst into rage and confusion. A state sometimes recovers out of a convulsion, and gains new vigour by it; but it much oftener expires in it. Heaven preserve me from ever beholding contending armies in England! They are different things from what they once were. Our armies formerly were only a number of the people armed occasionally; and armies of the people are the only armies which are not formidable to the people. Hence it is, that, in the many revolutions occasioned by the strife between the two royal houses of York and Lancaster, there never was any danger of slavery from an armed force: A single battle decided the contention; and next day these popular soldiers went home, and resumed their ordinary arms, the tools of husbandry. But since that time armies have not been so easily parted with; but after the danger was over for which they were raised, have often been obstinately kept up, and by that means created dangers still as great.

Some quacks in politicks may perhaps venture publick disturbances, out of an opinion that they shall be able to prevent them by art, or suppress them by force. But this shews their capacity, as well as their wickedness: For, not to mention the malignity of their hearts, in risking publick ruin, to gratify a private appetite; how can any event be certainly foreseen, when the measure of the cause cannot be certainly known? They can never ascertain the degree of opposition; they cannot foreknow what circumstances may happen, nor into whose hands things may fall. Cicero did not dream, when he employed Octavius for the commonwealth, that his young champion for liberty would ever be the tyrant of his country. Who could foresee that Cromwell would enslave those whom he was employed to defend? But there is no trusting of liberty in the hands of men, who are obeyed by great armies.

From hence may be seen what a fatal and crying crime it would be, in any free country, to break the confidence between the prince and his people. When loyalty is once turned into indifference, indifference will soon be turned into hatred; hatred will be returned with hatred; resentment may produce tyranny, and rage may produce rebellion. There is no mischief which this mutual mistrust and aversion may not bring forth. They must therefore be the blackest traitors, who are the first authors of so terrible an evil, as are they who would endeavour to protect them.

Henry III of Castile said, that he feared the curse of his people more than he did the arms of his enemies: In which saying he shewed as much wisdom as humanity; since, while he was beloved at home, he had nothing to fear from abroad, and the curses of his subjects were the likeliest means to bring upon him the arms of his enemies.

G

I am, &c.

No. 26. SATURDAY, April 22, 1721.

The sad Effects of general Corruption, quoted from Algernon Sidney, Esq. [Gordon] ↪

[I-195]

SIR,

I send you, for the entertainment of your readers this week, two or three passages out of the great Algernon Sidney: An author, who can never be too much valued or read; who does honour to the English nobility, and to the English name; who has written better upon government than any Englishman, and as well as any foreigner; and who was a martyr for that liberty which he has so amiably described, and so nobly defended. He fell a sacrifice to the vile and corrupt court of our pious Charles II. He had asserted the rights of mankind, and shewed the odiousness of tyranny; he had exposed the absurdity and vileness of the sacred and fashionable doctrines of those days, passive obedience, and hereditary right; doctrines, which give the lie to common sense, and which would destroy all common happiness and security amongst men! Doctrines, which were never practised by those that preached them! and doctrines, which are big with nonsense, contradiction, impossibility, misery, wickedness, and desolation! These were his crimes, and these his glory.

The book is every way excellent: He had read and digested all history; and this performance of his takes in the whole business of government: It makes us some amends for the loss of Cicero's book *De Republica*. Colonel Sidney had all the clear and comprehensive knowledge, and all the dignity of expression, of that great master of eloquence and politicks; his love of liberty was as warm, his honesty as great, and his courage greater.

G

“Liberty cannot be preserved, if the manners of the people are corrupted; nor absolute monarchy introduced, where they are sincere: Which is sufficient to shew, that those who manage free governments ought always, to the utmost of their power, to oppose corruption, because otherwise both they and their government must inevitably perish; and that, on the other hand, the absolute monarch must endeavour to introduce it, because he cannot subsist without it. 'Tis also so natural for all such monarchs to place men in power who pretend to love their persons, and will depend upon their pleasure, that possibly 'twould be hard to find one in the world who has not made it the rule of his government: And this is not only the way to corruption, but the most dangerous of all. For though a good man may love a good monarch, he will obey him only when he commands that which is just; and no one can engage himself blindly to do whatever he is commanded, without renouncing all virtue and religion; because he knows not whether that which shall be commanded is consistent with each, or directly contrary to the laws of God and man. But if such a monarch be evil, and his actions such as they are too often found to be; whoever bears an affection to him, and seconds his designs, declares himself an enemy to all that is good; and the advancement of such men to power, does not only introduce, foment, and increase corruption, but fortifies it in such a manner, that without an entire renovation of that state, it cannot be removed. Ill men may possibly creep into any government; but when the worst are placed nearest the throne, and raised to honours for being so, they will with that force endeavor to draw all men to a conformity of spirit with themselves, that it can no otherwise be prevented than by destroying them, and the principle in which they live.

“Man naturally follows that which is good, or seems to him to be so. Hence it is, that in well-governed states, where a value is put upon virtue, and no one honoured unless for such qualities as are beneficial to the publick; men are from the tenderest years brought up in a belief, that nothing in this world deserves to be sought after, but such honours as are acquired by virtuous actions: By this means virtue itself becomes popular, as in Sparta, Rome, and other places, where riches (which, with the vanity that follows them, and the honours men give to them, are the root of all evil) were either totally banished, or little regarded. When no other advantage attended the greatest riches, than the opportunity of living more sumptuously or deliciously, men of great spirits slighted them. When Aristippus told Cleanthes, that if he would go to court and flatter the tyrant, he need not seek his supper under a hedge; the philosopher answered, that he who could content himself with such a supper, need not go to court to flatter the tyrant. Epaminondas, Aristides, Phocion, and even the Lacedemonian kings, found no inconvenience in poverty, whilst their virtue was honoured, and the richest princes in the world feared their valour and power. It was not difficult for Curius, Fabricius, Cincinnatus, or Emilius Paulus, to content themselves with the narrowest fortune, when it was no obstacle to them in the pursuit of those honours which their virtues deserved. ’Twas in vain to think of bribing a man, who supped upon the coleworts of his own garden. He could not be gained by gold, who did not think it necessary. He that could rise from the plough to the triumphal chariot, and contentedly return thither again, could not be corrupted; and he that left the sense of his poverty to his executors, who found not wherewith to bury him, might leave Macedon and Greece to the pillage of his soldiers, without taking to himself any part of the booty. But when luxury was brought into fashion, and they came to be honoured who lived magnificently, though they had in themselves no qualities to distinguish them from the basest of slaves, the most virtuous men were exposed to scorn if they were poor; and that poverty, which had been the mother and nurse of their virtue, grew insupportable. The poet well understood what effect this change had upon the world, who said,

Nullum crimen abest facinusque libidinis, ex quo Paupertas Romana perit

Juvenal

“When riches grew to be necessary, the desire of them, which is the spring of all mischief, followed. They who could not obtain honours by the noblest actions, were obliged to get wealth, to purchase them from whores or villains, who exposed them to sale: And when they were once entered into this track, they soon learned the vices of those from whom they had received their pre-ferment, and to delight in the ways that had brought to it. When they were come to this, nothing could stop them: all thought and remembrance of good was extinguished. They who had bought the commands of armies or provinces from Icelus or Narcissus, sought only to draw money from them, to enable them to purchase higher dignities, or gain a more assured protection from those patrons. This brought the government of the world under a most infamous traffick; and the treasures arising from it were, for the most part, dissipated by worse vices than the rapine, violence, and fraud with which they had been gotten. The authors of those crimes had nothing left but their crimes; and the necessity of committing more, through the indigency into which they were plunged by the extravagance of their expenses. These things are inseparable from the life of a courtier; for as servile natures are guided rather by sense than reason, such as addict themselves to the service of courts, find no other consolation in their misery, than what they receive from sensual pleasures, or such vanities as they put a value upon; and have no other care than to get money for their supply, by begging, stealing, bribing, and other infamous practices. Their offices are more or less esteemed, according to the opportunities they afford for the exercise of these virtues; and no man seeks them for any other end than for gain, nor takes any other way than that which conduces to it. The useful means of attaining them are, by observing the prince's humour, flattering his vices, serving him in his pleasures, fomenting his passions, and

by advancing his worst designs, to create an opinion in him that they love his person, and are entirely addicted to his will. When valour, industry, and wisdom advanced men to offices, it was no easy matter for a man to persuade the Senate he had such qualities as were required, if he had them not: But when princes seek only such as love them, and will do what they command, 'tis easy to impose upon them; and because none that are good will obey them when they command that which is not so, they are always encompassed by the worst. Those who follow them only for reward, are most liberal in professing affection to them; and by that means rise to places of authority and power. The fountain being thus corrupted, nothing that is pure can come from it. These mercenary wretches having the management of affairs, justice and honour are set at a price, and the most lucrative traffick in the world is thereby established. Eutropius, when he was a slave, used to pick pockets and locks; but being made a minister, he sold cities, armies, and provinces; [*] and some have undertaken to give probable reasons to believe, that Pallas, one of Claudius's manumised slaves, by these means, brought together more wealth in six years, than all the Roman dictators and consuls had done, from the expulsion of the kings to their passage into Asia. The rest walked in the same way, and the same arts, and many of them succeeded in the same manner. Their riches consisted not of spoils taken from enemies, but were the base product of their own corruption. They valued nothing but money, and those who could bribe them were sure to be advanced to the highest offices; and, whatever they did, feared no punishment. Like effects will ever proceed from the like causes. When vanity, luxury, and prodigality are in fashion, the desire of riches must necessarily increase in proportion to them: And when the power is in the hands of base mercenary persons, they will always (to use the courtier's phrase) make as much profit of their places as they can. Not only matters of favour, but of justice too, will be exposed to sale; and no way will be open to honours or magistracies, but by paying largely for them. He that gets an office by these means, will not execute it *gratis*: He thinks he may sell what he has bought; and would not have entered by corrupt ways, if he had not intended to deal corruptly: Nay, if a well-meaning man should suffer himself to be so far carried away by the stream of a prevailing custom, as to purchase honours of such villains, he would be obliged to continue in the same course, that he might gain riches to procure the continuance of his benefactor's protection, or to obtain the favour of such as happen to succeed them. And the corruption thus beginning in the head, must necessarily diffuse itself into the members of the commonwealth: Or, if any one (which is not to be expected) after having been guilty of one villainy, should resolve to commit no more, it could have no other effect, than to bring him to ruin; and he being taken away, all things would return to their former channel."

I am, &c.

No. 27. SATURDAY, April 29, 1721.

General Corruption, how ominous to the Publick, and how discouraging to every virtuous Man. With its fatal Progress whenever encouraged. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[I-202]

SIR,

Sallust, or whoever else was the author of the two discourses to Caesar about settling the commonwealth, observes to that emperor, that those magistrates judge wildly, who would derive their own security from the corruption of the people; and therefore make them wicked men, to make them good subjects: Whereas, says he, tis the interest of a virtuous prince to make his people virtuous; for, the debauched, having thrown off all restraint, are of all men the most ungovernable.”

Pliny tells Trajan, that all his predecessors, except Nerva and one or two more, studied how to debauch their people, and how to banish all virtue, by introducing all vices; first, because they were delighted to see others like themselves; secondly, because the minds of the Romans being depraved by the taste and vices of slaves, they would bear with greater tameness the imperial yoke of servitude.

Thus did these governors and enemies of Rome destroy virtue, to set up power. Nor was such policy at all new or strange:

It was then, and always will be, the direct road to absolute monarchy, which is in its nature at everlasting enmity with all goodness and honesty. The Roman virtue and the Roman liberty expired together; tyranny and corruption came upon them almost hand in hand.

This shews the importance of an honest magistracy; nothing certainly is more threatening, or more to be apprehended, than a corrupt one. A knave in power is as much to be dreaded, as a fool with a firebrand in a magazine of powder: You have scarce a bare chance for not being blown up.

From the wicked and worthless men, who engrossed all the places at Rome in the latter days of the commonwealth, and from the monstrous prodigalities, infamous briberies, and endless corruptions, promoted by these men, the sudden thralldom of that glorious city might easily have been foreseen. It was scarce possible to be honest, and preferred. Atticus would never accept of any employment, though he was offered the highest. “This refusal,” says Monsieur Bayle,

was doubtless owing to his virtue: There was no rising to offices then, but by means that were infamous; nor was there any such thing as executing these offices according to the rules of justice and the publick good, without being exposed to the resentment and violence of many and great wicked men. He therefore chose to be rather a virtuous private man, than an exalted and publick rogue.

How charming is this example, but how rare! If all men were like Atticus, there would be no danger of a state of anarchy. But as to that we may be easy; for there will be always more rogues and rooks at hand to be devouring and monopolizing places, by all proper vile means, than there will be places to bestow.

Bayle goes on, and tells us of

a great traveller, who being rallied upon his rambling humour, answered, that he would cease travelling, as soon as ever he could find a country where power and credit were in the hands of honest men, and preferments went by merit. Nay then, says one who heard him, you will infallibly die travelling.

Corruption, bribery, and treachery, were such ways to power, as Atticus would not tread. Colonel Sidney says, that

a noble person in his time, who was a great enemy to bribery, was turned out from a considerable post, as a scandal to the court; for, said the principal minister, "he will make no profit of his place; and by that means cast a scandal upon those that do."

And Alexander ab Alexandro tells a story of a very honest man, well skilled in the languages, who having long struggled with difficulties and poverty, while he trusted in vain to his honesty and learning, bethought himself of a contrary road; and therefore turning pimp and pathick, instantly he prospered, and got great riches, power, and places.

Aude aliquid brevibus gyaris & carcere dignum.

Cicero, who lived to see dismal days of ambition and corruption at Rome, was sensible that he could do little or no good with all his abilities and his honesty. "If I saw," says he in a letter to Lentulus,

if I saw the commonwealth held and governed by corrupt and desperate men, as has happened in my days and formerly, no motive or consideration should engage me in their interests; neither their bribes could move me, nor could dangers, which often sway the boldest men, terrify me; nor could any of their civilities, or any of their obligations, soften me.

Talking, in another place, of the Senate, then awed by power, or governed by avarice, he says, *Aut assentiendum est nulla cum gravitate paucis aut frustra dissentiendum*: That is, you must either basely vote with Crassus and Caesar, and one or two men more in power, or vote against them to no purpose. These great men did not seek power, nor use it, to do good to their country, which is the end of power; but to themselves, which is the abuse of power. Where government is degenerated into jobbing, it quickly runs into tyranny and dissolution: And he who in any country possesses himself of a great post for the sake of gainful jobs, as a certain great person once owned that he did, ought to finish his last job under a gallows.

It is natural and necessary for those that have corrupt ends, to make use of means that are corrupt, and to hate all men that are uncorrupt.

I would lay it down as a rule for all nations to consider and observe, that where bribery is practised, 'tis a thousand to one but mischief is intended; and the more bribery, the more mischief. When therefore the people, or their trustees, are bribed, they would do well to consider, that it is not, it cannot be, for their own sakes. Honest and open designs, which will bear light and examination, are hurt and discredited by base and dark expedients to bring them about: But, if you would persuade a man to be a rogue, it is natural that money should be your first argument; and therefore, whoever offers me a bribe, does tacitly acknowledge that he thinks me a knave.

Tacitus, taking notice of the woeful decline of virtue and liberty, towards the end of the Republick, says, that the greatest villainies were committed with impunity, and ruin was the price of honesty: *Deterrima quaeque impune, ac multa honesta exitio fuere*. And indeed, where corruption and publick crimes are not carefully opposed, and severely punished, neither liberty nor security can possibly subsist.

The immense briberies practised by Julius Caesar, were sure and terrible presages of Caesar's tyranny. It is amazing what mighty sums he gave away: Caius Curio alone, one of the tribunes, was bought into his interest, at no smaller a price than half a million of our money. Other magistrates too had their shares; and all were bribed, who would be bribed. We may easily conceive how he came by such sums; he got them as wickedly as he gave them away. Nor can I call him generous in this vast liberality; since he purchased the Roman empire with its own money, and gave away a part to get the whole.

Unjust and unfrugal ways of throwing away money, make wicked and violent means necessary to get money; and rapine naturally follows prodigality. They that waste publick money, seldom stop there, but go a wicked step farther; and having first drained the people, at last oppress them. Publick frauds are therefore very alarming, as they are very big with publick ruin. What shall we say then of other times, when publick schemes have been concerted to confound all property, to put common honesty out of countenance, and banish it from amongst men; and when an appetite for power was only an appetite for mischief? Dreadful sure was the prospect! And yet this was the state of Rome in those days; as will be seen further before this letter is ended.

Nor would it have been any advantage or security to Rome, though Caesar and his party had been less able men than in truth they were: Having debauched the people, he did more by corruption towards enslaving them, than he did by his parts, as great as they were. It is somewhere observed, that to do good requires some parts and pains; but any man may be a rogue. The world, says the proverb, little knows what silly fellows govern it. Even the difficulties of doing good proceed from the pravity of some men's nature, ever prone to do evil; and so strong is that pravity, that many men frequently slight great temptations to be honest, and embrace slight temptations to be knaves.

It is an observation, which every body is capable of making, that a good character lost is hardly, if ever, recovered. Now the reason of this is, not so much from the malevolence of the world (often too ready to calumniate) as from the inability of a knave to become honest: He is, as it were, doomed to be one: The bias of his spirit is crooked; and if ever he act honestly, it is for a roguish reason. I have known a man, who, having wilfully lost all credit, rejected as wilfully all opportunities to regain it, even when thrown into his lap. He could not help earning fresh detestation, with great labour; when he might have acquired the highest renown with the greatest ease. From hence may be seen how dangerous it is ever to trust a man who has once been a knave; and hence too may be learned, that from men who have done eminent mischief, whether publick or private, greater still is to be dreaded. Vice is a prolifick thing, and wickedness naturally begets wickedness.

Olearius, giving an account of Muscovy, observes, that

the Great Duke's court hath this in common with those of other princes, that vice takes place of virtue, and gets nearest the throne. Those who have the honour to be nearest his person, are withal more subtle, more deceitful, and more insolent, than the others that have not. They know very well how to make their advantages of the prince's favour, and look for the greatest respects and humblest submissions imaginable, from those who make their addresses to them; which the others render them, as much to avoid the mischief they might do to them, as for the good they expect from them.

This is the character of a court, where one is not much surprized nor troubled to find out tyranny and corruption in abundance: But one is at once amazed and affected with the mournful account Sallust gives us of the Romans in his time; the Romans, who had been so virtuous a people, so great and so free!

The same author says, that it would have lessened his concern, had he seen such great wickedness perpetrated by men of great qualities. But his grief had not this mitigation: For, says he, wretched creatures with little souls, whose whole genius lay in their tongue and whose utmost talent and ability was to prate glibly, exercised with insolence that power which they had acquired by chance, or by the sloth of others. *Ac me quidem mediocris dolor angerct, si virtute partam victoriam more suo per servitium exercerent: Sed homines inertissimi quorum omnis vis virtusque in lingua sita est, forte, & alterius socordia, dominationem oblatam insolentes agitant.* And for the Roman nobility of that time, he says, that, like stupid statues, their names and titles were their only ornament: *Inertissimi nobiles, in quibus, sicut in statua praeter nomen, nihil est additamenti.* Sallust. ad C. Caesarem, de repub. ordinand.

We see what a market these men made of power, and what a degree of degeneracy they introduced. The end of all was, the utter loss of liberty, and a settled tyranny.

G

I am, &c.

No. 28. SATURDAY, May 6, 1721.

A Defence of Cato against his Defamers. [Gordon] ↩

TO CATO ↩

[I-210]

SIR,

See what it is to be conspicuous! Your honesty, and the truths which you tell, have drawn upon you much envy, and many lies. You cannot be answered; therefore it is fit to abuse you. Had you kept groveling near the earth, in company with most other weekly writers, you might have lulled the town asleep as they do, with great safety to your person, and without any body's saying an unkind word of you: But you have galloped away so fast and so far before them, that it is no wonder the poor vermin, conscious of their own heaviness and want of speed, crawl after you and curse you. It is natural, human sight is offended with splendor: This is exemplified in a man looking at the sun; he makes all the while a world of wry mouths and distorted faces.

Consider yourself, Sir, as the sun to those authors, who behold you with agonies, while they behold you with admiration. Great minds alone are pleased with the excellencies of others, and vulgar souls provoked by them. The mob of writers is like the weaver's mob; all levellers. This appears by their unmannerly and seditious speeches concerning you, their monarch. Strange instance of impudence and ingratitude! They live upon you, and scold at you. Your lot is the same with that of many other eminent authors; you feed vermin before you are dead.

Your slanderers, as they are below even contempt, so are they far below all notice: But it is worth considering who set them at work; from whom they receive the wages of prostitution; and what contradictory things the poor creatures are taught to say. Scarce a paper appeared for a considerable time together in which Cato's letters were not extolled; and those who did it endeavoured, to the best of their skill, to write after him: But finding that his labours made theirs useless, and that the recommending of publick spirit was too mighty a task for humble hirelings, they suddenly, and without ceremony, tack about, and, by calumniating Cato, make themselves liars: Such deference have they for their customers, and for themselves!

It is no wonder, therefore, that the same worthy, but waggish pens, represent him, with the same breath, as an abandoned atheist, and a bigoted Presbyterian; while others as plainly prove him a flaming Jacobite, and an arrant republican; that is, one who is high for monarchy, and one who is against all monarchy. I could shew you these pretty consistencies in one and the same paper.

Cato had described and shewed the horrid effects of publick confusion, and contended for punishing the authors of our own: Hence Cato is represented as an enemy to government and order, and a promoter of confusion.

Cato had bestowed real and unfeigned encomiums upon his Majesty, and done all justice to the abilities and honesty of his ministers: Hence Cato is charged with casting reproaches, and making sarcasms upon his Majesty and his ministry.

Cato has writ against Turkish, Asiatick, and all sorts of tyranny: Hence Cato is said to be a great incendiary, and an open enemy to our constitution.

Cato contends, that great traitors ought to be hanged: Hence Cato is traduced, as if he affronted the ministry.

Cato asserts, that the good of mankind is the end of government: Hence Cato is for destroying all government.

Cato lays down certain rules for farther establishing his Majesty's throne, and for ensuring to him for ever the minds of his people: Therefore Cato is a Jacobite.

Cato has shewn at large the blessings of a limited monarchy, especially of our own: Therefore Cato is a republican.

Cato has shewn the dreadfulness of popular insurrections and fury; the misery of civil wars, the uncertainty of their end: Therefore Cato stirs up the people to sedition and rebellion.

Cato laments, that great criminals are seldom brought to the gallows: Hence Cato is represented as one that deserves the gallows.

Cato, talking of Turkey, observes with warmth and concern, that the holy name of God was belied, and religion prostituted, to bind down wretchedness upon his creatures, and to protect the tyrant that does it: therefore Cato scurrilously reviles the Church of England.

Cato has shewn the destructive terms of arbitrary power, and how it had almost dispeopled the earth: In answer to this it is said, that Cato wears a dark wig.

Cato has complained, that this great nation has been

abused, cheated, and exhausted; its trade ruined; its credit destroyed; its manufactures discouraged, &c. and affirmed, that vengeance is due to those traitors who have done it; that none but traitors will protect traitors; that publick honesty and publick spirit ought to be encouraged, in opposition to publick corruption, bribery, and rapine; that there is regard to be had to the rights, privileges, and tempers of the people: That standing armies are dreadful things; that a military government is violent and bloody: That they are the blackest traitors, who would break the confidence between a prince and his subjects: That great men mind chiefly the getting of plumbs; and that honest measures are the best measures. To all which it is replied, that Cato is a whimsical unreasonable man, who talks and expects strange things; and, in fine, that he dreams odd dreams.

By such powerful arguments is Cato answered; by such pretty arts decried. He is really a great criminal; he asserts the rights and property of the people, and calls for justice upon those who would destroy them. He is surely a Jacobite, who would not let certain elevated sages do what they would, and get what they pleased. I would ask, whether the obliging, protecting, and avenging, the injured people, be likely ways to bring in the Pretender? Yet these are the ways which Cato contends for. Or, whether the deceiving, loading, and squeezing of the harmless people, be natural ways to make and keep them well affected? Yet these are the ways which Cato condemns and exposes.

Being detached from all parties, eminently guiltless of all personal views of his own, and going upon principles certainly true in themselves, certainly beneficent to human society; it is no wonder that he is read and approved by every intelligent man in England, except the guilty, their screens, hirelings, and adherents. What he writes, the people feel to be true: If men can be great knaves, in spite of opposition; how much greater would they be, if there were none? And if justice be opposed, openly, shamelessly, and violently opposed, in spite of her champions and defenders; she must certainly be destroyed, if she had none. It is a dismal reflexion, that justice must sometimes be sought for inch by inch, before it can be obtained,

and at last is not half obtained; and that the higher and blacker the villainy is, the greater is the security. I hope that this will never be our case; but I could name many a country whose case it has been.

I am not surprized that certain tall traitors are very angry with Cato. “Good now hold your tongue,” said a quack to his complaining patient, under agonies into which he had been cast by the doctor's infallible specifick: “Good now hold your tongue, and be easy; leave the matter to me, and the matter will go well”: That is, lie still and die, and I will warrant you. Great grief and distress will have utterance, in spite of art or terror.

On Ascension Day, when the Doge of Venice weds the sea with a ring, the admiral, who conducts the *bucentauro*, or vessel in which that ceremony is performed, does a bold thing: He pawns his head to the Senate, to ensure them, against the danger and effects of tempests and storms. But the thing would still be bolder, if he had first wilfully raised a storm, or bored a hole in the vessel.

I appeal to the sense of the nation, daily uttered in their addresses to the Parliament for relief and vengeance; whether Cato's sentiments be not the same with theirs; I appeal to the sufferings, the heavy, melancholy sufferings of the people, whether either Cato or they speak thus without grounds.

The grounds are too visible, and their allegations too true. Hence the rage of guilt, which is more galled by truth, than innocence is hurt by lies: And hence I have heard it observed, concerning a set of worthies, that they do not care what falsehoods you publish concerning them, but will never forgive you if you meddle with facts.

For certain gentlemen to find fault with Cato's letters, is to avow their own shame. Why was there occasion given for those letters? Some other questions might be asked too, which would discover fresh blackness in these betrayers, were they not already all over black. Who is it that might have checked, and yet did not check, rampant rogues last summer? And from what motives proceeded such omission? Who is it that openly screens open guilt? Who is it that conceals the evidence of guilt? Who is it that brow- beats the pursuers of guilt? Who is it that throws obstacles in the Parliament's way? Who is it that lengthens out the process? Who is it that strives to defeat the enquiry? Who is it that makes malcontents, and then reproaches them for being so?

In vain they fall upon Cato, with lying reproaches, false pictures, and ugly names: Their conduct betrays them; by making him of every party, they shew him to be of none; as he has shewed himself to be of none. I thought it, however, not amiss, thus, once for all, to make his apology, and to shew what are his crimes, and who his enemies. His great guilt is, that he will not spare guilt; and the great objection to his writings is, that they cannot be answered. Let the reader judge whether I have misrepresented him or his foes, who are no other than the late directors, their friends and confederates.

As to the poor weekly journeymen of the press, whose principle is the ready penny, and who, for a morsel, defile paper, and blot reputations without hurting them, they deserve no resentment. It is their profession to do what they are bid, when they are paid for it. A church is not the less sacred, because curs frequently lift up their leg against it, and affront the wall: It is the nature of dogs. They therefore are and ought to be pitied and overlooked; the business of this letter to you being to expose the false and unjust censures of some, who bear a greater figure than such harmless weekly writers, without possessing more honesty.

The conjectures of these creatures about the person of Cato afford matter of mirth. They will needs know him, right or wrong. Let them guess on; whatever they guess, I will venture to pronounce them liars, though they should guess truly: Since without being able to do any

thing more than guess, they yet go on to affirm; which no honest man would do without competent evidence. I am,

G

Sir

Your humble servant,

PORTIUS

No. 29. SATURDAY, May 13, 1721.

Reflections occasioned by an Order of Council for suppressing certain impious Clubs that were never discovered. [Gordon] ↩

[I-218]

SIR,

I would willingly propagate and preserve the following Order of Council, as a monument of his Majesty's great zeal for virtue and religion. It is published in the *Gazette* of the 29th of April, in the following words:

At the Court of St. James's, the 28th day of April, 1721

Present,

The King's Most Excellent Majesty in Council

His Majesty having received information, which gives great reason to suspect, that there have lately been, and still are, in and about the cities of London and Westminster, certain scandalous clubs or societies of young persons, who meet together, and, in the most impious and blasphemous manner, insult the most sacred principles of our holy religion, affront Almighty God himself, and corrupt the minds and morals of one another; and being resolved to make use of all the authority committed to him by Almighty God, to punish such enormous offenders, and to crush such shocking impieties before they increase and draw down the vengeance of God upon this nation: His Majesty has thought fit to command the Lord Chancellor, and his Lordship is hereby required to call together his Majesty's Justices of the Peace of Middlesex and Westminster, and strictly to enjoin them in the most effectual manner, that they, and every of them, do make the most diligent and careful enquiry and search for the discovery of any thing of this and the like sort, tending in any wise to the corruption of the principles and manners of men; and to lay before his Lordship such discoveries as from time to time may be made, to the end that all proper methods may be taken for the utter suppression of all such detestable practices. His Lordship is further directed to urge them to the due execution of their office, in detecting and prosecuting, with vigour, all profaneness, immorality, and debauchery, as they value the blessing of Almighty God, as they regard the happiness of their country, which cannot subsist, if things sacred and virtuous are trampled upon, and as they tender his Majesty's favour, to which they cannot recommend themselves more effectually, than by shewing the utmost zeal upon so important an occasion; to which end his Lordship is to acquaint them, that as his Majesty for himself has nothing more at heart than to regard the honour of God, so impiously struck at, and is determined to shew all marks of displeasure and discouragement to any who may lie even under the suspicion of such practices; so he shall always account it the greatest and most substantial service they can do to his Majesty or his government, to exert themselves in discovering any who are guilty of such impieties, that they may be openly prosecuted, and punished with the utmost severity and most publick ignominy which the laws of the land can inflict.

Edward Southwell

To this it is added, in the same *Gazette*,

That his Majesty has been pleased to give orders to the principal officers of his household, to make strict and diligent enquiry, whether any of his Majesty's servants are guilty of the horrid impieties mentioned in the Order of Council inserted above, and to make a report thereof to his Majesty.

These societies must certainly be as distracted as they are impious. I have indeed been in doubt till now, whether there really were any such; but I am in no doubt about the punishment which they deserve: I think that it ought to be the most severe that is due to such raving wickedness, which is such, as neither youth nor wine can excuse, nor indeed extenuate; and till they are further punished, I think that the darkest holes in Bedlam ought to be their portion. But outrageous and godless as they are, they do not merit more detestation and severity, than do those who inhumanly give out, that gentlemen, who abhor such clubs, are members of them: The authors of so dreadful a calumny are much worse than murderers; because they endeavour to take away from men something much dearer than life: They are therefore in the class with daemons, and earns such mighty vengeance as God only can inflict.

The above Order of Council is very just and religious, and of excellent use and example: So much zeal cannot stop at a club or two of pernicious though private sinners; but doubtless extends to other criminals more publick and considerable, and even more destructive. The greatest part of the wickedness done by those thoughtless young wretches, is done to themselves, and like to remain with them; there being little probability that they will ever make many proselytes to their astonishing frenzies: Whereas the other great criminals, for the sole sake of doing good to themselves, have undone almost every man in England, with England itself into the bargain. They set three nations to sale; and themselves fixing the price, were themselves the buyers: They purchased our happiness, and paid us in want and sorrow. Every good man is proof against the contagion of profaneness; but virtue and goodness stood us in no stead against our money-monsters, who, having robbed all honest men, made a jest of honesty itself. Can there be greater evils under the sun, than rampant plunderers, abandoned corruption, and devouring calamity? Or are there any other evils which these do not produce?

We therefore take it for granted, that

as his Majesty is determined to shew all marks of displeasure and discouragement to any who may even lie under the suspicion of such destructive practices; so he will always account it the most substantial service that we can do to him and his government, to exert ourselves in discovering any who are guilty of such unparalleled frauds, such national wickedness; that they may be openly prosecuted, and punished with the utmost severity, and most publick ignominy, that the legislature can inflict.

And,

as his Majesty has been pleased to give orders to the principal officers of his household, to make strict and diligent enquiry, whether any of his Majesty's servants are guilty of the horrid impieties mentioned in the Order of Council inserted above, and to make report thereof to his Majesty:

So we may assure ourselves, that the same severe enquiry has been already made, whether any of those in trust under his Majesty, or about his person, have stained their hands, dishonoured their master, and provoked Almighty God, by promoting or embarking in any of the horrid and spreading mischiefs practised last year by the late South-Sea directors, and their confederates.

An enquiry into religion, and the private morals of men, is not inconsistent with an enquiry into civil and publick villainies; nor can the former ever prove a bone of contention to divert the latter, whatever the wicked and the guilty may hope, and the honest and distressed may apprehend. Fresh objects of horror and aversion cannot lessen our general detestation for those who ought to be beyond all others detested. While we pursue wolves and tigers, and the mightier beasts of prey, who, if they be not destroyed, will continue to

destroy, we are not to be diverted by the scent of a fox or badger, though they may annoy a private neighbourhood, and dispeople hen-roosts.

Our publick virtue is the best and surest proof that we can give of our private piety: Piety and justice are inseparable; and prayers said ten times a day, will not atone for a murder or a robbery committed once a month: Appearances go for nothing, when facts contradict them. The readiest way therefore to shew that our hearts are pure, is to shew that our hands are clean, and that we will punish those that have foul ones.

Here is a test of our virtue and innocence!

Let us hang up publick rogues, as well as punish private blasphemers. The observance of religion, and the neglect of justice, are contradictions. Let any man ask himself, whether a nation is more hurt by a few giddy, unthinking, young wretches, talking madly in their drink; or by open, deliberate, and publick depredations committed by a junto of veteran knaves, who add to the injury, and to their own guilt, by a shew of gravity, and a canting pretence to religion? The late directors all pretended to be good Christians. I would ask one question more; namely, whether it had not been better for England, that the late directors, and their masters, had spent their nights and their days in the Hell Fire Club, than in contriving and executing execrable schemes to ruin England? Pray, which of the two is your greater enemy, he who robs you of all that you have, but neither curses nor swears at you; or he who only curses you or himself, and takes nothing from you?

Where justice is exactly observed, religion will be observed; and to pretend to be very strict about the latter, without minding the former, would be highly absurd and ridiculous. Virtue necessarily produces religion, and is itself religion; and profaneness and irreligion will ever and necessarily follow corruption, the prolifick parent of numberless mischiefs.

Private profaneness is not therefore half so terrible to human society, as publick roguery and publick robbery. The happiness of mankind is surely the cause of God; and whenever I hear of arrests and edicts made by popish and tyrannical foreign princes, in favour of religion; I consider them as so many mockeries of God, whose creatures they, at the same time, grind and destroy. As consistently might they pretend great zeal for observing religiously the sixth command, and yet murder by war and famine ten thousand of their subjects a week.

James Naylor was severely punished for blasphemy; is there any comparison, as to their effects, between the crime of James Naylor, and the crimes of the late directors, their seconds, and abettors? James Naylor (being himself deluded) misled a few ignorant people, whose error was their greatest crime: But our modern impostors, our South-Sea deceivers have actually and wilfully plundered their country of near thirty millions of money, and involved it in universal confusion and want.

It is therefore a sensible pleasure to us, to behold his Majesty and his ministry engaged with so much zeal in vindicating our property, as well as our religion. His Majesty, in particular, has condescended, with unparalleled, I am sure uncommon, goodness, to tell the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, that *he has no share in the late wicked management*. This is a piece of royal grace, with which, I believe, never any subjects were blessed before. From hence we may draw a fresh assurance of his Majesty's alacrity and readiness to punish the execrable authors of that wicked management, who are also the greatest enemies to his crown and dignity.

His Majesty being resolved to make use of all the authority committed to him by Almighty God, to punish such enormous offenders, and to crush such shocking impieties, before they increase and draw down the vengeance of God

upon this nation:

I say, his Majesty being thus zealous for religion and the nation, will never suffer the authors of the greatest evil, the highest villainy ever committed in this nation, to escape unpunished. Has ever a heavier judgment befallen our nation, than the last year's merciless rapine? And can there be greater enemies to God and man, than the authors of it? Monsters who were for plucking up all virtue and all property by the roots. Oh, that their success had not increased their guilt! They acted as if they did not believe that there was a God who judged the world, and as if they defied all human tribunals, as well as the divine. These are the atheists terrible to society; this is the atheism woefully and universally felt. Desolation and misery are the occupation and sport of devils, and they their vicegerents who promote them.

He who talks profanely of things sacred, is a wicked man, and as ill bred as he is wicked: But he who wantonly fills a country, a glorious and happy country, with want, woe, and sorrow; what name, what torture, what death, does he not deserve? He is a destroyer-general: He is a mad dog, with ten thousand mouths, who scatters poison, wounds, and death all around him.

I shall conclude in the strong words of the above Order of Council; namely, that as we value the blessing of Almighty God, as we regard the happiness of our country, which cannot subsist, if things sacred and virtuous (and such are private property, publick faith, and publick justice) are trampled upon; and as we tender his Majesty's favour, to which we cannot recommend ourselves more effectually, than by shewing the utmost zeal upon so important an occasion: I say, as we value all these, let us be warm, bold, and active in the discovery and punishment of such enormous offenders; and to crush such shocking mischiefs, before they increase and draw down the vengeance of God upon this nation.

G

I am, &c.

P.S. I, who hate to see the punishment of any sort of great wickedness linger, do here propose an expedient to come at a certainty about the blasphemous clubs: [*] Let a reward be publickly offered for the discovery of any of their members, to be paid upon their legal conviction; and, in the mean time, let us not cast random reproaches upon particular men; lest, by falling upon the innocent, they return double upon ourselves. It is base and dishonest to feign crimes that are not; and where they really are, it is barbarous and diabolical to father them upon the guiltless: He who charges upon another a crime that deserves the gallows, does, if it prove false, pronounce sentence against himself, and proclaim his own right to Tyburn: As, on the other hand, he who screens from the gallows those that deserve it, adopts their title to the halter, and ought to swing in their room.

Can there be greater justice and impartiality than this? And I assure you, Sir, I heartily wish that they may take place.

No. 30. SATURDAY, May 20, 1721.

An excellent Letter from Brutus to Atticus; with an explanatory Introduction. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[I-227]

SIR,

I send you another excellent letter of the great Brutus. They who say that I forged the last, make me as great a compliment as ever was made to man; since whoever could write that letter, is, without reflecting on my contemporaries, certainly the greatest man of the age.

To the former letter I gave you an historical introduction; I shall give you another to this, and own myself obliged for it to Monsieur Soreau.

Brutus and Cassius, after the death of Caesar, having left Rome, Octavius, Caesar's nephew, arrived there: He was no more than nineteen years old; and the first thing of note that happened to him, was a quarrel with Mark Anthony, who treated him like a child, with contempt, and indeed was grown insupportable to all the world. Cicero and Anthony being then declared enemies, Octavius was persuaded by his friends to throw himself into the arms of Cicero. Hence began their friendship, equally desirable to both: Cicero governed the Senate, and Octavius had the hearts of his uncle's soldiers, with great treasure to gain new friends, and carry on new designs. Mark Anthony was the common enemy of both, and of the Republick, which he as outrageously attacked, as Cicero warmly defended.

This quarrel gave occasion to those orations of Cicero, called philippicks; which are eternal monuments of his love for his country, as well as of the marvelous eloquence of that great man.

Cicero and Octavius succeeded; they got the better of Mark Anthony, and drove him out of Rome. But, by his interest and activity, he soon gathered such a force, as he thought sufficient to make himself master of Rome; which therefore he prepared to attack and possess by downright violence. But Octavius having levied, at his own expence, an army, composed mostly of the veteran troops of Caesar, opposed the march of Anthony, and diverted that dreadful storm from the city. Cicero, who had undertaken the defence of Octavius from his first arrival at Rome, and laboured to fortify his cause by the authority of the Senate, was not wanting to extol this first service of Octavius for the Republick. Hence extraordinary honours were decreed him; that he should be made propraetor, and in that quality commander of the army; that a recompence should be given to his troops; that he should be received into the number of the Senators; that he might, before he came of age, demand all the other greatest dignities of the commonwealth; and even that a statue should be erected to him.

In the mean time Anthony, thus repulsed by Octavius, marched into Cisalpine Gaul, to drive from thence Decimus Brutus, its governor, a kinsman of our Brutus, and one of the tyrannicides. That governor, being unprovided of forces sufficient to fight Anthony, retired into the city of Modena, a Roman colony; and there shutting himself up, expected succour from the Senate. Anthony in the interim laid siege to the place, in hopes that being once master of that city, he would soon be so of Gaul, and afterwards be enabled to return into Italy, with a power sufficient to conquer Rome, where he meant to erect a dominion as absolute as was that of Caesar.

That siege occasioned fresh meetings of the Senate; where, in fine, Mark Anthony was declared an enemy to the commonwealth; and both the consuls, Hirtius and Pansa, were sent with an army to relieve Decimus Brutus: With the consuls, Octavius was likewise sent.

During all these transactions, our Brutus and Cassius having staid some time in Italy, after their leaving Rome, were now retired to their governments, Brutus to Macedonia, and Cassius to Syria; and both were levying men, and forming armies, for the defence of the commonwealth.

As to Cicero, he was now in the zenith of power, and governed all things at Rome: He particularly presided in the Senate, as the most antient consular, during the absence of the two consuls. In this situation he was wonderfully curious to know what was the opinion of Brutus concerning himself and his administration. It is certain that Brutus had his highest esteem; and he thought that if he could procure the esteem of Brutus, it would be an eminent proof of his own virtue and merit, as well as the most glorious reward of that virtue and merit. Brutus had, in all his letters, been very silent with him upon this head. Cicero therefore makes use of Atticus, their common friend, to sift Brutus, and know his sentiments. As soon, therefore, as it was known at Rome, that the siege of Modena was raised, and Anthony defeated by the two consuls and Octavius, Atticus dispatched the news to Brutus, and in his letter sounded him about his thoughts of Cicero.

The following letter is a frank and open answer to that of Atticus. In it he justly condemns Cicero's over violent hatred to Mark Anthony, which betrayed him into as unreasonable an affection and deference for Octavius, his champion against Anthony. Cicero saw his error at last, but saw it too late; the power and credit to which he had raised Octavius, cost him his life, and Rome her liberty. Cicero, who was the author of all the greatness and authority of Octavius, was by Octavius given up to the rage and sword of Mark Anthony, against whom Octavius had been generously defended and supported by Cicero: And Octavius enslaved the commonwealth with those very arms, which the commonwealth had trusted with him for her protection. So early had the pious Augustus learned the arts and gratitude of an absolute monarch!

G

I am, &c.

BRUTUS TO ATTICUS ↩

“You tell me, that Cicero wonders why, in any of my letters, I have never discovered to him my sentiments concerning his management and administration at Rome; I therefore discover those sentiments to you, since you are so earnest to know them.

“I know well the sincerity and great uprightness of Cicero's intentions: His passion for the good of the commonwealth is indeed evident and remarkable. But prudent and wise as he is, he has given proofs of a zeal which is imprudent, and a heart that is vain: I leave it to you to judge, which of these swayed him, when, more forward than well advised, he drew upon himself the hatred of so terrible a foe as Mark Anthony. This he meant for the good of the commonwealth; but it has had a contrary effect, since by it, instead of bridling, as he proposed, the dangerous power of Octavius, he has further animated his ambition, and raised his aims. Besides, such is the fatal complaisance of Cicero for that man, that he cannot help speaking of myself and the patriots of my country, with severe and bitter language; which, however, returns double upon himself: If we have put one man to death, he has put many. We killed Caesar, and he the associates of Catiline. If therefore Casca, who gave Caesar the first blow, be a murderer, as Cicero, to please Octavius, calls him; Cicero himself is one, and must confess himself one, and his great enemy Bestia is justified in calling him so.

“How! because we have not the Ides of March, in which we dispatched Caesar, eternally in our mouths, as Cicero has the Nones of December, in which he suppressed the conspiracy of Catiline, and which he is for ever celebrating upon all occasions; does he take advantage

of our modesty and his own vanity, and find from hence more reason to blame a glorious deed done by us for mankind, than Clodius and Bestia had to condemn, as they always did, his own severe conduct when he was consul?

“Cicero every where boasts, that he sustained the war against Anthony; yet no body ever saw Cicero out of a gown, and words were his weapons. But let it be so, that he has defeated Anthony; where is the victory, if, curing one mischief, it introduce a worse? And what avails it to have extinguished the tyranny of Anthony, if he who has done it erect another in its room more terrible, by being more durable? And yet thus will it be if we suffer it. These are articles in the conduct of Cicero, which shew that it is not the tyrant nor the tyranny that he fears; but it is only Anthony that he fears. If a man will have a tyrant, it is all one to me, whether he be more or less outrageous; it is the thing, it is the having a tyrant, which I dread.

“That Cicero is hastening to set up a tyrant, is plain, from actions as visible as sad. Octavius is all in all; a triumph is decreed him; his troops have largesses given them; he is loaded with flatteries, he is covered with honours. What shame for Cicero, to behold all this, and his own abject posture! His publick behaviour, and the speeches and motions which he makes in the Senate, all centering in his master; are they not a scandal to the great figure of that great consular, and a stain upon the renowned name of Cicero?

“You will read this with pain, as with pain I write it; but it is a task which you have put upon me. Besides, I know your thoughts of our publick affairs, and that desperate and extraordinary as they are, you think that, contrary to all appearance, they may be remedied by means that are ordinary. I do not however blame you, my dear Atticus; comfort yourself with hope; it is agreeable to your age, to the sweetness of your temper, and to your regard for your children: I do not therefore wonder that you are indolent and sanguine; which disposition of yours appears still farther to me, from the account which my friend Flavius gave me of what passed between you and him.

“But to return to Cicero: Pray where is the difference between him and the servile Salvidenus? Could that base retainer to Octavius struggle for the glory of his master with more labour and zeal than does Cicero? You will say, perhaps, that Cicero dreads still the remains of the civil war. This is wild: Can any one dread a beaten enemy, and yet apprehend nothing from the formidable power of one who commands a great army, elevated by victory? nor from the rashness of a young man, who may conquer the commonwealth by the means which enabled him to conquer for it? Does Cicero therefore make this mighty court to Octavius, because, having given him so much, he thinks it dangerous not to give him all! Oh the wretched folly of cowardice! thus to lessen your own security by consulting it; and to increase tyranny because you fear it! Is it not better to have nothing at all to fear, than thus to compound for the degrees of fear?

“The truth is, we too much dread poverty, banishment, and death; and our imagination swells their terrors beyond bounds. There are greater evils than these; and Cicero is mistaken if he thinks that there are not. And yet all goes well with him, if he be but humoured, if his opinion be regarded, if his suits be granted; if he be courted and extolled: He has no quarrel to servitude, provided it be accompanied with honour and lustre; if there can be any such thing as honour and lustre in this lowest, this vilest lot of human nature.

“Octavius may indeed call him Father Cicero, refer every thing to his counsel, sooth him with praises, and shew great gratitude and fondness towards him, while he loses nothing by all this, which is only a fair outside and fine words. Facts speak the plainest truth, and they effectually contradict the above appearances. For, can there be a greater insult upon common-sense, than for Octavius to take for a father that man who is no longer in the number of freemen?

“Whither then tend all these compliances, all this zeal of Cicero for Octavius? Why, only to this; that Octavius may be propitious to Cicero. In this little, worthless, shameful point center all the actions and designs of the great Cicero! Hence it is that I value no longer, in the person of Cicero, those arts and accomplishments with which, doubtless, his soul is vastly replenished. What is he the better, himself, for so many excellent precepts, so many noble discourses, every where found in his works, concerning publick liberty, true and solid glory, the contempt of death, exile, and want? How much better does Philippus understand all those fine rules laid down by Cicero, than Cicero himself does, who pays more homage to Octavius than Philippus, who is father-in-law to Octavius, pays?

“Let Cicero therefore cease glorying thus vainly in our grief, which also ought to be his: For, to repeat what I have already said, what advantage can we draw from a victory, which only translates the pernicious power of Mark Anthony to a new usurper? And yet, by your letter, I perceive that it is still a doubt whether Mark Anthony be entirely defeated.

“After all, since Cicero can live a dependent and a slave, let him live a dependent and a slave. It ought not to be otherwise, if he can thus shamefully forget his reverend age, the illustrious honours which he has borne, and the memorable parts which he has performed.

“For myself, while I live, I will make war upon tyranny; that is, upon all exorbitant power that lifts men above the laws: Nor can any condition of servitude, however advantageous and alluring, divert me from this great, this worthy purpose: Nor could Anthony shake it, though he really were, what you say he is, a man of worth; a character which contradicts my constant opinion of him. The judgment and spirit of our ancestors are mine; they would not have their father for their tyrant, nor would I.

“All this openness to you is the result of my affection for you; nor could I have said so much, had I not loved you as well as Cicero thinks he is beloved by Octavius. That all these sad truths affect not you so much as they do me, is my concern; especially since to an eminent fondness for all your friends, you have added a particular fondness for Cicero. As to myself, I beg you to believe that my affection for him is still the same, though my esteem of him is greatly abated: Nor can I help it, it being impossible to judge ill or well of men and things, but according as they appear ill or well. . . .”

No. 31. SATURDAY, May 27, 1721.

Considerations on the Weakness and Inconsistencies of human Nature. [Gordon] [↩](#)

[I-237]

SIR,

The study of human nature has, ever since I could study any thing, been a principal pleasure and employment of mine; a study as useful, as the discoveries made by it are for the most part melancholy. It cannot but be irksome to a good-natured man, to find that there is nothing so terrible or mischievous, but human nature is capable of it; and yet he who knows little of human nature, will never know much of the affairs of the world, which every where derive their motion and situation from the humours and passions of men.

It shews the violent bent of human nature to evil, that even the Christian religion has not been able to tame the restless appetites of men, always pushing them into enormities and violences, in direct opposition to the spirit and declarations of the gospel, which commands us to *do unto all men what we would have all men do unto us*. The general practice of the world is an open contradiction and contempt of this excellent, this divine rule; which alone, were it observed, would restore honesty and happiness to mankind, who, in their present state of corruption, are for ever dealing treacherously or outrageously with one another, out of an ill-judging fondness for themselves.

Nay, the peaceable, the beneficent, the forgiving Christian religion, is made the cause of perpetual hatred, animosity, quarrels, violence, devastation, and oppression; and the apostles, in spite of all their poverty, disinterestedness, and love of mankind, are made to justify their pretended successors of the Church of Rome, in engrossing to themselves the wealth and power of the earth; and in bringing mankind under a yoke of servitude, more terrible, more expensive, and more severe, than all the arts and delusions of paganism could ever bring them under: Of so much more force with the corrupt world are the destructive villainies and falsifications of men, than the benevolent and heavenly precepts of Jesus Christ.

The truth is, and it is a melancholy truth, that where human laws do not tie men's hands from wickedness, religion too seldom does; and the most certain security which we have against violence, is the security of the laws. Hence it is, that the making of laws supposes all men naturally wicked; and the surest mark of virtue is, the observation of laws that are virtuous: If therefore we would look for virtue in a nation, we must look for it in the nature of government; the name and model of their religion being no certain symptom nor cause of their virtue. The Italians profess the Christian religion, and the Turks are all infidels; are the Italians therefore more virtuous than the Turks? I believe no body will say that they are; at least those of them that live under absolute princes: On the contrary, it is certain, that as the subjects of the Great Turk are not more miserable than those of the Pope, so neither are they more wicked.

Of all the passions which belong to human nature, self-love is the strongest, and the root of all the rest; or, rather, all the different passions are only several names for the several operations of self-love. Self-love, says the Duke of Rochefoucauld, is the love of one's self, and of every thing else for one's own sake: It makes a man the idolater of himself, and the tyrant of others. He observes, that man is a mixture of contrarieties; imperious and supple, sincere and false, fearful and bold, merciful and cruel: He can sacrifice every pleasure to the getting of riches, and all his riches to a pleasure: He is fond of his preservation, and yet sometimes eager after his own destruction: He can flatter those whom he hates, destroy those

whom he loves.

This is a picture of mankind; and they who say it is a false one, ought to shew that they deserve a better. I have sometimes thought, that it was scarce possible to assert any thing concerning mankind, be it ever so good, or ever so evil, but it will prove true. They are naturally innocent, yet fall naturally into the practice of vice; the greatest instances of virtue and villainy are to be found in one and the same person; and perhaps one and the same motive produces both. The observance or non-observance of a few frivolous customs shall unite them in strict friendship and confederacy, or set them cutting one another's throats.

They never regard one another as men and rational beings, and upon the foot of their common humanity; but are cemented or divided by the force of words and habits. Considerations that are a disgrace to reason! The not being born in the same climate, or on this side such a river, or such a mountain, or the not wearing the like garments, or uttering the like sounds, or having the same thoughts or taste, are all so many causes of intense hatred, sometimes of mortal war. Whatever men think or do, especially if they have found a good name for it, be it ever so foolish or bad, is wisest and best in their own eyes: But this is not all; we will needs be plaguing our neighbours, if they do not quit upon our authority their own thoughts and practices for ours.

It fills me with concern, when I consider how men use one another; and how wretchedly their passions are employed: They scarce ever have proper objects for their passions; they will hate a man for what he cannot help, and what does them no harm; yet bless and pray for villains, that kill and oppress them. There never was such a dreadful tribunal under the sun as the Inquisition: A tribunal, against which the most innocent is not safe, to which the most virtuous men are most exposed; a tribunal, where all the malice, all the sagacious cruelty, all the bitterness, and all the fury and falsehood of devils are exerted, and all the tortures of hell are imitated and practised; yet this very tribunal is so dear to the people, though it terrifies them, enslaves them, and destroys them, that rather than part with it, they would part with all that is left them. Upon the surrender of Barcelona, in the late war, the inhabitants capitulated, that the Inquisition should not be taken from them: And even here in England, we may remember the time when men have been knocked down for saying that they had a right to defend their property by force, when a tyrant attempted to rob them of it against law. To such a pitch of stupidity and distraction are people to be brought by those who belie Almighty God, and falsify his word to satiate worldly pride; and such dupes and furies are men to one another!

Every thing is so perverted and abused, and the best things most, that a very wise man had but too much reason to say, that truth did not so much good in the world, as the appearance and pretence of it did evil. Thus the saving of men's souls is so universally understood to be a great and glorious blessing, that for the sake of it men have suffered, and do suffer, the highest misery and bondage from the impostors who pretend to bestow it, in the dark parts of the world, which are by far the greatest parts of the world. And thus civil government is the defence and security of human society; yet Dr. Prideaux makes it a doubt, whether the benefit which the world receives from government be sufficient to make amends for the calamities which it suffers from the follies, mistakes, and mal-administration of those that manage it. And thus to come home to ourselves, a project to pay off the nation's debts was so tempting; so popular and plausible, that almost every body came into it; and yet—the consequences speak themselves.

The Roman Senate could flatter and adore a Nero and a Caligula; the Roman soldiers could butcher a Piso and a Pertinax: It is hard to say which were the most guilty, the Senate while they worshipped tyranny, or the army while they destroyed virtue. So prone are men to propagate publick destruction for personal advantages and security! I can never think without

horror and trembling upon that dismal, that bloody maxim of Philip II of Spain, that he would rather be master of a kingdom ruined, miserable, and quiet; than of a kingdom rich, powerful, and turbulent. In pursuance of this maxim, he made his kingdom a desert, by destroying and expelling the most industrious of its inhabitants, the Moors: But Philip was very devout, and would frequently wash a pilgrim's feet; that is, he was very civil and charitable to an idle religious stroller, and a cruel enemy to the general happiness of mankind.

This puts me in mind of the history of John Basilowitz, Great Duke of Muscovy:

No history of his time but speaks of the unheard-of cruelties exercised by him on all sorts of persons through his whole reign: They are so horrid, that never any tyrant did the like; and yet Bishop Paulus Jovius gives him the character of a good and devout Christian, though he deserves not to be numbered even amongst men: It is true, he would go often to church, say the service himself, sing, and be present at ecclesiastical ceremonies, and execute the functions of the monks: but he abused both God and man, and had no sentiments of humanity. *Ambassadors Travels*, p. 73, 74.

What a medley is here of devotion and cruelty in the same men! Nor are these examples singular. Louis XI of France was a false, a wicked, and an oppressive prince, and one of the greatest bigots that ever lived; and some of the greatest saints in the Roman calendar were pernicious villains, and bloody monsters. No sect of bigots, when they are uppermost, are willing to tolerate another; and all ground their ungodly severity upon their zeal for religion; though their want of charity is a demonstration that they have no religion. It is certain, that without universal charity and forbearance, a man cannot be a Christian.

It is wonderful and affecting, to behold how the ideas of good and evil are confounded! The Turks place great devotion in releasing captive birds from their cages, in feeding indigent and mangy dogs, and building hospitals for them, and in paying a religious reverence to camels: But at the same time that they thus use birds and beasts like men and Christians, they use men and Christians worse than they do beasts; and with them it is a lighter offence to deny bread to a poor Christian, who is famished in his chains, than to the dogs of the street, which are fit for nothing but to breed infection. They will load a poor Christian with irons, cover him with stripes, and think that they do well and religiously in it; yet make it a matter of conscience not to overload a beast of burden.

In popish countries, in cases where nature is left to itself, as much compassion is shewn for the distressed as in other places: Even thieves, robbers, and murderers, are accompanied to the gallows or the wheel with sighs and tears; especially of the tender sex: But when an unhappy innocent is going to be burned, to be cruelly and slowly burned, for his sincerity and piety in speaking truth, and reading the Bible himself, or teaching it to others; nothing is to be seen but a general joy, nor to be heard but loud cries of approbation and consent; and all piety, all sympathy, is denied in an instance which calls for the highest. Tell a Spanish lady of a popish priest hanged in England for sedition or murder, she instantly falls into tears and agonies: Tell her of a kinsman of hers burned for denying transubstantiation, she gives glory to God, and feels a sensible joy.

And, in Protestant countries, how many men are there, who cheat, starve, and oppress all their life long, to leave an estate at their death to religious uses? As if men were to be rogues for God's sake. I have heard of a man, who having given half of his estate to mend highways, for the good of his country, said, that he would willingly give the other half, that England had never a ship, nor a merchant, nor a dissenter from the Church, belonging to it. Strange inconsistency! By one act of his, two or three miles of causeway were kept in good repair, which was only a kindness to horses' hoofs; by another act of his, he would have made all England miserable and desolate!

The hardships and distresses of this year shew too manifestly the rogueries and depredations of the last: Villainy was let loose amongst us, and every man endeavoured to entrap and ruin another, to enrich himself. Honesty was brow-beaten and driven into corners; humanity was extinguished; all friendship was abolished; and even the distinction of kindred and ties of blood were discarded: A raging passion for immoderate gain had made men universally and intensely hard-hearted: They were every where devouring one another. And yet the directors and their accomplices, who were the acting instruments of all this outrageous madness and mischief, set up for wonderfully pious persons, while they were defying Almighty God, and plundering men; and they set apart a fund of subscriptions for charitable uses: That is, they mercilessly made a whole people beggars, and charitably supported a few necessitous and worthless favourites. I doubt not, but if the villainy had gone on with success, they would have had their names handed down to posterity with encomiums; as the names of other publick robbers have been! We have historians and ode-makers now living, very proper for such a task. It is certain, that most people did, at one time, believe the directors to be great and worthy persons: And an honest country clergyman told me last summer, upon the road, that Sir John was an excellent publick-spirited person, for that he had beautified his chancel.

Upon the whole, we must not judge of one another by our fair pretensions and best actions; since the worst men do some good, and all men make fine professions: But we must judge of men by the whole of their conduct, and the effects of it. Thorough honesty requires great and long proof; since many a man, long thought honest, has at length proved a knave. And it is from judging without proof, or too little, of false proof, that mankind continue unhappy.

G

I am, &c.

No. 32. SATURDAY, June 10, 1721.

Reflections upon Libelling. [Gordon] ↪

[I-246]

SIR,

I design in this letter to lay before the town some thoughts upon libelling; a sort of writing that hurts particular persons, without doing good to the publick; and a sort of writing much complained of amongst us at this time, with great ground, but not more than is pretended.

A libel is not the less a libel for being true. This may seem a contradiction; but it is neither one in law, or in common sense: There are some truths not fit to be told; where, for example, the discovery of a small fault may do great mischief; or where the discovery of a great fault can do no good, there ought to be no discovery at all: And to make faults where there are none, is still worse.

But this doctrine only holds true as to private and personal failings; and it is quite otherwise when the crimes of men come to affect the publick. Nothing ought to be so dear to us as our country, and nothing ought to come in competition with its interests. Every crime against the publick is a great crime, though there be some greater than others. Ignorance and folly may be pleaded in alleviation of private offences; but when they come to be publick offences, they lose all benefit of such a plea: We are then no longer to consider only to what causes they are owing, but what evils they may produce; and here we shall readily find, that folly has overturned states, and private ignorance been the parent of publick confusion.

The exposing therefore of publick wickedness, as it is a duty which every man owes to truth and his country, can never be a libel in the nature of things; and they who call it so, make themselves no compliment. He who is affronted at the reading of the ten commandments, would make the decalogue a libel, if he durst; but he tempts us at the same time to form a judgment of his life and morals not at all to his advantage: Whoever calls publick and necessary truths, libels, does but apprise us of his own character, and arm us with caution against his designs. I doubt not but if the late directors had been above the Parliament, as they once thought themselves, they would have called the votes of the House of Commons against them, false and scandalous libels.

Machiavel says, Calumny is pernicious, but accusation beneficial, to a state; and he shews instances where states have suffered or perished for not having, or for neglecting, the power to accuse great men who were criminals, or thought to be so; and hence grew the temptation and custom of slandering and reviling, which was the only remedy that the people had left them: So that the evil of calumny was owing to the want of justice, and the people were more blameless than those whom they reviled; who, having forced them upon a licentiousness of speech, did very unkindly chide and punish them for using it. Slander is certainly a very base and mean thing: But surely it cannot be more pernicious to calumniate even good men, than not to be able to accuse ill ones.

I have long thought, that the world are very much mistaken in their idea and distinction of libels. It has been hitherto generally understood that there were no other libels but those against magistrates, and those against private men: Now, to me there seems to be a third sort of libels, full as destructive as any of the former can possibly be; I mean, libels against the people. It was otherwise at Athens and Rome; where, though particular men, and even great men, were often treated with much freedom and severity, when they deserved it; yet the

people, the body of the people, were spoken of with the utmost regard and reverence: "The sacred privileges of the people," "The inviolable majesty of the people," "The awful authority of the people," and "The unap-pealable judgment of the people," were phrases common in these wise, great, and free cities. Other modes of speech are since grown fashionable, and popular madness is now almost proverbial: But this madness of theirs, whenever it happens, is derived from external causes. Oppression, they say, will make a wise man mad; and delusion has not less force: But where there are neither oppressors nor impostors, the judgment of the people in the business of property, the preservation of which is the principal business of government, does rarely err. Perhaps they are destitute of grimace, mystery, refinements, shrugs, dissimulation, and reserve, and the other accomplishments of courtiers: But as these are only masks to conceal the absence of honesty and sense, the people, who possess as they do the substance, have reason to despise such insipid and contemptible shadows.

Machiavel, in the chapter where he proves that a multitude is wiser and more constant than a prince, complains, that the credit which the people should be in declines daily; for, says he, every man has liberty to speak what he pleases against them; but against a prince no man can talk without a thousand apprehensions and dangers. I have indeed often wondered, that the inveighing against the interest of the people, and calling their liberties in question, as has been and is commonly done among us by old knaves and young fools, has never been made an express crime.

I must own, I know not what treason is, if sapping and betraying the liberties of a people be not treason, in the eternal and original nature of things. Let it be remembered for whose sake government is, or could be, appointed; then let it be considered, who are more to be regarded, the governors or the governed. They indeed owe one another mutual duties; but if there be any transgressions committed, the side that is most obliged ought doubtless to bear the most: And yet it is so far otherwise, that almost all over the earth, the people, for one injury that they do their governors, receive ten thousand from them: Nay, in some countries, it is made death and damnation, not to bear all the oppressions and cruelties, which men made wanton by power inflict upon those that gave it them.

The truth is; if the people are suffered to keep their own, it is the most that they desire: But even this is a happiness which in few places falls to their lot; they are frequently robbed by those whom they pay to protect them. I know that it is a general charge against the people, that they are turbulent, restless, fickle, and unruly: Than which there can be nothing more untrue; for they are only so where they are made so. As to their being fickle, it is so false, that, on the contrary, they have almost ever a strong bent to received customs, and as strong a partiality to names and families that they have been used to: And as to their being turbulent, it is as false; since there is scarce an example in an hundred years of any people's giving governors any uneasiness, till their governors had made them uneasy: Nay, for the most part, they bear many evils without returning one, and seldom throw off their burdens so long as they can stand under them.

But intending to handle this subject more at large in another letter, I return more directly to the business of libels.

As to libels against government, like all others, they are always base and unlawful, and often mischievous; especially when governments are impudently charged with actions and designs of which they are not guilty. It is certain, that we ought not to enter into the private vices or weaknesses of governors, any further than their private vices enter into their public administration; and when they do, it will be impossible to stop people's mouths: They will be provoked, and shew that they are so, in spite of art and threats, if they suffer hardships and woe from the private gratifications of their superiors, from whom they have a right to expect

ease and happiness; and if they be disappointed, they will be apt to deal very freely with their characters.

In truth, most libels are purely personal; they fly at men rather than things; which proceeding is as injudicious as it is unmanly. It is mean to be quarrelling with faces, names, and private pleasures; things perfectly indifferent to the world, or things out of a man's own power; and 'tis silly, as it shews those whom we attack, that we attack them not for what they do, but for what they are: And this is to provoke them without mending them. All this therefore is libelling; an offence against which the laws of almost every country, and particularly of our own, have furnished a remedy in proportion to the consequence and quality of the person offended. And it is as just that reputation should be defended by law, as that property should.

The praise of well-doing is the highest reward that worthy and disinterested men aim at, and it is villainous and ungrateful to rob them of it; and those that do it, are libellers and slanderers. On the other hand, while censure and infamy attend evil-doers, it will be some restraint, if not upon them, yet upon others, from following their example: But if men be ever suffered to do what they please without hearing of it, or being accountable for it; liberty and law will be lost, though their names may remain. And whether acting wickedly with impunity, or speaking falsely with impunity, be likely to do most hurt to human society and the peace of the world, I leave all the world to judge: common equity says, that they both ought to be punished, though not both alike.

All libels, the higher they aim, the more malignity they acquire; and therefore when they strike at the person of the prince, the measure of their guilt is complete. The office of a prince is to defend his people and their properties; an excellent and a painful office; which, where it is executed with honesty and diligence, deserves the highest applause and reward; and whoever vilifies and traduces him, is an enemy to society and to mankind, and will be punished with the consent of all who love either. And yet it is scarce possible, in a free country, to punish by a general law any libel so much as it deserves; since such a law, consisting of so many branches, and being of such vast latitude, would make all writing whatsoever, how innocent soever, and even all speaking, unsafe. Hence it is, that in Turkey, though printing were permitted, it would be of no use, because no body would dare to make any use of it.

As long as there are such things as printing and writing, there will be libels: It is an evil arising out of a much greater good. And as to those who are for locking up the press, because it produces monsters, they ought to consider that so do the sun and the Nile; and that it is something better for the world to bear some particular inconveniencies arising from general blessings, than to be wholly deprived of fire and water.

Of all sorts of libels, scurrilous ones are certainly the most harmless and contemptible: Even truth suffers by ill-manners; and ill-manners prevent the effect of lies. The letter in the *Saturday's Post* of the 27th past does, I think, exceed all the scurrilities which I have either heard, or seen, from the press or the pulpit. The author of it must surely be mad: he talks as if distraction were in his head, and a firebrand in his hand; and nothing can be more false, than the insinuations which he makes, and the ugly resemblances which he would draw. The paper is a heap of falsehood and treason, delivered in the style and spirit of billingsgate; and indeed most of the enemies to his Majesty's person, title, and government, have got the faculty of writing and talking, as if they had their education in that quarter.

However, as bad as that letter is (and, I think, there cannot be a worse), occasion will never be taken from scurrilous and traitorous writing, to destroy the end of writing. We know that in all times there have been men lying upon the watch to stifle liberty, under a pretence

of suppressing libels; like the late King James, who, having occasion for an army to suppress Monmouth's Rebellion, would needs keep it up afterwards; because, forsooth, other rebellions might happen, for which he was resolved to give cause.

I must own, that I would rather many libels should escape, than the liberty of the press should be infringed; yet no man in England thinks worse of libels than I do; especially of such as bid open defiance to the present Protestant establishment.

Corrupt men, who have given occasion for reproach, by their base and dark practices with the late directors, being afraid of truths that affect them from the press, may be desirous of shutting it up: But honest men, with clear reputations, which they know foul mouths cannot hurt, will always be for preserving it open, as a sure sign of liberty, and a cause of it.

The best way to escape the virulence of libels, is not to deserve them; but as innocence itself is not secure against the malignity of evil tongues, it is also necessary to punish them. However, it does not follow that the press is to be sunk, for the errors of the press. No body was ever yet so ridiculous to propose a law for restraining people from travelling upon the highway, because some who used the highway committed robberies.

It is commonly said, that no nation in the world would allow such papers to come abroad as England suffers; which is only saying, that no nation in the world enjoys the *liberty* which England enjoys. In countries where there is no liberty, there can be no ill effects of it. No body is punished at Constantinople for libelling: Nor is there any distinction there between the liberty of the press, and the licentiousness of the press; a distinction ever to be observed by honest men and freemen.

G

I am, &c.

No. 33. SATURDAY, June 17, 1721.

Cautions against the natural Encroachments of Power. [Gordon] ↩

[I-255]

SIR,

Considering what sort of a creature man is, it is scarce possible to put him under too many restraints, when he is possessed of great power: He may possibly use it well; but they act most prudently, who, supposing that he would use it ill, inclose him within certain bounds, and make it terrible to him to exceed them.

Men that are above all fear, soon grow above all shame. *Rupto pudore & metu, suo tantum ingenio utebatur*, says Tacitus of Tiberius. Even Nero had lived a great while inoffensively, and reigned virtuously: But finding at last that he might do what he would, he let loose his appetite for blood, and committed such mighty, such monstrous, such unnatural slaughters and outrages, as none but a heart bent on the study of cruelty could have devised. The good counsels of Seneca and Burrhus were, for some time, checks upon his wolfish nature; and doubtless he apprehended, that if he made direct and downright war upon his people, they would use resistance and make reprisals: But discovering, by degrees, that they would bear any thing, and his soldiers would execute every thing, he grew into an open defiance with mankind, and daily and wantonly wallowed in their blood. Having no other rival, he seemed to rival himself, and every day's wickedness was blacker than another.

Yet Nero was not the worst of all men: There have been thousands as bad as he, and only wanted the same opportunity to shew it. And there actually have been many princes in the world who have shed more blood, and done more mischief to mankind, than Nero did. I could instance in a late one, who destroyed more lives than ever Nero destroyed, perhaps an hundred to one. It makes no difference, that Nero committed butcheries out of cruelty, and the other only for his glory: However the world may be deceived by the change of names into an abhorrence of the one, and an admiration of the other; it is all one to a nation, when they are to be slaughtered, whether they be slaughtered by the hangman or by dragoons, in prison or in the field; nor is ambition better than cruelty, when it begets mischief as great.

It is nothing strange, that men, who think themselves unaccountable, should act unaccountably, and that all men would be unaccountable if they could: Even those who have done nothing to displease, do not know but some time or other they may; and no man cares to be at the entire mercy of another. Hence it is, that if every man had his will, all men would exercise dominion, and no man would suffer it. It is therefore owing more to the necessities of men, than to their inclinations, that they have put themselves under the restraint of laws, and appointed certain persons, called magistrates, to execute them; otherwise they would never be executed, scarce any man having such a degree of virtue as willingly to execute the laws upon himself; but, on the contrary, most men thinking them a grievance, when they come to meddle with themselves and their property. *Suarum legum auctor & eversor*, was the character of Pompey: He made laws when they suited his occasions, and broke them when they thwarted his will. And it is the character of almost every man possessed of Pompey's power: They intend them for a security to themselves, and for a terror to others. This shews the distrust that men have of men; and this made a great philosopher call the state of nature, a state of war; which definition is true in a restrained sense, since human societies and human laws are the effect of necessity and experience: Whereas were all men left to the boundless liberty which they claim from nature, every man would be interfering and quarrelling with another; every man would be plundering the acquisitions of another; the labour of one man

would be the property of another; weakness would be the prey of force; and one man's industry would be the cause of another man's idleness.

Hence grew the necessity of government; which was the mutual contract of a number of men, agreeing upon certain terms of union and society, and putting themselves under penalties, if they violated these terms, which were called laws, and put into the hands of one or more men to execute. And thus men quitted part of their natural liberty to acquire civil security. But frequently the remedy proved worse than the disease; and human society had often no enemies so great as their own magistrates; who, where-ever they were trusted with too much power, always abused it, and grew mischievous to those who made them what they were. Rome, while she was free (that is, while she kept her magistrates within due bounds) could defend herself against all the world, and conquer it: But being enslaved (that is, her magistrates having broke their bounds) she could not defend herself against her own single tyrants, nor could they defend her against her foreign foes and invaders; for by their madness and cruelties they had destroyed her virtue and spirit, and exhausted her strength. This shews that those magistrates that are at absolute defiance with a nation, either cannot subsist long, or will not suffer the nation to subsist long; and that mighty traitors, rather than fall themselves, will pull down their country.

What a dreadful spirit must that man possess, who can put a private appetite in balance against the universal good of his country, and of mankind! Alexander and Caesar were that sort of men; they would set the world on fire, and spill its blood, rather than not govern it. Caligula knew that he was hated, and deserved to be hated; but it did not mend him. *Oderint dum metuant*, was his by-word: All that the monster aimed at, was to be great and terrible. Most of these tyrants died as became them; and, as they had reigned, by violence: But that did not mend their successors, who generally earned the fate of those that went before them, before they were warm in their place. *Invenit etiam aemulos infelix nequitia: Quid si floreat vigeatque?* "If unfortunate villainy thus finds rivals, what shall we say, when it exalts its head and prospers?"

There is no evil under the sun but what is to be dreaded from men, who may do what they please with impunity: They seldom or never stop at certain degrees of mischief when they have power to go farther; but hurry on from wickedness to wickedness, as far and as fast as human malice can prompt human power. *Ubi semel recto deerratum est, in praeceps pervenitur—a rectis in vitia, a vitiis in prava, a pravis in praecipitia*, says a Roman historian; who in this speaks the truth, though in other instances he tells many lies; I mean that base flatterer of power, Velleius Paterculus. So that when we see any great mischief committed with safety, we may justly apprehend mischiefs still greater.

The world is governed by men, and men by their passions; which, being boundless and insatiable, are always terrible when they are not controuled. Who was ever satiated with riches, or surfeited with power, or tired with honours? There is a tradition concerning Alexander, that having penetrated to the Eastern Ocean, and ravaged as much of this world as he knew, he wept that there was never another world for him to conquer. This, whether true or no, shews the spirit of the man, and indeed of human nature, whose appetites are infinite.

People are ruined by their ignorance of human nature; which ignorance leads them to credulity, and too great a confidence in particular men. They fondly imagine that he, who, possessing a great deal by their favour, owes them great gratitude, and all good offices, will therefore return their kindness: But, alas! how often are they mistaken in their favourites and trustees; who, the more they have given them, are often the more incited to take all, and to return destruction for generous usage. The common people generally think that great men have great minds, and scorn base actions; which judgment is so false, that the basest and worst of all actions have been done by great men: Perhaps they have not picked private

pockets, but they have done worse; they have often disturbed, deceived, and pillaged the world: And he who is capable of the highest mischief, is capable of the meanest: He who plunders a country of a million of money, would in suitable circumstances steal a silver spoon; and a conqueror, who steals and pillages a kingdom, would, in an humbler fortune, rifle a portmanteau, or rob an orchard.

Political jealousy, therefore, in the people, is a necessary and laudable passion. But in a chief magistrate, a jealousy of his people is not so justifiable, their ambition being only to preserve themselves; whereas it is natural for power to be striving to enlarge itself, and to be encroaching upon those that have none. The most laudable jealousy of a magistrate is to be jealous *for* his people; which will shew that he loves them, and has used them well: But to be jealous *of* them, would denote that he has evil designs against them, and has used them ill. The people's jealousy tends to preserve liberty; and the prince's to destroy it. Venice is a glorious instance of the former, and so is England; and all nations who have lost their liberty, are melancholy proofs of the latter.

Power is naturally active, vigilant, and distrustful; which qualities in it push it upon all means and expedients to fortify itself, and upon destroying all opposition, and even all seeds of opposition, and make it restless as long as any thing stands in its way. It would do what it pleases, and have no check. Now, because liberty chastises and shortens power, therefore power would extinguish liberty; and consequently liberty has too much cause to be exceeding jealous, and always upon her defence. Power has many advantages over her; it has generally numerous guards, many creatures, and much treasure; besides, it has more craft and experience, less honesty and innocence: And whereas power can, and for the most part does, subsist where liberty is not, liberty cannot subsist without power; so that she has, as it were, the enemy always at her gates.

Some have said, that magistrates being accountable to none but God, ought to know no other restraint. But this reasoning is as frivolous as it is wicked; for no good man cares how many punishments and penalties lie in his way to an offence which he does not intend to commit: A man who does not mean to commit murder, is not sorry that murder is punished with death. And as to wicked men, their being accountable to God, whom they do not fear, is no security to use against their folly and malice; and to say that we ought to have no security against them, is to insult common sense, and give the lie to the first law of nature, that of self-preservation. Human reason says, that there is no obedience, no regard due to those rulers, who govern by no rule but their lust. Such men are no rulers; they are outlaws; who, being at defiance with God and man, are protected by no law of God, or of reason. By what precept, moral or divine, are we forbid to kill a wolf, or burn an infected ship? Is it unlawful to prevent wickedness and misery, and to resist the authors of them? Are crimes sanctified by their greatness? And is he who robs a country, and murders ten thousand, less a criminal, than he who steals single guineas, and takes away single lives? Is there any sin in preventing, and restraining, or resisting the greatest sin that can be committed, that of oppressing and destroying mankind by wholesale? Sure there never were such open, such shameless, such selfish impostors, as the advocates for lawless power! It is a damnable sin to oppress them; yet it is a damnable sin to oppose them when they oppress, or gain by oppression of others! When they are hurt themselves ever so little, or but think themselves hurt, they are the loudest of all men in their complaints, and the most outrageous in their behaviour: But when others are plundered, oppressed, and butchered, complaints are sedition; and to seek redress, is damnation. Is not this to be the authors of all wickedness and falsehood?

To conclude: Power, without control, appertains to God alone; and no man ought to be trusted with what no man is equal to. In truth there are so many passions, and inconsistencies, and so much selfishness, belonging to human nature, that we can scarce be too much upon our guard against each other. The only security which we can have that men will be honest, is

to make it their interest to be honest; and the best defence which we can have against their being knaves, is to make it terrible to them to be knaves. As there are many men wicked in some stations, who would be innocent in others; the best way is to make wickedness unsafe in any station.

I am, &c.,

P. S. This letter is the sequel of that upon human nature; and both are intended for an introduction to a paper which I intend to write upon the restraints which all wise nations put upon their magistrates.

G

The End of the First Volume.

Endnotes to Volume 1

[*] Taunton in Somersetshire.

[*] He was one of the commissioners of the forfeited estates in Ireland in the reign of King William.

[*] This letter was written in October 1720.

[*] This was said to have been spoken by a certain Lord Chancellor in former times.

[*] A cant word, known to mean an hundred thousand pounds.

[*] The Peerage Bill.

[*]

—*Nunc uberiore rapina*
Peccat in urbe manus.

Claud.

[*] Upon the strictest enquiry, it could not be discovered that any such clubs ever existed, except in common fame and the above Order of Council.



CATO'S LETTERS.

VOL. II.

[June 24, 1721 to March 3, 1722]

No. 34. SATURDAY, June 24, 1721.

Of Flattery. [Gordon] ↩

[II-3]

SIR,

Flattery is a poisonous and pernicious weed, which grows and prevails every where, but most where it does most harm; I mean in courts. If few dare speak the truth to their superiors, how shall he who has no superiors ever come to know the truth? Perhaps there never was an instance in the world, where a prince was told the sincere truth in every thing which concerned him to know, by any servant of his. Truth is of a plain, unalterable nature, and cannot be moulded into fashionable shapes; truth is therefore unfit to be a courtier: But falsehood, being the creature of the imagination, is capable of bearing all modish and pleasing forms; falsehood is therefore an agreeable guest in palaces. To illustrate this, endless examples might be brought; but unfortunate princes are the most pregnant examples. Galba, when he had lost all, and nothing remained to him but his life, which he was also soon to lose, had not one about him to tell him his condition and danger; so cruelly dishonest were his servants! Their flattery prevented the means of his preservation. They therefore were the first murderers of their master.

Nothing more is necessary in order to be flattered, than to be uppermost. Galba was hated for his avarice, and despised for his age and severity; yet, in compliance to an emperor, multitudes of people, and particularly of senators and gentlemen, addressed him to put Otho to death, and to banish all his accomplices: And a rumour being spread, that Otho was slain, the same set of flatterers ran to the palace with noisy congratulations, and deceitfully complained that fate had snatched the usurper from their vengeance.

What marks were here of loyalty to Galba's person, and of zeal and firmness to his interest! yet in so small a space as two hours after, Otho's power having prevailed in Rome, Otho had their hearts and their acclamations in his turn, and Galba's death was demanded of him with the same importunity that the death of Otho had been demanded of Galba, and by the same men.

A melancholy lesson of the vile fraudulency of flatterers, and of the blindness of princes who trust in them! Even Galba, who was thought proof against flatterers (*adversus blandientes incorruptus*) was deceived by them.

The Sieur Amelot de la Houssaye, from whom many of these observations are taken, says truly, that most princes are better armed against fear than against flattery: Terrors animate them, and threats whet their courage; but flattery softens their minds, and corrupts their manners; it makes them negligent and idle, and forget their duty. *Corrupta mens assiduis adulationibus*, says Tacitus of Domitian. Besides, mistaking flattery for complaisance (which is a sign of affection) they think that those who flatter them love them, and from that delusion come to trust and employ their most dangerous enemies. He further says, that Philip II of Spain was wont to interrupt those who went about to flatter him, by saying to them roundly, “Cease trifling, and tell me what it concerns me to know”: Words worthy of all princes, who are never entertained by their flatterers but with things useless or pernicious. If princes never heard any thing but what they ought to know, they would never hear flatterers.

Flattery is a false and selfish thing, begot only by fear or favour; and having itself only in view, it observes no rule of equity or merit, but praises and calumniates, just according as men are exalted or depressed. Mezeray tells us, that as long as Henry III of France built magnificent monasteries, and plunged himself into monkish devotions, ill-becoming his dignity, the monks revered him as a saint, and called him one: But no sooner was the religious and seditious League formed against him, but these godly ingrates loaded him with all the reproaches and ill names that they could devise; tyrant, hypocrite, murderer, and abominable, were the titles which they gave him; and at last they butchered him as a heretick: So easily can flatterers make one and the same man a god or devil; and so true is it that flatterers love no man, and only court the fortunes of men. Flattery is venal, and always goes to the best bidder; and it is servile, and always crouches most to those who are uppermost, let them be what they will: *Adulationi foedum crimen servitutis inest*. Most of the evil that princes commit, comes from the lessons and compliance of flatterers; and to such most princes have owed their ruin: Few princes would have done what many of them did, if their false friends had not told them that they might do what they would: We have had many instances of this at home, and there have been more abroad. It would be a great advantage to princes, if they would remember that there never was a prince in the world but was flattered, and never a prince but was hurt by flattery, and many utterly undone by it. It has made good princes bad, and bad worse: By flattery they have been brought to think themselves more than men, and to act worse than brutes; and, in fine, to live and die as beasts of prey live and die, in blood. Their flatterers having made them worse than men, adored them like gods: But, as Pliny says, *principum exitus docuit ne a diis quidem amari nisi quos homines ament*.

Their business is to tell their great patron what pleases him, though it destroy him; and when they have deprived him of all his friends, his innocence, his felicity, and his possessions, they leave him too; or having ruined his fortune, they take away his life, which is their last and best civility: For flattery ends ever in ingratitude, and often in treason; and for princes to be often distressed by those whom they have obliged most, is nothing new.

Flattery is always great in proportion as its patrons are bad. And therefore Pliny observes, that those emperors who were most hated, were likewise most flattered: For he says, “that dissimulation is more ingenious and artful than sincerity, slavery than liberty, fear than love.” Hence flattery is a sign of servitude, and inconsistent with equality, and with liberty, the offspring of equality. It is indeed one of the purposes of flattery to make men worse; it gains by corruption, and lives upon credulity, folly, and vice. It is particularly at perpetual enmity with truth; and flatterers are like liars, not to be believed even when they speak truth. I have somewhere heard flatterers compared to thieves, who break into houses by night; the first thing that they do, is to extinguish the lights: So flatterers, when they have beset a prince, or any other great man, never fail to keep far from him all light and information.

Flattery is cruel, and gives bloody counsels; and flatterers are constant and merciless calumniators: Every word which they do not like, is a libel; every action that displeases them, is treason or sedition: Where there are no faults, they create them. The crimes objected to the honest and excellent Thræsea Petus, were such as these:

That he had never applauded Nero, nor encouraged others to applaud him; that when the Senate were running into all the extravagancies of flattery, he would not be present, and therefore had not been in it for three years; that he had never sacrificed for Nero's charming voice; that he would never own Madam Poppæa for a goddess, she who had been Nero's mistress, and was then his wife; that he would not vote that a gentleman who had made satirical verses upon Nero should be put to death, though he condemned the man and his libel; but he contended that no law made the offence capital; that they could not, without scandal, and the imputation of cruelty, punish with death, an offence for which the laws had already provided a punishment that was milder.

These were the honourable and virtuous crimes of that great and good man; but they were then high treason, and cost him his life. Memorable are the words of Philip de Comines, speaking of court flatterers:

If a six-penny tax be to be raised, they cry it ought by all means to be a twelve-penny one. If the prince be offended with any man, they are directly for hanging him. In other instances, they maintain the same character. Above all things, they advise their master to make himself terrible; as they themselves are proud, fierce, and overbearing, in hopes to be dreaded by that means, as if authority and place were their inheritance.

As all honest truths affect such men, whatever is said against ill men, they construe to be said against them: And even when they are praised, they cry they are abused, and that such praise is rank irony. Now all this is very impolitic: Good men neither fear libels, nor suspect applauses to be ironies. Pliny says justly to Trajan,

When I speak of your humanity, liberality, frugality, clemency, vigilance, &c. I have no apprehension that your Majesty will think yourself reproached with the contrary vices.

But it was not so in some preceding reigns, when virtue was dangerous, truth capital, and every book that contained either was burnt, and its author put to death: By which violent and unjust proceedings, they hoped to shut up for ever people's mouths, to abolish the liberty of the Senate, and utterly to extinguish the memories of good men. Not satisfied with killing the authors, they exercised their rage upon their works, and appointed a junto called *Triumviri*, to destroy the fruits of the greatest geniuses by fire.

I have scarce ever heard of a more gross or ingenious piece of flattery, than that of Vitellius to Caligula, upon the following occasion: That mad emperor had taken it into his head to be a god, and thought he might debauch some of the she-deities, as well as he had his sisters; he therefore asked Vitellius this question, "Pray, Vitellius," says he, "have you never seen me embrace the Moon?" "*O Sir,*" says the parasite, "*that is a mystery which none but a god, such as your Majesty, ought to reveal.*" Vitellius was one of those, *quibus principum honesta atque inhonesta laudare mos est; who praise every thing that their prince does, whether good or bad. Flattery therefore is never at the height, till liberty and virtue are utterly lost; and with the loss of liberty, shame and honour are lost.* Tacitus, who never mentions the woes of his country without seeming to feel them, talking of Sejanus, who having got the whole administration into his hands, was now the chief idol at Rome, makes M. Terentius, say with indignation,

We worshipped his manumised slaves, and prostituted ourselves to his former footmen; and to be acquainted with his porter, was a mighty honour.

As flatterers make tyrants, tyrants make flatterers; neither is it possible that any prince could be a tyrant without them: He must have servile hands to execute his will, servile mouths to approve it. It was with great fear that Nero ordered the murder of his mother, though he had wicked counsellors enough to advise and applaud it; and when he had done it, he was thunder-struck and distracted with apprehensions of the consequences: But finding flattery from all hands, instead of resentment from any, he grew outrageously abandoned, and plunged into all licentiousness and infamy: Had it not been for flatterers, the middle and end of his reign might have been as good as the beginning, than which there was scarce ever a better.

I have said enough to shew the vileness and mischief of flattery; a vice which has finally ruined many nations, and many princes, and one time or other hurt all. Let us be thankful that we are not at the cruel mercy of flatterers, and have a prince who we firmly believe will never be led or perverted by them; we hope that he will never have bad counsel given him, and would reject it, if it were: We know his honest purposes, and great moderation; and confess with gratitude, that during his whole reign no outrages have been committed upon the lives and fortunes of any of his subjects; and that the protection of the law has been as strong and extensive, as ever it was, or ought to be. I could say more, but I stop here; for the greatest honour that can be done a prince, is, to suppose him above flattery, and to avoid for his sake the appearance of it, when we speak to him, or of him.

G

I am, &c.

No. 35. SATURDAY, July 1, 1721.

Of publick Spirit. [Gordon] ↩

[II-11]

SIR,

The love of one's country, or publick spirit, is a phrase in every body's mouth, but it seldom goes deeper; it is talked of with out being felt: Some mention it without having any ideas at all of it, but only as a fine thing which every body likes, and a good quality which one would not seem to be without.

Others, when they name it, intend only some poor and selfish gratification of their own: Thus with great men, it is wealth and empire, to do what they list, and to get what they can; which is direct faction, or promoting, under colour of the publick, those views which are inconsistent with it. Thus with the trader and artificer, it is the encouraging only that sort of art or ware in which he himself deals; and this is monopoly and engrossing, ever mischievous to the publick.

In popish countries, it is publick spirit to build and beautify many churches, at the expense of the poor people; who must also maintain, at a further expense, a long band of luxurious ecclesiasticks, to play tricks in them; or, in other words, to keep the heads and pockets of their deluded hearers as empty as they can. It is moreover great publick spirit, to adorn an old skull with pearl and diamonds, and to enrich a venerable rotten tooth with gold and emeralds, of a value sufficient to maintain a city and all its inhabitants, who yet perhaps are starved by doing it. It is likewise very publick-spirited there, for a man to starve his family and his posterity, to endow a monastery, and to feed, or rather gorge, a fraternity of reverend gluttons, professed foes to truth and peace, and to the prosperity of the world; idlers, maintained to gormandize and deceive. This, forsooth, is publick spirit; to rob the country of its hands, to rear up a pernicious and turbulent mob of drones, in principles destructive of liberty, and to bring up enemies to a country at its own charges.

In arbitrary countries, it is publick spirit to be blind slaves to the blind will of the prince, and to slaughter or be slaughtered for him at his pleasure: But in Protestant free countries, publick spirit is another thing; it is to combat force and delusion; it is to reconcile the true interests of the governed and governors; it is to expose impostors, and to resist oppressors; it is to maintain the people in liberty, plenty, ease, and security.

This is publick spirit; which contains in it every laudable passion, and takes in parents, kindred, friends, neighbours, and every thing dear to mankind; it is the highest virtue, and contains in it almost all others; steadfastness to good purposes, fidelity to one's trust, resolution in difficulties, defiance of danger, contempt of death, and impartial benevolence to all mankind. It is a passion to promote universal good, with personal pain, loss, and peril: It is one man's care for many, and the concern of every man for all.

Consider this picture, O ye great patriots and guardians of the earth, and try if you resemble it! Whom have ye exalted for his own merits, whom cast down for the sake of your country? What advantages have you acquired to your nation, with loss to yourselves? And have your people's losses never been your gains?

Out of England these questions cannot well be answered; nor could they in England formerly.

If my character of publick spirit be thought too heroick, at least for the living generation, who are indeed but babes in that virtue; I will readily own, that every man has a right and a call to provide for himself, to attend upon his own affairs, and to study his own happiness. All that I contend for is, that this duty of a man to himself be performed subsequently to the general welfare, and consistently with it. The affairs of all should be minded preferably to the affairs of one, as every man is ready to own when his own particular is embarked with the whole; as indeed every man's will prove to be sooner or later, though for a while some may thrive upon the publick ruins, but their fate seldom fails to meet them at last, them or their posterity.

It is a favourable sign of publick spirit, though not a certain sign, when the interest and reputation of men rise and increase together; and there is policy and wisdom in it. He who acquires money in spite of fame, pays dear for his avarice, while it returns him hatred and curses, as well as gold; and to be rich and detested, is to me no pleasing character. The same holds true in regard to ambition, and every other passion, which breaks its bounds, and makes a captive of its owner. It is scarce possible to be a rogue and be beloved; and when men are arrived to an insensibility of popular censure and opinion concerning their honesty and dishonesty, it is a sign that they are at defiance with the community where they live, and that the rest ought to be upon their guard against them; they do as it were cut themselves off from the society, and teach the people what to call them.

It is true, that great ill men never fail to have great court paid to their fortunes; which court their own self-love always construes to be paid to their persons: But there is a way to undeceive them, and it often happens; let them but sink into meanness, and they will soon find themselves sunk into contempt, which is the end of hatred when the object of hatred diminishes.

There is a sort of men found almost every where, who having got a set of gainful and favourite speculations, are always ready to spread and enforce them, and call their doing so *publick spirit*, though it often turns the world topsy-turvy: Like the mad monk at Heidelberg, who was for knocking every man on the head who did not like Rhenish wine, which it seems was his beloved liquor; perhaps he thought it was as reasonable to make all the world swallow Rhenish, as to make them swallow transubstantiation.

Opinions, bare opinions, signify no more to the world, than do the several tastes of men; and all mankind must be made of one complexion, of one size, and of one age, before they can be all made of the same mind. Those patrons therefore of dry dreams, who do mischief to the world to make it better, are the pests and distressers of mankind, and shut themselves out from all pretence to the love of their country: Strange men! They would force all men into an absolute certainty about absolute uncertainties and contradictions; they would ascertain ambiguities, without removing them; and plague and punish men for having but five senses.

I would assert another proposition, as true as the last, though it may seem stranger; namely, that the taking a thousand or ten thousand pounds a year for the merit of helping to draw a hundred times as much from the people, is not publick spirit, whatever use may call it; and to grasp at all, and put a whole country in two or three pockets, is a sort of publick spirit, which I hope in God never to see, though there have been nations who have sorrowfully felt it.

As liberty can never subsist without equality, nor equality be long preserved without an agrarian law, or something like it; so when men's riches are become immeasurably or surprizingly great, a people, who regard their own security, ought to make a strict enquiry how they come by them, and oblige them to take down their own size, for fear of terrifying the community, or mastering it. In every country, and under every government, particular

men may be too rich.

If the Romans had well observed the agrarian law, by which the extent of every citizen's estate was ascertained, some citizens could never have risen so high as they did above others; and consequently, one man would never have been set above the rest, and have established, as Caesar did at last, a tyranny in that great and glorious state. I have always thought, that an enquiry into men's fortunes, especially monstrous fortunes raised out of the publick, like Milton's infernal palace, as it were in an instant, was of more importance to a nation, than some other enquiries which I have heard of.

But, will some say, is it a crime to be rich? Yes, certainly, at the publick expense, or to the danger of the publick. A man may be too rich for a subject; even the revenues of kings may be too large. It is one of the effects of arbitrary power, that the prince has too much, and the people too little; and such inequality may be the cause too of arbitrary power. It is as astonishing as it is melancholy, to travel through a whole country, as one may through many in Europe, grasping under endless imposts, groaning under dragoons and poverty, and all to make a wanton and luxurious court, filled for the most with the worst and vilest of all men. Good God! What hard-heartedness and barbarity, to starve perhaps half a province, to make a gay garden! And yet sometimes even this gross wickedness is called publick spirit, because forsooth a few workmen and labourers are maintained out of the bread and the blood of half a million.

In those countries, were the judgment of the people consulted, things would go better: But they are despised, and esteemed by their governors happy enough, if they do not eat grass; and having no representatives, or share in the government, they have no remedy. Such indeed is their misery, that their case would be greatly mended, if they could change conditions with the beasts of the field; for then, being destined to be eaten, they would be better fed: Such a misfortune is it to them that their governors are not cannibals! Oh happy Britain, mayest thou continue ever so!

For a conclusion: As the preservation of property is the source of national happiness; whoever violates property, or lessens or endangers it, common sense says, that he is an enemy to his country; and publick spirit says, that he should feel its vengeance. As yet in England, we can speak such bold truths; and we never dread to see the day, when it will be safer for one man to be a traitor, than for another man, or for a whole people, to call him so. Where-ever publick spirit is found dangerous, she will soon be seen dead.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 36. SATURDAY, July 8, 1721.

Of Loyalty. [Gordon] ↩

[II-18]

SIR,

Loyalty is a very good word; but, like most others, being wrested first by design, and afterwards by ignorance and custom, from its original and virtuous signification, does now frequently bear a very bad one. In an honest sense, indeed in common sense, it means no more than the squaring our actions by the rules of good laws, and an attachment to a constitution supported by such: And the French word *loyauté*, comes from another French word, which signifies law.

Other meanings have since been fathered upon that word, such as it abhors. To bear stupidly the wild or deliberate ill acts of a tyrant, overturning all law, and to assist him in it, has been impiously called *loyalty*; though it was all the while on the other side: As it is the very office and genius of loyalty to defend law, virtue, and property; and to pull down, as traitors and disloyalists, all who assault them.

Whoever is lawless, is disloyal; and to boast of loyalty to disloyalty, is strange nonsense; a paradox first invented by solemn and pernicious pedants, whose trade it is to pervert the use of words and the meaning of things, to abuse and confound the human understanding, and to mislead the world into misery and darkness.

To obey a prince, who does himself obey the laws, is confessed on all hands to be loyalty: Now, from hence, one would naturally think, that, by every rule of reason, it might be inferred, that to obey one who obeys no law, is a departure from all loyalty, and an outrage committed upon it; and that both he who commands, and he who obeys, are outlaws and disloyalists: And yet these same ungodly pedants shall maintain it to your face, that though loyalty consist in obeying a good prince, it also consists in the very contrary, and in obeying a wicked prince; who, though he be an enemy to God, is the vicegerent of God; and though he commit all wickedness, yet does it by divine right; and though it be a sin to obey him, yet it is a damnable sin to resist him: In short, that all the instruments and partners of his crying crimes are loyalists; and all who defend law, virtue, and mankind, against such monsters, are rebels, and assuredly damned, for preventing or resisting actions which deserve damnation: And thus men become rebels, by acting virtuously against the worst of all rebels, who are restrained by no consideration, human or divine.

Was ever such impudence, impiety, and nonsense, broached amongst pagans? In truth, they never would have been broached amongst Christians, had not sanctity been made a cloak for those who sold godliness for gain, and propagated imposture at the price of all that was virtuous and sacred.

Disloyalty is indeed rarely the crime of subjects and private men; and they who charge it most upon others, are they who practice it most themselves. King Richard II and Edward II were the greatest rebels in England in their own time: The greatest rebel in all Italy, is the Pope. Every lawless prince is a rebel, and the Grand Seignior is the greatest that is or can be in his own dominions. It is true, he is bound by no written law; but in this very thing he is a rebel: No man ought to be exempt from the ties of laws; and the higher any man is, the more ties he ought to be under. All power ought to be balanced with equal restraints, else it will certainly grow mischievous: He who knows no law, but his own lust, seldom observes any other. Besides, there are such things as the external laws of mercy, justice, and truth, legible

by every man's natural reason, when it is not blinded by craft; and whoever observes not these, let him be called by what name he will, is a rebel to all the world, and it is loyalty to all the world to pursue him to destruction.

Brutus, who expelled the royal and rebellious race of the Tarquins, was the most loyal man in Rome; and his sons, who would have restored them, were the greatest rebels in Rome: The Roman people therefore acted justly, when they rewarded the father with the chief magistracy; and the father acted justly, when he sacrificed the traitors of his own loins to the liberties and resentments of the Roman people.

Some play with the words *sovereign* and *subject*, and divert themselves with the ridicule of obedience resisting command: But their wit and reasoning are alike wretched, whether they proceed from ignorance or dishonesty, as they often do from both; as if the world were to be guided by sound rather than sense, in things essential to its well-being. The highest and first sovereignty is in the laws, of which the prince has only the sovereign execution: In other words, it is his office and duty to see the laws obeyed; an employment which implies their superiority, and his own subjection.

A learned prince, who knew not much of government, and practised less than he knew, did yet own, that a *King is only the chief servant of the state*. The law ought to be the measure of his power and actions, as much as of any private man's, and more; as his example is of greater influence, and as his opportunities and temptations to break them are greater than any private man's can be: And the only just reason that can be assigned why those crimes which are punished with death in a subject, have been often committed with impunity by a chief magistrate, was, because the station which he was in gave him such strength, and such a party, that to have punished him, the publick quiet must have been risked or shaken: And as to the inferior great traitors, the gain of their crimes and partners of their guilt protected them.

Exalted wickedness is the safest: I could name an English reign, in which, for above twenty years together, there scarce passed a week in which the prince did not venture his crown, and his ministers forfeit their heads. And yet not one of these forfeitures were exacted: So corrupt and wicked was the government, and so tame and acquiescing were the people! Indeed the people in every country deserve the best usage, and in almost all meet with the worst: Their lot is very hard and unequal: They often pay millions, not only in their own wrong, but frequently to strengthen the hands of their oppressors: And this they generally do, without so much as a tumult; yet for one of them to coin a silver sixpence, is death and confiscation.

These things are obvious; yet how little are they considered! It is safer for a great man to rob a country, than for a poor man to steal a loaf: But the wages of villainy protect villains, and justice is only blind where the object is naked. But these are only complaints, which, we hope, we Britons will never have cause to make.

We have been formerly stunned with the big word *prerogative*, by those who contend for unlimited loyalty: Men, who while they reserve to themselves a right to be the most turbulent of all subjects, would make all others the tamest and the blindest of all slaves. But what prerogative do they mean? I know no prerogative in the crown, which is not at the same time a certain privilege of the people, for their sake granted, and for their sake to be exerted: And where a prerogative is claimed in opposition to the rights and interests of the people, so far a tyranny is claimed; tyranny being nothing else but the government of one man, or of a few men, over many, against their inclination and interest: And where prerogative is exercised more to the hurt than the good of the governed, it is no longer prerogative, but violence and usurpation; and therefore in England several prerogatives have from time to time been taken from the crown, because the crown had abused them.

A certain British king was wont to say, that so long as he could make bishops and judges, he would have what law and gospel he pleased. An impious and arbitrary saying, and a bold one coming from a prince of so mean a spirit, governing a brave and a free people, who were disgraced by his profuse and ridiculous reign, which is one of those that stain our annals. But for all the absurdity of his government, and the smallness of his soul, he found himself able, by the assistance of sycophants, to multiply and entail many evils upon these kingdoms. It is certain, that he and some of his posterity found such complaisant bishops and judges, that the religion and politicks of the court were generally the religion and politicks of Westminster-Hall, and of Henry VII's chapel: Absolute power in the crown was pleaded and granted in both those solemn places.

So wicked and merciless a thing is self-interest! Those grave men, who were by profession the guardians of truth and law, gave up both, to keep preferment, or to acquire it. How little are men to be trusted, and how little does religion bind them! They can break the strongest bands, violate the most awful oaths, and commit the most horrid, most extensive treacheries, for the vilest and most uncertain gratifications. I am therefore seldom surprized to hear of the most astonishing things and events, whether they be publick depredations and massacres, or private treacheries and parricides; having my mind constantly filled with examples that answer them, or exceed them, though perhaps they are not exactly of the same nature.

It is certain, that those judges, counsellors, and clergy, who have adjudged a dispensing and lawless power to kings, had, each of them, the guilt of a thousand private murderers upon their head: They, as it were, signed a dead-warrant for their country; and, as much as in them lay, made themselves the authors of universal barbarity, slavery, infamy, and wretchedness; and of every other evil and wickedness, which is produced by that great source of all evil and wickedness, arbitrary power.

Of this we are sure, that the least publick guilt is greater than the greatest private guilt: Let every man concerned in publick trust, every where, consider this, and examine his own heart: Every step which a publick man takes, every speech which he makes, and every vote which he gives, may affect millions. Whoever acts in a great station against his conscience, might perhaps with more innocence carry a dagger, and like Old Muley stab twenty men a day.

Now were these judges and counsellors above-mentioned, loyalists? Yes, doubtless, if there are such things as loyal traitors. For, even supposing loyalty centered wholly in the person of the prince, than which nothing can be more false; yet even here it loses its name, since it is doing him the highest unkindness, as it separates him from his people, and their hearts from him, and as it tempts him to evil, loads him with infamy and guilt, and lessens his security; in truth, such loyalty is perfidiousness and flattery, and has cost many princes their lives and their kingdoms.

No good prince will pretend that there is any loyalty due to him further than he himself is loyal to the law, and observant of his people, the makers of kings and of laws. If any man, misled by sound and delusion doubt this, let him consider what is the design of magistracy, and what the duty of magistrates; and if he has reason in him, he will find that his duty is only due to those who perform theirs; that protection and allegiance are reciprocal; that every man has a right to defend what no man has a right to take: That the divine right of kings, if they had it, can only warrant them in doing actions that are divine, and cannot protect them in cruelty, depredation, and oppression: That a divine right to act wickedly, is a contradiction and blasphemy, as it is *maledictio supremi numinis*, a reproach upon the Deity, as if he gave any man a commission to be a devil: That a King, in comparison with the universe, is not so much as a mayor of a town, in comparison with a kingdom; and that were Mr. Mayor called

King, it would give him no new right; or, if a King were only called Mr. Mayor, it would not lessen nor abrogate his old jurisdiction: That they are both civil officers; and that an offence in the lesser is more pardonable than an offence in the greater: That the doctrines of unbroken hereditary right, and of blind obedience, are the flights and forgeries of flatterers, who belie heaven, and abuse men, to make their own court to power, and that not one of them will stand the trial himself: In fine, the government, honest and legal government, is *imperium legum non hominum*, the authority of law, and not of lust.

These are the principles upon which our government stands, the principles upon which every free government must stand; and that we Britons dare tell such truths, and publish such principles, is a glorious proof of our civil and religious freedom: They are truths which every Briton ought to know, even children and servants: They are eternal truths, that will remain for ever, though in too many countries they are dangerous, or useless, or little known: They are truths, to which we are beholden for the present succession, and the present mild administration; and they are the principles of English loyalty, as well as of English liberty.

Before I have done, I would take notice of another mistake very common concerning loyalty: It is indeed a trick, more than a mistake; I mean of those who would assert or rather create a sort of loyalty to ministers, and make every thing which they do not like an offence against their master.

How endless are the arts and instances of deceiving! Yet the stalest artifices are still new. The above is a method which bad ministers have ever taken, but which good ones want not: Innocent ministers will never prostitute the name and authority of the prince, to protect their own faults and mistakes; and every wise and indifferent man will be for preserving him from the imputation of the guilt and folly of his servants, who, whenever they are for thrusting in their master between themselves and the censure or odium of their own actions, do at once acknowledge that their own actions are evil, and that they would barbarously and ungratefully make a screen of their sovereign, and save themselves upon his ruin or disgrace.

What can be more vile, what more disloyal, than this! Yet who were louder in their prate about loyalty, than the worst ministers have ever been; even while they were weakening their master's hands, creating him enemies, and setting him at variance with his people? This is so true, that it has been sometimes impossible to love the prince without abhorring his servants, and to serve them without hurting or abusing him. Yet while they were very loyally undoing him, it was forsooth high disloyalty to resist or expose them. Whoever would recollect instances of this, need not go out of Europe, nor above forty years backwards: And for instances at home, as we can find no present ones, we fear none that are future.

G

I am, &c.

No. 37. SATURDAY, July 15, 1721.

*Character of a good and of an evil Magistrate, quoted from Algernon Sidney, Esq.
[Gordon]* ↩

[II-28]

SIR,

The following are the sentiments of Mr. Sidney: I know it is objected that he is a republican; and it is dishonestly suggested that I am a republican, because I commend him as an excellent writer, and have taken a passage or two out of him. In answer to this, I shall only take notice, that the passages which I take from him are not republican passages, unless virtue and truth be republicans: That Mr. Sidney's book, for the main of it, is eternally true, and agreeable to our own constitution, which is the best republick in the world, with a prince at the head of it: That our government is a thousand degrees nearer a-kin to a commonwealth (any sort of commonwealth now subsisting, or that ever did subsist in the world) than it is to absolute monarchy: That for myself, I hope in God never to see any other form of government in England than that which is now in England; and that if this be the style and spirit of a republican, I glory in it, as much as I despise those who take base methods to decry my writings, which are addressed to the common sense and experience of mankind. I hope that it is not yet made heresy in politicks, to assert that two and two make four.

G

“The good magistrate seeks the good of the people committed to his care, that he may perform the end of his institution: and knowing that chiefly to consist in justice and virtue, he endeavours to plant and propagate them; and by doing this he procures his own good, as well as that of the publick. He knows there is no safety where there is no strength, no strength without union, no union without justice, no justice where faith and truth in accomplishing publick and private engagements is wanting. This he perpetually inculcates; and thinks it a great part of his duty, by precept and example to educate the youth in a love of virtue and truth, that they may be seasoned with them, and filled with an abhorrence of vice and falsehood, before they attain that age which is exposed to the most violent temptations, and in which they may by their crimes bring the greatest mischiefs upon the publick. He would do all this, though it were to his own prejudice. But as good actions always carry a reward with them, these contribute in a high measure to his advantage. By preferring the interest of the people before his own, he gains their affection, and all that is in their power comes with it; while he unites them to one another, he unites all to himself. In leading them to virtue, he increases their strength, and by that means provides for his own safety, glory, and power.

“On the other side, such as seek different ends must take different ways. When a magistrate fancies he is not made for the people, but the people for him; that he does not govern for them, but for himself; that the people live only to increase his glory, or to furnish matter for his pleasure; he does not enquire what he may do for them, but what he may draw from them: By this means he sets up an interest of profit, pleasure, or pomp in himself, repugnant to the good of the publick, for which he is made to be what he is. These contrary ends certainly divide the nation into parties; and while every one endeavours to advance that to which he is addicted, occasions of hatred, for injuries every day done, or thought to be done, and received, must necessarily arise. This creates a most fierce and irreconcilable enmity; because the occasions are frequent, important, and universal, and the causes thought to be most just. The people think it to be the greatest of all crimes to convert that power to their hurt, which was instituted for their good; and that the injustice is aggravated by perjury

and ingratitude, which comprehend all manner of ill; and the magistrate gives the name of sedition and rebellion to whatsoever they do for the preservation of themselves and their own rights. When men's spirits are thus prepared, a small matter sets them on fire; but if no accident happens to blow them into a flame, the course of justice is certainly interrupted, the publick affairs are neglected; and when any occasion, whether foreign or domestick, arises, in which the magistrate stands in need of the people's assistance, they whose affections are alienated, not only shew an unwillingness to serve him with their persons and estates, but fear that by delivering him from his distress, they strengthen their enemy, and enable him to oppress them; and he, fancying his will to be unjustly opposed, or his due more unjustly denied, is filled with a dislike of what he sees, and a fear of worse for the future. Whilst he endeavours to ease himself of the one, and to provide against the other, he usually increases the evils of both; and jealousies are on both sides multiplied. Every man knows that the governed are in a great measure under the power of the governor; but as no man, or number of men, is willingly subject to those that seek their ruin, such as fall into so great a misfortune, continue no longer under it than force, fear, or necessity may be able to oblige them. But such a necessity can hardly lie longer upon a great people, than till the evil be fully discovered and comprehended, and their virtue, strength, and power be united to expel it: The ill magistrate looks upon all things that may conduce to that end as so many preparatives to his ruin; and by the help of those who are of his party, will endeavour to prevent that union, and diminish that strength, virtue, power and courage, which he knows to be bent against him. And as truth, faithful dealing, and integrity of manners, are bonds of union, and helps to good, he will always, by tricks, artifices, cavils, and all means possible, endeavour to establish falsehood and dishonesty; whilst other emissaries and instruments of iniquity, by corrupting the youth, and such as can be brought to lewdness and debauchery, bring the people to such a pass, that they may neither care nor dare to vindicate their rights; and that those who would do it may so far suspect each other, as not to confer upon, much less to join in, any action tending to the publick deliverance.

“This distinguishes the good from the bad magistrate; the faithful from the unfaithful; and those that adhere to either, living in the same principle, must walk in the same ways. They who uphold the rightful power of a just magistracy, encourage virtue and justice, and teach men what they ought to do, suffer, or expect from others; they fix them upon principles of honesty, and generally advance every thing that tends to the increase of the valour, strength, greatness, and happiness of the nation, creating a good union among them, and bringing every man to an exact understanding of his own and the publick rights. On the other side he that would introduce an ill magistrate, make one evil who was good, or preserve him in the administration of injustice when he is corrupted, must always open the way for him by vitiating the people, corrupting their manners, destroying the validity of oaths, teaching such evasions, equivocations, and frauds, as are Inconsistent with the thoughts that become men of virtue and courage; and overthrowing the confidence they ought to have in each other, make it impossible for them to unite amongst themselves. The like arts must be used with the magistrate: He cannot be for their turns, till he is persuaded to believe he has no dependence upon, and owes no duty to, the people; that he is of himself, and not by their institution; that no man ought to enquire into, nor be judge of, his actions; that all obedience is due to him, whether he be good or bad, wise or foolish, a father or an enemy to his country. This being calculated for his personal interest, he must pursue the same designs, or his kingdom is divided within itself, and cannot subsist. By this means, those who flatter his humour come to be accounted his friends, and the only men that are thought worthy of great trusts; while such as are of another mind are exposed to all persecution. These are always such as excel in virtue, wisdom, and greatness of spirit: They have eyes, and they will always see the way they go; and leaving fools to be guided by implicit faith, will distinguish between good and evil, and choose that which is best; they will judge of men by their actions, and by them discovering whose servant every man is, know whether he is to be obeyed or not. Those who

are ignorant of all good, careless, or enemies to it, take a more compendious way: Their slavish, vicious, and base natures, inclining them to seek only private and present advantage, they easily slide into a blind dependence upon one who has wealth and power; and desiring only to know his will, care not what injustice they do, if they may be rewarded. They worship what they find in the temple, though it be the vilest of idols; and always like that best which is worst, because it agrees with their inclinations and principles. When a party comes to be erected upon such a foundation, debauchery, lewdness, and dishonesty are the true badges of it; such as wear them are cherished; but the principal marks of favour are reserved for them who are the most industrious in mischief, either by seducing the people with the allurements of sensual pleasures, or corrupting their understandings with false and slavish doctrines.”

I am, &c.

No. 38. SATURDAY, July 22, 1721.

The Right and Capacity of the People to judge of Government. [Gordon] ↩

[II-34]

SIR,

The world has, from time to time, been led into such a long maze of mistakes, by those who gained by deceiving, that whoever would instruct mankind, must begin with removing their errors; and if they were every where honestly apprized of truth, and restored to their senses, there would not remain one nation of bigots or slaves under the sun: A happiness always to be wished, but never expected!

In most parts of the earth there is neither light nor liberty; and even in the best parts of it they are but little encouraged, and coldly maintained; there being, in all places, many engaged, through interest, in a perpetual conspiracy against them. They are the two greatest civil blessings, inseparable in their interests, and the mutual support of each other; and whoever would destroy one of them, must destroy both. Hence it is, that we every where find tyranny and imposture, ignorance and slavery, joined together; and oppressors and deceivers mutually aiding and paying constant court to each other. Where-ever truth is dangerous, liberty is precarious.

Of all the sciences that I know in the world, that of government concerns us most, and is the easiest to be known, and yet is the least understood. Most of those who manage it would make the lower world believe that there is I know not what difficulty and mystery in it, far above vulgar understandings; which proceeding of theirs is direct craft and imposture: Every ploughman knows a good government from a bad one, from the effects of it: he knows whether the fruits of his labour be his own, and whether he enjoy them in peace and security: And if he do not know the principles of government, it is for want of thinking and enquiry, for they lie open to common sense; but people are generally taught not to think of them at all, or to think wrong of them.

What is government, but a trust committed by all, or the most, to one, or a few, who are to attend upon the affairs of all, that every one may, with the more security, attend upon his own? A great and honourable trust; but too seldom honourably executed; those who possess it having it often more at heart to increase their power, than to make it useful; and to be terrible, rather than beneficent. It is therefore a trust, which ought to be bounded with many and strong restraints, because power renders men wanton, insolent to others, and fond of themselves. Every violation therefore of this trust, where such violation is considerable, ought to meet with proportionable punishment; and the smallest violation of it ought to meet with some, because indulgence to the least faults of magistrates may be cruelty to a whole people.

Honesty, diligence, and plain sense, are the only talents necessary for the executing of this trust; and the public good is its only end: As to refinements and finesses, they are often only the false appearances of wisdom and parts, and oftener tricks to hide guilt and emptiness; and they are generally mean and dishonest: they are the arts of jobbers in politicks, who, playing their own game under the publick cover, subsist upon poor shifts and expedients; starved politicians, who live from hand to mouth, from day to day, and following the little views of ambition, avarice, revenge, and the like personal passions, are ashamed to avow them, yet want souls great enough to forsake them; small wicked statesmen, who make a private market of the publick, and deceive it, in order to sell it.

These are the poor parts which great and good governors scorn to play, and cannot play; their designs, like their stations, being purely publick, are open and undisguised. They do not consider their people as their prey, nor lie in ambush for their subjects; nor dread, and treat and surprize them like enemies, as all ill magistrates do; who are not governors, but jailers and sponges, who chain them and squeeze them, and yet take it very ill if they do but murmur; which is yet much less than a people so abused ought to do. There have been times and countries, when publick ministers and publick enemies have been the same individual men. What a melancholy reflection is this, that the most terrible and mischievous foes to a nation should be its own magistrates! And yet in every enslaved country, which is almost every country, this is their woeful case.

Honesty and plainness go always together, and the makers and multipliers of mysteries, in the political way, are shrewdly to be suspected of dark designs. Cincinnatus was taken from the plough to save and defend the Roman state; an office which he executed honestly and successfully, without the grimace and gains of a statesman. Nor did he afterwards continue obstinately at the head of affairs, to form a party, raise a fortune, and settle himself in power: As he came into it with universal consent, he resigned it with universal applause.

It seems that government was not in those days become a trade, at least a gainful trade. Honest Cincinnatus was but a farmer: And happy had it been for the Romans, if, when they were enslaved, they could have taken the administration out of the hands of the emperors, and their refined politicians, and committed it to such farmers, or any farmers. It is certain, that many of their imperial governors acted more ridiculously than a board of ploughmen would have done, and more barbarously than a club of butchers could have done.

But some have said, It is not the business of private man to meddle with government. A bold, false, and dishonest saying; and whoever says it, either knows not what he says, or cares not, or slavishly speaks the sense of others. It is a cant now almost forgot in England, and which never prevailed but when liberty and the constitution were attacked, and never can prevail but upon the like occasion.

It is a vexation to be obliged to answer nonsense, and confute absurdities: But since it is and has been the great design of this paper to maintain and explain the glorious principles of liberty, and to expose the arts of those who would darken or destroy them; I shall here particularly shew the wickedness and stupidity of the above saying; which is fit to come from no mouth but that of a tyrant or a slave, and can never be heard by any man of an honest and free soul, without horror and indignation: It is, in short, a saying, which ought to render the man who utters it for ever incapable of place or credit in a free country, as it shews the malignity of his heart, and the baseness of his nature, and as it is the pronouncing of a doom upon our constitution. A crime, or rather a complication of crimes, for which a lasting infamy ought to be but part of the punishment.

But to the falsehood of the thing: Publick truths ought never to be kept secrets; and they who do it, are guilty of a solecism, and a contradiction: Every man ought to know what it concerns all to know. Now, nothing upon earth is of a more universal nature than government; and every private man upon earth has a concern in it, because in it is concerned, and nearly and immediately concerned, his virtue, his property, and the security of his person: And where all these are best preserved and advanced, the government is best administered; and where they are not, the government is impotent, wicked, or unfortunate; and where the government is so, the people will be so, there being always and every where a certain sympathy and analogy between the nature of the government and the nature of the people. This holds true in every instance. Public men are the patterns of private; and the virtues and vices of the governors become quickiy the virtues and vices of the governed.

Nor is it example alone that does it. Ill governments, subsisting by vice and rapine, are jealous of private virtue, and enemies to private property. *Opes pro crimine; & ob virtutes certissimum exitium.* They must be wicked and mischievous to be what they are; nor are they secure while any thing good or valuable is secure. Hence it is, that to drain, worry, and debauch their subjects, are the steady maxims of their politicks, their favourite arts of reigning. In this wretched situation the people, to be safe, must be poor and lewd: There will be but little industry where property is precarious; small honesty where virtue is dangerous.

Profuseness or frugality, and the like virtues or vices, which affect the publick, will be practised in the City, if they be practised in the court; and in the country, if they be in the City. Even Nero (that royal monster in man's shape) was adored by the common herd at Rome, as much as he was flattered by the great; and both the little and the great admired, or pretended to admire, his manners, and many to imitate them. Tacitus tells us, that those sort of people long lamented him, and rejoiced in the choice of a successor that resembled him, even the profligate Otho.

Good government does, on the contrary, produce great virtue, much happiness, and many people. Greece and Italy, while they continued free, were each of them, for the number of inhabitants, like one continued city; for virtue, knowledge, and great men, they were the standards of the world; and that age and country that could come nearest to them, has ever since been reckoned the happiest. Their government, their free government, was the root of all these advantages, and of all this felicity and renown; and in these great and fortunate states the people were the principals in the government; laws were made by their judgment and authority, and by their voice and commands were magistrates created and condemned. The city of Rome could conquer the world; nor could the great Persian monarch, the greatest then upon earth, stand before the face of one Greek city.

But what are Greece and Italy now? Rome has in it a herd of pampered monks, and a few starving lay inhabitants; the Campania of Rome, the finest spot of earth in Europe, is a desert. And for the modern Greeks, they are a few abject contemptible slaves, kept under ignorance, chains, and vileness, by the Turkish monarch, who keeps a great part of the globe intensely miserable, that he may seem great without being so.

Such is the difference between one government and another, and of such important concernment is the nature and administration of government to a people. And to say that private men have nothing to do with government, is to say that private men have nothing to do with their own happiness and misery.

What is the publick, but the collective body of private men, as every private man is a member of the publick? And as the whole ought to be concerned for the preservation of every private individual, it is the duty of every individual to be concerned for the whole, in which himself is included.

One man, or a few men, have often pretended the publick, and meant themselves, and consulted their own personal interest, in instances essential to its well-being; but the whole people, by consulting their own interest, consult the publick, and act for the publick by acting for themselves: This is particularly the spirit of our constitution, in which the whole nation is represented; and our records afford instances, where the House of Commons have declined entering upon a question of importance, till they had gone into the country, and consulted their principals, the people: So far were they from thinking that private men had no right to meddle with government. In truth, our whole worldly happiness and misery (abating for accidents and diseases) are owing to the order or mismanagement of government; and he who says that private men have no concern with government, does wisely and modestly tell us,

that men have no concern in that which concerns them most; it is saying that people ought not to concern themselves whether they be naked or clothed, fed or starved, deceived or instructed, and whether they be protected or destroyed: What nonsense and servitude in a free and wise nation!

For myself, who have thought pretty much of these matters, I am of opinion, that a whole nation are like to be as much attached to themselves, as one man or a few men are like to be, who may by many means be detached from the interest of a nation. It is certain that one man, and several men, may be bribed into an interest opposite to that of the publick; but it is as certain that a whole country can never find an equivalent for itself, and consequently a whole country can never be bribed. It is the eternal interest of every nation, that their government should be good; but they who direct it frequently reason a contrary way and find their own account in plunder and oppression; and while the publick voice is pretended to be declared, by one or a few, for vile and private ends, the publick know nothing of what is done, till they feel the terrible effects of it.

By the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Settlement, at the Revolution; a right is asserted to the people applying to the King and to the Parliament, by petition and address, for a redress of publick grievances and mismanagements, when such there are, of which they are left to judge; and the difference between free and enslaved countries lies principally here, that in the former, their magistrates must consult the voice and interest of the people; but in the latter, the private will, interest, and pleasure of the governors, are the sole end and motives of their administration.

Such is the difference between England and Turkey; which difference they who say that private men have no right to concern themselves with government, would absolutely destroy; they would convert magistrates into bashaws, and introduce popery into politicks. The late Revolution stands upon the very opposite maxim; and that any man dares to contradict it since the Revolution, would be amazing, did we not know that there are, in every country, hirelings who would betray it for a sop.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 39. SATURDAY, July 29, 1721.

Of the Passions; that they are all alike good or all alike evil, according as they are applied.
[Gordon]↩

[II-43]

SIR,

Nothing is more provoking than to hear men talk magisterially, and with an air of teaching, about things which they do not understand, or which they have an interest to have understood wrong. We have, all of us, heard much of the duty of subduing our appetites, and extinguishing our passions, from men, who by these phrases shewed at once their ignorance of human nature, and yet that they aimed at an absolute dominion over it.

Wrong heads and knavish designs are frequently found together; and creatures that you would not trust with laying out ten shillings for you in an instance where you trust to your own understanding, shall sometimes, by the mere sound of their voice, and an unmeaning distinction, make themselves masters of your mind and your fortune. It is by trusting to these that men come to know so little of themselves, and to be so much the prey of others as ignorant and more dishonest. I know no man so fit as himself to rule himself, in things which purely concern himself. How happy would this plain rule make the world, if they could be brought to observe it, and to remember that brown is as virtuous a colour as black; that the Almighty possesses alike every quarter of the world; and that in his sight fish and flesh in point of merit and innocence are the same! These things are self-evident, and yet the misery of mankind is in a great measure owing to their ignorance of them.

The ancient Stoicks had many admirable and virtuous precepts, but their philosophy was too rigid to be very popular; they taught men an absolute indifference for sensual pain and pleasure; but in this their doctrine was neither useful nor practicable. Men were not to be thus dealt with; they could not cease to be men, nor change nature for philosophy. Besides, these teachers being pagans, and arguing only from the topicks of wisdom strained too high, had no equivalent to offer to their disciples for parting with their appetites and their senses. But when some of their Sophists came into Christianity, and brought along with them the severe notions of their sect, they spread and recommended the same with more success, by tacking to these their opinions the rewards and terrors of the world to come, which had nothing to do with them: However, they said that it had, and quickly found credit enough to make it dangerous to contradict them.

These favourite dreams of theirs, added to some sayings and passages of the gospel, ill understood, were vehemently urged, as if they had been so many certain passports to paradise; and soon turned men's brains, and made them really fond of poverty, hardships, and misery, and even of death itself: Enthusiasm conquered reason, and inflamed nature; and men, to be devout, grew distracted.

This came of stifling the passions, and subduing nature, as the phrase was. But the folly and mischief of this doctrine thus extravagantly pushed, were not greater than its falsehood: For, as there is no such thing as departing from nature, without departing from life, it is certain that they who were remarkable for restraining some of their appetites, were as remarkable for indulging others; so that their boasted mortification was no more than the exchange of one passion for another, and often of a better for a worse. Thus there are many saints in the Romish calendar, who practised a religious abstinence from all sorts of flesh living or dead, and yet made it the duty of their profession, and the business of their lives, to

stir up dissension and war amongst men, and to promote slaughter and desolation: They abstained from women, and yet were the authors of infinite rapes and adulteries: Their gentle and sanctified souls would not allow them to kill, much less to eat any part of an animal made to be killed and eaten; but they avowedly and piously preached up human and Christian butcheries, and have smiled over the carcasses of a nation massacred at their instigation.

It is the weakness and misfortune of the human race, that a man, by the means of one virtue, or the appearance of it, is often able to do a thousand mischiefs; and it is the quality of human nature, that when any one of its appetites is violently restrained, others break out into proportionable excesses. Thus men grow rash and precipitate, by trampling upon caution and fear; and thus they become cowards, by stifling the love of glory: Whereas, if the appetite for danger were checked by the appetite of self-preservation, and the lazy love of safety by the love of fame, rashness and cowardice would be no more.

It is the highest stupidity to talk of subduing the passions, in the common acceptance of that phrase; and to rail at them in gross, is as foolish. The greatest evils often proceed from the best things abused, or ill applied; and this is particularly true of the passions, which are the constituent parts of a man, and are good or ill as they are managed.

The exercise therefore of reason is nothing else, but the indulging or controlling of the passions, with an impartial hand, and giving them all fair play; it is an equal administration of the appetites, by which they are restrained from outrunning one another: Thus, for example, if men's fears were always as powerful as their hopes, they would rarely run into danger; or, if their hopes balanced their fears, they would never despair.

Every one of the leading passions is as necessary as another; all the difficulty is to keep them well marshalled: They are only terrible by breaking out of their ranks, and when they do, they are all alike terrible, though the world generally thinks otherwise. But it is certain, that those passions to which the kindest ideas are annexed, do as much mischief when they get out of their bounds, as do those to which we annex the harshest ideas; and love and hope, which bear soft and mild names, are in their excesses as active and as formidable passions, as are anger and revenge, the names of which are apt to shock us; and anger and revenge are, in their proper limits, more desirable passions than are love and hope out of their proper limits; that is, they are all equally good, or all equally evil, just as they are let loose or restrained. A man who cuts another's throat out of love to his wife, commits the same wickedness as if he did it out of revenge. Extravagant joy for the Restoration (which was doubtless a great and extraordinary blessing) had well nigh cost England its religion and liberty; and afterwards the awakening fears of popery saved both. No nation has been more fleshed in blood than the Turks; principally, because the false hopes of Mahomet's lascivious paradise animated them in their butcheries.

The only way therefore of dealing with mankind, is to deal with their passions; and the founders of all states, and of all religions, have ever done so: The first elements, or knowledge of politicks, is the knowledge of the passions; and the art of governing, is chiefly the art of applying to the passions. When the publick passions (by which I mean every man's particular warmth and concern about publick transactions and events) are well regulated and honestly employed, this is called government, or the art of governing; and when they are knavishly raised and ill employed, it is called faction, which is the gratifying of private passion by publick means.

And because passion and opinion are so nearly related, and have such force upon each other, arbitrary courts and crafty churchmen have ever endeavoured to force, or frighten, or deceive the people into an uniformity of thoughts, especially of religious thoughts. A thing tyrannical and impossible! And yet a whole people do often, through ignorance or fear, seem

of one mind; and but seem: For, if they come to explain, they would find their ideas differ widely, though their words agree. Whereas in a well-governed free state, diversity of speculations is so far from clogging the publick good, that it evidently promotes the same; all men being equally engaged in the defence of that, by which all men are indifferently protected. So that to attempt to reduce all men to one standard of thinking, is absurd in philosophy, impious in religion, and faction in the state. And though the mortifying of the appetites be a very plausible phrase, and, in a restrained sense, a laudable thing; yet he who recommends it to you does often mean nothing but this, *Make your passions tame, that I may ride them.*

There is scarce any one of the passions but what is truly laudable when it centers in the publick, and makes that its object. Ambition, avarice, revenge, are all so many virtues, when they aim at the general welfare. I know that it is exceeding hard and rare, for any man to separate his passions from his own person and interest; but it is certain that there have been such men. Brutus, Cato, Regulus, Timoleon, Dion, and Epaminondas, were such, as were many more ancient Greeks and Romans; and, I hope, England has still some such. And though, in pursuing publick views, men regard themselves and their own advantages; yet if they regard the publick more, or their own in subserviency to the publick, they may justly be esteemed virtuous and good.

No man can be too ambitious of the glory and security of his country, nor too angry at its misfortunes and ill usage; nor too revengeful against those that abuse and betray it; nor too avaricious to enrich it, provided that in doing it he violates not the rights of others.

Tacitus giving the character of the emperor Galba, who doubtless was an honest man, and had many virtues, after saying that he coveted no man's money, and was sparing of his own, adds, that he was solicitous to save publick money: *Pecuniae alienae non appetens, suae parcus, publicae avarus*; which publick avarice in him was a publick virtue, and cost him his life; he was not suffered to reign, because would not lavish away the publick money in bribes; *Milites a se eligi, non emi*. So dangerous, and even fatal, was personal virtue in that corrupt state; and so hard and impossible is it, in any state, to stay the progress of corruption! Galba would have reformed the Roman state: But the vices of his predecessors, and long use, made it impracticable; and he lost his life in the attempt. The passions of men were detached from the commonwealth, and placed upon their own personal security or gain; and they had no sense of the publick, and as little knowledge of its affairs: For that great people, and almost the whole world had been long the sole property of a single man, who took counsel only of his lust,

G.

I am, &c.

No. 40. SATURDAY, August 5, 1721.

Considerations on the restless and selfish Spirit of Man. [Gordon] ↩

[II-50]

SIR,

It is melancholy to consider how every thing in the world is abused: The reason is, that men having themselves chiefly in view, consider all things with an eye to themselves only; and thus it is that general blessings cease to be so by being converted into private property, as is always done where it is safe or possible to be done.

Enquiring how it comes to pass that the best things in the world, such as religion, property, and power, are made to do so much hurt; I find it to proceed principally from hence, that men are never satisfied with their present condition, which is never perfectly happy; and perfect happiness being their chief aim, and always out of their reach, they are restlessly grasping at what they never can attain.

So chimerical is the nature of man! his greatest pleasures are always to come, and therefore never come. His content cannot possibly be perfect, because its highest objects are constantly future; and yet it is the more perfect for their being future. Our highest enjoyment is of that which is not: Our pleasure is deceit; and the only real happiness that we have is derived from non-entities. We are never satisfied with being just what we are; and therefore, though you give us all that we desire, or can conceive, yet we shall not have done desiring. The present possessions give but little joy, let them be ever so great; even as great as can be grasped: It is the enjoyment to come that is only or most valued. When we say, that if such a thing happened, we would be easy; we can only mean, or ought only to mean, that we would be more easy than we are: And in that too we are often mistaken; for new acquisitions bring new wants; and imaginary wants are as pungent as real ones. So that there is the same end of wishing as of living, and death only can still the appetites.

Publick blessings would really be so to every man, if every man would be content with his share: But every man would have more; nor would more satisfy him, whatever he may think; but his desires would rise with his possessions or his power, and his last wish would be to have all: Nor would the possession of all quiet the mind of man, which the whole world cannot fill. Indeed, he who has most, wants most; and care, anxious care, as it is the close companion of greatness, so it is furthest from him who has least to care for.

I own, that many have seemed to despise riches and power, and really declined the means of acquiring them: But they deceived themselves, if they thought that this conduct of theirs was owing to a real contempt for the things themselves; when in truth it was only a dislike of the terms upon which they were to be had. Disinterestedness is often created by laziness, pride, or fear; and then it is no virtue. There is not, perhaps, a man living but would be glad of wealth and grandeur, if he could acquire them with speed, and possess them with ease; and almost all men would risk, and do daily risk, ease, reputation, life, and all, to come at them. Do we not see that men venture being beggars to be rich, lose their rest for the sake of quiet, and acquire infamy to earn honour? We live in a hurry, in order to come at the resting-place; and in crowds to purchase solitude. Nor are we the nearer to our end, though the means succeed: Human life is a life of expectation and care; and he who rejects the conditions, must quit it.

Every passion, every view that men have, is selfish in some degree; but when it does good to the publick in its operation and consequence, it may be justly called disinterested in the usual meaning of that word. So that when we call any man disinterested, we should intend no more by it, than that the turn of his mind is towards the publick, and that he has placed his own personal glory and pleasure in serving it. To serve his country is his private pleasure, mankind is his mistress; and he does good to them by gratifying himself.

Disinterestedness, in any other sense than this, there is none. For men to act independently of their passions, is a contradiction! since their passions enter into all that they do, and are the source of it: And the best actions which men perform, often arise from fear, vanity, shame, and the like causes. When the passions of men do good to others, it is called virtue and publick spirit; and when they do hurt to others, it is called selfishness, dishonesty, lust, and other names of infamy. The motive of every man's conduct is fetched from within, and has a good or an ill name according to its effect upon others; and sometimes the great difference between an honest man and a knave, is no other than a piece of humour, or a piece of chance. As the passions of men, which are only the motions raised within us by the motion of things without us, are soothed or animated by external causes, it is hard to determine, whether there be a man in the world who might not be corrupted by some means and applications; the nicety is, to choose those that are proper.

All these discoveries and complaints of the crookedness and corruption of human nature are made with no malignant intention to break the bonds of society; but they are made to shew, that as selfishness is the strongest bias of men, every man ought to be upon his guard against another, that he become not the prey of another. The too great confidence which many men have placed in one, has often ruined millions. How many sorrowful experiences have we, that men will be rogues where they dare; and that the greatest opportunities always make the greatest! Give them what you can, they will still want more than you give; and therefore the highest trusts are the most apt to be broken.

Those who have talked most of the dignity of human nature, seem to have understood it but little. Men are so far from having any views purely publick and disinterested, that government first arose from every man's taking care of himself; and government is never abused and perverted, but from the same cause. Do we not know that one man has slaughtered a million, and overturned nations, for the gaining of one point to himself? and that almost all men would follow evil, if they found their greatest advantage or pleasure in it.

Here therefore lies the source of all the evil which men suffer from men, that every man loves himself better than he loves his whole species, and more or less consults himself in all that he does. He naturally pursues what is pleasant or profitable in his own eyes, though in doing it he entail misery upon multitudes. So that we have no other security against the malice and rapine of each other, but the security of laws or our own force. By laws societies subsist within themselves; and by force they defend themselves against each other. And as in the business of faith and leagues between nation and nation, treaties are made by consent, but kept by fear and power; and observed or violated just as interest, advantage, and opportunities invite, without regard to faith and good conscience, which are only words of good-breeding, with which courts compliment one another and themselves; so between subject and subject, and between magistrates and subjects, concord and security are preserved by the terror of laws, and the ties of mutual interest; and both interest and terror derive their strength from the impulses of self-love.

Thus one man is only safe, while it is the interest of another to let him alone; and men are knaves or honest men, according to the judgment which they make of their own interest and ease, and of the terms upon which they choose to live in the world. Many men are honest, without any virtue, or indeed a thought of honesty; as many others are rogues, without any

malice: And both sorts mean only their own personal advantage; but take different roads to arrive at it. This is their great aim; and that constitution which trusts more than it needs to any man, or body of men, has a terrible flaw in it, and is big with the seeds of its own destruction. Hence arose tyrants, and tyranny, and standing armies: Marius, and Caesar, and Oliver Cromwell. How preposterously do men act! By too great confidence in one man, or a few men, they become slaves; and by a general distrust of each other, they continue so!

It may be objected, that since men are such a wretched race, made so by the apostasy of Adam, they are not worth serving; that the most unhappy of them are but what they themselves would make others, and therefore their fate is just upon them.

In answer to this, I readily own what I have been proving, that men are very bad where they dare, and that all men would be tyrants, and do what they please. But still let us preserve justice and equality in the world. Why should he, who is bad himself, oppress others who are no worse than him? Besides, the lot of humanity being an unhappy one, it is an honest ambition, that of endeavouring to mend it, to improve nature by virtue, and to mend mankind by obliging them to observe rules that are good. We do not expect philosophical virtue from them; but only that they follow virtue as their interest, and find it penal and dangerous to depart from it. And this is the only virtue that the world wants, and the only virtue that it can trust to.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 41. SATURDAY, August 19, 1721.

The Emperor Galba's Speech to Piso, with an Introduction. [Gordon] ↪

[II-56]

SIR,

I send you a translation of the speech of the emperor Galba to Piso, when he adopted him his partner and successor in the Empire; a speech full of great sense, great honesty, and noble sentiments. Indeed Galba seems to have come to the government with worthy intentions to mend it. To restore the ancient liberty, was impossible. Things had run long in another channel; people were accustomed to the largesses and false bounty of their princes, to the awful and sounding names of the Caesars, and to the luxury, pomp, and tinsel of a court. The soldiers would have an emperor; nor could the Senate withstand the soldiers: The venerable orders of the commonwealth had been long abolished, her ancient virtues extinct; *Nihil usquam prisci & integri moris*; and the commonwealth itself was forgot: *Quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam vidisset!* says Tacitus, speaking of the end of the reign of Augustus. In short, the emperor was all in all: *Illuc cuncta vergere*. The state was overturned, mangled, and changed: The old laws of equality were utterly lost in the imperial power, and that was supported by the sword. There was no safety but in servitude; *Jussa principis aspectare*. All the other magistrates were but shadows with fine old names.

The chief aim therefore of Galba, since he could not restore, was to reform. A worthy attempt, but he failed in it: So irresistible was the tide of corruption! Two things principally obstructed his design, and shortened his life and reign; the avarice of the soldiery, and the vile conduct of his servants.

As to the soldiers, he had honestly, but unfortunately said, that he *would choose them, but not buy them*; a saying which they never forgave him. Besides, as he practised himself the rigid old Roman discipline, he would oblige his army to practise it; a thing new to them, and intolerable. They had been long used to luxury and sloth, and were grown as fond of the vileness and vices of their princes, as the old republican armies had been of the temperance, modesty, and other virtues of their commanders: They therefore could not bear the severity and frugality of Galba; nor would Galba depart from his temper and his purposes. Money would have made them his friends; but he would part with none. The reflection of the historian upon this conduct of his is fine, but melancholy; *Nocuit antiquus rigor, & nimia severitas, cui jam pares non sumus*: "He was ruined by reviving unseasonably the severe virtue of our ancestors: Alas! we are no longer equal to it." To conclude this head; the soldiers butchered an emperor that would not bribe them.

As to the part of Galba's servants in the tragedy of their master, it was no small one: They made him odious by their own crimes; and in his name committed cruelties and rapine, which blackened his character; and when they had brought him under a general dislike, none of his own good qualities could recover him his good name: *Inviso semel principe, seu bene seu male facta premunt*. Their avarice was imputed to him, and called his: *Jam offerebant venalia cuncta praepotentes liberti*. They were resolved to make the most of his short reign; and by doing so made it shorter: *Servorum manus subitis avidae, & tanquam apud senem festinantes*. He paid dear for their wickedness: *Odio flagitiorum oneratum destruebant*. His character, in relation to his friends and servants, was, that he was indulgent to them, if they were good; and blind to their faults, if they were bad. *Ubi in bonos incidisset, sine reprehensione patiens: Si mali forent, usque ad culpam ignarus*.

The rest of his character, taken from Tacitus, from whom I have taken the whole, is, that being seventy years old, he had lived in prosperity during five reigns, more happy in them than in his own: That he was of a family ancient, great, and noble, and master of great wealth: That he had a moderate capacity, and more innocence than abilities: That he neither courted fame, nor despised it: That he coveted no man's money, was sparing of his own, and solicitous to save publick money: That a nobleman of his great birth and quality, having lived so securely in such dangerous times, was a thing so surprizing and rare, that his good fortune passed for wisdom, and his real indolence for real art: That in the vigour of his years he acquired great renown in the German wars: That being proconsul in Africa, he governed that province, and afterwards Spain, with great equity: That he seemed greater than a subject, while he was but a subject; and that, in the opinion of all men, he was equal to the empire, if he had never been emperor.

So much for the character of Galba; which I thought necessary to introduce his speech to Piso, who was every way worthy of the adoption and of a better fortune; which, however, was of a- piece: He was long an exile under Nero, who had murdered his brother Crassus; as had Claudius his brother Magnus: He himself was but four days Caesar, and then butchered; as was his eldest brother presently after him. He was of a noble race, both by father and mother, and had an amiable and popular character for the severity of his manners, and his many virtues; and during the few days of his highest power and adversity he behaved himself with great modesty and firmness, and seemed to make good every hope concerning him. But virtue and goodness were then pernicious, and we see what he got by having them. The whole story, and particularly his fate in it, affects me.

I am, &c.

THE SPEECH OF GALBA TO PISO↔

“Were I, as a private man, to adopt you for my son, by virtue of the law Curiata, in preference of the pontiffs, according to the ordinary usage; glorious even then would be the adoption to us both; as with the blood of the great Pompey and of Marcus Crassus my family would be enriched; and the nobility of your house derive fresh splendor from the signal lustre and renown of the Sulpitian and Lutacian race. I am now a publick person, by the united consent of gods and men called to the empire; and of this same sovereignty, for which our ancestors contended with arms, I, who by war have obtained it, do offer you the possession, while you are neither seeking nor pursuing it: A gift to which I am urged only by the love of my country and your own excellent qualifications. In this I follow the example of the deified Augustus, who assumed successively, for his partners in power, first his sister's son, Marcellus; next his son-in-law, Agrippa; afterwards his grandsons; lastly, his wife's son Tiberius. But Augustus, who would entail the empire upon his own house, in his own house sought a successor: I choose out of the commonwealth an heir to the commonwealth. Not that I am reduced to this choice by any want of relations to my blood, or of fellow-commanders in war. But neither did I, no more than you, arrive at supreme power by any efforts of ambition; and my thus overlooking your relations, as well as my own, is a proof and monument with what sincerity of intention I prefer you to all men. You have a brother, in nobility your equal, in age your superior; a man worthy of this fortune; did I not in you find one still more worthy. Such is your age, as to be past the giddiness and impetuosity of youth; such has been your course of life, that nothing in your conduct, thus far, is subject to blame. But hitherto you have only had an adverse fortune to contend with. More dangerous and keen are the stimulations of prosperity, to try the temper of the soul, and call forth its weaknesses. For, the strokes of calamity we struggle under and bear: By a flow of felicity we are utterly subdued and corrupted.

“You doubtless will still retain, with your usual firmness, the same honour, faith in friendship, candour and freedom of spirit; endowments which, above all others, adorn the mind of man. But the false complaisance of others will slacken your fortitude. Flattery will force its way to your heart; deceitful soothings, the most pestilent poison to every honest affection, will enchant you; and to his own sordid gain will every particular be wresting your honour and good inclinations. You and I upon this occasion converse together with hearts perfectly open and sincere: Others will choose to make their addresses to our fortune rather than to us. Indeed, to deal faithfully with princes, to reason them into their duty, is a mighty task, and with infinite difficulty performed. But easy is the art of cajoling any prince whatsoever, and in doing it the heart has no share. Could this immense empire subsist, and be swayed without a single ruler, I should glory in resigning, glory in being the first emperor who resigned the power of the Republick into her own hands. But such, long since has been the fatal situation of the state, that all the good which my old age enables me to do to the Roman people, is to leave them a good successor; nor can you, with all your youth, do more for them than afford them in yourself a benevolent prince. Under Tiberius and Caligula and Claudius, we were all of us no more, the Roman world was no more, than as the inheritance of one family. That the empire has in me begun to be elective, is a sign of our ancient liberty revived, and some equivalent for it; the only liberty we are capable of enjoying. Now the Julian and Claudian families being extinct, the best men are likely, in this way of adoption, to become the highest. To be sprung from a sovereign race, is the effect of chance, and further than this requires no deliberation or regard. But in the work of adoption the judgment is exercised, free from bias and restraint; and whenever you want to choose, you are by the general consent directed to the person worthy to be chosen.

“Have always before your eyes the example of Nero, who, secure as he was, and swelling with the pride of his race, a long genealogy of the Caesars his ancestors, was not in reality dethroned by Julius Vindex, the governor of a province unprovided with forces, nor by me, assisted by one legion: No, it was his own brutal tyranny, his own beastly debaucheries, that flung down the tyrant from riding on the necks of mankind. Nor was there till then any instance of an emperor by publick sentence condemned and deposed. We who succeed him by a different title, by war and by publick approbation and choice, shall thence reap publick glory, however the malignity of particulars may pursue us. Nor must you be alarmed, if while the world itself continues in this general uproar, there are two legions which yet remain unreclaimed to obedience. It was my own lot to be called to an unsettled state; and as to my old age, the only objection to my government, it is no longer one, since, when it is known that I have adopted you, I shall seem young in my successor. The loss of Nero will ever be regretted by all the most profligate and bad. To us it belongs, to you and to me, so to govern, that he may not also be regretted by the good.

“To say more in this way of instruction, the present conjunction suffers not; nor is it necessary; since if I have in you made a worthy choice, I have answered every purpose. One certain rule you have to observe, exceeding wholesome, as well as exceeding short; so to comport yourself towards your subjects, as, were you a subject, you would wish your prince to comport towards you. By this rule you will best distinguish the boundaries of justice and iniquity; best comprehend the art of reigning: for, you must remember that it is not with us as with other nations, such as are barbarous and tyrannized, where a particular lordly house is established, and where all besides are slaves without reserve. But you are about to govern the Romans; a people of too little virtue to support complete liberty, of too much spirit to bear absolute bondage.”

G

No. 42. SATURDAY, August 26, 1721.

Considerations on the Nature of Laws. [Gordon] ↩

[II-64]

SIR,

The mischiefs that are daily done, and the evils that are daily suffered in the world, are sad proofs, how much human malice exceeds human wisdom. Law only provides against the evils which it knows or foresees; but when laws fail, we must have recourse to reason and nature, which are the only guides in the making of laws. *Stirpem juris a natura repertam*, says Cicero; there never would have been any law against any crime, if crimes might have been safely committed, against which there was no law: For every law supposes some evil, and can only punish or restrain the evils which already exist.

But as positive laws, let them be ever so full and perspicuous, can never entirely prevent the arts of crafty men to evade them, or the power of great ones to violate them; hence new laws are daily making, and new occasions for more are daily arising: So that the utmost that wisdom, virtue, and law can do, is to lessen or qualify, but never totally abolish, vice and enormity. Law is therefore a sign of the corruption of man; and many laws are signs of the corruption of a state.

Positive laws deriving their force from the law of nature, by which we are directed to make occasional rules, which we call laws, according to the exigencies of times, places, and persons, grow obsolete, or cease to be, as soon as they cease to be necessary. And it is as much against the law of nature to execute laws, when the first cause of them ceases, as it is to make laws, for which there is no cause, or a bad cause. This would be to subject reason to force, and to apply a penalty where there is no crime. Law is right reason, commanding things that are good, and forbidding things that are bad; it is a distinction and declaration of things just and unjust, and of the penalties or advantages annexed to them.

The violation therefore of law does not constitute a crime where the law is bad; but the violation of what ought to be law, is a crime even where there is no law. The essence of right and wrong does not depend upon words and clauses inserted in a code or a statute-book, much less upon the conclusions and explications of lawyers; but upon reason and the nature of things, antecedent to all laws. In all countries reason is or ought to be consulted, before laws are enacted; and they are always worse than none, where it is not consulted. Reason is in some degree given to all men; and Cicero says, that whoever has reason, has right reason; that virtue is but perfect reason; and that all nations having reason for their guide, all nations are capable of arriving at virtue.

From this reasoning of his it would follow, that every people are capable of making laws, and good laws; and that laws, where they are bad, are gained by corruption, faction, fear, or surprize; and are rather their misfortune, than the effects of their folly. The acts of Caesar were confirmed by the Senate and the people; but the Senate was awed, and the tribunes and people were bribed: Arms and money procured him a law to declare him lawless. But, as the most pompous power can never unsettle the everlasting land-marks between good and evil, no more than those between pleasure and pain; Caesar remained still a rebel to his country, and his acts remained wicked and tyrannical.

Let this stand for an instance, that laws are not always the measure of right and wrong. And as positive laws often speak when the law of nature is silent, the law of nature sometimes speaks when positive laws say nothing: *Neque opinione, sed natura constitutum*

esse jus. That brave Roman, Horatius Cocles, was bound by no written law to defend the wooden bridge over the Tiber, against a whole army of Tuscans; nor was there any law, that I know of, in Rome, against adultery, when the younger Tarquin ravished Lucretia: And yet the virtue of Horatius was justly rewarded, and the vileness of Tarquin justly punished, by the Romans.

It is impossible to devise laws sufficient to regulate and manage every occurrence and circumstance of life, because they are often produced and diversified by causes that do not appear; and in every condition of life men must have, and will have, great allowances made to their own natural liberty and discretion: But every man, who consents to the necessary terms of society, will also consent to this proposition, that every man should do all the good, and prevent all the evil, that he can. This is the voice of the law of nature; and all men would be happy by it, if all men would practise it. This law leads us to see, that the establishment of falsehood and tyranny (by which I mean the privilege of one or a few to mislead and oppress all) cannot be justly called law, which is the impartial rule of good and evil, and can never be the sanction of evil alone.

It has been often said, that virtue is its own reward; and it is very true, not only from the pleasure that attends the consciousness of doing well, and the fame that follows it, but in a more extensive sense, from the felicity which would accrue to every man, if all men would pursue virtue: But as this truth may appear too general to allure and engage particular men, who will have always their own single selves most at heart, abstracted from all the rest; therefore in the making of laws, the pleasures and fears of particular men, being the great engines by which they are to be governed, must be consulted: Vice must be rendered detestable and dangerous; virtue amiable and advantageous. Their shame and emulation must be raised; their private profit and glory, peril and infamy, laid before them. This is the meaning of Tully, when he says, *Vitiorum emendatricem legem esse oportet, commendatricemque virtutum*.

Rewards and punishments therefore constitute the whole strength of laws; and the promulgation of laws, without which they are none, is an appeal to the sense and interest of men, which of the two they will choose.

The two great laws of human society, from whence all the rest derive their course and obligation, are those of equity and self-preservation: By the first all men are bound alike not to hurt one another; by the second all men have a right alike to defend themselves: *Nam jure hoc evenit, ut quod quisque ob tutelam corporis suifecerit, jure fecisse existimetur*, says the civil law; that is, "It is a maxim of the law, that whatever we do in the way and for the ends of self-defence, we lawfully do." All the laws of society are entirely reciprocal, and no man ought to be exempt from their force; and whoever violates this primary law of nature, ought by the law of nature to be destroyed. He who observes no law, forfeits all title to the protection of law. It is wickedness not to destroy a destroyer; and all the ill consequences of self-defence are chargeable upon him who occasioned them.

Many mischiefs are prevented, by destroying one who shews a certain disposition to commit many. To allow a licence to any man to do evil with impunity, is to make vice triumph over virtue, and innocence the prey of the guilty. If men be obliged to bear great and publick evils, when they can upon better terms oppose and remove them; they are obliged, by the same logick, to bear the total destruction of mankind. If any man may destroy whom he pleases without resistance, he may extinguish the human race without resistance. For, if you settle the bounds of resistance, you allow it; and if you do not fix its bounds, you leave property at the mercy of rapine, and life in the hands of cruelty.

It is said, that the doctrine of resistance would destroy the peace of the world: But it may be more truly said, that the contrary doctrine would destroy the world itself, as it has already some of the best countries in it. I must indeed own, that if one man may destroy all, there would be great and lasting peace when nobody was left to break it.

The law of nature does not only allow us, but oblige us, to defend ourselves. It is our duty, not only to ourselves, but to the society; *Vitam tibi ipsi si negas, multis negas*, says Seneca: If we suffer tamely a lawless attack upon our property and fortunes, we encourage it, and involve others in our doom. And Cicero says, “He who does not resist mischief when he may, is guilty of the same crime, as if he had deserted his parents, his friends, and his country.”

So that the conduct of men, who, when they are ill treated, use words rather than arms, and practise submission rather than resistance, is owing to a prudential cause, because there is hazard in quarrels and war, and their cause may be made worse by an endeavour to mend it; and not to any confession of right in those that do them wrong. When men begin to be wicked, we cannot tell where that wickedness will end; we have reason to fear the worst, and provide against it.

Such is the provision made by laws: They are checks upon the unruly and partial appetites of men, and intended for terror and protection. But as there are already laws sufficient every where to preserve peace between private particulars, the great difficulty has hitherto been to find proper checks for those who are to check and administer the laws. To settle therefore a thorough impartiality in the laws, both as to their end and execution, is a task worthy of human wisdom, as it would be the cause and standard of civil felicity. In the theory nothing is more easy than this task: Yet who is able to perform it, if they who can will not?

No man in society ought to have any privilege above the rest, without giving the society some equivalent for such his privilege. Thus legislators, who compile good laws, and good magistrates, who execute them, do, by their honest attendance upon the publick, deserve the privileges and pay which the publick allows them; and place and power are the wages paid by the people to their own deputies and agents. Hence it has been well said, that a chief magistrate is *major singulis, omnibus minor*: “He is above the private members of the community; but the community itself is above him.”

Where-ever, therefore, the laws are honestly intended, and equally executed, so as to comprehend in their penalties and operation the great as well and as much as the small, and hold in awe the magistrates as much as the subject, that government is good, that people are happy.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 43. SATURDAY, September 2, 1721.

The natural Passion of Men for Superiority. [Gordon] ↩↪

[II-71]

SIR,

All men have an ambition to be considerable, and take such ways as their judgments suggest to become so. Hence proceeds the appetite of all men to rise above their fellows, and the constant emulation that always has been, and always will be, in the world, amongst all sorts of men. Nature has made them all equal, and most men seem well content with the lot of parts which nature has given them; but the lot of fortune never thoroughly satisfies those who have the best.

The first spring therefore of inequality is in human nature, and the next in the nature of society. In order that many may live together in perfect equality, it is necessary that some should be above the many, who otherwise will be using frauds and violence to get above one another. Some inequality there must be; the danger is, that it be not too great: Where there is absolute equality, all reverence and awe, two checks indispensable in society, would be lost; and where inequality is too great, all intercourse and communication is lost.

Thus in Turkey, where there are no natural links, nor proper degrees of subordination in the chain of their government, there is a monstrous gap between the subject and the throne. The Grand Seignior preserves no understanding with his people: Nothing is to be seen but the terrors of absolute monarchy, and the abject postures of crouching slaves. Power does not glide there, as it ought every where, down an even and easy channel, with a gentle and regular descent; but pours from a precipice with dreadful din, rapidity, and violence upon the poor and passive valleys below, breaking down all before it, and laying waste where-ever it comes.

All men in the world are fond of making a figure in it. This being the great end of all men, they take different roads to come at it, according to their different capacities, opinions, tempers, and opportunities. No man would choose to have any man his equal, if he could place himself above all men. All would be Pompeys. But though it has fallen to the share but of few men to be above all men; yet as every man may, or thinks he may, excel some men, there is a perpetual spur in every descendant of Adam to be aspiring. Every man has self-love, and self-love is never deserted by hope.

But this spirit in every man of rising above other men, as it constitutes the happiness of private individuals, who take great complacency in their favourable opinion of themselves and their own abilities; so is it the great cause of publick and private evils, wars, frauds, cruelty, and oppression. The ambition of excelling in every station by honest means, is not only lawful, but laudable, and produces great good to society: But as nothing produces good in this world, but what may, and generally does, produce evil; and as fame, riches, and power, may be honestly got, but wickedly used, it ought to be the care of society to provide that such emulation amongst its members be so directed and controlled, as to be always beneficial, but never dangerous. But this is a felicity at which few nations have arrived, and those that had it rarely preserved it long.

It is a nice point of wisdom, perhaps too nice for human judgment, to fix certain and lasting bounds to this spirit of ambition and emulation amongst men. To stop it too soon, frustrates its use; and not to stop it at all, invites its mischief. The Venetians, by discouraging it, have never, or very rarely, felt its advantages; and the Athenians found their ostracism, an

expedient invented for this very purpose, ineffectual to prevent their great men, who had done great good to the state, from growing terrible to the state itself: Pericles in particular, by his arts, eloquence, and popularity, made himself master of it, and did almost what he pleased in it all his life; that single man was so potent in that free city, that he broke the power of the Areopagus, the senate of Athens, a court of magistrates that balanced the power of the populace; who, being set free from that restraint, ran into all manner of licentiousness and corruption.

The people of Athens became the subjects of Pericles: by having done them much good, he found credit enough to destroy their government and their virtue. From the character of a benefactor, he stole into that of a master: so narrow and invisible are the bounds between the benefactor and the betrayer! Valerius Maximus observes very finely, that “the only difference between Pisistratus and Pericles was, that the latter exercised by art the same tyranny that the other had exercised by arms.”

Good and evil thus often flowing from the same root, and mischief being frequently introduced by merit, it shews great discernment and virtue in a people, and a happy spirit in their laws, if they can encourage and employ the capacity and genius of their principal men, so as to reap only the good fruits of their services.

This was the practice and good fortune of the old Romans for several ages: Virtue was the only road to glory; it was admired, supported, applauded, and recompensed; but they who had shewn the greatest found no sanctuary from it, when they committed crimes that deserved none. This is particularly verified in the cases of Coriolanus and Manlius Capitolinus. They were both brave men, and had deserved well of their country; were both, in recompence, distinguished with great honours; yet were both afterwards condemned by their country, the one for a conspiracy against it, the other for despising its laws. Their services and crimes were properly separated and rewarded.

Emulation therefore, or the passion of one man to equal or excel another, ought to be encouraged, with these two restrictions: First, that no man, let his merit be what it will, should take his own reward; secondly, that he should have no more than comes to his share. Scipio, afterwards called Africanus, was chosen as the greatest and best man in Rome, to invade the territories of Carthage; and he performed it with great glory to himself, with great emolument to his country. He defeated Hannibal, and conquered Carthage. The like praise is also due to Metellus, Lucullus, to T. Flaminius, Paulus Emilius, and many other Roman commanders, who all conquered for their country, and were rewarded by their country with its laurels and its dignities.

Julius Caesar, being also employed by the commonwealth to conquer for it, succeeded in his commission; but, as a reward, took the commonwealth for his pains: He paid himself with the whole Roman world, for having conquered part of it. Alexander the Great, and most other conquerors, had the same modesty, and the same wages; they took all to themselves.

When men are left to measure their own merit, and the reward due to it, they rarely stint themselves; all that they can get is the least that they expect: And, to descend to lesser instances, the world has always abounded in men, who, though they deserved contempt or a prison, yet could never be satiated with places and power. And all men who have observed the affairs of the world, will remember and acknowledge, that sometimes one man has possessed many posts, to whom the publick suffrage and consent never gave one.

In my reflections upon this subject, I have often amused, and even diverted myself, with an odd imagination; namely, what a wonderful and epidemical cessation of power and place would ensue a sudden and universal removal from thence of every man who deserved neither. I fancied that I saw the whole inhabitants of several countries, towards every quarter

of the sky, gaping round them for magistrates, at least for one single magistrate, and finding none; and yet even in this state of anarchy congratulating one another and themselves upon the wonderful amendment of their government. I saw all Asia, the whole ample dominions of the Turk, and many potent kingdoms nearer home, all in an absolute state of nature: In the large bosom of the Romish Church, not a priest was to be seen; and in some Protestant countries, the good people were greatly put to it, where to get a man in a proper habit to say publick prayers. Here in England, indeed, I found a different face of things, and more comfort: For, though at present we have no Parliament sitting, and though in other places I saw dismal solitude, and numberless vacancies; yet I perceived many worthy persons in church and state doing their business, and counting their gains, with great attention and alacrity, but greatly distressed how to find new persons for old places.

Imagination apart: I shall conclude in the words of a great English writer. It is true that

consideration ought to be had of human frailty; and some indulgence may be extended to those who commit errors, after having done important services: But a state cannot subsist, which compensating evil actions with good, gives impunity to dangerous crimes, in remembrance of any services whatever. He that does well, performs his duty, and ought always to do so; justice and prudence concur in this; and it is no less just than profitable, that every action be considered by itself, and such a reward allotted to it as in nature and proportion it best deserves.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 44. SATURDAY, September 9, 1721.

Men not ruled by Principle, but by Passion. [Gordon] ↩

[II-77]

SIR,

Mr. Bayle, in the article of Epicurus, says, that “Multitudes of Christians believe well, and live ill: But Epicurus and his followers had, on the contrary, very ill opinions, and yet lived well.” The truth is, the worst opinions that are can do but little harm, when they are impracticable, or when no advantages are gained by reducing them into practice; and the best can do but little good, when they contradict the darling pleasures and prevailing interests of men.

Dry reasoning has no force: If you would have your doctrine successful, you must prove it gainful. And as in order to lay down good rules for well governing the commonwealth, you must first know the commonwealth; so in order to persuade and govern men, you must know what will please or frighten them. The good that they do to one another, they do not because it is just or commanded; nor do they forbear mutual evil, because it is unjust or forbid: But those things they do out of choice or fear, and both these center in themselves; for choice is pleasure, and fear is the apprehension of pain. So that the best things that men do, as well as the worst, are selfish; and self-love is the parent of moral good and evil.

What Mr. Selden says of humility, may be said of every other virtue. “Humility,” says that wise man,

is a virtue that all preach, none practise, and yet every body is content to hear: The master thinks it good doctrine for his servants, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity.

Thus we deal with all the virtues; we leave and recommend the practice of them to others, and reserve the advantage and praise of them to ourselves.

All this, and the rest of this letter, is meant to shew that this world is governed by passion, and not by principle; and it ever will be so as long as men are men.

There are rarely any men, never any body of men, but what profess some sort of religion; and every religion professes to promote the peace of mankind, the happiness of human society, and the security of the world; and, for proof of this, refers to its principles, doctrines, and decisions. And it is very true, that all parties in religion contend for submission to the state, as long as the state humours them, or submits to them; but their obedience and good humour never hold longer. All their principles ply in the day of trial, and are either thrown away, or distinguished away; which is the same thing, though not so honest. Nature is then the best guide, and passion the most popular preacher.

Men suit their tenets to the circumstances that they are in, or would be in; and when they have gained their point, they forget their tenets. I could give instances of this from all sorts of men, and even from many whose names are great and venerable.

Gregory Nazianzen, that eloquent and eminent Greek Father, being himself orthodox, contended for toleration to the Arians, while the Arians were uppermost, and had the emperor on their side: but as soon as things took a contrary turn, and his own party had the imperial power on their side, he changed his style; and then it was unpardonable boldness and a

horrible attempt, for the Arians and Macedonians so much as to meet together to worship God their own way.

St. Austin had the same spirit and inconsistency: He was once in the sentiments of charity and toleration towards hereticks; but his dispute afterwards with the Donatists so inflamed him, that he changed without any ceremony from white to black, and maintained with violence, that hereticks ought to be compelled, persecuted, and exterminated.

Thus it is that men bear witness against themselves, and practise the evils which they condemn. The Puritans, says Mr. Selden,

who will allow no free will at all, but God does all; yet will allow the subject his liberty to do, or not to do, notwithstanding the king, who is God upon Earth: The Arminians, who hold that we have free-will, do yet say, when we come to the king, we must be all obedience, and no liberty is to be stood for.

“While Spain was the most renowned power in Europe, the Jesuits,” says Mr. Bayle,

were all Spaniards; as well those born at Paris, or Rome, as those born in old Castile. Ever since the decay of the house of Austria, and the elevation of Lewis le grand, the Jesuits are all French, at Rome, at Vienna, at Madrid, as well as in the College of Clermont. In those days the liberties of the Gallican church appeared to them not well grounded: They never ceased writing for the rights of the Pope against those of our kings. One might fill a library with the defences composed by the Society, and condemned by the parliament and the Sorbon. At present his Majesty has not trustier pens than theirs in his differences with the Pope. It is now the turn of the court of Rome to censure the books of the reverend fathers. It seems the king's prosperity and successes have afforded them new lights.

It is with laymen and civil societies, as with religious: They have one set of principles when they are in power; another, and a contrary, when they are out of it. They that command, and they that obey, have seldom or never the same motives. Men change with their condition, and opinions change with men. And thus is verified that maxim of Rochefoucauld's, that the understanding is the dupe or tool of the heart; that is, our sentiments follow our passions.

Nor has religion been suffered to mend nature: On the contrary, being instituted as a restraint, and an antidote against sin, it has been, and is frequently perverted into a reason for sinning: Yes, to the shame and misfortune of the world, men often make war upon truth, conscience, and honesty, in behalf of their religion; and there are others, who, when they have wantonly wounded virtue, have recourse to religion for a balsam.

All men speak well of religion, either natural or revealed, and readily practise every thing in religion that is easy, indifferent, or advantageous to them: But in almost every contention between religion and the appetites, the victory remains to nature; that is, men are never dishonest without temptation, and rarely honest against it.

Thus their principle is interest or pleasure; and when they say that they act from principle, how can we believe them, unless we see that they do it against interest? A proof which they rarely give us! Had the several contracts and treaties between nation and nation been observed, there would never have been war above once between any; or had every free nation observed its own laws, every free nation would have continued free; or, had private men observed the common laws of equity, and those of mutual compact between each other, every private man would have lived in peace and security. But treaties, compacts, and laws are only so far strong as no body dares break them.

I think it is Juvenal, who somewhere brings in a couple of false witnesses perjuring themselves for hire; one is a religious rogue, and believes in the gods; the other is an infidel, who disbelieves or despises them. But though they disagree in their sentiments, they agree in the thing, with this very small difference; the atheist forswears himself boldly without remorse; the believer forswears himself too, but does it with a small qualm, which is presently over.

— — — *Vendet perjuriam summa
Exigua, Cereris tangens aramque pedemque.*

Bayle very humourously engages a mandarin of China, of the sect of the Literati, in a dialogue with the Jesuits, and with a Dutch ambassador: The Jesuits tell the mandarin,

that the Emperor had no subjects in his dominions, whose obedience was so secure to him as that of their converts the Christians; and none whose allegiance was so precarious as that of the Literati, who were atheists.

“Hold,” cries the mandarin; “let us not assert too much without proving it: What reason have you to say that the submission of the Christians to the orders of the Emperor is more certain than that of all his other subjects?” “That book inspired by God,” answer the Jesuits; “that book, which is the rule of our faith, commands us expressly to submit ourselves to the higher powers: Take the trouble, my lord, to read in it such and such passages: Nothing is more clear, nothing so precisely determined.”

“But,” says the mandarin turning to the ambassador, are not you in Europe divided about the meaning of these passages?”

“So divided,” replies the Dutchman, “that one room would not contain the volumes written for and against the right of subjects to resist and depose their prince: And both sides take particular care in all their writings to examine accurately every text of scripture, which the reverend fathers refer you to. This discussion of texts has therefore begot two propositions, flatly contradicting each other. One party asserts, that in departing from your obedience, you depart from the Bible: The other says, they resist with the Bible on their side. We have in Christendom many instances of princes attacked by parties of their subjects, bereft of their sovereignty, banished, beheaded, assassinated, and generally for the interest of religion. Nor is there any end of the books published on this occasion; we have every day printed accusations, and every day printed apologies; and both they who accuse and they who defend appeal to God, and refer to his word. As to the Jesuits in particular, it becomes them the least of all men to talk in this manner; no society of men have ever written so much in behalf of popular insurrections; they have openly contended for rebellion, and practised it; they have been the authors of royal assassinations, and have been turned out of states for disturbing them.”

“If these things are so,” concludes the mandarin, “you gentlemen of the Order of Jesus have no reason to boast in behalf of yourselves and your followers, as if you were better subjects than other men. This your pretended article of faith about the submission of the subject is couched so obscurely in your book of sacred laws, that you will never find it there when you have occasion for a rebellion or a revolution; events which I find are frequent enough in your country.”

The same Bayle observes, that the same party of Christians, namely, the French Catholicks, who had maintained, under Charles IX and Henry III that it was against all laws, human and divine, for subjects to take arms against their prince, did also maintain, even before the death of Henry III that it was agreeable to laws, human and divine, to take up arms against one's prince. The other party of Christians, namely, the Protestants, were not more consistent. They maintained, during the reigns of Charles IX and Henry III that laws, human and divine, allowed the smaller part of the subjects to arm themselves against the greater part even with the king at their head: But after the death of Henry III when they had got a king of their own religion, they maintained, that both the law of God and the law of man forbid even the greater part of the subjects to arm themselves against the smaller part with the king at their head.

It were needless to give more proofs, and endless to give all that might be given. Almost every thing that men do, is an evidence that their friendship for themselves does effectually extinguish their regard for all the rest of their species; and that they adopt or reject principles, just as these principles promote or contradict their interest and passions.

Nor are religious or moral principles the worse for being thus used; but men shew their own unconquerable malignity and selfishness in using them thus.

Upon the whole, I think it very plain, that if you separate from the principles of men the penalties and advantages which are annexed to them by laws human and divine, or which every man has annexed to them in his own mind, you will hardly leave such a thing as principle in the world; the world is therefore not governed by principle.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 45. SATURDAY, September 16, 1721.

Of the Equality and Inequality of Men. [Gordon] ↩

[II-85]

SIR,

Men are naturally equal, and none ever rose above the rest but by force or consent: No man was ever born above all the rest, nor below them all; and therefore there never was any man in the world so good or so bad, so high or so low, but he had his fellow. Nature is a kind and benevolent parent; she constitutes no particular favourites with endowments and privileges above the rest; but for the most part sends all her offspring into the world furnished with the elements of understanding and strength, to provide for themselves: She gives them heads to consult their own security, and hands to execute their own counsels; and according to the use that they make of their faculties, and of the opportunities that they find, degrees of power and names of distinction grow amongst them, and their natural equality is lost.

Thus nature, who is their parent, deals with men: But fortune, who is their nurse, is not so benevolent and impartial; she acts wantonly and capriciously, often cruelly; and counterplotting justice as well as nature, frequently sets the fool above the wise man, and the best below the worst.

And from hence it is, that the most part of the world, attending much more to the noisy conduct and glaring effects of fortune, than to the quiet and regular proceedings of nature, are misled in their judgment upon this subject: They confound fortune with nature, and too often ascribe to natural merit and excellency the works of contrivance or chance. This however, shews that reason and equity run in our heads, while we endeavour to find a just cause for things that are not just; and this is the source of the reverence which we pay to men whom fortune sometimes lifts on high, though nature had placed them below. The populace rarely see any creature rise, but they find a reason for it in his parts; when probably the true one will be found in his own baseness, or another man's folly.

From the same reasoning may be seen why it is, that, let who will be at the head of a party, he is always extolled by his party as superior to the rest of mankind; and let who will be the first man of his country, he will never fail being complimented by many as the first of his species. But the issue and their own behaviour constantly shew, that the highest are upon a level with the rest, and often with the lowest. Men that are high are almost ever seen in a false light; the most part see them at a great distance, and through a magnifying medium; some are dazzled with their splendor, many are awed by their power. Whatever appears shining or terrible, appears great, and is magnified by the eye and the imagination.

That nature has made men equal, we know and feel; and when people come to think otherwise, there is no excess of folly and superstition which they may not be brought to practise. Thus they have made gods of dead men, and paid divine honours to many while they were yet living: They saw them to be but men, yet they worshipped them as gods. And even they who have not gone quite so far, have yet, by their wild notions of inequality, done as much mischief; they have made men, and often wicked men, to be vice-gods; and then made God's power (falsely so called) as irresistible in the hands of men as in his own, and much more frightful.

It is evident to common sense, that there ought to be no inequality in society, but for the sake of society; but these men have made one man's power and will the cause of all men's misery. They gave him as far as they could the power of God, without obliging him to

practise the mercy and goodness of God.

Those that think themselves furthest above the rest, are generally by their education below them all. They are debased by a conceit of their greatness: They trust to their blood; which, speaking naturally, gives them no advantage; and neglect their mind, which alone, by proper improvements, sets one man above another. It is not blood or nature, but art or accident, which makes one man excel others. Aristotle, therefore, must either have been in jest, when he said, that he, who naturally excelled all others, ought to govern all; or said it to flatter his pupil and prince, Alexander the Great. It is certain, that such a man never yet was found in the world, and never will be found till the end of it. Alexander himself, notwithstanding the greatness of his spirit, and his conquests, had in his own army, and perhaps among the common soldiers, men naturally as great and brave as himself, and many more wise.

Whoever pretends to be naturally superior to other men, claims from nature what she never gave to any man. He sets up for being more than a man; a character with which nature has nothing to do. She has thrown her gifts in common amongst us; and as the highest offices of nature fall to the share of the mean as well as of the great, her vilest offices are performed by the great as well as by the mean: Death and diseases are the portion of kings as well as of clowns; and the corpse of a monarch is no more exempted from stench and putrefaction, than the corpse of a slave.

Mors aequo pulsat pede.

All the arts and endowments of men to acquire pre-eminence and advantages over one another, are so many proofs and confessions that they have not such pre-eminence and advantages from nature; and all their pomp, titles, and wealth, are means and devices to make the world think that they who possess them are superior in merit to those that want them. But it is not much to the glory of the upper part of mankind, that their boasted and superior merit is often the work of heralds, artificers, and money; and that many derive their whole stock of fame from ancestors, who lived an age or many ages ago.

The first founders of great families were not always men of virtue or parts; and where they were so, those that came after them did frequently, and almost generally, by trusting to their blood, disgrace their name. Such is the folly of the world, and the inconvenience of society, to allow men to be great by proxy! An evil that can scarce ever be cured. The race of French kings, called by their historians in contempt, *les rois faineants* and the succession of the Roman Caesars (in both which, for one good prince they had ten that were intolerable, either for folly, or cruelty, and often for both), might be mentioned as known proofs of the above truth; and every reader will find in his own memory many more.

I have been told of a prince, who, while yet under age, being reprov'd by his governor for doing things ill or indecent, used to answer, *Je suis roy; I am King*; as if his quality had altered the nature of things, and he himself had been better than other men, while he acted worse. But he spoke from that spirit which had been instilled into him from his cradle. *I am King!* What then, Sir? The office of a king is not to do evil, but to prevent it. You have royal blood in your veins: But the blood of your page is, without being royal, as good as yours; or, if you doubt, try the difference in a couple of porringers next time you are ill; and learn from this consideration and experiment, that by nature you are no better than your people, though subject from your fortune to be worse, as many of your ancestors have been.

If my father got an estate and title by law or the sword, I may by virtue of his will or his patent enjoy his acquisition; but if I understand neither law nor the sword, I can derive honour from neither: My honour therefore is, in the reason of things purely nominal; and I

am still by nature a plebeian, as all men are.

There is nothing moral in blood, or in title, or in place: Actions only, and the causes that produce them, are moral. He therefore is best that does best. Noble blood prevents neither folly, nor lunacy, nor crimes: but frequently begets or promotes them: And noblemen, who act infamously, derive no honour from virtuous ancestors, whom they dishonour. A man who does base things, is not noble; nor great, if he do little things: A sober villager is a better man than a debauched lord; an honest mechanick than a knavish courtier.

— — — Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.

Prima mihi debes animi bona; sanctus haberi Justitiaeque tenax factis dictisque mereris? JUV. SAT. 8

We cannot bring more natural advantages into the world than other men do; but we can acquire more virtue in it than we generally acquire. To be great is not in every man's power; but to be good is in the power of all: Thus far every man may be upon a level with another, the lowest with the highest: and men might thus come to be morally as well as naturally equal.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 46. SATURDAY, September 23, 1721.

Of the false Guises which Men put on, and their ill Effect. [Gordon] ↩

[II-91]

SIR,

Men are often capable of doing as much, whether it be good or evil, by the appearance of parts, as by possessing them; and become really considerable by being thought so. Some, by pretending to great interest with the gods, have gained great interest among men; and plagued the earth, to prove themselves favourites of heaven: Others grow great at court, by being thought great in a party; and grow at the same time great in a party, by being thought great at court: Twice liars, they meet with the double wages of lying.

Thus is the world deceived; a thing so easily done, that rarely any man sets about it but he succeeds in it, let his parts be ever so scanty or starved. Murderers have passed for saints, buffoons for wits, and solemn dunces for wise men.

I have been often provoked to see a whole assembly, sometimes neither contemptible for number, nor figure, nor sense, give themselves up to the guidance and management of a silly ignorant fellow, important only in grimace and assurance: Nay, parties, potent parties, generally throw themselves into the hands and direction of men, who, though they chop them and sell them, yet want every talent for this sort of negotiation, but what they possess in the credulity of those that trust them. This is the best qualification, and it is sufficient. These are the sidrophils, the cunning men in parties, as ignorant as those in Moorfields; they only know more than those whom they deceive, by pretending to more.

The affectation of wisdom is a prevailing folly in the world; men fall naturally into the practise of it; and it would be pardonable, as it is common, if it went no further than the aiming at a little notice and reverence, which every body may be innocently fond of. But when men seek credit this way, in order to betray, and make use of their grimace as a trap to deceive; when they turn their admirers into followers, and their followers into money; then appearing wisdom becomes real villainy, and these pretenders grow dangerous impostors.

And this is what men frequently get by trusting more to the understanding of others than to their own, though often the better of the two; and therefore we find, in many instances, that fools mislead and govern men of sense. In things where men know nothing, they are apt to think that others know more than they; and so blindly trust to bold pretensions: And here is the great cause and first rise of sharpeners and bubbles of all denominations, from demagogues and their followers, down to mountebanks and their mobs.

I think that there is not a more foolish figure in the world than a man affectedly wise: But it is not every body that sees it: and such a one is often the admiration of one sort of people, and the jest of another, at the same time. Where we see much of the outside of wisdom, it is a shrewd sign that there is but little within; because they who have the least often make the greatest shew: As the greatest hypocrites are the loudest prayers.

The inside of such a man is not worth knowing; and every man must have observed his outside: His words fall from him with an uncommon weight and solemnity; his gait is stately and slow, and his garb has a turn in it of prudence and gravity, of which he that made it is the author, and by that means becomes a considerable instrument and artificer of wisdom.

This will be better illustrated in the character of Lord Plausible, who having long set up for a wise man, and taking eloquence to be the most effectual sign of wisdom, is an orator and a wise man in every circumstance of his life, and to every body; he is eloquent to his footman, to his children, and at his table. Lord Plausible never converses; no, talking carelessly as other people do, would not be wise enough; he therefore does not converse in company, but makes speeches; he meditates speeches in his closet, and pronounces them where he visits. Even while he drinks tea, or plays at cards, his language is lofty and sounding; and in his gait you see the same sublime as in his words. Add to all this, an unrelenting gravity in his looks, only now and then softened by a studied smile. He never laughs without checking his muscles: mirth would be a blot upon wisdom; the good man only creates mirth in others.

Thus he grows important, without suffering in his character for his natural shallowness and acquired folly, unseen by the bulk of his party, who, being for understanding and breeding pretty much in the lower class, think him an oracle, and believe him deep in the counsels and reverence of great men, who use him civilly and laugh at him.

As a man can hardly be severely just and constant to the ways which he approves, without some degree of austereness, or what the world calls so; it is no wonder if this character, always esteemed and often beloved, becomes mimicked by those who have no pretence to it. But I am at a loss whether it be more provoking or merry, to see creatures setting up for a severity of behaviour, without one grain of justice and honour about them; pretending to wisdom, with great conceit and stupidity; complaisant in every step and degree of corruption, yet preserving a stiffness in their behaviour, as if they were so many rigid Stoicks.

Quid? Si vultu torvo & pede nudo
Exiguæque togæ simulet textore Catonem;
Virtutemque repræsentet moresque Catonis.

There are mimicks of wisdom and virtue in all ages, as well as in that of Horace.

A man may be a lord, or a minister, or a considerable man, without declaring war against gaiety and easiness. But grave fellows, who become grave to gain importance, are by all men of sense disappointed. A wise man may be a merry fellow; and a very silly fellow may be a very grave man. The wisest men of my acquaintance are the merriest men that I know; nor could I ever find what wisdom had to do with an unpleasing and rebuking stateliness, that contradicts it. Mirth, and what these solemn drones call folly, is a piece of wisdom which they want sense to know and practise. Besides, there is a wise way of playing the fool, which wise men know how to practise, without losing their character. But your grave fellows are perhaps afraid of playing the fool, because they would do it too naturally; yet even that would be better than being thus ridiculously wise against nature.

Some men's natural heaviness passes for wisdom, and they are admired for being blockheads. Sometimes forced gravity does the same thing. Nor is it any thing new to place wisdom in grimace; many of the old philosophers did the same, and made their long beards, in particular, an eminent type of it.

Jussit sapientem poscere barbam.

Doubtless, like others who have lived since, they often possessed the sign only. The Schoolmen were reckoned deep and wise men, for talking unintelligibly, and their wisdom was jargon and obscurity.

They that are really wise, need not take much pains to be thought so; and they that do, are not really wise. We cannot live always upon the stretch, either of silence, or of eloquence, or of gaiety: and whoever endeavours it, shews his folly while he seeks renown.

A man of great quality and age, and of great reputation for wisdom, being once surprized by a foreign minister, while he was at play with his little children, was so far from confessing any shame for being thus caught indulging the fancy and fondness of a father, that he told the ambassador, who seemed to have found what he did not expect: "Sir, be in no pain for me; he who is accounted a wise man in the morning, will never be reckoned a fool at night." This is, no doubt, true of a man truly wise. But it is as true, that many men have passed for wise men in the morning, who have been found fools before noon.

Men, affectedly wise, need only be examined to be despised; and we find by experience, that starched gravity creates more jest and laughter amongst men of sense, who are generally frank and pleasant men, than the most remarkable levity and giddiness can do. The reverence therefore paid to such men, if it be real, is constantly the effect of ignorance: We admire them at a distance; but when we see them a little nearer, we begin to admire at our own admiration.

But such examination is never like to be very popular, and consequently such discoveries are not like to be very formidable; the multitude will never make them; there will always be a great deal in resolving to be great and wise, and great success will be ever attending it: *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*, is at all times a safe way of reasoning. And hence drones and coxcombs will, by a false show of wisdom, be always bidding fair for the reputation of wisdom, and often for its rewards. This is more easily shewn, than mended.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 47. SATURDAY, October 7, 1721.

Of the Frailty and Uncertainty of human Judgment. [Gordon] ↩

[II-97]

SIR,

Human judgment is the best and surest guide that we have to follow, in affairs that are human; and even in spirituals, where the immediate word of God interposes not. But it is so liable to be corrupted and weighed down by the biases that passion, delusion, and interest hang upon it, that we ought never to trust, without caution and examination, either to our own or that of others.

Men are hardly ever brought to think themselves deceived in contending for points of interest or pleasure. But as it is rare that one man's pursuits do not cross and interfere with the pursuits of others, and as every man contends for the reasonableness of his own; though it must be in the nature of things, that they may be both in the wrong, and only one can be in the right: Hence it proceeds that men, who are so naturally alike, become morally so unlike, that sometimes there is more resemblance between a man and a wolf, than between one man and another; and that one and the same man is not one and the same man in two different stations.

The difference therefore between one man's judgment and another's, arises not so much from the natural difference between them; though that too, the structure of their organs being different, may beget different sentiments; as from the difference of their education, their situation and views, and other external causes.

Men, who in private life were just, modest, and good, have been observed, upon their elevation into high places, to have left all their virtuous and beneficent qualities behind them, and to have acted afterwards upon a new spirit, of arrogance, injustice, and oppression. And yet, perhaps, their latter actions had as much the sanction of their own judgment as their first.

England could not boast of a greater patriot than the great Earl of Strafford, while he was yet a private commoner. No man exposed better, or more zealously, the encroachments and oppressions practised by the court upon the kingdom, or contended more loudly for a redress of grievances: But he was no sooner got into the court, but he began openly to counter-act the whole course of his past life: He devised new ways of terror and oppression, heightened all those grievances of which he had complained; and, as the excellent Lord Falkland said of him in the House of Commons, the oppressions which he committed were "so various, so many, and so mighty, as were never committed by any governor in any government since Verres left Sicily." But though the two great parts of his life, were thus prodigiously inconsistent, I do not remember that he ever condemned the worst, though he suffered for it, or recanted the best. It is probable, that his judgment in both cases approved his conduct.

Nor is the judgment of men varied by great and considerable causes only; to the disgrace of our reason we must own, that little ones do it as effectually. A wise man ruffled by an accident, or heated by liquor, shall talk and act like a madman or a fool; as a madman, with a little soothing and management, shall talk like a wise man: And there are instances of very able men, who, having done great service to their prince and country, have undone it all from motives that are shameful to mention. Perhaps they missed a smile from him, when they expected one; or met with a satirical jest, when they expected none: and thus, piqued by a little real mirth or fancied neglect, they have run into all the excesses of disloyalty and rebellion, and either ruined their country, or themselves and their families in attempting it.

Others, misled by a gracious nod, or a squeeze by the hand, or a few fair promises no better than either, have, by running all the contrary lengths of complaisance and subserviency, done as much mischief to their country, without intending it any, and perhaps thinking that they did it none. There are examples of the same men practising both these extremes.

So mechanical a thing is human judgment! So easily is the human machine disconcerted and put out of its tone! And the mind subsisting in it, and acting by it, is calm or ruffled as its vehicle is so. But though the various accidents and disorders happening to the body, are the certain causes of disorders and irregular operations in the mind; yet causes that are internal affect it still more; I mean the stimulations of ambition, revenge, lust, and avarice. These are the great causes of the several irregular and vicious pursuits of men.

Neither is it to be expected, that men disagreeing in interest, will ever agree in judgment. Wrong, with advantages attending it, will be turned into right, falsehood into truth; and, as often as reason is against a man, a man will be against reason: And both truth and right, when they thwart the interests and passions of men, will be used like enemies, and called names.

It is remarkable that men, when they differ in any thing considerable, or which they think considerable, will be apt to differ in almost every thing else. Their differences beget contradiction, contradiction begets heat, heat quickly rises into resentment, rage, and ill-will. Thus they differ in affections, as they differ in judgment; and the contention, which began in pride, ends in anger.

The acquiescing sincerely in the judgment of another, without the concurrence of our own, and without any advantage, real or fancied, moving us to such acquiescence, is a compliment which I do not know that one man ever paid to another: An unanswerable argument, why no man should be provoked at those whom he cannot convince; since they, having reasons, or thinking that they have reasons, on the contrary side, as strong as his, or stronger, have as much cause to be provoked with him for not acquiescing in theirs. Yet there are but few debates of consequence in this world, where the arguments are not seconded by wrath, and often supplied by it.

But this is not the way of dealing with men; nor is there any other way of persuading them into your judgment, but by shewing it their interest. Their minds are so corrupted by their appetites, that, generally speaking, their judgment is nothing but their interest in theory; and their interest is their judgment reduced into practice. This will account for the contradictory parts which men play, and the contrary parties that they occasionally choose. This serves them with reasons for the unreasonable things that they do, turns roguery into honesty, madness into merit.

In truth, whenever men leave their own judgment for the judgment of others, as they sometimes do, they either do it for gain, or glory, or pleasure, or for the avoiding of shame, or some such cause; all which motives are interest, as is every thing else that they do for their own sakes. Thus honesty is often only the fear of infamy, and honour the appetite of applause: Thus men rush into danger and death, to gratify love or anger, or to acquire fame: And thus they are faithful to their word and engagement, to avoid the reproach of treachery.

Men are so apt to link their approbation to their profit and pleasure, that their interest, though ever so vile, absurd, and unjustifiable, becomes really their judgment. I do not think that human art and imagination could have invented tenets more false and abominable, more chimerical or mischievous, than are those of the *infallibility of the Pope*, and the *irresistibleness of tyrants*; that is, that one man, living in the hourly practice of error, or vice, or folly, and often of them all, shall judge for the whole earth, and do what God has not done; that is, fashion the minds of all the human race like his own, and make them his sacrifices, where he cannot make them his slaves: And that another man shall have a divine right to

represent God and govern man, by acting against God and destroying man.

These are such monstrous absurdities, such terrible, ridiculous, and inhuman inventions, as could arise from nothing but pride and avarice on one side, and fear and flattery on the other; and could be defended by nothing but the most brutish force, or the most abandoned impudence. Yet we have seen these monstrous absurdities defended, and God Almighty declared their defender; even him, who is the God of mercy and truth, made, blasphemously, the author of cruelty and lies.

In this light do these things appear to one who considers them without embarking in them, and receiving any advantage from them. But those who gain or subsist by them, see them in a different light: I doubt not but their judgment, as they call it, does actually blend with their interest, or for the most part does; and therefore they are really in earnest in maintaining it. Folly, falsehood, and villainy, are no longer called by their own names, nor thought to deserve them, by those that reap advantages from them. Even those, who have practised the greatest of all evils, even that of destroying God's people, have thought that in doing it they did God good service. Our blessed Saviour foretold it; and his words have been fulfilling ever since, and perhaps will be till he return.

Oliver Cromwell fought God in all his Oppressions; and though I am sure that he was an usurper, I am not sure that he was a hypocrite, at least all along; though it is most probable that he was one at first. But he had so long personated a saint, that he seems at last to have thought himself one; and when he saw his latter end approaching, he was so far from shewing any compunction for the part which he had acted, that he, on the contrary, boasted that he had been the cause of much good to this nation; and added such ejaculations and prayers, as shewed that he possessed his mind in peace, and was not without confidence in God.

The emperor of Morocco, than whom a more inhuman butcher never lived, makes God the author of all his barbarities; and when he murders a slave (as he does every day some) out of wantonness or wrath, he lifts up his eyes and says, "Tis God that does it": No man talks more of God and religion, and he certainly thinks himself a most religious man.

Let all this serve to shew, how little men's judgment is to be trusted when interest follows it, and is probably both the cause and the effect. Let it abate our confidence in particular men, who may make our trust in them the means of their misleading us: Let us learn to believe no man the more, for that he believes himself; since men are as obstinate in error, especially in gainful error, as they are in truth; and more so, where truth is not gainful: And lastly, let us swallow no man's judgments, without judging of it and him; and yield up our reason to no man's authority, nor our interest to any man's direction, any farther than prudence or necessity obliges us. Let us remember what the world has ever got by implicit faith of any kind whatsoever.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 48. SATURDAY, October 14, 1721.

The general unhappy State of the World, from the Baseness and Iniquity of its Governors in most Countries. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[II-104]

SIR,

While I have been reading history, or considering the state of human affairs, how woefully they are neglected, how foolishly managed, or how wickedly disconcerted and confounded, in the most and best countries: When I have remembered how large, every where, is the source of mischief, how easily it is set a running, and how plentifully it flows; how it is daily breaking into new channels, and yet none of the old ones are ever suffered to wax dry: I have been apt to wonder, that the general condition of mankind, though already vastly unhappy, is not still worse.

Pope Aeneas Sylvius must have had such reflections as these, when he said, that this world did, in a great measure, govern itself. He had many examples before his eyes, how easy it was to govern wretchedly, and yet continue to govern. The papacy itself might particularly have furnished him with many examples. It is a fairy dominion, founded upon non-entities, inventions, and abominations; supported by lies and terrors; exercised with cruelty, craft, and rapine; and producing meanness, delusion, and poverty, where-ever it prevails.

What could appear more strange, incredible, and shameful, than to see a mean monk, residing in a corner of the world, and ruling and plundering it all; living in crimes, pride and folly, and controlling Christendom by the sounds of humility, holiness, and infallibility; subsisting upon the spoils and industry of nations, and engaging nations in a blind conspiracy against themselves, for the defence of their oppressor; pronouncing the peace of God to mankind, and animating mankind to continual quarrels and slaughters; declaring himself the vicar of Christ, and making unrelenting war against the followers of Christ; and, finally, the father of Christendom, and the destroyer of Christians.

All this villainy and impudence was obvious to common sense, and felt by long experience. But how little do men see, when they are taught to be afraid of their eye-sight! Even the Reformation, one of the greatest blessings that ever befell Europe, has but partially removed this mighty and enormous usurpation. The root of the evil still remains: and men are not yet weary of fighting about words, subtleties, chimeras, and about the shape of their thoughts and imagination; a thing as much out of their own power, as the shape of their limbs, or the motion of the winds: The issue and design of all which is, that their leaders in strife reap the fruits of it, and gather the spoils, the whole spoils of those battles, in which craft only blows the trumpet, while ignorance wields the sword, and runs all the danger.

If in this, as in other wars, none would fight but those that are paid, or find their account in fighting, the combatants would soon be reduced to a few; and they too would quickly leave a field where there was no booty.

Will the world never learn, that one man's corn grows not the worse, because another man uses different words in his devotion? That pride and anger, wealth and power, are of no religion? And that religion is inseparable from charity and peace?

I am told, that the famous combustion raised some years ago at Hamburg, by one Krumbultz, a divine, and in which that free city had like to have perished, was occasioned by this momentous question, namely, whether in the Lord's Prayer we should say, *Our Father*, or, *Father, our*. A hopeful point of debate, to be the cause of civil dissension, and a true specimen of the importance and consequences of ecclesiastical disputes, and of the spirit of those that manage them!

It is a shameful satire upon the wickedness of some, and the weakness of others, thus to endanger the peace of society and their own, for the sake of a sound; to be thus eager for trifles; thus to concern heaven and earth in behalf of conceits, which of themselves concern neither: but, as they are generally managed, do both provoke God, and hurt men. But so it will ever be, as long as men, in possession of reverence, find their ends and gratifications in fetching knotty distinctions out of the plain word of God and making them of equal importance with it.

Thus unhappy has the greatest part of the world been, and is, in its ghostly government; two words which are a contradiction to each other; since the mind and understanding, in which alone all religion that is rational doth reside, can never be altered or controlled by any other means than that of counsel, reasoning, and exhortation; which method is utterly inconsistent with force and positive authority, as the same are implied in the idea of government.

Nor can I say, that mankind have been more happy in their civil lot, and in the administration of their temporal affairs; which are almost every where in a wretched situation, and they themselves under the iron hand of the oppressor. The whole terraqueous globe cannot shew five free kingdoms; nor perhaps half so many kings, who make the ease and prosperity of their people their care.

In enslaved countries (that is, in all countries, except our own, and a very few more) the good of the governed is so far from entering into the hearts and counsels of the governors, that it is opposite to the genius of their politicks, either to do them good, or to suffer them to acquire it for themselves. Their happiness and security, which are the very ends of magistracy, would be terrible to their magistrates; who, being the publick enemies of their country, are forced, for their own safety, to leave their people none.

How vile is that government, and those governors, whose only strength lies in whips and chains; a sort of instrument of servitude, which it would much better become the baseness of these men's natures to wear themselves, than to inflict upon others! A prince of slaves is a slave; he is only the biggest and the worst; just as the chief of the banditti is one of them. Such a prince is but a national executioner, and for a scepter he carries a bloody knife.

Such, for the most part, by far the most part, are the governors of the world: They derive their whole greatness, plenty, splendor, and security, from the misery, poverty, peril, and destruction of the governed. Whoever makes just, equal, and impartial laws, does, by doing so, but declare to the people, *Be wicked at your peril*: But he who rules them by terrors and standing armies, does, in effect, tell them in a terrible tone, *Be happy if you dare*.

Who, that has human compassion, can help feeling the sorrows of his wretched race, and behold, unconcerned, the forlorn and abject state of mankind? Monks deceiving, alarming, and sponging them; their governors taxing, mulcting, and squeezing them! Soldiers harrassing, oppressing, and butchering them! And, in short, all the bitter evils and crying miseries in human power to inflict, deliberately and daily inflicted upon them! Nor do things mend; on the contrary, the mischiefs and misfortunes of the world grow hourly greater, and its inhabitants thinner.

All these black considerations would lead a man, who had no other spirit or guide but that of nature, to think that providence, tempted by the sins of men, had long ago renounced them, or signed a decree of vengeance against them, which has ever since been dreadfully executed, and continues to be.

If one was to consider mankind in theory only, his own species would make no small figure in his imagination; he would see them formed by a divine hand, and according to a divine model; possessed of all the advantages of strength and contrivance, guided by reason, made wise by observation, and cautious by their own foresight and the experience of others; directed by laws and human constitutions; rendered discerning by the frequent trials of good and evil, and many of them enlightened by divine revelation: He would see them lords of the creation, arbiters of their own condition and felicity, invested with the use and property of sea and land, and with dominion over every other creature.

Thus mankind appear in speculation, powerful, wise, just, equal, and happy. But viewed in another light, they make another appearance. They use one another worse than they do the beasts of the field; and, by the wretched and monstrous oeconomy and government, almost every where found amongst them, they would seem not to have more understanding, as they have certainly less happiness. The beasts no where appoint or suffer one of their own herd to monopolize the whole soil, to engross every advantage to himself, to deprive them of all, to kill and destroy, to disperse and to starve them at his pleasure. Every one of them equally enjoys the shelter and pasture, the air and the water, which nature makes common to them all.

But men, their masters, cannot boast such security and justice: they generally live at the mere mercy of one, one of themselves, whose views suffer him to have no mercy. He is often a madman, often an idiot, often a destroyer; and the whole art of his government consisting in oppressing and terrifying, no other talent is required but a merciless spirit and brutal force.

Such is an arbitrary prince, and the descendants of Adam know few others. Sometimes a creature is seen to start into imperial power, whom the world never knew before, or knew only for his infamy: Taken out of the stews or out of a dungeon, into a throne; and without knowing how to rule himself, he rules an empire; living a recluse, and seen by nobody, he governs all but the women or parasites, who govern him: Millions of men, and their properties, are at the sole discretion of one who has none; and a creature void of humanity disposes wantonly of a great part of human kind.

This is the dismal state of all Asia and of all Africa, except a few free towns. The spirit of their monarchs, which is generally alike, may be seen in a story (among many others) which Knox tells us of the King of Ceylon, who, being in danger of drowning, was saved by the officious affection or ambition of one of his slaves, who leaped into the water, and ventured his own life to preserve his master's. This, one would think, was the greatest and most heroick kindness that one man could do another. But mark how the monarch requites it! why, the first thing he did after he came to himself, was to order the belly of his preserver to be ripped up, for daring to touch the person of his sacred Majesty.

Nature has prepared many advantages and pleasures for the use of mankind, given them taste to enjoy them, and sagacity to improve them: But their governors, almost universally, frustrate the kind purposes of nature, render her beneficence abortive, and mar all human happiness. They have successfully studied the arts of misery, and propagated the practice.

It is a melancholy reflection, that when human affairs are put into a bad way, where they do not speedily recover, they never recover, or rarely ever. One great reason is, that power is always on the worst side, either promoting mischief, or preventing its removal; and the champions of dishonesty and oppression are more artful and better paid than the patrons of justice and innocence.

It has hitherto been the good fortune of England (and I hope always will be) when attempts have been made upon its liberty, to recover it before it was gone, at least before the sense of it was gone. And therefore it still subsists in spite of all the powerful, popular, and sanctified attacks that have been made, and frequently made, upon it. Let us make much of it; while it remains, it will make us amends for all the losses and miscarriages which we have fallen under, or may fall under, and will enable us to get the better of them. It is the root of our felicity, and all our civil advantages grow from it. By it we exceed almost all other nations, many more degrees than some of them exceed us in sun and soil: We are men, and they are slaves. Only government founded upon liberty, is a publick blessing; without liberty, it is a publick curse, and a publick warrant for depredation and slaughter.

Let us therefore remember the mighty difference between ourselves and other nations, and the glorious cause of it, and always dearly cherish it. We are not the prey of monks, or janizaries, or dragoons, nor the blind slaves of unaccountable will and pleasure. Our lives and properties are secured by the best bulwark in the world, that of laws made by ourselves, and executed by our magistrates, who are likewise made by us; and when they are dishonestly executed, or wilfully neglected, our constitution affords a remedy, a tried and a practicable remedy. And as no nation ever lost its liberty but by the force of foreign invaders, or the domestick treachery of its own magistrates; we have the sea and a great navy for our defenders against the former; and exorbitancies of the other are prevented or restrained by an excellent counterpoise, in the frame of our legislature.

That we may be for ever able to boast of all these blessings, these glorious and uncommon blessings, is the cordial wish and passionate prayer of

G

Yours, &c.

No. 49. SATURDAY, October 21, 1721.

Of the Power of Prejudice. [Gordon] ↩

[II-112]

SIR,

Men boast of their reason, and might justly, if they used it freely, and applied it properly; but considering that generally in their moral conduct they are guided by such reasons as are a shame and a contradiction to reason, it seems to be thrown away upon them: Indeed so little, or so wrong, is the use which they make of it, that it would be really [better] for their reputation if they had none.

But though the many scarce use it all, and none so much as they ought; yet every man thinks he does, and never wants something which he calls reason, for the justification of his folly or wickedness. Prejudice or passion steps into its room, takes its name; and, under the appearance of reason, does things which reason abhors. And thus reason, as well as religion, is forced to furnish its enemies with arms against itself; and the abuse of it is worse and more dangerous than the absolute want of it; as an idiot is less terrible and less odious than a knave, and as a harmless pagan is a much more amiable character than an outrageous persecuting bigot. So that as no religion at all is better than a mischievous religion; that is to say, any religion that prompts men to hurt one another; so the absence or inactivity of the faculties is better than the quickness of faculties wickedly applied.

Of all the many false lights that mislead men from their reason, prejudice is one of the foremost and most successful; and though no two things upon earth are more opposite in their natures, or more destructive of each other, than reason and prejudice are; yet they are often made to pass for each other: And as some men will give you very good reasons for their being in the wrong themselves, there are those too, who will give you as good, why others should not be in the right; that is, the prejudices of some would be thought wisdom, and the wisdom of others is miscalled prejudice. The worst things that men do, called by a good name, pass for the best; and the best, blackened by an ill name, pass for the worst. Such is the force of prejudice in the world, and so successfully does this foe to reason ape reason!

Prejudice is an obstinate and unreasonable attachment to an opinion, supported only by a wilfulness to maintain it, whether regarding men or things: It links the good with the bad, the bad with the good, and hates or loves by the lump. Thus if a man be called a saint, his worst actions are sainted with him; his very ignorance and cruelty, and even his dirtiness and his dreams, are made sacred and meritorious; as may be seen at large in the Romish legends, where the principal qualification for saintship seems to have consisted in stark raving madness, and in an implacable and bloody fury towards all sense and sobriety. And thus, even with us, if a man passes for a good man, his bad deeds are often thought good ones, by those that think him so, and only because they think him so.

On the other side, if a man be called an atheist, the odium of that name, where it is believed true, is made a blot upon his best actions and greatest virtues, and to defeat them as well as soil them. That there are such men as atheists, can only be imagined by those, who, doubting of a deity themselves, may naturally enough suppose that there are others who quite disbelieve one: For my own particular, I cannot think that there are any such men; but if there were, I cannot think that truth and sobriety in an atheist are worse than in another man. That black is not white, and that two and two make four, 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; and even in the business of bearing testimony, or making a report, in which cases the credit and 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.

So that as no man is to be believed an atheist, unless he is evidently proved one; which, where he himself denies it, can be done by God only: So 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. As it is therefore the blackest and most barbarous villainy to charge any man with atheism, who is no atheist; it is the greatest folly to think that any man's crimes are the less for the name of him that commits them; or that truth is less or more truth, for the ill or good name of him that speaks it.

Prejudice has long taught men, contrary to all reason, to think otherwise; and to consider, not what was done or said, but who were the men that said or did it. A happy expedient, I must own, to acquire dominion, and to exercise it, and to keep, for that end; mankind ignorant and base, as their teachers and governors too generally keep them! And therefore, in most parts of the world, truth is a capital crime; and the Pope and Mahomet, the Alcoran and the mass-book, and the like sounds, with a competent assistance of fire and sword, are sufficient to convince and govern all true Catholicks and Mussulmen.

But we live in a land of liberty; and have, I hope, well-nigh wiped off the scandal of being led or animated by noise or names, as were many of our forefathers; whose reason, being in other men's keeping, was generally turned upon them, and co-operated with other causes towards keeping them in bondage. They were decoyed or frightened into folly and chains; some saw not their condition, others wanted courage or power to mend it. But with liberty light has sprung in, and we have got rid of the terror and delusion occasioned by solemn and ill sounding names; a sort of bugbears that frighten only in the dark: We have learned, that we are as fit to use our own understandings, as they are whose understandings are no better than ours; and that there is no merit in sounds, nor in those actions which a wicked man may practise as well as a good man, without departing from his character.

True learning and prejudices cannot subsist together; and therefore, though in societies of pedants, little else is to be found but prejudices, bitterness, ignorance, and ill-breeding; I am amazed to hear, that in societies of gentlemen, formed for the promoting of knowledge, and liberty of enquiry, a province utterly inconsistent with the narrow spirit of prejudice, there are yet found instances of the greatest. I hope, however, that it is not true, what I am told, that the Royal Society refused admitting Mr. Whiston' and another ingenious gentleman as members, because the one was an Arian, and the other a Black. Who would imagine, that natural complexion, or religious opinions, could any way affect the discovery of fossils and cockleshells, or the improvement of mustard and pickles? But I dare say, that this is only a story raised, to bring that learned body into ridicule and contempt: If it were true, it would justify the jest made upon them by a gentleman, who, being asked by some of them, whether he had a mind to be a member? told them, "No, gentlemen, 'tis impossible; you see I have a mole on my upper lip, and I am subject to talk in my sleep."

It is scarce credible, but that we see it, how violently and shamefully prejudice flies in the face of reason, and often gets the better of it, in instances too where reason seems to be strongest and most obvious. I shall mention a remarkable one.

Alexander and Caesar are never mentioned but with applause, or thought of but as amiable characters, and the true patterns of princes and heroes, though it is certain that there never lived more wicked men; they turned the world upside down, and usurped its power; they paved their way to dominion with dead bodies, and were the oppressors and butchers of [the] human race. Here is fact, plain undeniable fact, against prejudice and opinion.

Oliver Cromwell, on the contrary, is scarce ever mentioned but with detestation, or thought of but as a monster; though it is as certain that he never did the hundredth part of the mischief that was done by either of the other two. He had at least as good a right to Great Britain as they had to the globe, and ruled it with more equity and less blood. He was, doubtless, an usurper, but a little one; and though wicked enough, really an innocent man compared to them. Nor was he at all below them in parts and courage. What therefore is the cause of this mighty and unjust difference, where the lesser wickedness is most magnified, and least excused; and where the blackest criminals and the highest usurpers are admired and extolled?

There is yet one effect of prejudice more impious than all the rest; I mean, the daring presumption of those men who wantonly apply the judgments of God to others, and of calling those things judgments which are not so. Probably nothing ever yet happened to one man, but has happened to another, and a different man: The wicked live in as much prosperity, and die with as few agonies, as do the righteous; who, I think, are allowed to be here below much the more unhappy of the two. Who has told us, what God can only tell, that misfortunes are judgments, or that death is one? That death which is common to all men? And as to the different and disastrous manners of dying; have not fire and sword, famine and pestilence, poison and torture, wild beasts and accidents, destroyed as many good men as evil men?

How foolish and insolent are we! When we are angry, unreasonably angry with one another, we presumptuously think that God, the good and all-wise God, is so too; by which we profanely suggest, that he is a being as weak, ridiculous, and passionate as ourselves. Whereas that often pleases God, which is hated by man; and that which is really a blessing, is often thought a curse: and therefore some wickedly think the judgment of God due to others for things that entitle them rather to God's favour. So wickedly do men differ in their sentiments and affections!

They who call the misfortunes of others judgments upon them, plainly enough own, though not in words, that they wish for judgments upon others, or are glad when they happen. What can we say of such an anti-Christian spirit as this?

When the heathens were uppermost, they charged the Christians with being the cause of all the evils and misfortunes that befell the Roman empire, such as inundations, plagues, earthquakes, and the like; and one of the fathers writ a book, to prove, that all those things had been from the beginning; and whoever makes the like charge now against any man, or body of men, may be silenced, if he has modesty, sense, or shame, in him, by the same answer.

G.

I am, &c.

No. 50. SATURDAY, October 28, 1721.

An Idea of the Turkish Government, taken from Sir Paul Ricaut. [Gordon] ↩

[II-120]

SIR,

Sir Paul Ricaut's *State of the Ottoman Empire*, is what I have quoted before in these letters: It is written with fidelity and judgment, and gives us a good idea of that horrible and destroying government; a government fierce and inhuman, founded in blood, supported by barbarity; and a government that has a declared enmity to all that is good and lovely in the eyes of mankind.

I have therefore transcribed the following passage from him, to shew my countrymen the abject, the deplorable condition of that people, and the brutish and destructive genius of their government, and I do it with a benevolent view, to make them more and more in love with their own, and passionate for its preservation.

No man's authority is, or ought to be, of any weight for or against truth, when every man sees it, or may see it: but since weak men, and they that are worse, make a difficulty of crediting the reasonings and relations of any men about any thing, unless they know and approve his opinions in every thing; I think it not amiss to acquaint my readers, that Sir Paul was a sincere monarchy-man, and an unquestionable friend to our civil and religious establishment; but having long seen the dismal terrors and desolations of absolute monarchy, he could not help observing the infinite distance between that and a limited one; as may be seen in the following quotation.

For my own particular, I think it contrary to common sense to concern myself with the character of a writer, in those writings which do not concern his character: And therefore in matters of reason or fact, Cicero is as much regarded by me as Dr. Tillotson; and I credit Livy and much as I do Dr. Prideaux. For this reason, in reading authors, Christian or heathen, monarchical or republican, I do not consider their system, but their sense; which I shall therefore, as often as I see necessary, give in their own words, where I cannot mend them: And as often as they speak my thoughts as well, or better than I could speak them myself, I shall not scruple being beholden to them.

G.

I am, &c.

“He that is an eye-witness and strict observer of the various changes and chances in the greatness, honours, and riches of the Turks, hath a lively emblem before him of the unconstancy and mutability of human affairs. Fortune so strangely sports with this people, that a comedy or a tragedy on the stage, with all its scenes, is scarce sooner opened or ended, than the fate of divers great men, who in the day-time being exhaled into high sublimity by the powerful rays of the Sultan's favour, fall or vanish in the night, like a meteor. The reason hereof, if duly considered, may be of great use as things stand here; that is, the power of the Grand Seignior; for in this constitution, the benefit of the emperor is consulted before the welfare of the people.

* * *

“And this course does not only evidence the power of the Grand Seignior; but likewise increases it: For none are advanced in these times to office, but pay the Grand Seignior vast sums of money for it, according to the riches and expectations of profit from the charge. Some pay, as the bashaws of Grand Cairo and Babylon, three or four hundred thousand dollars upon passing the commission; others one, others two hundred thousand; some fifty thousand, as their places are more or less considerable; and the money is most commonly taken up at interest at 40 or 50 per cent for the year, and sometimes at double, when they are constrained to become debtors to the covetous eunuchs of the seraglio. So that every one, at his first entrance into office, looks upon himself (as indeed he is) greatly indebted, and obliged, by justice or injustice, right or wrong, speedily to disburden himself of the debts, and improve his own principal in the world; and this design must not be long in performance, lest the hasty edict overtake him before the work is done, and call him to an account for the improvement of his talent.

“Taking then all circumstances together, the covetous disposition of a Turk, the cruelty and narrowness of soul in those men commonly that are born and educated in want; think what oppression, what rapine and violence must be exercised, to satisfy the appetite of these men, who come famished with immense desires and strange considerations to satisfy!

Diu sordidus, repente dives mutationem fortunae male [tegebat], accensis
egestate longa cupidinibus immoderatus. Tacit.

“So that justice in its common course is set to sale; and it is very rare, when any law-suit is in hand, but bargains are made for the sentence; and he hath most right, who hath most money to make him *rectus in curia*, and advance his cause; and it is the common course for both parties at difference, before they appear together in presence of the judge, to apply themselves singly to him, and try whose donative and present hath the most in it of temptation; and it is no wonder if corrupt men exercise this kind of trafficking with justice, for having before bought the office, of consequence they must sell the fruit.

“Add hereunto a strange kind of facility in the Turks, for a trifle or small hire, to give false witness in any case, especially (and that with a word) when the controversy happens between a Christian and a Turk; and then the pretence is for the Mussulmanleek, as they call it; the cause is religious, and hallows all falseness and forgery in the testimony.

“This consideration and practice made an English ambassador, upon renewing the Capitulations, to insert an article of caution against the testimony of Turks, as never to be admitted or pleaded in any court of Turkish justice, against the English interest.

“In the times of the best emperors, when virtue and deserts were considered, and the empire flourished and increased, men had offices conferred upon them for their merits, and good services were rewarded freely and with bounty, without sums of money and payments. But now it is quite contrary, and all matters run out of course; a manifest token, in my opinion, of the declension and decay of the empire! However, this serves in part the great end of the empire; for bashaws and great men, having a kind of necessity upon them to oppress their subjects, the people thereby lose their courage; and by continual taxes and seizures upon what they gain, poverty subdues their spirits, and makes them more patiently suffer all kind of injustice and violence that can be offered them, without thoughts or motion to rebellion: And so the Lord Verulam says in his *Essays*, that it is impossible for a people overladen with taxes ever to become martial or valiant; for no nation can be the lion's whelp, and the ass between two burdens.

“By this means the Turk preserves so many different sorts of people, as he hath conquered, in due obedience, using no other help than a severe hand, joined to all kind of oppression: But such as are Turks, and bear any name of office or degree in the service of the empire, feel but part of this oppression, and live with all freedom, having their spirits raised by a licence they attain to insult over others that dare not resist them.

“But the issue and conclusion of the spoils that these great men make on subjects is very remarkable: For, as if God were pleased to evidence his just punishment more evidently and plainly here than in other sins, scarce any of all these bashaws that have made haste to be rich, have escaped the Grand Seignior's hands; but he either wholly divests them of all, or will share the best part of the prey with them. Amongst whom I have observed none passes so hardly as the bashaws of Grand Cairo, because it is the richest and most powerful of all the governments of this empire; and so, either in his journey home, or after his return, he loses his life by publick command, or at least is rifled of his goods as ill got, which are condemned to the Grand Seignior's treasury: And it is strange yet to see with what heat these men labour to amass riches, which they know by often experiences have proved but collections for their master; and only the odium and curses which the oppressed wretches have vented against their rapine; remain to themselves.

Rebus secundis avidi, adversis autem incauti. Tacit.

* * *

“The Turk understands well how profitable it is for the constitution of this estate, to use evil instruments, who may oppress and poll his people, intending afterwards for himself the whole harvest of their labours; they remaining with their hatred, while the prince, under colour of performing justice, procures both riches and fame together.

“If it be suspected that any great man intends to make combustion or mutiny in his government, or that his wealth or natural abilities render him formidable, without further inquisition or scrutiny, all discontent of the Grand Seignior is dissembled, and perhaps a horse, or sword, or sable vest, is reported to be presented, and all fair treatment is counterfeited, till the executioner gets the bow-string about his neck, and then they care not how rudely they deal with him: Just like the birds in Plutarch, that beat the cuckoo, for fear that in time he should become a hawk.

“And to make more room for the multitude of officers that crowd for preferments, and to act the cruel edicts of the empire with the least noise; oftentimes when a great personage is removed from his place of trust, and sent with a new commission to the charge, perhaps, of a greater government; and though he depart from the regal seat with all fair demonstrations of favour, yet before he hath advanced three days in his journey, triumphing in the multitude of his servants and his late hopes, the fatal command overtakes him, and, without any accusation or cause, other than the will of the Sultan, he is barbarously put to death, and his body thrown into the dirt of a foreign and unknown country, without solemnity of funeral or monument; and he is no sooner in his grave, than his memory is forgotten.

“Hence are apparent the causes of the decay of arts amongst the Turks; and of the neglect and want of care in manuring and cultivating their lands; why their houses and private buildings are made slight, and not durable for more than ten or twenty years; why you find there no delightful orchards, and pleasant gardens and plantations; and why, in those countries where nature hath contributed so much on her part, there are no additional labours of art to complete all, and turn it into a paradise: For men, knowing no certain heir, nor who shall succeed them in their labours, contrive only for a few years' enjoyment. And moreover, men are afraid of shewing too much ostentation or magnificence in their palaces, or ingenuity

in the pleasures of their gardens, lest they should bring on them the same fate that Naboth's vineyard occasioned to its master. And therefore men neglect all applications to the studies of arts and sciences, but only such as are necessary to the mere course of living: For the fear and crime of being known to be rich, makes them appear outwardly poor; and so become naturally Stoicks and philosophers in all the points of a reserved and cautious life.

“And here I am at a stand, and cannot conclude, without contemplating a while, and pleasing myself with the thoughts of the blessedness, the happiness, the liberty of my own country; where men, under the protection and safe influence of a gracious and the best prince in the world [He might with more propriety have said, *the best constitution in the world*], enjoy and eat of the fruit of their own labour; and purchase to themselves, with security, fields and manors, and dare acknowledge and glory in their wealth and pomp, and yet leave the inheritance to their posterity.”

No. 51. SATURDAY, November 4, 1721.

Popularity no Proof of Merit. [Gordon] ↩

[II-128]

SIR,

Popularity is the fondness and applause of many, following the person of one, who, in their opinion, deserves well of them; and it must doubtless be a sensible pleasure to him who enjoys it, if he enjoy it upon good terms, and from reputable causes: But where it is only to be acquired by deceiving men with words, or intoxicating them with liquors, or purchasing their hearts with bribes, a virtuous man would rather be without it; and therefore virtuous men have been rarely popular, except in the beginning, or near the first rise of states, while they yet preserved their innocence.

Where parties prevail, a principal way to gain popularity is, to act foolishly for one side, and wickedly against the other: And therefore some publick talkers have grown popular, by calling those whom they disliked by bitter and ill-bred names; or by rioting and making a noise for some sounds, which they had taken a liking to; or by insulting and abusing those that affronted them, by being more sober and sensible than themselves: And some, to be revenged on those that never hurt them, have given themselves up a blind prey to certain leaders, who deluded them, and sold them, and yet earned popular applause of them for so serving them.

So that popularity is often but the price which the people pay to their chiefs, for deceiving and selling them: And this price is so implicitly paid, that the very vices and fooleries of a popular chief become popular too, and were perhaps amongst the first causes that made him so. Some gentlemen of this cast owe their figure to the weakness of their heads, or the strength of their barrels; and grow considerable by their having small parts, or by drinking away those that they have.

These are the instruments that cunning men work with; and therefore sometimes a knave, who is not popular, shall get a weak man, who is so, to do those things with applause, for which he himself would be hated and condemned: And the hand that executes shall be blessed, when the head that contrives would be cursed, for one and the same thing.

This shews that names are principal reasons to determine the multitude to popular love and hatred; and it proceeds not so much from their being untaught as ill taught: When they are instructed not to reason but to rage, not to judge but to mistake, a better discernment and wiser behaviour are not to be hoped from them.

Demetrius, and the other craftsmen, shrine-makers to Diana, at Ephesus, were more popular men than St. Paul, and raised a mob to confute his arguments for Christianity: For it had not yet entered into the heads of the people, that religion and rage were contradictory things, and that antiquity and reverence could not sanctify impiety, falsehood, and folly.

In like manner, Barabbas, a rioter and a murderer, had more votes to save him than our blessed Saviour had; who was thought by that zealous, deluded, and outrageous people, to be the greater criminal of the two, for having told them sober, and saving truth, which was new to them, though everlasting in itself; and therefore condemned because it was new.

Now, in neither of these instances were the people, though they acted thus impiously and madly, originally in the fault; but those who taught them; and who, having for religion taught them trifles, folly, and fury, were alarmed by the rational and prevailing doctrines of mercy, wisdom, and truth. They therefore blaspheme against the author of truth, yet charge him with blasphemy. As to the populace, they did as they were taught, and uttered the cry which was put into their mouths.

The people, when they are left to themselves, and their own understandings and observation, will judge of men by their good or bad actions, and are capable of separating vice from virtue, and the just from the unjust: And therefore, when their government is not corrupted, the best and most virtuous men will always be the most popular, and he who does best will be esteemed best: But when strong liquor, or money, or false terrors intervene, and government is turned into faction; the judgment of the people is vitiated, and worse than none. They then prefer the worst men to the best, if they have stronger drink, or more money, or are covered with any other false merit, by those whose word they take, and whose authority they submit to; and the most popular man is he who bribes highest, or imposes upon them best.

That these things are common, and almost universal, is not strange: Generally speaking, where-ever there is power, there will be faction; and where-ever there is money, there will be corruption: So that the heads of faction, and the promoters of corruption, have from their very characters, which ought to render them detestable, the means of popularity.

Who was better beloved at Rome than Spurius Melius, while he was meditating the slavery of the Roman people? Who could ever boast such potent parties, such numerous followers, such high applause and regard, such trophies and statues, as Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, Augustus and Anthony could boast; while they were overturning the state, oppressing mankind, butchering one half of the world, and putting shackles upon the other? And, in fine, who was ever a greater impostor, and more admired prophet, than Mahomet was? All these men were enemies to liberty, truth, and peace; the plagues and scourges of the earth: But they deceived and destroyed their people with their own consent, and by the highest wickedness gained the highest popularity.

The two Dukes of Guise, Francis and Henry, father and son, were the two most popular men that ever France saw, and grew so by doing it more mischief than ever two men till then had done. They were perpetually, during a course of many years, destroying its peace, violating its laws, usurping its authority, pushing at the crown, raising and carrying on rebellions, committing massacres, and filling it with blood and desolation: They had no one publick end, and did no one publick thing, but what was pernicious to France; yet France adored them.

Whoever is the author of a civil war, is author of all its cruel consequences; plunders, devastations, burnings, rapes, slaughters, oppression and famine. A frightful catalogue of crimes to line at one man's door! yet both these dukes had them all to answer for over and over, yet were vastly beloved. Even when they were dead, they continued the authors of long publick miseries, by leaving their destructive schemes and their party behind them; a fierce, lawless, and powerful party, that maintained the civil war long after them; and having destroyed Henry III was like to prove too hard even for the great Henry IV nor did he overcome it but by infinite courage, industry, and patience, and the renouncing of his religion: Nay, at last, his murder was owing to the spirit of the League, first concerted, and afterwards constantly headed and animated, by these two dukes successively.

Had ever any country two greater foes? yet were ever two men greater darlings of any country? For Henry, Duke of Guise, particularly, he had so much the hearts of the people, that their passion for him ran not only to dotage, but idolatry; and they blasphemed God, to do the duke honour: They worshipped his image; they invoked him in their prayers; they touched religiously the hem of his garment, and with the same spirit and design rubbed their beads upon his clothes; nay, following him in multitudes as he passed their streets, saluted him with hosannas to the son of David.

Thus they treated and adored this idol; a lewd man, a public incendiary and destroyer, but represented to them as their saviour. He had for the ends of ambition put himself at the head of the Catholick cause; the surest warrant in the world for mischief and homage!

Our good fortune, or our better constitution, has hitherto restrained us against our will from running into all these excesses of distraction and folly. But we have had our popular idols too; wretched idols, who could not furnish us from their parts or reputation with one reason for our stupidity in admiring them. Sometimes paltry and turbulent priests, destitute of all virtue and good-breeding, weak and immoral patricians, or loud and ignorant plebeians, have run away with our reverence, without being able to merit our esteem; without religion they have been popular in the cause of religion, and contended popularly for loyalty by faction and rebellion.

To every reader, instances of this nature will occur within his own memory and observation. To name them with the other great names above-mentioned, would be an honour too mighty for them, who were but small wicked men, though greatly popular.

I have often remembered, with compassion, an unfortunate great man still living, but utterly ruined by his popularity and false friends. His good-nature has been often mentioned, and is grown almost proverbial: Nor do I deny it; though by it he never served himself, his family, or the publick. On the contrary, it has proved his failing and his crime. If one were to enquire for the causes of his popularity in the probity of his life, the piety of his mind, his publick abilities, private oeconomy, or conjugal or domestick virtues, these are topicks upon which his friends do not extol him: And for his loyalty, take loyalty in what sense you will, he will be found to have given preposterous proofs of it, and to have been engaged in all the depths of rebellion and perjury, and is still engaged.

From what has been said, it will not seem strange that some of the most popular men in the world have been the most mischievous in their behaviour and opinions. What fighting and burning has there been for transubstantiation! what declaiming, damning, and rebelling, for passive obedience! what fierce contention, and how many foolish arguments for persecution! All which opinions are a contradiction to religion and scripture, an affront to common-sense, and utterly destructive of all civil and religious liberty, and of all human happiness: Nor would any of them, or any like them, have ever entered into the heart of any man, unless he were first deceived, or found his account in deceiving. But even crimes, contradictions, and folly, will be popular in a state, when they bring gain or selfish gratifications to those who are in possession of a power to render folly, contradiction, and crimes, advantageous to the pernicious pursuits which they are engaged in.

G

I am, &c.

No. 52. SATURDAY, November II, 1721.

Of Divine Judgments; the Wickedness and Absurdity of applying them to Men and Events.
[Gordon] ↩

[II-135]

SIR,

I have in a former letter to you, not long since, shewn the rashness of men in applying to one another the judgments of God. I shall in this consider that subject farther, and endeavour to cure that prevailing and uncharitable spirit.

Almost all sorts of men pretend, in some instances, to be in the secrets of the Almighty, and will be finding out the unsearchable purposes of his providence; they will be prying into the hidden things of God, and assigning such ends and motives for his all-wise dispensations, as are only suitable to their own weakness, or prejudices, or malice: They give him the same passions that they themselves possess, and then make him love and hate what and whom they themselves love and hate: They are pleased with flattery and sounds, and provoked by trifles and names; and so they think is he. And as they thus sanctify all their own doings, affections, and fancies, with a fiat and approbation from heaven, and belie and provoke God, to make him their friend; so they take it for granted that he is an enemy to all their enemies; and that therefore every evil, or seeming evil, that befalls their enemies, or those whom they dislike, is a manifest judgment from God, and a justification of whatever they can do against them: So that God is often made the author of every mischief which they themselves commit; but they that feel it, think more rationally that they are animated by a contrary spirit.

God made man after his own likeness, perfect, amiable, merciful, and upright; and men are bold and foolish enough to make God after theirs; and almost every one has his own God, one fashioned according to his own temper, imaginations, and prejudices. In this sense they worship as many false gods, as they have wrong notions of the true one; and so in some sort polytheism does yet remain even in the Christian world. They only agree in calling what they worship by the same name; but they conceive him in such a different manner, they differ so widely about his nature and will, and either give him such contradictory attributes, or so contradict one another in explaining these attributes, that it is plain they do not mean one and the same being. Some make God hate what he certainly loves, others make him love what he certainly hates; and all take it amiss if you think that they own and adore any God but the true God. But let them think what they will, many of them still worship the old gods of the heathens, gods that were delighted with baubles, shew, and grimace, and with cruelty, revenge, and human sacrifices.

From this mistaken and impious spirit it proceeds, that when calamities and disasters befall others, especially those that differ from us, we call them judgments, and say that the hand of God is against them: But when the same evils or worse befall ourselves, the style is changed, and then *whom God loveth he chasteneth*; or if we own them to be judgments, yet still they are judgments upon us for other people's sins.

Thus all the misfortunes that happened to Spain for many hundred years, whether they came from the enemy, or the elements, were divine judgments upon them for suffering the idolatrous Moors to inhabit that good Catholick country; and therefore, like true Catholicks, they brought the greatest judgment of all upon it, by destroying and banishing that numerous and industrious people. Thus the bigotted pagans, when Alarick, king of the Huns, sacked Rome, charged the Christians with being the cause of that and of every other calamity that

befell the empire: The Christians despised their gods, and therefore their gods, out of a particular spite to the Christians, afflicted the whole world with miseries; and so plagues, wars, hurricanes, and earthquakes, which were evils that had been in the world from the beginning of it, and will be to the end, were, notwithstanding, all so many judgments, occasioned by the poor Christians! Hence the beginning of penalties, severities, and persecutions against them; and thus the Christians came in time to return the charge upon the heathens, to use the same way of reasoning, and to make the like reprisals, and with as little equity, truth, or clemency: And thus, lastly, all parties in religion have ever dealt with one another.

We are commanded *not to judge, lest we be judged*; and we are told that *vengeance is the Lord's*, and that judgments are in his hand: All which are to convince us, that we have no certain or probable rule to apply God's judgments by; and that the surest rule is the rule of charity, *which wisheth all things, hopeth all things*. The good and evil that happen to man in this world, are no sure marks of the approbation and displeasure of Almighty God, who makes his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the just and the unjust: Good-fortune and calamities are the portion of the good and of the bad; and if there be any inequality, the wicked seem to have the advantage. The world had more people and temporal prosperity in the times of heathenism, than since its abolishment; Mahometanism possesses much more of the globe than Christianity possesses; the papists are more numerous than the Protestants are, and have greater and better countries. The apostles and saints were the poorest men in the world, and debauched men are often uppermost, and thrive best; and as the righteous are at least as subject to distempers and affliction while they live, as the wicked are, so the wicked die with as little pain and as few pangs as the righteous die.

That there is a providence, and a gracious providence presiding over the world, is manifest and undeniable; but how it works, and from what particular motives, in a thousand instances, none but the author of it can tell; though almost all pretend to tell, and are for ever diving into the secret counsels of the most high, with as much temerity as ill success.

To the discredit of this practice, it is observable, that none but the fierce and uncharitable, none but ignorant and narrow-spirited bigots and barbarians come into it or encourage it. Men of charitable and benevolent minds, enlarged by reason and observation, condemn it as irreligious; they know that it is often malicious and dishonest, always ridiculous and dangerous; they know the ways of God to be past finding out; they see human affairs so perplexed and unaccountable; men sometimes rising and sometimes falling, both by virtue and vice; such vicissitudes and revolutions in the fortunes of men and of nations, often without any change in these men and nations from virtue to vice, or from vice to virtue; people growing greater without becoming better, and poorer without growing worse: They behold good and evil so promiscuously dispensed; sometimes thousands of men, women, and children, of different spirits, merit, and morals, suffering equally under the same publick calamity, and deriving equally the like advantages from publick prosperity; they behold the adversity of some to be the visible cause of the prosperity of others, who are no better than them; and the prosperity of some the visible cause of the adversity of others, who are no worse than the former; and one and the same thing producing good and evil to those who alike deserve or do not deserve good and evil: They see so little equity or consistency in the proceedings of men; sometimes good men exalted, without any regard had to their virtue; sometimes wicked men cast down, without any resentment of their crimes; sometimes good men punished for being good, and wicked men raised and rewarded for being wicked; sometimes both good and bad suffering or prospering alike, sometimes good-fortunes following the good, and ill-fortune the bad, often taking a contrary freak. I say, wise and honest men, seeing all these things in this great confusion and uncertainty, find sufficient reason to be afraid of making bold with heaven, and of christening by the name of its

judgments any of these events and evils that afflict any part of mankind.

But bigots, and they, who, to serve ill ends, interest heaven in all that they do, deal more freely and profanely with their great maker and judge, whose counsels and judgments being incomprehensible, it is impiety and a contradiction to go about to explain and apply them. The Turks make God the author of every thing that they do, and of every evil that others suffer from them. They measure his will by the event; and, with them, whatever is successful, is lawful and just: The murder of a prince, or his murdering of others, is never sinful if it succeed: God, they say, blesses and approves the event, else he would prevent it. So that, upon this principle, there can be no such thing as wickedness and villainy amongst them; for who knows but it may succeed, and then it is good? or if it does not succeed, who could foresee but it would? This impious tenet of that brutish people arms them with fierceness and outrage against one another, and all the world; it animates them to commit rapine and butcheries, and then sears their consciences, and prevents all remorse. Nay, they glory in executing cruelty, because it is the judgment of God, and they are his agents.

I wish I could keep this dreadful principle out of Christendom; but I am sorry to say, that it is common amongst us. Whoever applies the judgment of God to others, has this Turkish spirit in him: And all men that make such applications, reason so foolishly, so falsely, and often so maliciously in their defence, that every instance which I have ever yet met with in all my reading and observation (except the declared instances in sacred writ) exposes them.

Upon the murder of Henry III of France, by Jacques Clément, a Dominican friar, the deputy of the famous French League, then at Rome, tells the Pope, in an audience given upon that occasion, that the assassin was chosen by God, and divinely inspired to murder his prince, and calls it a glorious exploit: And though that execrable and bloody monk used all the methods of falsehood, lies, and forgeries, to get access to the King, in order to destroy him; yet the deputy solemnly tells his Holiness, that it was notorious that the thing came not from men. The League distressed, resisted, and at last murdered their prince: And all these their own wicked doings were, forsooth, the judgments of God upon him, for suffering heresy in the land.

The Huguenots, on the other hand, made a judgment of that murder too; but a judgment on their side, for his frequent breach of faith and edicts with them, and for his barbarities towards them. They said, it was a remarkable providence of God, that he was assassinated in the same chamber where he had concerted the furious massacre of St. Bartholomew —in the very chamber, nay, on the same day, the same hour, and on the same spot! Here are judgments encountering judgments! let who will reconcile them. I think both sides sufficiently rash and ridiculous in making them, as are all those that do, whatever side they are of.

The conquest of the Greeks by Mahomet II and their slavish subjection to the Turks, is ascribed by the Jesuit Maimbourg to the Schism, which he says they were guilty of in withdrawing their obedience from the See of Rome. Here, according to him, was the judgment and the cause of the judgment. Bayle observes upon this occasion, that Rome being taken by Charles V in 1527, was as barbarously pillaged by his troops, as was Constantinople by the Turks, when they took it: And he asks, whether Maimbourg would take it well to be told by the Greeks that that desolation of Rome was a judgment upon her for her pride and ambition, in demanding, imperiously, of the Greek Church an absolute uniformity and obedience to her discipline and dictates? He says, that Maimbourg, since he was dealing in judgments, might as well have given this another turn, with which Chalcondylis would have furnished him. That historian relates, that when Mahomet invaded and subdued Greece, the then inhabitants of Rome, who thought themselves the descendants of the old Romans, who came from Aeneas, who came from Troy, asserted positively, that all the destruction brought

upon the Greeks by the barbarians, was but a judgment upon them for all the ravages which their Greek ancestors had committed against the subjects of Priamus, and in the destruction of Troy some thousand years before.

The death of Oliver Cromwell was, it seems, attended or followed by a very high wind; which was nothing strange: But as Oliver had been a usurper, and a great deceiver, and was greatly hated; most of the vulgar, and many that would be thought much wiser took it into their heads, that that same storm was a loud judgment and declaration of the wrath of heaven against him, and that Satan was fetching away his soul in a whirlwind. But his friends turned it quite another way; particularly Mr. Waller, who made all that tumult and bellowing in the elements, to be partly the call of heaven, summoning away so great a man; partly the sighs and sympathy of nature for his last agonies and departure. The copy of verses that Waller made on that occasion is one of the noblest in our language; I shall conclude with a few lines out of it.

*We must resign; Heav'n his great soul does claim,
In storms as loud as his immortal fame.
His dying groans, his last breath shakes our isle;
And trees, uncut, fall for his fun'ral pile.
New Rome in such a tempest lost her king,
And, from obeying, fell to worshipping.
Nature herself took notice of his death,
And, sighing, swell'd the sea with such a breath,
That, to remotest shores, her billows roll'd,
Th' approaching fate of their great ruler told.*

G

I am, &c.

No. 53. SATURDAY, November 18, 1721.

Dr. Prideaux's Reasoning about the Death of Cambyses, examined; whether the same was a Judgment for his killing the Egyptian God Apis. [Gordon] ↩

[II-144]

SIR,

The talent of writing history is so rare on this side the Alps, and more on this side the Channel, that I think most of our southern neighbours have far exceeded us in it; as much, perhaps, as some of the ancients have exceeded them. By far the most part of our English histories are pitiful performances, unworthy of a free, polite, and learned nation. But though many of our neighbours excel us in the histories of their own countries, we can boast of two universal histories, which do honour to the authors, and their country. The first is Sir Walter Raleigh; one of the worthiest and ablest men that this or any other country ever produced. He had a soul as vast as the work which he undertook, and his work resembles him; for though it has much in it that is foreign to history, it is noble, nervous, and instructive; its spirit, clearness, and style, are admirable; and for narration, penetration, knowledge, sentences, and observation, he has few competitors in antiquity.

The other is the very reverend, learned, and aged Dr. Prideaux, Dean of Norwich; who has given us a body of universal history, written with such capacity, accuracy, industry, and honesty, as make it one of the best books that ever came into the world, and shew him to be one of the greatest men in it. No book was ever more universally read and approved. It is indeed a great publick service done to mankind, and entitles the author to the highest publick gratitude and honour.

But though I never saw any great work to which I found fewer objections; yet, as a memorable proof how inseparably mistakes and prejudices cleave to the mind of man, the great and candid Dr. Prideaux is not without them; I therefore do not upbraid him with them, but rather admire him for having so few. There are however some of his theological observations, which seem to me not only ill-grounded, but to have a tendency to create in his readers wrong notions of the Deity, and to encourage them to mistake the common accidents of life, and the common events of nature, for the judgments of God, and to apply them superstitiously as such.

Of this kind is the observation which he makes upon the death of Cambyses, the Persian emperor, who had slain the Egyptian Apis. For the better understanding of this, we must know, that the chief god of the Egyptians was Osiris; him they worshipped in the shape of a bull, and that not only in imagery, but also in reality; for they kept a bull in the temple of Osiris, which they worshipped in his stead. The Doctor adds, that in imitation of this idolatry was it that Aaron made the golden calf in the wilderness, and Jeroboam those in Dan and Bethel, and did set them up there to be worshipped by the children of Israel, as the gods that had brought them out of the land of Egypt.

When this the god and bull of the Egyptians died, they looked out for another, with such proper marks and spots as were certain indications of his divinity; and when they found one, they expressed their joy in great and publick festivity. In such a fit of rejoicing Cambyses found the city of Memphis, when he returned to it from his unprosperous expedition into Aethiopia. The Egyptians had just then found a new god amongst the cattle, and had lodged him at his crib in his temple with great solemnity. Cambyses had a mind to see this deity of theirs: And, says Dr. Prideaux,

this Apis being brought to him, he fell into a rage, as well he might, at the sight of such a god; and, drawing out his dagger, run it into the thigh of the beast; and then reproaching the priests for their stupidity and wretchedness in worshipping a brute for a God, ordered them to be severely whipped, and all the Egyptians in Memphis to be slain, who should be found any more rejoicing there on this occasion. The Apis being carried back to the temple, languished of his wounds, and died.

As to the death of Cambyses, and the manner of it, take it also in the Doctor's words.

As he mounted his horse, his sword falling out of the scabbard, gave him a wound in the thigh, of which he died: The Egyptians remarking, that it was in the same part of the body where he had afore wounded the Apis, reckoned it as an especial judgment from heaven upon him for that fact; and perchance they were not much out in it: For it seldom happening in an affront given to any particular mode of worship, how erroneous soever it may be, but that religion in general is wounded thereby; there are many instances in history, wherein God had very signally punished the profanations of religion in the worst of times, and under the worst modes of heathen idolatry.

Without inquiring whether this be any compliment to truth and religion, I freely own, that the distressing or disturbing of any sort of people in any sort of worship, however false and ridiculous, where the same does not violate property or human society, is an invasion of the rights of nature and conscience, and no man can do it with a wise and honest design: And what men do of this kind, out of bitterness of spirit or self-ends, no one will justify. If people will play the fool in their devotion, they only expose themselves, but hurt not others; and whoever does hurt to them, does but warrant them to return it: And hence is the sure beginning of tyranny, and of eternal civil and religious war. Every man reckons every religion false or foolish, which he does not embrace; and his own the best, though it be the worst. And if in this universal obstinacy of every man in every religious opinion which he has imbibed, a dispute by the sword, and arguments of authority and force, were encouraged, or but permitted, confusion and slaughter would be their chief employment. Or if one man's will were to be a law to other men's thoughts, the effects would be every where alike; that is, the stupidity and slavery of Turks would be the portion and character of Englishmen.

But I cannot think that the wounding of a bull, even of a consecrated bull, and the whipping of his priests, were such crimes as, beyond all the other crimes of Cambyses, called for the avenging judgments of God upon him. He had others to answer for of a far more black, malignant, and detestable nature: He put his brother to death for his merit, and for a dream that he had concerning him. He killed, by a kick in the belly, his beloved wife Meroe, who was also his sister, and then with child by him, for lamenting the death of her murdered brother.

He caused several of his principal followers to be buried alive, without any cause deserving of it, and daily sacrificed some or other of them to his wild fury. And when Croesus (formerly King of Lydia, the old and faithful friend and counsellor of his father Cyrus) advised him against those proceedings, and laid before him the ill consequences which they would lead to, he ordered him to be put to death; and when those who received his orders, knowing he would repent of it next day, did therefore defer the execution, he caused them all to be executed for it, though at the same time he expressed great joy that Croesus was alive: And out of a mere humour, only to shew his skill in archery, he shot to death the son of Prexaspes, who was the chief of his favourites.

He caused the magistrates of Memphis to be put to death, for answering truly to a question which he asked them. In his mad march over the Lybian sands, to invade a people that had done him no harm, he destroyed most of his vast army, fifty thousand in one place:

The rest were reduced by famine to feed on each other.

Which now is most likely, and most becoming the divine wisdom and goodness, that the great God of heaven and earth should be more offended with this black catalogue of cruelties and crimes, than with a hasty blow given to a brute worshipped as God; which the doctor owns had justly provoked the rage of Cambyses? And is the Almighty more provoked at an affront put upon an idol, and upon the attendants of an idol, which falsely and impudently is made to represent him, than at a terrible and raging tyranny, that spreads blood and desolation over the face of the earth?

Cambyses, upon his invading Egypt, did another thing as bad as the wounding of Apis; I shall relate it in the Doctor's own words:

Finding that the garrison of Pelusium, a strong frontier town, were all Egyptians, in an assault which he made upon the city, he placed a great number of cats, dogs, sheep, and others of those animals which the Egyptians reckoned sacred, in the front of the army; and therefore the soldiers not daring to throw a dart, or shoot an arrow, that way, for fear of killing some of those animals, Cambyses, made himself master of the place without any opposition. For these being the gods which the Egyptians then adored, it was reckoned the highest impiety to kill any of them; and when they died of themselves, they buried them with great solemnity.

The Doctor makes no reflection upon this; though, upon the same principle, it must have been an affront to religion; and if none of these sacred creatures were killed, it was owing to no tenderness in Cambyses, who exposed them to so much danger. But if true religion be hurt by putting an affront upon a false one, how came it to be a merit in the primitive Christians to pull down the heathen temples, and to destroy the idols of the heathen, as they almost every where did where they had power, often in opposition to power? And upon what foot and motive is it that penalties and incapacities are put upon any sect of religion in any country? And how came the Jews to exercise such fury upon the Gods and worship of the Gentiles, as many of the Jewish leaders, especially the Maccabees, did, often out of their own country, often without provocation?

The primitive Fathers are every where full of sarcasms against the heathenish worship, which they treat constantly with ridicule and reproach, with contempt and bitterness: Did Christianity suffer by this behaviour of theirs; or did not Christianity rather gain advantage and new beauties, by comparing it with the absurdities, the fopperies, nonsense, corruptions, and vanities of the pagans? Truth cannot suffer by exposing falsehoods, which can no more bear the face of truth, than darkness can the face of the sun. No two things are more unlike than true and false religion; and the same treatment can never affect both in any respect, as the same arguments cannot defend truth and error. Indeed, true religion is defended and recommended by the very means that expose and destroy a false one. I have therefore often wondered at a saying of Mr. Collier's, though not that it was said by him; namely, that the transition is easy from ridiculing a false religion to the ridiculing a true one; or words to that effect. Than which nothing could be more unjustly said: They are as opposite as law and the violation of law; as unlike as justice and oppression, and as different as Christ and Belial. How should the worship of daemons resemble the worship of the true God? And if they cannot be mistaken for each other, how can they be annoyed by the same weapons? The Fathers were so far from such an imagination, that in their railleries and reasonings upon the devout fooleries of the Gentiles, they did not treat them with a bit the more reverence or regard for their being established by a law.

So much may serve to shew, that the true religion can have no sympathy with the false, nor suffer in its sufferings. As to the death of Cambyses, I do not see any sign of a judgment in it, unless every death occasioned by an accident, or an instrument, is a judgment. Indeed every disaster, before it can be called a judgment in this sense of the word, must be proved a miracle; and common effects from visible and common causes, as they are no miracles, so neither can they be called judgments, unless God, the author of judgments, declares them so, as he did not in the case before us. Many a good man has been killed in a more terrible manner, as were all the saints and martyrs.

Now where is the miracle of a sword falling out of the sheath, when a man is mounting his horse? And where was it more likely to fall than on his leg or his thigh? If indeed it had got out of the scabbard of its own accord, and mounted up to his head and cut it off, it might have looked like a judgment; but yet I should have looked out rather for any cause of it, than the killing of a deified bull.

G

I am, &c.

No. 54. SATURDAY, November 25, 1721.

The Reasoning of Dr. Prideaux about the Fate of Brennus the Gaul, and of his Followers, examined; whether the same was a Judgment for an Intention to plunder the Temple of Delphos. [Gordon] ↩

[II-152]

SIR,

I shall bestow this paper in considering what Dr. Prideaux says of Brennus the Gaul, his expedition, death, and crime. This man, at the head of a great number of his countrymen, sent abroad to seek new habitations, passing through Hungary, Illyriam, and Macedonia, plundering, pillaging, and destroying as they went, at last invaded Greece, and

marched on towards Delphos, to plunder the temple in that city of the vast riches which were there laid up. But he there met a wonderful defeat: For on his approaching the place, there happened a terrible storm of thunder, lightning, and hail, which destroyed great numbers of his men; and at the same time there was as terrible an earthquake, which rending the mountains in pieces, threw down whole rocks upon them, which overwhelmed them by hundreds at a time; by which the whole army being much dismayed, they were the following night seized with such a panick fear, that every man supposing him that was next to him to be a Grecian enemy, they fell upon each other; so that before there was day-light enough to make them see the mistake, one half of the army had destroyed the other. By all this the Greeks, who were now come together from all parts to defend their temple, being much animated, fell furiously on them; and although now Acichorus was come up with Brennus, yet both their forces together could not stand the assault; but great numbers of them were slain, and great numbers were wounded; and amongst these last was Brennus himself, who had received several wounds; and although none of them were mortal, yet seeing all now lost, and the whole expedition, which he had been the author of, thus ended in a dismal ruin, he was so confounded at the miscarriage, that he resolved not to outlive it: And therefore calling to him as many of the chief leaders as he could get together amidst calamitous hurry, he advised them to slay all the wounded, and with the remainder make as good a retreat backward as they could; and then having guzzled down as much wine as he could drink, he ran himself through and died. The rest being to march through enemies' countries, they were, as they passed, so distressed for want of provisions, which they were every where to fight for, so incommoded at night by lodging mostly upon the ground in a winter season, and in such a manner harrassed and fallen upon where-ever they came by the people of those countries through which they passed, that what with famine, cold, and sickness, and what with the sword of their enemies, they were all cut off and destroyed: So that of the numerous company which did first set out on this expedition, not so much as one man escaped the calamitous fate of miserably perishing in it.

This is the story of Brennus, which I have told in the Doctor's own words: Now follows his reflection upon it:

Thus God was pleased in a very extraordinary manner to execute his vengeance upon those sacrilegious wretches, for the sake of religion in general, how false and idolatrous soever that particular religion was, for which that temple at Delphos was erected. For, to believe a religion true, and offer sacrilegious violences to the places consecrated to the devotions of that religion, is absolute impiety, and a sin against all religion; and there are many instances of very signal judgments with which God hath punished it even amongst the worst of heathens and infidels; and much more may they expect it, who, having the truth of God established among them, shall become guilty hereof.

If this unhappy end of Brennus and his followers was a judgment, as doubtless this reverend and worthy author thinks, I cannot see why an intention to pillage a stupid idol of his useless wealth and devout baubles, given and used for the ends of idolatry and delusion, should be reckoned the cause of it. I would be glad to know how any part of mankind would have suffered in their religion and fortune, though the shrine and temple of Apollo had been stripped of their superstitious and ill-got finery; or how God Almighty came to shew himself thus miraculously the guardian of an idol, set up to rival him, and to deceive the world by uttering oraculous lies; or, how the taking away those riches that were acquired by belying God and deceiving man, and employed for the ornament and support of a blasphemous imposture, could be called sacrilege or robbing of God, who was really robbed by an idol of that only which he can be robbed of, divine worship and homage.

But because people are apt to be misguided and terrified by words, especially by such as are applied to devotion and holy things, I shall here bestow some reflections upon the awful word *sacrilege*, and shew that it is ill understood.

Sacrilege, we are told by some, signifies the robbing or stealing from God any thing which is peculiarly his. Now nothing can be stolen from God, nor can any thing be concealed from him. Every thing being his, it is as much his in the hands of one man as in the hands of another; for, let who will have the use of it, the property cannot be altered: God, who has all things, can never be put out of possession of any thing; and as nothing can be taken from him, so neither can any thing be given to him, because all the world and every thing in it is already his; and it is absurd to imagine that any form of words, or change of place or position, can enlarge or lessen his property in any thing. All that we have, we have from him; and to return him his own gifts back again, which we want, and he does not, is no compliment nor any part of religion or of reason: It is shewing ourselves wiser than him, in setting apart for his use those things which he has graciously created and set apart for ours. Can we feed him? Or can we clothe, adorn, or enrich him? Can we build him a city to dwell in, or furnish him with guards for the security of his person?

Sacrilege therefore is either the robbing of men, or no robbery at all. And this crime is greater or less, according to the measure or mischief done. To rob a poor man of his loaf, is a greater crime, *in foro conscientiae*, than to rob a rich man of an ox: To rob a man of a small part of a thing that is necessary to him, is a greater crime, than the robbing him of a great superfluity; and if I rob a man of a thing that will do him hurt, I hope I do him less an injury, than if I robbed him of a thing which does him good. But if I take a thing which no man has a right to, I myself have a right to it, by possessing it.

To apply all this to the business of sacrilege; if a man take away any of the books, vestments, or utensils, made use of in devotion, he only robs the congregation, who must buy more; and many being more able than one to bear this loss, the offence, as to its effects, is less than if he robbed but one man. But if he take away from a heathen temple, plate, or hidden treasure, laid up there, but not used, he indeed does an action that he has no right to do, but an action that however does good to the world, by turning into use that which was of none, or of bad use.

Dead treasure, first drawn from the people in superstitious offerings, and then laid up in a heathen temple, and kept and used for impious and idolatrous ends, but never to return again into the world, for the necessary purposes of life and commerce, is the plunder of mankind; and the worst of all plunders, because it never circulates; and people are greatly the worse for it, in respect both of soul and body, but never can be the better. It is first taking from them, and afterwards denying them, the great and chief means of life and convenience. He therefore, whoever he be, that takes it from thence, let him take it in what manner he will, does a better and more publick thing than he who keeps it there.

No man can be robbed of a thing in which he has no property. Of this sort was Apollo's wealth; and no body was robbed in taking it away. So that whoever takes away golden images, or other dead wealth, the means and objects of false adoration, is guilty of no other crime, than that of disturbing erroneous consciences: Nor need such consciences be much disturbed, since the crime being committed without their consent, they have no share in it. And therefore if such idolatrous images, and such superstitious, useless, and pernicious riches, be taken away by a lawful authority, or in a lawful war, it is no crime at all. So that in every sense Brennus committed a greater crime in plundering one village, than he could have committed, had he plundered, as he intended, the temple of Delphos.

If Brennus had believed in Apollo, he sinned against his conscience, in designing to rob him. But we do not know that Brennus, or those that followed him, believed thus. I do not remember that Apollo was the god of the Gauls, or that the druids owned him: All nations agreed not in worshipping the same gods, but often disputed about the quality, birth, and precedence of their gods. And if Brennus despised or disregarded Apollo, he committed no sacrilege; at least with respect to himself, it was no sacrilege, but only rapine; but if, believing in him, though an idol, he would have sinned in pillaging him, as doubtless he would, here is an argument, that a good conscience may be an erroneous conscience; and that if no man must act against his own conscience, though it be erroneous, as doubtless he must not, then much less has any other man whatsoever a right to punish or distress him for it. If God approve, who is it that condemns? And none but God knows the heart of another.

If Brennus had worshipped Apollo, he was guilty of idolatry, in the opinion of all Christians: And if he had robbed him, he was guilty of sacrilege in the opinion of most. Now we hear of no judgment falling upon those that worshipped Apollo, and supported that idol with superstitious donations; all which was idolatry. And is idolatry, which God has declared abominable in his eyes, a less sin than robbing an idolatrous temple, which action God has nowhere declared a sin? The good kings of the Jews destroyed all idols and idolatrous temples, where-ever they had power; and the wrath of God was kindled against all that did not. If it was therefore a sin against the true God, not to destroy them; how came it to be sin only to rob them?

I think all this is enough to shew, that an intention to plunder Apollo of his idle and unhallowed wealth, was not the probable cause of any judgment upon Brennus and his followers: But if there must be a judgment in the case, there were reasons for it much more powerful, and much more likely to provoke God to send it. He was a wild and barbarous robber, at the head of an army of savages, who cruelly ravaged many nations, made spoil of all men's property, and inhumanly massacred those that defended their own. They were invaders, plunderers, and murderers, who, by numbers, barbarity, rapine, and slaughter, laid waste whole countries, and destroyed, unprovoked, men and property. In this general pillage, they had already passed through and desolated Hungary, Illyrium, Macedonia, and were now got into Greece. Was not here guilt enough to call down a thousand judgments? And after all this bloody and brutish violence done to the world, and to the laws of God and man; can we imagine that these Gauls suffered that terrible doom for barely intending a thing, in which neither God would have been dishonoured, nor man injured? At least in any degree of comparison, with the least of the other great and terrible calamities, which they suffered from these destroying barbarians?

I shall now add something more particularly concerning the wretched end of these Gauls, and enquire how far it can be reckoned a judgment. And here I am of opinion, that either every calamity, publick or private, must be accounted a judgment; which doctrine, I believe, no man holds; or else we must determine, by what means we can know a judgment from a calamity: Nor do I know of any sufficient marks to direct us in this matter, but an immediate miracle, and declaration from Almighty God, that he means it so: And in such a miraculous

declaration, the crime must be expressly specified, for which such judgment is inflicted; because for every crime judgments are not indicted, nor always for the latest crimes; but sometimes overtake the sinner, long after the sin is committed. All this I take to be self-evident. We must remember that men, biassed by passions and prejudices, do often confound good and evil, and mistake the greatest wickedness for the greatest merit, and the highest merit for the highest wickedness: Publick massacres have been applauded, publick incendiaries have been sainted, publick tyrants deified. While on the other side, public virtue has passed for a publick crime, truth for blasphemy, and Christianity has been rewarded with fire and sword. So that men thus blind and perverse do frequently entitle vice to the blessing and favour of God, and virtue and merit to his severest judgments.

Where-ever therefore there is a great complication of crimes, and sometimes of great crimes, how can we distinguish for which of them the judgment is sent, unless he that sends it declare the same? If he send it for more crimes than one, how shall we distinguish where he, who only can, does not? And if the judgment be sent for one sin only, by what certain token can we discover it? If one man hurt or disoblige twenty, in twenty different ways; rob one, steal from another, deceive a third, calumniate a fourth, wound a fifth, bear false witness against a sixth, and so on till he has as many enemies as crimes, and afterwards die by a disaster or the law; every one of the twenty will be apt to call it a judgment, and a particular judgment, for the particular offence done to himself. Now where is the rule, by which certainly to know either that this man's death was a judgment, or to find out the certain crime that brought it upon him? Or is ever such a rule like to be found, as long as all sorts of evils befall all sorts of men?

As to the thunder, lightning, hail, and earthquakes, that destroyed so many of the Gauls, were they not the usual operations and effects of nature? And have they not been from the beginning? Have not whole cities and countries been destroyed by them? And has not their impartial fury been felt by the good and the bad, without distinction? In destroying storms by land and sea, are the wicked only overtaken? And do not the virtuous perish undistinguished with the latter? And are not just men, going upon just expeditions, frequently overwhelmed by them? And do not wicked men, in wicked enterprizes, often escape them? When an impetuous shock of an earthquake overturns a city, or opens a devouring chasm to swallow it up; do the dwellings of the righteous remain unmoved, and their persons unhurt!

Nor is it at all wonderful and uncommon, that this ignorant multitude, dismayed by so many and so alarming misfortunes, thus suddenly checked in their progress, at a great distance from home, beset with enemies in an enemy's country, unskilled in the phaenomena of nature, suffering many calamities, and dreading more, fell into a panick; and, having lost their senses, attacked one another, by a mistake, in the dark. Wicked armies have fallen into the like terror upon the sight of an eclipse: And the same unaccountable fear, but without the same effect, seized the victorious Macedonian army of Alexander the Great, the very night before they fought one of their greatest and most successful battles. And we have still a much later instance at home: At the battle of Naseby, King Charles I who was in it, being pressed by some of his own people that were behind them, bid them keep back; which words being repeated by others to those next them, and by these to others, the word *back* was caught up, and running from man to man through all the ranks, was understood as a sign to fly; and accordingly the royal army fled, and the field was lost. And thus a chance word threw a whole army into a panick. None of the royal party have yet told us, that this was a judgment upon that king and his cause; nor, I dare say, would they have believed the other party, had the other party alledged that it was.

Considering all these calamities and losses suffered by the Gauls, and the consternation which they were in, I suppose there was no great miracle in their being vanquished by the Greeks, who were now come together from all parts, to fall furiously on a defeated enemy.

And as small is the wonder of Brennus's killing himself: He was a resolute man, and took this method to cure himself of that grief and disappointment which he could not bear, and to preserve himself from falling alive into the hands of his enemies, to whom he had given a right of using him very ill.

Neither is it any thing surprizing that the rest,

being to march through enemies' countries, were, as they passed, so distressed for want of provisions, which they were every where to fight for; so incommoded at night by lodging mostly on the ground in a winter season, and in such a manner, harassed and fallen upon where-ever they came by the people of those countries through which they passed, that what with famine, cold, and sickness, and what with the sword of their enemies, they were all cut off and destroyed.

All this misfortune is thus fairly accounted for, and the thing is not uncommon. The whole nation of the Cimbrians were destroyed in much greater numbers, when they left their old habitations in quest of new; though it does not appear that they intended to rob temples. And yet Xerxes destroyed and plunder'd all the idolatrous temples in the East, except that of Diana at Ephesus, without thriving the worse for it.

They were all cut off and destroyed! for which plain, natural, and necessary causes are assigned; and yet it was a judgment! Surely this is strange and unaccountable! Doubtless there were degrees and great differences of guilt and innocence amongst Brennus's followers; and why should they, who were not all equally guilty, all equally suffer? Why should subjects and soldiers be punished for the sins of a prince or a general? Soldiers are often pressed into the service, and rarely or never know the reasons of the commander's orders; and it is mutiny and death to disobey him. And princes often run into wild wars, without the consent of their subjects, and against their interest; and yet if their subjects oppose them in it, they are guilty of resistance, which is reckoned rebellion; a very terrible and crying crime, to which the judgment of God has been pronounced due: And yet the judgments of God, which sometimes fall upon princes for an unjust war, fall also upon their subjects, who were utterly guiltless of it, What strange doctrine is this? that every man in a nation shall suffer for the sins of one man, whom they could not restrain; or that any man shall suffer for the crimes of another? And that the best men in an army or a nation shall bear the calamities inflicted upon them for the sins of the worst; as if it were a crime in a good man to live where his lot has cast him, without his own consent, next door to a wicked man, or within ten miles of him?

This paper, which I could make much longer, grows already too long. I shall conclude with observing, that we either apply God's judgments at random, without his authority, always in opposition to his commands, and, for aught we know, as often contrary to his ends and intention; or we do it out of prejudices to men and opinions: And by this we give advantage to infidels and men of no religion, to reproach us with presumption upon our own principles, in meddling with the secret councils of God, in confounding his mercy and justice, in making him act capriciously, and in confounding one religion with another, the good with the bad, as if we thought them all alike. Let us give no more ground for this reproach; and as a specimen of our candour and equitable judgment, let us own, in the instance before us, that the liberty, prosperity, and peace of the world, and, amongst the rest, the liberty of Greece, were things somewhat more sacred and inviolable than Apollo's consecrated baubles.

G

I am, &c.

P. S. The story about King Charles I relate upon memory, and may mistake in names or circumstances.

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No. 55. SATURDAY, December 2, 1721.

The Lawfulness of killing Julius Caesar considered, and defended, against Dr. Prideaux.
[Gordon] ↩

[II-165]

SIR,

I shall, in this paper, consider and discuss a great point; namely, whether the killing of Julius Caesar was a virtue, or a crime? And because Dr. Prideaux, who condemns it, does not only speak his own sense, but that of a great party, I shall here transcribe what he says of it.

He was murdered in the Senate-house, by a conspiracy of Senators. This was a most base and villainous act; and was the more so, in that the prime authors of it, Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, and Trebonius, and some others of them, were such as Caesar had in the highest manner obliged; yet it was executed under the notion of an high heroick virtue, in thus freeing their country from one whom they called a tyrant; and there are not wanting such as are ready, even in our days, to applaud the act. But divine justice declared itself otherwise in this matter: For it pursued every one of them that were concerned herein with such a just and remarkable revenge, that they were every man of them cut off in a short time after, in a violent manner, either by their own or other men's hands.

These are the Doctor's words, and this his judgment, which is roundly passed; but how justly, I hope to make appear before I have ended this letter. He has not told us what it was, that, in his opinion, rendered the person of Caesar so very inviolable. That Caesar had for his title, only power and success gained by violence, and all wicked means, is most certain. That the acquiring and exercising of power by force, is tyranny, is as certain; nor did ever any reasonable man say, that success was a proof of right. They who make the person of Caesar sacred, declare the person of a tyrant, and an usurper to be sacred; for no man ever lived, to whom those two characters do more notoriously belong. And if all the privileges and impunity belonging to a lawful magistrate, who protects his people, and rules himself and them by law, and their own consent, do also appertain to a lawless intruder, who is stronger than all, by being worse than all; and under the mock name of a publick magistrate, is a publick oppressor, scourge, usurper, executioner, and plunderer; then all these blessed consequences follow: That there is an utter end of all publick and private right and wrong, every magistrate may be a tyrant, every tyrant is a lawful magistrate; 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 have as much right, and more innocence, than great ones, and who are only so for subsistence; yet it is impious and unlawful to oppose great robbers, who, out of lust, avarice, cruelty, or wantonness, take away life and property, and destroy nations at pleasure: That real, great, and general mischief, is defended by giving it a good name, by which he who commits it is protected; violence, fraud, and oppression, may be committed with security, if they be but called magistracy; and the execrable authors of them are not only safe, but sacred, if they be but called magistrates: Though it be unlawful to be a publick destroyer and murderer, yet it is unlawful to destroy him; that is, it is unlawful to prevent or punish that which is most impious and unlawful: And, finally, that any man who can oppress and enslave the world, and destroy nations, with the most and best men in them, may do all this with impunity.

If Julius Caesar was a lawful magistrate, then every man who has force and villainy enough, may make himself a lawful magistrate; and lawful magistrates are, or may be made by force and villainy. But if magistracy is not acquired by overturning with the sword all law

and magistracy, then Julius Caesar was no magistrate; and if he was not, how came he by the rights and impunity with which lawful magistrates only are vested?

Against any man using unlawful force, every man has a right to use force. What crime would it have been in any Roman, or body of Romans, even without any commission from Rome, to have slain Alarick, or Attila, or Brennus, when they invaded the Roman territories? And what more right had Caesar than they? In truth, his crime was infinitely greater than theirs, as he added the sins of ingratitude, treachery, and parricide, to that of usurpation. The Goths and Gauls did indeed violate the laws of nations, in molesting and invading a country, that owed them neither subjection nor homage: But Caesar violated the laws of nature, and of his country, by enslaving those whom he was entrusted and bound to defend.

Every body, I believe, will own, that when he first made war upon his country, his country had a right to make war upon him; and to destroy him, who fought to destroy them. How came that right to cease, after he had, by his success in villainy and usurpation, added to his crimes, and made death still more his due? Or, is it lawful to resist and kill a robber before he has taken away your money, but not after he has done it? And does a villain grow sacred and inviolable, by the mere merit of completing his villainy? If Caesar had forfeited his life, as he certainly had by all the laws of Rome; why was it not lawful to take it away by the hands of thirty men, as by the arms of thirty thousand, and in the Senate as well as in the field?

The reason why one private man must not kill another in society, even when he does that which deserves death, is, that in society no man must be his own judge, or take his own revenge; but the more equitable law must give it him, and there are judges established for that purpose. But if the offender set himself above the law and the judges, he leaves a right to the person injured to seek redress his own way, and as he can get it. Whoever puts himself in a state of war against me, gives me a right of war against him; and violence is a proper remedy for violence, when no other is left.

That right which, in the state of nature, every man had, of repelling and revenging injuries, in such a manner as every man thought best, is transferred to the magistrate, when political societies are formed, and magistracy established; but must return to private men again, when the society is dissolved: Which dissolution may happen either through the natural demise of the persons entrusted with the publick authority, where there is no provision made in the constitution for others to succeed them; or when, by a superior unlawful force, they are restrained from answering the great end of their trust, in protecting the innocent; an end for which alone men part with their natural rights, and become the members and subjects of society.

It is a most wicked and absurd position, to say, that a whole people can ever be in such a situation, as not to have a right to defend and preserve themselves, when there is no other power in being to protect and defend them; and much more, that they must not oppose a tyrant, a traitor, an universal robber, who, by violence, treachery, rapine, infinite murders and devastations, has deprived them of their legal protection.

Now, that all these black characters belonged to Caesar, is indisputable fact; nor was there ever a traitor and a tyrant in the world, if he was not one. He broke, outrageously broke, every tie that can bind a human soul; honour, virtue, religion, law, trust, humanity, and every thing that is sacred and valuable amongst men. He was a subject and servant of the Roman commonwealth, greatly honoured and trusted by it; he was a Senator and high priest; he had been consul; he was general of one of its greatest armies, governor of one of its greatest and best provinces. All this power and credit, all these offices and forces, he turned, ungratefully, barbarously, and traitorously, upon his masters, and made a prey of his country with its own

money and arms.

The means by which he did this mighty and consummate evil, were suitable to the end. He stuck at nothing; nor was any pitch of baseness too high or too low for him. He even submitted his person to infamous and unnatural prostitution, for the ends of ambition; and from a boy was in every faction for embroiling and overturning the state; first in the bloody measures of Marius; afterwards in the more terrible conspiracy of Catiline, to murder the consuls and the Senate, to burn Rome, and to enslave the commonwealth: And though he failed in that conspiracy, he went on conspiring; he corrupted the people, and headed parties of desperadoes, to frighten those whom he could not bribe: He oppressed the provinces, and destroyed their inhabitants; he robbed the publick temples; he slaughtered the armies of the republick; he seized the publick treasure; at last, he seized the world, and extinguished its liberty. Hear the dismal dread of the Roman Senate and people, upon that dreadful occasion, as the same is described by Lucan.

— — *Fuit haec mensura timoris,
Velle putant quodcunque potest — —
Omnia Caesar erat; privatae curia vocis
Testis adest. Sedere patres, censere parati,
Si regnum, si templa sibi, jugulumque senatus,
Exiliumque petat. — — —*

LUCAN. PHARSAL. I. 3. v. 108

Thus fell Rome, the glory and mistress of the earth, and the earth with it, under the yoke of a tyrant, whose parts increased his guilt, and made him the more dreadful. From the numberless mischiefs which he had done to get power, the highest were apprehended from him now he was possessed of it; and it was not doubted, but he would have proceeded to massacre and conflagration, had he been provoked by opposition.

— — — *Namque ignibus atris
Creditor ut captae rapturus moenia Romae.*

LUCAN. UT SUPRA, V. 99

And therefore most of the Senators were fled with Pompey, and Rome was left defenceless to the sword of the usurper.

What now had the Romans to do in this calamitous case, under this enormous oppressor; owing them duty and allegiance as one of their own citizens, but, like a barbarous conqueror and an alien, holding them in bonds with his sword at their throats? Law, liberty, and appeals, were no more! A tyrant was their chief magistrate; his will their only law. Because he had murdered one half of the people, had he therefore a right to govern the rest? And because he had robbed them of most of their property, were they obliged to give him the remainder? Does the success of a criminal sanctify his crime, or are crimes sanctified by their greatness? If only an intention to destroy the state, was high treason and death; how did the executing of that execrable intention become lawful government, and acquire a right of allegiance?

I say, what remained now to the Romans to be done for relief? As to legal process against Caesar, there could be none; *omnia Caesar erat!* Nor was there any publick force great enough to oppose him: He had before destroyed or corrupted the armies of the commonwealth. Or, if a new army could have been drawn together, ought an opportunity to have been given him to have destroyed that too? Or, was it lawful to kill him, and twenty or thirty thousand men with him, and perhaps with the like slaughter on the other side, and with the loss of the best and bravest Romans whom his ambition had left unmurdered; and yet was

it unlawful to kill him, without all this apparatus, expence, and mischief? Strange! that the killing by surprize a single traitor and parricide, who had forfeited his life by all the laws of God and man, should be esteemed a heinous and crying crime; and yet that the surprizing and cutting to pieces a whole army should be reckoned heroick virtue!

It was a known maxim of liberty amongst the great, the wise, the free ancients, that a tyrant was a beast of prey, which might be killed by the spear as well as by a fair chase, in his court as well as in his camp; that every man had a right to destroy one who would destroy all men; that no law ought to be given him who took away all law; and that, like Hercules's monsters, it was glorious to rid the world of him, whenever, and by what means soever, it could be done.

If we read the stories of the most celebrated heroes of antiquity (men of whom the present world is not worthy) and consider the actions that gained them their highest reverence and renown, and recommended their names to posterity with the most advantage; we shall find those in the first rank of glory, who have resisted, destroyed, or expelled tyrants and usurpers, the pests, the burdens, and the butchers of mankind. What can be more meritorious, what more beneficent to the world, than the saving of millions of men at the expense of one grand murderer, one merciless and universal plunderer? And can there be any better or other reason given for the killing of any guilty man, but the preserving of the innocent? Indeed, an action so glorious to those that did it, and so benevolent and advantageous to those for whom it was done, could never have been censured in the world, if there had not lived in all ages abject flatterers, and servile creatures of power, always prepared to sanctify and abet any [of] the most enormous wickedness, if it were gainful: And these are they who have often misled good men in the worst prejudices.

Timoleon, one of the wisest and most virtuous men that ever blessed this earth, spent a long and glorious life in destroying tyrants; he killed, or caused to be killed, his own brother, when he could not persuade him to lay down an usurped power, and no other means were left to save his country. And if this action cost him afterwards much grief and melancholy, it was owing to his own tender heart, and the curses and reproaches of a mother otherwise indulgent. He was even censured for this his sorrow, as if it had got the better of his love to mankind; and when he at last overcame it, he shewed that it was not occasioned for having slain a tyrant, but his brother; for he immortalized the rest of his life in doing nothing else but destroying tyrants, and restoring liberty.

But if the killing Caesar were so great a crime, how comes Catiline to be still so universally detested, for only intending what Caesar accomplished! It is true, Caesar did not burn Rome; nor did he save it out of any tenderness to it, but saved it for himself: He spared fire, only because the sword was sufficient. I would here ask another question: If Oliver Cromwell had died by any of the numerous conspiracies formed to take away his life; would posterity have condemned the action for this reason alone, that it was done the only way that it could be done?

But there is an instance in the Roman history, that will set this matter yet in a fuller light; it is the story of Spartacus, a Thracian slave and gladiator, who bid fair for being lord of the Roman world. He seems to me to have had personal qualifications and abilities, as great as those of Caesar, without Caesar's birth and education, and without the measure of Caesar's guilt. For I hope all mankind will allow it a less crime in any man to attempt to recover his own liberty, than wantonly and cruelly to destroy the liberty of his country.

It is astonishing to consider, how a poor slave, from the whip and the chain, followed only by about seventy fugitive gladiators, should begin a revolt from the most powerful state that ever the world saw; should gather and form, by his courage and dexterity, a formidable

army; should inspire resolution and fidelity into the very dregs of mankind; should qualify his sudden soldiers, composed of thieves and vagabonds, to face and defeat the Roman legions, that were a terror to the world, and had conquered it; should keep together, without pay or authority, a raw and lawless rabble, till he had vanquished two Roman armies, and one of them a Praetorian army: And even when Crixius, his fellow-commander, envying his glory and success, had withdrawn from him, and carried with him a great number of his forces, and was cut to pieces with twenty thousand of his men, by Q. Arrius the praetor, yet he still continued to conquer. He beat that very Arrius that had killed Crixius; he defeated Lentulus the consul; he overcame L. Gellius, another consul; and in all likelihood, had he not been weakened by the above defection of Crixius, he had beat Crassus too, and seen himself lord of Rome.

Now I would ask the advocates of lawless power, the friends to the life and name of Caesar, whether Spartacus, if he had succeeded in his last battle against Crassus, had been lawful and irresistible King of Rome? And whether the Senate and people of Rome, with the greatest part of the known world, would have owed him duty and allegiance? Or, would he not have continued still a thief and a robber? And if he had continued so, then, by all the laws of nature and self-preservation, as well as by the municipal laws of every country in the world, every man was at liberty to seize him how he could, and to kill him if he resisted, or ran away.

Tell me, O ye unlimited slaves, ye beasts of lawless power, ye loyal levellers of right and wrong! how came Caesar by a better title to dominion than Spartacus had, whose sword was as good, though not quite so prosperous and destructive, as Caesar's? Tell me where lay the difference between them, unless in their different success; and that Spartacus was as great a man, but Caesar a greater traitor and tyrant?

Indeed, had Sir Robert Filmer, or any other of the honest and sage discoverers of Adam's right heir, lived in those days (as they have done since, and plainly pointed him out) and complimented Caesar, as doubtless they would, with a lineal and hereditary title from Aeneas, wandering prince of Troy; he might have been called the Lord's Anointed, as well as others, and his assassination been accounted rebellion, and worse than the sin of witchcraft. But as I do not find that Caesar, though he valued himself upon his descent from the pious Trojan hero, did yet claim any dictatorial right by virtue of his illustrious parentage; I have therefore taken liberty to treat him as a mere traitor, an usurper, and a tyrant.

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I am, &c.

No. 56. SATURDAY, December 9, 1721.

A Vindication of Brutus, for having killed Caesar. [Gordon] ↩

[II-177]

SIR,

Having proved in my last, I think unanswerably, that Caesar was rightly killed; I will here enquire, whether Brutus and the other tyrannicides did right in killing him? And methinks, if it has been shewn that he ought to have been slain, as an enemy to every Roman citizen, and virtuous man; every Roman citizen, and every virtuous man, had a right to slay him.

But since there are in our world so many little and cramped spirits, who dare not think out of the vulgar path, though ever so crooked and dark, and perhaps first struck out by ignorance or fraud: Narrow minds, which, locked up in received systems, see all things through false mirrors, and as they are represented by strong prejudices, prevailing customs, and very often by corruption and party-interest: I shall, as I have occasion, endeavour to disperse these thick and deceitful mists from before weak eyes; and shall consider the present question, as well as all others that come before me, as they appear in their own nature, independent on the quirks of pedants, and the narrow jurisdiction of inferior tribunals: I shall bring them before the great tribunal of heaven; and assert the cause of liberty and truth, by arguments deduced from common-sense, and the common good of mankind.

It is generally alledged against Brutus, and some of those who joined with him in this great action, that they were highly obliged by Caesar; which is a strange objection. How were they obliged? He gave Brutus a life, which he could not take from him without murder; and did a mighty generous thing in not murdering Brutus for defending his country, animated by his own virtuous spirit, and the known laws of Rome! This is the obligation of a highwayman, who, taking away your money, which is all he wants, kindly leaves you your life. Are you obliged in honour, conscience, or common-sense, to spare the robber, because he was not a murderer? Or are you obliged not to pursue and take him, and to kill him, if he refuse to submit? In truth, Caesar was one of the greatest robbers and murderers that ever lived: Every man slain in that unjust, bloody, and unnatural war, which he wantonly and maliciously made upon his country, was murdered: And the world was the mighty spoil which he gained by universal murder and rapine. He was, in short, a man so consummately wicked, that the strongest words which you can use, and the bitterest instances which you can bring, to paint out him and his actions, will be but faint, compared to him and his actions.

As to the places and favours conferred upon Brutus, by Caesar; they were not Caesar's but Rome's. He was only *rapti largitor*. Caesar had no right to the publick, nor to dispose of it, or its emoluments. It was all barefaced usurpation. Besides, when favours of this, or any kind, with-hold a man from his duty, they are mischievous baits and corruptions, and ought to bind no man, as they never will a virtuous man: And we see how Brutus, who was the most virtuous man upon earth, understood and disregarded them.

They were only the artful shackles of a tyrant, intended to bind the bold and free mind of Brutus to his interest: But he, who owed no allegiance but to the commonwealth, scorned the deceitful smiles and generosity of its oppressor; who was bribing him to be his slave, with the gifts and offices of his country, to which he himself had no title, but Brutus had every title. This therefore was a piece of impudent civility, which Brutus could not but detest, as it was a shameful and melancholy proof of Caesar's tyranny, and of his own and Rome's vassalage. They were hollow and destructive favours; it was high-treason to be the author of

them: And was not death signally due to such high-treason? Brutus therefore made the properest return.

Caesar had usurped the Roman world, and was cantoning it out to his creatures as became a tyrant, and paying his personal creatures with the publick bounty. As the worst tyrants must have some friend; and as the best men do them the most credit, and bring them the most support, if such can be got; Caesar had sense enough to know, that he could never buy Brutus too dear; and so paid him great court. But Brutus saw the tyrant's design, and his own shame; and every civility was a fresh provocation. It was as if a thief breaking into a house to rob a lady of her jewels, spoke thus to her son; "Sir, pray permit me, or assist me, to cut your mother's throat, and seize her treasure, and I will generously reward you with your life, and lend you one or two of her diamonds to sparkle in as long as I think fit."

Could such a villainous civility as this engage the son, especially a virtuous son, to any thing but revenge? And would not the only way that he could take it, be the best way?

Caesar took from Brutus his liberty, and his legal title to his life and his estate, and gave him in lieu of it a precarious one during his own arbitrary will and pleasure: Upon the same terms he gave him some mercenary employments, as hire for that great good man's assistance to support his tyranny. Could the great and free soul of Brutus brook this? Could Brutus be the instrument or confederate of lawless lust? Brutus receive wages for an oppressor! That great, virtuous, and popular Brutus; who, if the commonwealth had subsisted, might, from his reputation, birth, abilities, and his excellent worth, have challenged the most honourable and advantageous offices in it, without owing thanks to Caesar.

So that the injuries done by Caesar to Brutus were great, heinous, and many; and the favours none. All the mercy shewn by Caesar was art and affectation, and pure self-love. He had found in the Roman people so universal a detestation of the bloody measures of Marius, Cinna, and Sulla: He saw the whole empire so reduced and enervated by repeated proscriptions and massacres, that he thought it his interest to establish his new-erected dominion by different measures; and to reconcile, by a false and hypocritical shew of clemency, the minds of men, yet bleeding with their late and former wounds, to his usurpation. That Caesar, the usurping and destructive Caesar, who had slaughtered millions, and wantonly made havock of the human race, had any other sort of mercy, than the mercy of policy and deceit, will not be pretended by any man, that knows his and the Roman story. Brutus therefore being the most revered and popular man in Rome, it became the craft of the tyrant to make Brutus his friend; it was adding a sort of sanctity to a wicked cause: Whereas the death of Brutus by Caesar, would have made Caesar odious and dreadful even amongst his own followers.

But it is said, that Brutus submitted to Caesar, and was bound by his own act. Here the allegation is true, but the consequence false. Did not Brutus submit to Caesar, as innocent men are often forced to submit to the galleys, the wheel, and the gibbet? He submitted, as a man robbed and bound submits to a house-breaker, who, with a pistol at his heart, forces from him a discovery of his treasure, and a promise not to prosecute him. Such engagements are not only void in themselves, but aggravate the injury, and become themselves fresh injuries. By the law of nature and reason, as well as by the positive institutions of every country, all promises, bonds, or oaths, extorted by duress, that is, by unlawful imprisonments or menaces, are not obligatory: It is, on the contrary, a crime to fulfil them! because an acquiescence in the impositions of lawless villains, is abetting lawless villains.

Besides, it was not in the power of Brutus to alter his allegiance, which he had already engaged to the commonwealth, which had done nothing to forfeit the same. For how lawful soever it be for subjects to transfer their obedience to a conqueror, in a foreign war, when the

former civil power can no longer protect them; or to a new magistrate made by consent, when the old had forfeited or resigned: It is ridiculous to suppose, that they can transfer it to a domestick traitor and robber, who is under the same ties and allegiance with themselves, and, by all acts of violence, treason, and usurpation, extorts a submission from his oppressed masters and fellow-subjects. At least such allegiance can never be pre-engaged, whilst any means in nature are left to rid the world of such a monster.

It is a poor charge against Brutus, that Caesar intended him for his heir and successor. Brutus scorned to succeed a tyrant: And what more glorious for Brutus, than thus to own that the dangerous and bewitching prospect of the greatest power that ever mortal man possessed, could not shake the firm and virtuous heart of Brutus, nor corrupt his integrity? To own that no personal considerations, even the highest upon earth, could reconcile him to a tyrant; and that he preferred the liberty of the world to the empire of the world!

The above charges therefore against Brutus can hardly come from any but those, who, like the profane and slavish Esau, would sell their birthright for a mess of pottage; would sacrifice their duty to their interest; and, unconcerned what becomes of the rest of mankind, would promote tyranny, if they might but shine in its trappings. But an honest mind, a mind great and virtuous, scorns and hates all ambition, but that of doing good to men, and to all men; it despises momentary riches, and ill-gotten power; it enjoys no vicious and hard-hearted pleasures, arising from the miseries of others: But it wishes and endeavours to procure impartial, diffusive, and universal happiness to the whole earth.

This is the character of a great and good mind; and this was the great and sublime soul of the immortal Brutus.

From this mention of the slippery and dangerous favours of tyrants, I would just observe, as I go along, that, to any man who values virtue or liberty, twenty pounds a year in a free country, is preferable to being first minister to the Great Turk; whose ministers, by their station and allegiance, are obliged to be oppressors, and are often rewarded with the bow-string for their most faithful services to their master, and for services perhaps performed by his command.

But to return to Brutus: He had on his side the law of self-preservation, the spirit of the Roman constitution, and of those laws of liberty, which had subsisted near five hundred years, but were now destroyed by the usurper. And during all those long and renowned ages of liberty, the destroying of tyrants was ever accounted glory and heroism. And, as every law of the commonwealth was against Caesar, who was an open enemy to the commonwealth; the commonwealth, and all its laws, were for Brutus, its greatest and best subject. Caesar's laws were none, and worse than none; but the whole life and actions of Brutus were agreeable to the constitution of his country.

Suppose Brutus, having killed Caesar, had succeeded him: He could not have been a greater usurper than Caesar was. And yet would he, in that case, have been less sacred and inviolable than Caesar? I hope the oppressing of mankind is not a less crime than the killing of their oppressor.

Our Brutus could not have greater ties of affection to the tyrant Caesar, who usurped Rome, and destroyed its liberties, than the elder Brutus had to his own sons, whom he put to death, for a plot to restore the tyrant Tarquin, a thousand times more innocent than Caesar: And as to the sudden manner of putting him to death, Mutius Scaevola is immortalized for a bold attempt, to kill by surprize the Tuscan king Porsenna, who was a foreign enemy, making unjust war upon Rome, to restore Tarquin: And the like immortality is bestowed upon Judith, for killing Holofernes deceit- fully, when it could be done no other way. Now both these men were publick enemies; but neither of them a publick traitor: Caesar was both; and *dolus an*

virtus quis in hoste requirat? Was ever Aratus mentioned with reproach, or does Dr. Prideaux mention him with reproach, for surprizing and expelling Nicocles, tyrant of Sicyon; or has he not gained deathless fame by that worthy action? And how comes the little tyrant Nicocles to be less sacred than the greater tyrant Caesar, who did millions of mischiefs more than Nicocles?

Let us now see what Dr. Prideaux says of Caesar. After having told us, that he was excited by ambition and malice; that he justly had for the reward thereof that destruction by which he fell; the Doctor adds these words:

He is said to have slain eleven hundred and ninety-two thousand men; which proves him to have been a terrible scourge in the hand of God, for the punishment of the wickedness of that age. And, consequently, he is to be reputed the greatest pest and plague that mankind had therein: But notwithstanding this, his actions have with many acquired great glory to his name: Whereas true glory is due only to those who benefit, not to those who destroy, mankind.

All this is honestly and justly said; but I cannot reconcile it to what he has said before, about the death of that destroyer. Sure, upon his own principles, never was true glory more due to any mortal man, than to Brutus! His life and studies were laid out in doing good to mankind; whereas Caesar was indeed the greatest pest and plague that mankind had. For, besides all the wickedness that he did with his own wicked hands and counsels, he frustrated all the purposes, virtue, and bravery, of the old Romans, in establishing liberty, and in conquering, polishing, and setting free great part of the barbarous world. All the battles that they fought, were fought for him; all the blood that they spilt, was spilt for him. Caesar took all, and overturned all. Besides, all the numberless and heavy mischiefs that the Roman world suffered from succeeding tyrants, were, in a great measure, owing to Caesar, who established a government by tyrants. He was in this sense the author of all the barbarity, rapine, and butcheries, brought upon the empire, by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and other barbarians, who easily mastered an empire, weakened, and already almost destroyed, by the folly, madness, cruelty, and prodigality, of the imperial tyrants, his successors.

The Doctor takes notice, that Cassus Parmensis, being the only remaining tyrannicide, was put to death by the command of Augustus. And he observes upon it, that murder seldom escapes the vindictive hand of God, and especially the murder of princes. All this may be true; and yet, what is all this to Julius Caesar? If Caesar was a prince, any robber or murderer that has force and villainy enough, may be a prince; and blood, and wounds, and treason, constitute a prince. Every soldier in Caesar's army had as good a right to the government of Rome, as Caesar had. Was his style like that of a prince, or the father of his country, when he told his soldiers, according to Petronius, and agreeably to what he did afterwards;

— — — *Ite furentes,*
Ite mei comites, & causam dicite ferro.
Judice fortuna cadat alea: Sumite bellum;
Inter tot fortes armatus nescio vinc.

Was not this setting up open violence and the sword for a title? If Rob Roy had conquered Scotland, with his barbarous Highland host; would he have been a prince, Prince of Scotland? Was Cromwell a prince? And would Massianello and Jack Straw, had they succeeded, have been princes?

As to Caesar's parts, they added vastly to his crimes, and were, as he applied them, only a great capacity to do great mischief. *Curse on his virtues, they have undone his country!* Besides, there were doubtless many men in Rome who had equal parts, and infinitely more merit. Brutus particularly had. The Devil has much greater abilities than Caesar had, and is

also a prince, a very great prince; the executioner of God's vengeance too, the greatest executioner: And yet are we not expressly commanded to resist him? The plague is often the instrument of God's judgment; are we therefore not to resist the plague, by proper diet and antidotes? The bite of an adder may be the judgment of God; is it therefore a sin to tread upon the adder's head, and kill him? Or are antidotes against all other plagues lawful; but none lawful against the worst, the most lasting and destructive of all plagues, the plague of tyranny? Or is an adder less sacred than a tyrant? And why? I hope God made adders as well as Caesar. A storm may be a judgment; must we not therefore discharge a great gun against it, in order to disperse it? Or pray how comes one sort of the instruments of God's judgment to be more sacred than another? I am sure, God detests tyrants; and if they be God's ministers, so are plagues and serpents, and so is Satan himself.

Brutus was one of the properest persons to kill Caesar; as he was of all the men in Rome the most revered and popular. His wisdom, and virtue, and publick spirit, were known and adored: The consent of the Senate, and of all good men, was with him; none but the prostitute creatures of power, and those that ambitiously sought it, with their deceived and hireling followers, condemned him; nor durst even they at first. But Brutus, out of his too great goodness and generosity, spared Anthony, who ought to have accompanied Caesar. But while the wild Anthony remained, the root of the evil was not quite plucked up. He began a new war upon his country. The Senate, however, declared for the tyrannicides; declared Mark Anthony a publick enemy for making war upon Decimus Brutus, who was one of them; and sent both the consuls with an army against Anthony, in defence of Brutus: And had it not been for the treacherous and ungrateful young Caesar, the commonwealth would have been, in all likelihood, thoroughly established. But this young traitor, like his uncle Julius, turned the arms of the commonwealth upon the commonwealth, and joined with its enemy Mark Anthony to oppress it.

The terrible proceedings and bloody proscriptions that followed this agreement are well known. Nor is it at all strange, that not one of the tyrannicides survived the civil war, or died a natural death. They were almost all soldiers and commanders, and were either mostly slain in battle, or by the command of the conquerors: Their enemies got the better, and they had no where to fly to. The world was possessed by the usurpers. If Brutus and Cassius killed themselves, rather than fall into their enemies' hands, and adorn the triumphs of successful traitors; several of the chiefs of the other party did also kill themselves during the war; particularly Dolabella, and many of the principals of his party at Antioch, when Cassius besieged them there. Was this also a judgment?

Brutus and Cassius killed themselves! What then? Was it not done like Romans, like virtuous old Romans, thus to prefer death to slavery? It was a Roman spirit; and those who possessed it, did as much disdain to be tyrants, as to submit to tyranny; a spirit that scorned an ignominious life, held only at the mercy of an usurper, or by flattering his villainy, and abetting his usurpations; and a spirit, which those that want it can never admire. Great souls are not comprehended by small! It is undoubtedly true, that by the precepts of Christianity we are not at liberty to dispose of our own lives; but are to wait for the call of heaven to alleviate or end our calamities: But the Romans had no other laws to act by, but the natural dictates of uncorrupted reason. I call upon the great pretenders to philosophy and refined morals, to assign one fair reason, why a Roman, why Brutus and Cassius, should prefer a miserable life to an honourable death; should bear vassalage, chains, and tortures of body or mind, when all those evils were to be avoided by doing only that, which, by the course of nature, every man must soon do. It is better not to be, than to be unhappy; and the severest judgment on the wicked is, that they shall live for ever, and can never end their miseries: Much less can it be any service to society, to keep alive by art or force a melancholy, miserable, and useless member, grown perhaps burdensome too by age and infirmities.

In this light we must view the actions of the old Romans, guided only by nature, and unrestrained from suicide by any principles of their religion. We find, on the contrary, in history, many examples of the great and magnanimous heroes of antiquity, choosing voluntary death, often in the midst of health, with the greatest calmness of mind; sometimes from satiety of life and glory, either when they could gain no more, or apprehending that the future caprices of unconstant fortune might sully the past; and oftener still, to avoid submitting to disgrace and servitude.

A voluntary death from such motives as these, was, among the ancients, one of the paths to immortality; and, under certain circumstances, none but mean and abject minds declined it. Roman ladies often chose it. Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, chose a long premeditated death, rather than be led captive to Rome. And when Perseus sent to P. Aemilius, beseeching him with all earnestness, that so great a prince, late lord of Macedon, and good part of Greece, might not be led, like a slave, in chains at his chariot wheel, to grace his triumph; he received this short answer, that "it was in his own power to prevent it": Thus signifying to him, that he deserved the disgrace, if he would live to bear it.

Even under the dispensations of a new religion, which God Almighty condescended personally to teach mankind; human nature has prevailed so far over revealed truths, that in multitudes of instances a voluntary death is approved, at least not condemned, by almost the greatest part of the world. Men in extreme pain and agonies do often refuse physick, and the means of preserving their lives, days, weeks, and months longer. Men in lingering and desperate distempers go, uncalled, to mount a breach in a siege, or into the midst of the battle, to meet certain death. Great commanders have done the same, when the day went against them, rather than survive being beaten. Commanders of ships have blown up themselves and their ships, rather than be the prey of the conqueror. Towns besieged, when they could defend themselves no longer, have first burnt their town, then precipitated themselves desperately amongst their enemies, to procure an honourable death and revenge. Even common malefactors often choose to die, rather than discover their accomplices; and always get credit by doing so. And the stories of the Decii, of Celanus, of the great Cato, and even of Otho, and many other of the great examples of antiquity, made immortal by this act of ancient heroism, are still read with admiration.

I shall, for a conclusion of this long paper, give my readers the sentiments of the excellent Mr. Cowley, concerning Brutus and Caesar, in his ode entitled *Brutus*.

*Can we stand by and see
Our mother robb'd, and bound, and ravish'd be,
Yet not to her assistance stir,
Pleas'd with the strength and beauty of the ravisher?
Or shall we fear to kill him, if before
The cancell'd name of friend he bore?
Ingrateful Brutus do they call?
Ingrateful Caesar, who could Rome enthral!
An act more barbarous and unnatural
(In th' exact balance of true virtue try'd)
Than his successor Nero's parricide!*

* * *

*What mercy could the tyrant's life deserve
From him who kill'd himself rather than serve?*

* * *

*What joy can human things to us afford,
When we see perish thus by odd events,
By ill men and wretched accidents,
The best cause, and best man that ever drew a sword?
When we see
The false Octavius and wild Anthony,*

God-like Brutus! conquer thee?

G

I am, &c.

No. 57. SATURDAY, December 16, 1721.

Of false Honour, publick and private. [Gordon] ↩

[II-192]

SIR,

I have more than once complained in these letters, that the best things being most abused are capable of doing the greatest harm: Nor is it a new observation, whatever new occasion there may be, at all times, to repeat it. Men have been ever deceived by good names into an approbation of ill things, sanctified by these names. Imposture and delusion have been called religion, and thought so; oppression and rapine have been called government, and esteemed government. Teachers have degenerated into deceivers, submission into slavery, taxation into plundering, protection into destruction, and magistrates into murderers, without changing their names: Power and right have been ever confounded; and success, or the want of success, has turned villainy into virtue, and virtue into villainy.

Hence it is that little crimes and small criminals have been detested and punished, while great malefactors have been generally revered and obeyed: and that little rogues have been called thieves, and hanged; and great thieves have been styled conquerors and princes, and sometimes deified. Your Alexanders and Caesars were only felons above the gallows; and so have been many others of much less figure than they. Great crimes protect themselves, and one another; so that, in effect, crimes are not always punished because they are crimes, but because they are not mighty crimes: Nor, in the inflicting of punishments, has the offence or the offender been considered, but only the figure of the offender; who, if he were poor and necessitous, has been put to death; if great and ambitious, has been protected or preferred. And thus it is, that halters and garters, axes and white staves, palaces and dungeons, have been often miserably confounded and misplaced.

Thus are the boundaries and distinction between good and evil almost lost in the world. To illustrate this in every instance that deserves illustration, would be to write a folio instead of a letter; at present I shall confine myself to the consideration of false honour, which has done much more mischief to mankind than ever real honour did good, as it is more conducing to the little personal gratifications, and the crooked self-ends of particular men.

True honour is an attachment to honest and beneficent principles, and a good reputation; and prompts a man to do good to others, and indeed to all men, at his own cost, pains, or peril. False honour is a pretence to this character, but does things that destroy it: And the abuse of honour is called honour, by those who from that good word borrow credit to act basely, rashly, or foolishly.

A man cannot act honourably in a bad cause. That he thinks it a good cause, is not a good excuse; for folly and mistake is not honour: Nor is it a better excuse, that he is engaged in it, and has pledged his faith to support it, and act for it; for this is to engage his honour against honour, and to list his faith in a war against truth. To say that he is ashamed to desert it, is to say that he is ashamed to do an honest thing; and that he prefers false shame to true honour, which engages the man that possesses it to hate and break all criminal engagements. If a man enter into a party or society, because he thinks it an honest society; is he obliged to continue in it, when he finds it a society of knaves? And does his honour oblige him to be a knave too, or to desert those that are knaves? Or, does a robber, who leaves the gang, violate his honour, which was only an obligation to rob?

A good conscience, an honest heart, and clean hands, are inseparable from true honour; nor does true honour teach any man to act against his judgment. It must be convinced before it acts, and mere authority has no weight with it. In human matters, it does not consider what is commanded, but what ought to be commanded; and before it executes an injunction, enquires whether the same be rational and just. When superior orders are unjust, the honour of obedience is taken away; for honour is not the instrument of evil; it is therefore false and pretended honour, to execute and vindicate a bad action by an unjust command. Indeed, no command of any consequence ought to be obeyed, but what is or ought to be law, and is not forbidden by any law.

But this is only reasoning, which has but little force with men when it combats their interest and worst passions. To them therefore who follow the guides of gain and ambition, what I have here said is not addressed; but to those who, contrary to their interest, follow and approve others whose only principle is interest.

False honour has more power over men than laws have; and those who despise all the ties of laws, and of religion and humanity, are often very exact in observing all the fantastical and wicked rules of false honour. There are no debts so punctually paid as those contracted at play: though there are express laws against play, and against paying of money won at play; nay, 'tis penal to pay such debts. And yet those that are thus exact in paying to their own ruin, and in defiance of law, whatever debts they contract to avowed sharpers, who live by cheating and picking pockets, and are the destruction of families, and a publick nuisance: I say, those men thus exact in unrighteousness and their own wrong, shall run in debt to honest tradesmen, without any purpose of paying them, and, unconcerned, see them broke, imprisoned, and undone, for want of such payment. So lawlessly just are they to rogues that ruin them, and so barbarously unjust to industrious and credulous men, who feed and clothe them!

Is this honour! What dupes are we to words and to our own vice and folly! It is but small comfort to us, that this voluntary madness prevailed of old amongst our barbarous German ancestors; of whose distracted propensity to gaming Tacitus gives us this astonishing account:

Aleam sobrii inter seria exercent, tanta lucrandi perdendive temeritate, ut cum omnia defecerunt, extremo ac novissimo jactu, de libertate & de corpore contendant. Victus voluntariam servitutem adit, quamvis junior, quamvis robustior, adligari se ac venire patitur. Ea est in re prava pervicacia: ipsi fidem vocant.

Gaming is one of their most serious employments, and even sober they are gamblers! To this rash vice they are so violently addicted, that when they have wantonly lost all, they have not done, but desperately stake their liberty and their persons upon the last throw. The loser goes calmly into bondage; and though the younger and the stronger, suffers himself tamely to be bound and sold by him that wins. Such is their vicious perseverance in folly! they themselves call it honour.

Our modern gamblers do not indeed go quite this length; they only sell themselves, with their families and posterity, to beggary: For as to their bodies, no body will stake any thing against them. But in point of honour, in gaming, we still retain the strictness of these our polite ancestors at play, and generously pay to the last morsel of bread, and venture famine rather than a dun from one that has foiled us at the art of picking pockets. As to other duns, honest and necessitous duns, we matter them not; and debts of real honour and conscience, do not at all touch our honour.

Thus is honour set up against virtue and law. Good laws not executed are worse than none, and only teach men to despise law: whereas reverence and obedience go together. No law will or can ever be executed by inferior magistrates, while the breach of it is openly encouraged by the example of superior. Does any man think that the best laws, even inspired laws, against duelling, would have any effect, if there was at the same time a duelling-office kept open at St. James's? The example of those that should execute laws, or see them executed, is stronger than the authority of those that make them. The example of Vespasian did more towards the restraint of luxury, than all the sumptuary laws of Rome could do till his time.

Praecipuus adstricti moris auctor Vespasianus fuit. Obsequium inde in principem, & aemulandi amor, validior quam poena ex legibus & metus.

Vespasian was himself a special instance and author of temperance and frugality. From hence grew in the people a reverence for the example of the prince, and an emulation to conform their manners to his; a tie much stronger than the dread of laws and all their penalties.

It is moreover become a mighty piece of honour to repair one crime by another, and a worse; and when one has done you an injury, he must, by the rules of honour, fight to defend it. Having affronted or harmed you, contrary to justice and honour, he makes you satisfaction by taking away your life, according to the impulses of true honour; so here is a war of honour against honour and justice and common sense.

Another piece of honour is an adherence to error, after conviction, and not to change a bad religion for a better. To have been born in a certain faith, is just as good sense as to have been born a lawyer or mathematician; and yet that same is often the best and truest reason against change! And therefore we often adhere against all our reason, to what others said or did for us without our consent, and when we had no reason. Because perhaps some people promised for us when we were a day old, that we should forty years afterwards, and all our life, count beads, worship unsavoury bones, be governed by deceivers and believe contradictions; are we therefore obliged to do all this, though we find it to be against all religion? Must we be hypocrites, because our ancestors were fools? Are old falsehoods and fooleries the standard of our honour? Are we never to mend a wretched condition, and never to make use of our conscience? If so, then here is a war of honour against conscience, a war of faith against belief, and a war of religion against persuasion!

Another piece of false honour has sometimes been that of serving a prince at the expence of one's country, though the serving of that country was the only duty and only business of the prince, and of every man in office under him. But this, though a truth as self-evident as any in the Bible, has been so little understood or practised, that the wicked execution of impious engagements made to a tyrant, against those made to society, has been called honour. And it has frequently been the honour of a courtier, to execute all the ill purposes of a court against his country. And here was the war of honour against duty.

The honour of a party is to adhere to one another, right or wrong; and though their chief be a knave and a traitor, their honour is engaged to be honest to him in all his rogueries and treason. And this is a war of honour against honesty.

The honour and *bona fide* of some princes have been of that odd and unprincipely contexture, that they were never once restrained by the same, from deceiving, plaguing, invading, robbing, and usurping upon their neighbours, and doing things which would have entitled a plain subject to the gibbet. Their honour seems to have been deeply concerned to have no honour: And though their faith was engaged to protect their subjects; yet their honour, on the other side, was engaged to pillage and enslave them. And here grew the royal

war of honour against faith and equity!

How many peaceable nations have been robbed, how many millions of innocents butchered, out of mere honour, princely honour? This honour is indeed so wild, mischievous, and extravagant, that words, the most warm and significant words, fail in describing it. I shall therefore subjoin a few instances of its spirit, and conclude.

His Grace, Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, engaged his country in two mad wars at once with the two greatest powers in Europe, because his honour had suffered a rebuff in his attempts to debauch two great foreign ladies. Europe was to be embroiled; lives, treasure, and the safety of kingdoms to be risked and thrown away, to vindicate, forsooth, his Grace's debauched honour.

Cambyses, to revenge an affront put upon his father many years before by an Egyptian king, in the business of sending him a wife, involved the world in a flame of war; and at the expence of perhaps a million of lives, and the destruction of kingdoms, did at last heroically vindicate his father's honour and his own, upon the bones of a dead king, whom he caused to be dug up, and, after many indignities, cast into the fire.

White elephants are rare in nature, and so greatly valued in the Indies, that the King of Pegu hearing that the King of Siam had got two, sent an embassy in form, to desire one of them of his royal brother, at any price: But being refused, he thought his honour concerned to wage war for so great an affront. So he entered Siam with a vast army, and with the loss of five hundred thousand of his own men, and the destruction of as many of the Siamese, he made himself master of the elephant, and retrieved his honour.

Darius (I think it was Darius the Mede) found his honour concerned to chastise the Scythians for having invaded Asia a hundred and thirty years before; and lost a great army to vindicate his honour, which yet was not vindicated; that is, he missed the white elephant.

In short, honour and victory are generally no more than white elephants; and for white elephants the most destructive wars have been often made. What man free, either by birth or spirit, could, without pity and contempt, behold, as in a late French reign he frequently might behold, a swarm of slavish Frenchmen, in wooden shoes, with hungry bellies, and no clothes, dancing round a maypole, because their *Grand Monarque*, at the expence of a million of their money, and thirty or forty thousand lives, had acquired a white elephant, or, in other words, gained a town or victory?

Instances are endless, or else I could name other people, who have employed themselves several years in catching white elephants by sea and land; but I am in haste to conclude.

G

I am, &c.

No. 58. SATURDAY, December 23, 1721.

Letter from a Lady, with an Answer, about Love, Marriage, and Settlements. (A Woman, Trenchard, and Gordon) ↩

[II-201]

TO CATO

SIR,

Though love, abstracted from marriage, is a subject too low for a statesman, a politician, and I might add a philosopher; yet as it relates to that holy state (as our Church is pleased to call it) it is worthy the greatest notice; for though many take upon them to ridicule all lawful and honourable love, and marriage, which crowns and proves it, yet I will venture to affirm, that hardly any person lives a long life without desiring at some part of it to enter into that state: It is like religion, implanted in our natures; and all men have a notion that 'tis the way to happiness, though all do not practise it: The reasons of this want of practise are many; besides the degeneracy of human nature, the imperfections of both sexes make them afraid of so close an affinity; the want of constancy in the male sex, and, above all, the love of money in both, is the greatest scandal and hindrance to this most honourable state in life.

I cannot excuse either sex (though by this time, both from my subject and handling of it, you will guess me to be of the weakest) from this last vice, the love of money; and I might add to it ambition; for it seems to me grown the rule of marriage, there being few alliances contracted of late years, but where this is the chief motive on the man's side, and almost so on the woman's: No wonder the ladies should have caught the vice; for when a woman finds herself slighted for no other want but that of a large fortune, she must needs think it worth purchasing at any rate, and neglect all other merit as useless.

I do not pretend to say that virtue and merit, in our sex, is to be met with in every corner of the streets, as I am too sensible the contrary is; but sure I am it is to be found, and judgment was given to the men in order to distinguish it. But, say your sex, is money then to be despised? Must the contrary be sought? And has a lady less merit for having a large fortune? Not always, but indeed too often; nay, nothing can hinder it but natural good sense and temper, joined to great care taken in the education; without that a superior fortune makes a worse woman, consequently a worse wife.

I was led into this thought, and which occasioned this letter, by a disappointment that a young lady I had a friendship for met with lately, with relation to this subject, which cost her her life.

She was addressed to by a gentleman, whose good sense and agreeableness would, she thought, atone for some natural defects and infirmities, which she had penetration enough to find out in his temper and disposition; among which his love of money was not the least: He was superior to her in fortune; but she was a gentlewoman born, and bred so, and in every respect, but money, his equal: She resolved to suit herself to his humour; and fancied herself cut out to please and make him happy, not out of vanity, but inclination to do so. She had pride, and did not greatly care to be obliged, even by the man whom she loved; but fancied she could save up a fortune to him in a few years, and, with the refusing of presents, and resigning of settlements, atone in great measure for the want of it. He thought it worth while to deceive her for a considerable length of time, for what reason I cannot guess, she being a woman of undoubted character, which he had known for some years before, and all her actions answered: But in short he left her, and that in so abrupt and rude a manner, as made

her bear it worse; not shewing the least abatement of his passion the last time he saw her, more than at the first. I wish that he had trusted her with the secret of forsaking her; for I dare say she would have taken it handsomely, and (for his advantage) given him up.

The disappointment met her under an indisposition of body, else I believe she had good sense, reason, and resentment enough, to have got the better of it. But she died, and without reproaching of him, or behaving herself unhandsomely; she said she was inclined to believe that there was a fate in things of that nature, and wished him happier than (she doubted) he deserved.

He is now upon the brink of marriage to a lady, that I dare say he does not like half so well as this lady whom he left for her; but she had more money abundantly, which he does not want; and then, though, as I said before, money is no objection, nor need a woman be sought out that wants it, yet I would not have a man venture to leave a woman for no other reason, lest he (as too probably he may) chance to repent it.

Sir, if you think this subject, or our sex, worthy your notice, we shall be obliged to you; you are an author, I might say it to your face, capable of serving any cause that you undertake; ours is a charitable one: I am out of the question myself, with relation to making my fortune, or it might not have been so proper for me to have started this subject, though obscure; but I have a general love for mankind, and particularly for my own sex; whose cause I commit to you, as into the hands of a most powerful advocate, and (I hope) a willing patron. My sincerity on this subject cannot be doubted, when I most humbly subscribe myself of that sex whose cause I recommend; viz.

A WOMAN

TO THE LADY WHO WROTE THE FOREGOING

MADAM,

You will easily believe me, when I acquaint you, that I am not a little proud of the honour you have done me, in thinking me worthy of the correspondence of a lady, to whom nature has shewn herself so indulgent. She seldom leaves her own work imperfect; and therefore I doubt not but she has been propitious to you more ways than one: And I am persuaded, that if you had been the first object of the inconstant Strephon's adoration, he had never worshipped any false goddess.

I can assure you, madam, you could never have recommended yourself so much to me, or have obliged me more, than in engaging me in this agreeable manner in the cause of helpless innocence, and distressed virtue; and in giving me an opportunity to consider the greater and better half of the world in their nearest and most engaging relation. I am, by profession, a knight-errant: It is my business to right wrongs, and redress injuries; and none more than those done to your tender sex.

It is a subject which employs my softest and most delicate thoughts and inclinations; which I can in nothing gratify so much, as by contributing to the ease and happiness of that sex, to whom we owe most of our own.

*That cordial drop heav'n in our cup has thrown,
To make the nauseous draught of life go down;*

And to atone for the thousands, ten thousands of evils, to which human condition is subject.

Hercules himself laid down his club, and took up a distaff: And,

— — — *—furious Mars,
The only governor and god of wars,
When tir'd with heat and toil, does oft resort
To taste the pleasures of the Paphian court.*

I do not therefore depart from my character, or desert my duty, in considering this subject, and attending upon the concerns of the fair: With their cause the cause of liberty is blended; and scarce any man will be much concerned for publick happiness, unless he enjoys domestick: Publick happiness being nothing else but the magistrate's protecting of private men in their property, and their enjoyments. It is certain, that a man's interest, in point of happiness and pleasures, is in no instance so much concerned as in that of marriage; which being the happiest or unhappiest state in the world, must mostly contribute to his happiness or misery.

The beauty, the vigour, the wit, and consequently the preferment of his posterity, do much depend upon the choice of his wife, and possibly upon his inclinations to her, and hers to him. We are very careful of the breed of our horses, of our cocks, and our dogs, and as remarkably neglectful of the education of our children; and yet we dedicate two thirds of our substance to our posterity: For so much is the difference between the purchase of estates of inheritance, and of estates only for our own lives.

Our wealth does also depend in a great measure upon domestick sympathy and concord; and it is a true proverb, that *A man must ask leave of his wife to be rich*: So great a share of his substance and prosperity must remain in her power, and at her discretion, and under her management, that if he would thrive and be happy himself, he must make her so.

In order to this, he ought to choose one whose temper, good sense, and agreeableness, shall make him find his pleasure in obliging her; and by constancy and endearing actions make her wholly his own, and to do all in her power to oblige him. No man can live in a constant state of hypocrisy in his own family; but if he has distastes, they will certainly break out; or at least be found out by one who is always about him, and whose constant business it is to observe him, and his humours and affections. And therefore it is his best and only way to find out such a one as he need not counterfeit a kindness to.

In all my observation, a good husband rarely misses to make a good wife. The hearts of women are naturally so tender, their passions towards their husbands so strong, their happiness and the respect which they meet with in the world are so much owing to their husbands, that we seldom find a married woman who will not, with a little real, and often with but a seeming kindness, do whatever a prudent husband will desire of her; and often, to oblige him, more than he desires. And what can be more barbarous, than to use one ill who throws herself into his power, and depends upon his protection; who gives up all that she has to his mercy, and receives it afterwards at his pleasure?

It is miserable folly, to put yourself in a circumstance of being uneasy in your own house, which ought to be a retreat from all the ruffles and disappointments that you meet with elsewhere: In consequence of this, you must seek your pleasures abroad at great expence, and the hazard of your health, and to the neglect of your affairs. Your wife too, when she finds herself neglected by one in whom she had fixed her whole happiness, will not bear the place and mansion of her misery, but will fall into a despondency, and an indifference to your interest; and will be apt to look out in her turn for pleasures abroad, when she can have none at home. Women for the most part place their felicity in their husbands, and in their families; and generally pursue those views, till the unkindness, neglect, and folly of their husbands render them impracticable.

Whatever excuse there may be for men overrun with debts, or otherwise very necessitous, to aim only at money in marriage, and thereby to throw themselves into a miserable and nauseous imprisonment for life, to prevent falling into one but little worse; I cannot find one tolerable reason in nature, why any man in easy circumstances, and who does not want the common necessities of life, should purchase the superfluities at so dear a price. But it is stupendous that men of figure and fortune, who have in their power the means of enjoying not only the conveniencies, but the luxury and vices of life (if such can be called enjoyments), should yet barter away all their happiness for a little seeming additional wealth, which for the most part produces real poverty.

It is certain, that ten men of birth and estates have been undone by marrying great fortunes, for one who has been enriched by it. Most men pay twenty per cent for such portions, as long as they have any thing to pay. Ten thousand pounds additional fortune, when laid out in land, will not produce three hundred pounds a year clear; which sum will scarce maintain the tea-table, and keep the supernumerary baubles in repair; and it will cost as much more to shew them. Besides, when the usual presents are made, and an expensive marriage is solemnized, gaudy clothes and equipage are bought, and perhaps a London house furnished; a considerable part of this portion will be disbursed, and the forlorn hero of this shewy, noisy farce, will discover, too late, how much more eligible it had been to have married a lady well born, of a discreet, modest, and frugal education, and an agreeable person, with less money, than a haughty dame with all her quality airs about her, or Mr. Thimbleman's daughter, though bedecked with as many trinkets as Tallboy or Jerry Blackacre upon the stage.

But before we can complete this account, we must balance what must be given in lieu of this lady's wealth, besides the entire loss of conjugal and domestick happiness. It is truly said, that *gold may be bought too dear*; and I may safely say, that the dearest purchase now in England, is a wife with a great fortune, not excepting that of South-Sea stock last year.

For every thousand pounds the lady brings, she must have a hundred pounds a year, at least during her own life, and often a rent-charge, which alone is worth the purchase money which she brings, if she outlives her husband; and then she brings nothing towards the issue, which, modestly speaking, are as much hers as her husband's; and it is certain, that during her living with him, she spends more than the interest of it: For (besides her private expence) the gay furniture, the rich beds, the China ware, the tea-table, the visiting-rooms, rich coaches, &c. must be chiefly placed to her account; and she shares equally in the table expence, and in that of the children and gardens: And yet, over and above all this, a man must settle the remainder of his estate and substance out of his own power, and entail it upon whatever heir chance and his wife bring him; perhaps upon an ungrateful and disobedient one, made so by his independency upon his father; often upon a foolish and unimprovable one; sometimes, perhaps, upon a spurious one.

I do not complain of this usual method of settlement, as thinking it reasonable that any man should give a large sum of money in dowry with his daughter, without taking proper precautions to provide for her and his own posterity: But I censure the present great abuse of giving and demanding such fortunes, which have inverted the very ends of marriage, and made wives independent on their husbands, and sons on their fathers; fortunes, which make men bargain for their wives, as they would for cattle; and, instead of creating conjugal friendship and affection, and all sorts of domestick happiness, have produced nothing but strife, aversion, and contention, where there ought to be perfect sympathy and unanimity; and have brought into the world a race of monkeys and baboons, instead of creatures with human shape and souls.

Why should men of fortune and understanding bring themselves, without any motive from reason or interest, into these unhappy circumstances? Why should any man, without any consideration, at least any valuable consideration, divest himself of the greatest part of the property of his own estate? Why make himself only tenant for life, when he is in possession of an inheritance; and render himself by that means unable to provide against the many emergencies of life? Why subject himself to the insolence of an ungrateful heir, or be forced to leave it to an unworthy one? Why be obliged to bear the caprices and dishonour of a wanton and peevish wife, perhaps made so by his neglect, arising from his aversion, the ordinary effect of marriage against inclination? when he might have chosen one every way suited to the same; and, by contenting himself with less fortune, have kept the greatest part of his estate in his own power, and with it the further means of obliging her, and of making her future fortune and expectations to depend upon her own conduct, complaisance, and affectionate behaviour?

T

You have given me, madam, a very pregnant and affecting instance of a gentleman, who, made false by avarice, has lost, and wickedly lost, a virtuous, prudent, and fond wife, while he sought money more than merit; and cruelly broke his faith, and with it a tender heart, for the infamous sake of lucre; which may deservedly prove a canker in his soul and his substance, and bring him a lady with qualities proper to revenge the other's just quarrel and barbarous wrongs. And I, on my part, can give you an instance of a gentleman of great fortune and figure, who, by acting according to the former wiser rules, has made himself happy in an amiable, discreet, and observant lady, and enjoys with her all the blessings of mutual confidence and tender affection. He is complaisant without art, and she without fear. I am,

G

With perfect respect,
MADAM,
Your most humble and most obedient servant,

CATO

POSTSCRIPT ↩

I have, in several of my late letters, observed some slips that have escaped from the pen of the great and learned Dr. Prideaux; but as I have done this with no design of blemishing a character which cannot be blemished, I think myself obliged to own once more, his great merit, the service done by him to man-kind, the honour to his country, and the pleasure and information which I in particular have received from his worthy labours.

It is possible, that out of detestation to principles which subvert and tear up by the roots all liberty and civil happiness, I may have used some warm expressions against those that maintain them. Such expressions therefore can be applied only to those who have been ever the avowed and active enemies of every thing lovely, valuable, or praiseworthy amongst men. But as to Dr. Prideaux, however he is fallen into prejudice, perhaps early imbibed, and not since examined by him with his usual accuracy; or however he might intend to serve a pious cause with adventitious helps and precarious supports, which it wanted not: Certain it is, from the whole course of his excellent performance, that he had sincerely at heart the interest of true religion and liberty. A spirit of virtue, piety, good sense, and integrity, and an aversion to oppression, cruelty, and tyranny, shine through his whole history, and animate the same; and neither he nor his history can be too much commended.

But the Doctor is an eminent instance, how little any man ought to be guided by the mere authority of another; since one of the greatest and worthiest men living is capable of falling into such obvious errors. From the greatness of his name and credit alone I was led to these animadversions, and with reluctance I made them. Falcons do not prey upon flies. Other writers, whose characters add no weight to their mistakes, are safe from any censure of mine. For this reason I shall not trouble myself with the party-falsehoods, and pious ribaldry, and blunders, of a modern voluminous writer of English history. His contract and dialogue between Oliver Cromwell and the Devil, is a harmless piece of history, and as entertaining as the rest.

T.

I am, &c.

No. 59. SATURDAY, December 30, 1721.

Liberty proved to be the unalienable Right of all Mankind. [Trenchard] ↩

[II-214]

SIR,

I intend to entertain my readers with dissertations upon liberty, in some of my succeeding letters; and shall, as a preface to that design, endeavour to prove in this, that liberty is the unalienable right of all mankind.

All governments, under whatsoever form they are administered, ought to be administered for the good of the society; when they are otherwise administered, they cease to be government, and become usurpation. This being the end of all government, even the most despotick have this limitation to their authority: In this respect, the only difference between the most absolute princes and limited magistrates, is, that in free governments there are checks and restraints appointed and expressed in the constitution itself: In despotick governments, the people submit themselves to the prudence and discretion of the prince alone: But there is still this tacit condition annexed to his power, that he must act by the unwritten laws of discretion and prudence, and employ it for the sole interest of the people, who give it to him, or suffer him to enjoy it, which they ever do for their own sakes.

Even in the most free governments, single men are often trusted with discretionary power: But they must answer for that discretion to those that trust them. Generals of armies and admirals of fleets have often unlimited commissions; and yet are they not answerable for the prudent execution of those commissions? The Council of Ten, in Venice, have absolute power over the liberty and life of every man in the state: But if they should make use of that power to slaughter, abolish, or enslave the senate; and, like the Decemviri of Rome, to set up themselves; would it not be lawful for those, who gave them that authority for other ends, to put those ten unlimited traitors to death, any way that they could? The crown of England has been for the most part entrusted with the sole disposal of the money given for the Civil List, often with the application of great sums raised for other publick uses; yet, if the lord-treasurer had applied this money to the dishonour of the King, and ruin of the people (though by the private direction of the crown itself) will any man say that he ought not to have compensated for his crime, by the loss of his head and his estate?

I have said thus much, to shew that no government can be absolute in the sense, or rather nonsense, of our modern dogmatizers, and indeed in the sense too commonly practised. No barbarous conquest; no extorted consent of miserable people, submitting to the chain to escape the sword; no repeated and hereditary acts of cruelty, though called succession, no continuation of violence, though named prescription; can alter, much less abrogate, these fundamental principles of government itself, or make the means of preservation the means of destruction, and render the condition of mankind infinitely more miserable than that of the beasts of the field, by the sole privilege of that reason which distinguishes them from the brute creation.

Force can give no title but to revenge, and to the use of force again; nor could it ever enter into the heart of any man, to give to another power over him, for any other end but to be exercised for his own advantage: And if there are any men mad or foolish enough to pretend to do otherwise, they ought to be treated as idiots or lunaticks; and the reason of their conduct must be derived from their folly and frenzy.

All men are born free; liberty is a gift which they receive from God himself; nor can they alienate the same by consent, though possibly they may forfeit it by crimes. No man has power over his own life, or to dispose of his own religion; and cannot consequently transfer the power of either to any body else: Much less can he give away the lives and liberties, religion or acquired property of his posterity, who will be born as free as he himself was born, and can never be bound by his wicked and ridiculous bargain.

The right of the magistrate arises only from the right of private men to defend themselves, to repel injuries, and to punish those who commit them: That right being conveyed by the society to their publick representative, he can execute the same no further than the benefit and security of that society requires he should. When he exceeds his commission, his acts are as extrajudicial as are those of any private officer usurping an unlawful authority, that is, they are void; and every man is answerable for the wrong which he does. A power to do good can never become a warrant for doing evil.

But here arises a grand question, which has perplexed and puzzled the greatest part of mankind: Yet, I think, the answer to it easy and obvious. The question is, who shall be judge whether the magistrate acts justly, and pursues his trust? To this it is justly said, that if those who complain of him are to judge him, then there is a settled authority above the chief magistrate, which authority must be itself the chief magistrate; which is contrary to the supposition; and the same question and difficulty will recur again upon this new magistracy. All this I own to be absurd; and I aver it to be at least as absurd to affirm, that the person accused is to be the decisive judge of his own actions, when it is certain that he will always judge and determine in his own favour; and thus the whole race of mankind will be left helpless under the heaviest injustice, oppression, and misery, that can afflict human nature.

But if neither magistrates, nor they who complain of magistrates, and are aggrieved by them, have a right to determine decisively, the one for the other; and if there be no common established power, to which both are subject; then every man interested in the success of the contest, must act according to the light and dictates of his own conscience, and inform it as well as he can. Where no judge is nor can be appointed, every man must be his own; that is, when there is no stated judge upon earth, we must have recourse to heaven, and obey the will of heaven, by declaring ourselves on that which we think the juster side.

If the Senate and people of Rome had differed irreconcilably, there could have been no common judge in the world between them; and consequently no remedy but the last: For that government consisting in the union of the nobles and the people, when they differed, no man could determine between them; and therefore every man must have been at liberty to provide for his own security, and the general good, in the best manner he was able. In that case the common judge ceasing, every one was his own: The government becoming incapable of acting, suffered a political demise: The constitution was dissolved; and there being no government in being, the people were in the state of nature again.

The same must be true, where two absolute princes, governing a country, come to quarrel, as sometimes two Caesars in partnership did, especially towards the latter end of the Roman empire; or where a sovereign council govern a country, and their votes come equally to be divided. In such a circumstance, every man must take that side which he thinks most for the publick good, or choose any proper measures for his own security: For, if I owe my allegiance to two princes agreeing, or to the majority of a council; when between these princes there is no longer any union, nor in that council any majority, no submission can be due to that which is not; and the laws of nature and self-preservation must take place, where there are no other.

The case is still the same, when there is any dispute about the titles of absolute princes, who govern independently on the states of a country, and call none. Here too every man must judge for himself what party he will take, to which of the titles he will adhere; and the like private judgment must guide him, whenever a question arises whether the said prince be an idiot or a lunatick, and consequently whether he be capable or incapable of government. Where there are no states, there can be no other way of judging; but by the judgment of private men the capacity of the prince must be judged, and his fate determined. Lunacy and idiotism are, I think, allowed by all to be certain disqualifications for government; indeed they are as much so, as if he were deaf, blind, and dumb, or even dead. He who can neither execute an office, nor appoint a deputy, is not fit for one.

Now I would fain know, why private men may not as well use their judgment in an instance that concerns them more; I mean that of a tyrannical government, of which they hourly feel the sad effects, and sorrowful proofs; whereas they have not by far the equal means of coming to a certainty about the natural incapacity of their governor. The persons of great princes are known but to few of their subjects, and their parts to much fewer; and several princes have, by the management of their wives, or ministers, or murderers, reigned a good while after they were dead. In truth, I think it is as much the business and right of the people to judge whether their prince be good or bad, whether a father or an enemy, as to judge whether he be dead or alive; unless it be said (as many such wise things have been said) that they may judge whether he can govern them, but not whether he does; and that it behoves them to put the administration in wiser hands, if he be a harmless fool, but it is impious to do it, if he be only a destructive tyrant; that want of speech is a disqualification, but want of humanity, none.

That subjects were not to judge of their governors, or rather for themselves in the business of government, which of all human things concerns them most, was an absurdity that never entered into the imagination of the wise and honest ancients: Who, following for their guide that everlasting reason, which is the best and only guide in human affairs, carried liberty, and human happiness, the legitimate offspring and work of liberty, to the highest pitch that they were capable of arriving at. But the above absurdity, with many others as monstrous and mischievous, were reserved for the discovery of a few wretched and dreaming Mahometan and Christian monks, who, ignorant of all things, were made, or made themselves, the directors of all things; and bewitching the world with holy lies and unaccountable ravings, dressed up in barbarous words and uncouth phrases, bent all their fairy force against common sense and common liberty and truth, and founded a pernicious, absurd, and visionary empire upon their ruins. Systems without sense, propositions without truth, religion without reason, a rampant church without charity, severity without justice, and government without liberty or mercy, were all the blessed handy-works of these religious mad-men, and godly pedants; who, by pretending to know the other world, cheated and confounded this. Their enmity to common sense, and want of it, were their warrants for governing the sense of all mankind: By lying, they were thought the champions of the truth; and by their fooleries, impieties, and cruelty, were esteemed the favourites and confidants of the God of wisdom, mercy, and peace.

These were the men, who, having demolished all sense and human judgment, first made it a principle, that people were not to judge of their governor and government, nor to meddle with it; nor to preserve themselves from publick destroyers, falsely calling themselves governors: Yet these men, who thus set up for the support and defenders of government, without the common honesty of distinguishing the good from the bad, and protection from murder and depredation, were at the same time themselves the constant and avowed troublers of every government which they could not direct and command; and every government, however excellent, which did not make their reveries its own rules, and themselves alone its

peculiar care, has been honoured with their professed hatred; whilst tyrants and publick butchers, who flattered them, have been deified. This was the poor state of Christendom before the Reformation; and I wish I could say, of no parts of it since.

This barbarous anarchy in reasoning and politicks, has made it necessary to prove propositions which the light of nature had demonstrated. And, as the apostles were forced to prove to the misled Gentiles, that they were no gods which were made with hands; I am put to prove, that the people have a right to judge, whether their governors were made for them, or they for their governors? Whether their governors have necessary and natural qualifications? Whether they have any governors or no? And whether, when they have none, every man must not be his own? I therefore return to instances and illustrations from facts which cannot be denied; though propositions as true as facts may, by those especially who are defective in point of modesty or discernment.

In Poland, according to the constitution of that country, it is necessary, we are told, that, in their diets, the consent of every man present must be had to make a resolve effectual: And therefore, to prevent the cutting of people's throats, they have no remedy but to cut the throats of one another; that is, they must pull out their sabres, and force the refractory members (who are always the minority) to submit. And amongst us in England, where a jury cannot agree, there can be no verdict; and so they must fast till they do, or till one of them is dead, and then the jury is dissolved.

This, from the nature of things themselves, must be the constant case in all disputes between dominion and property. Where the interest of the governors and that of the governed clash, there can be no stated judge between them: To appeal to a foreign power, is to give up the sovereignty; for either side to submit, is to give up the question: And therefore, if they themselves do not amicably determine the dispute between themselves, heaven alone must. In such case, recourse must be had to the first principles of government itself; which being a departure from the state of nature, and a union of many families forming themselves into a political machine for mutual protection and defence, it is evident, that this formed relation can continue no longer than the machine subsists and can act; and when it does not, the individuals must return to their former state again. No constitution can provide against what will happen, when that constitution is dissolved. Government is only an appointment of one or more persons, to do certain actions for the good and emolument of the society; and if the persons thus interested will not act at all, or act contrary to their trust, their power must return of course to those who gave it.

Suppose, for example, the Grand Monarch, as he was called, had bought a neighbouring kingdom, and all the lands in it, from the courtiers, and the majority of the people's deputies; and amongst the rest, the church-lands, into the bargain, with the consent of their convocation or synod, or by what other name that assembly was called; would the people and clergy have thought themselves obliged to have made good this bargain, if they could have helped it? I dare say that neither would; but, on the contrary, that the people would have had the countenance of these reverend patriots to have told their representatives in round terms, that they were chosen to act for the interest of those that sent them, and not for their own; that their power was given them to protect and defend their country, and not to sell and enslave it.

This supposition, as wild as it seems, yet is not absolutely and universally impossible. King John actually sold the kingdom of England to his Holiness: And there are people in all nations ready to sell their country at home; and such can never have any principles to withhold them from selling it abroad.

It is foolish to say, that this doctrine can be mischievous to society, at least in any proportion to the wild ruin and fatal calamities which must befall, and do befall the world, where the contrary doctrine is maintained: For, all bodies of men subsisting upon their own substance, or upon the profits of their trade and industry, find their account so much in ease and peace, and have justly such terrible apprehensions of civil disorders, which destroy every thing that they enjoy; that they always bear a thousand injuries before they return one, and stand under the burdens as long as they can bear them; as I have in another letter observed.

What with the force of education, and the reverence which people are taught, and have been always used to pay to princes; what with the perpetual harangues of flatterers, the gaudy pageantry and outside of power, and its gilded ensigns, always glittering in their eyes; what with the execution of the laws in the sole power of the prince; what with all the regular magistrates, pompous guards and standing troops, with the fortified towns, the artillery, and all the magazines of war, at his disposal; besides large revenues, and multitudes of followers and dependants, to support and abet all that he does: Obedience to authority is so well secured, that it is wild to imagine, that any number of men, formidable enough to disturb a settled state, can unite together and hope to overturn it, till the publick grievances are so enormous, the oppression so great, and the disaffection so universal, that there can be no question remaining, whether their calamities be real or imaginary, and whether the magistrate has protected or endeavoured to destroy his people.

This was the case of Richard II, Edward II, and James II and will ever be the case under the same circumstances. No society of men will groan under oppressions longer than they know how to throw them off; whatever unnatural whimsies and fairy notions idle and sedentary babblers may utter from colleges and cloisters; and teach to others, for vile self-ends, doctrines, which they themselves are famous for not practising.

Upon this principle of people's judging for themselves, and resisting lawless force, stands our late happy Revolution, and with it the just and rightful title of our most excellent sovereign King George, to the scepter of these realms; a scepter which he has, and I doubt not will ever sway, to his own honour, and the honour, protection, and prosperity of us his people.

T

I am, &c.

No. 60. SATURDAY, January 6, 1722.

All Government proved to be instituted by Men, and only to intend the general Good of Men. [Trenchard] ↩

[II-226]

SIR,

There is no government now upon earth, which owes its formation or beginning to the immediate revelation of God, or can derive its existence from such revelation: It is certain, on the contrary, that the rise and institution or variation of government, from time to time, is within the memory of men or of histories; and that every government, which we know at this day in the world, was established by the wisdom and force of mere men, and by the concurrence of means and causes evidently human. Government therefore can have no power, but such as men can give, and such as they actually did give, or permit for their own sakes: Nor can any government be in fact framed but by consent, if not of every subject, yet of as many as can compel the rest; since no man, or council of men, can have personal strength enough to govern multitudes by force, or can claim to themselves and their families any superiority, or natural sovereignty over their fellow-creatures naturally as good as them. Such strength, therefore, where-ever it is, is civil and accumulative strength, derived from the laws and constitutions of the society, of which the governors themselves are but members.

So that to know the jurisdiction of governors, and its limits, we must have recourse to the institution of government, and ascertain those limits by the measure of power, which men in the state of nature have over themselves and one another: And as no man can take from many, who are stronger than him, what they have no mind to give him; and he who has not consent must have force, which is itself the consent of the stronger; so no man can give to another either what is none of his own, or what in its own nature is inseparable from himself; as his religion particularly is.

Every man's religion is his own; nor can the religion of any man, of what nature or figure soever, be the religion of another man, unless he also chooses it; which action utterly excludes all force, power, or government. Religion can never come without conviction, nor can conviction come from civil authority; religion, which is the fear of God, cannot be subject to power, which is the fear of man. It is a relation between God and our own souls only, and consists in a disposition of mind to obey the will of our great Creator, in the manner which we think most acceptable to him. It is independent upon all human directions, and superior to them; and consequently uncontrollable by external force, which cannot reach the free faculties of the mind, or inform the understanding, much less convince it. Religion therefore, which can never be subject to the jurisdiction of another, can never be alienated to another, or put in his power.

Nor has any man in the state of nature power over his own life, or to take away the life of another, unless to defend his own, or what is as much his own, namely, his property. This power therefore, which no man has, no man can transfer to another.

Nor could any man in the state of nature, have a right to violate the property of another; that is, what another had acquired by his art or labour; or to interrupt him in his industry and enjoyments, as long as he himself was not injured by that industry and those enjoyments. No man therefore could transfer to the magistrate that right which he had not himself.

No man in his senses was ever so wild as to give an unlimited power to another to take away his life, or the means of living, according to the caprice, passion, and unreasonable pleasure of that other: But if any man restrained himself from any part of his pleasures, or parted with any portion of his acquisitions, he did it with the honest purpose of enjoying the rest with the greater security, and always in subserviency to his own happiness, which no man will or can willingly and intentionally give away to any other whatsoever.

And if any one, through his own inadvertence, or by the fraud or violence of another, can be drawn into so foolish a contract, he is relievable by the eternal laws of God and reason. No engagement that is wicked and unjust can be executed without injustice and wickedness: This is so true, that I question whether there be a constitution in the world which does not afford, or pretend to afford, a remedy for relieving ignorant, distressed, and unwary men, trepanned into such engagements by artful knaves, or frightened into them by imperious ones. So that here the laws of nature and general reason supersede the municipal and positive laws of nations; and no where oftener than in England. What else was the design, and ought to be the business, of our courts of equity? And I hope whole countries and societies are no more exempted from the privileges and protection of reason and equity, than are private particulars.

Here then is the natural limitation of the magistrate's authority: He ought not to take what no man ought to give; nor exact what no man ought to perform: All he has is given him, and those that gave it must judge of the application. In government there is no such relation as lord and slave, lawless will and blind submission; nor ought to be amongst men: But the only relation is that of father and children, patron and client, protection and allegiance, benefaction and gratitude, mutual affection and mutual assistance.

So that the nature of government does not alter the natural right of men to liberty, which in all political societies is alike their due: But some governments provide better than others for the security and impartial distribution of that right. There has been always such a constant and certain fund of corruption and malignity in human nature, that it has been rare to find that man, whose views and happiness did not center in the gratification of his appetites, and worst appetites, his luxury, his pride, his avarice, and lust of power; and who considered any publick trust reposed in him, with any other view, than as the means to satiate such unruly and dangerous desires! And this has been most eminently true of great men, and those who aspired to dominion. They were first made great for the sake of the publick, and afterwards at its expence. And if they had been content to have been moderate traitors, mankind would have been still moderately happy; but their ambition and treason observing no degrees, there was no degree of vileness and misery which the poor people did not often feel.

The appetites therefore of men, especially of great men, are carefully to be observed and stayed, or else they will never stay themselves. The experience of every age convinces us, that we must not judge of men by what they ought to do, but by what they will do; and all history affords but few instances of men trusted with great power without abusing it, when with security they could. The servants of society, that is to say, its magistrates, did almost universally serve it by seizing it, selling it, or plundering it; especially when they were left by the society unlimited as to their duty and wages. In that case these faithful stewards generally took all; and, being servants, made slaves of their masters.

For these reasons, and convinced by woeful and eternal experience, societies found it necessary to lay restraints upon their magistrates or publick servants, and to put checks upon those who would otherwise put chains upon them; and therefore these societies set themselves to model and form national constitutions with such wisdom and art, that the publick interest should be consulted and carried at the same time, when those entrusted with the administration of it were consulting and pursuing their own.

Hence grew the distinction between arbitrary and free governments: Not that more or less power was vested in the one than in the other; nor that either of them lay under less or more obligations, in justice, to protect their subjects, and study their ease, prosperity, and security, and to watch for the same. But the power and sovereignty of magistrates in free countries was so qualified, and so divided into different channels, and committed to the direction of so many different men, with different interests and views, that the majority of them could seldom or never find their account in betraying their trust in fundamental instances. Their emulation, envy, fear, or interest, always made them spies and checks upon one another. By all which means the people have often come at the heads of those who forfeited their heads, by betraying the people.

In despotick governments things went far otherwise, those governments having been framed otherwise; if the same could be called governments, where the rules of publick power were dictated by private and lawless lust; where folly and madness often swayed the scepter, and blind rage wielded the sword. The whole weath of the state, with its civil or military power, being in the prince, the people could have no remedy but death and patience, while he oppressed them by the lump, and butchered them by thousands: Unless perhaps the ambition or personal resentments of some of the instruments of his tyranny procured a revolt, which rarely mended their condition.

The only secret therefore in forming a free government, is to make the interests of the governors and of the governed the same, as far as human policy can contrive. Liberty cannot be preserved any other way. Men have long found, from the weakness and depravity of themselves and one another, that most men will act for interest against duty, as often as they dare. So that to engage them to their duty, interest must be linked to the observance of it, and danger to the breach of it. Personal advantages and security, must be the rewards of duty and obedience; and disgrace, torture, and death, the punishment of treachery and corruption.

Human wisdom has yet found out but one certain expedient to effect this; and that is, to have the concerns of all directed by all, as far as possibly can be: And where the persons interested are too numerous, or live too distant to meet together on all emergencies, they must moderate necessity by prudence, and act by deputies, whose interest is the same with their own, and whose property is so intermingled with theirs, and so engaged upon the same bottom, that principals and deputies must stand and fall together. When the deputies thus act for their own interest, by acting for the interest of their principals; when they can make no law but what they themselves, and their posterity, must be subject to; when they can give no money, but what they must pay their share of; when they can do no mischief, but what must fall upon their own heads in common with their countrymen; their principals may then expect good laws, little mischief, and much frugality.

Here therefore lies the great point of nicety and care in forming the constitution, that the persons entrusted and representing, shall either never have any interest detached from the persons entrusting and represented, or never the means to pursue it. Now to compass this great point effectually, no other way is left, but one of these two, or rather both; namely, to make the deputies so numerous, that there may be no possibility of corrupting the majority; or, by changing them so often, that there is no sufficient time to corrupt them, and to carry the ends of that corruption. The people may be very sure, that the major part of their deputies being honest, will keep the rest so; and that they will all be honest, when they have no temptations to be knaves.

We have some sketch of this policy in the constitution of our several great companies, where the general court, composed of all its members, constitutes the legislature, and the consent of that court is the sanction of their laws; and where the administration of their affairs is put under the conduct of a certain number chosen by the whole. Here every man

concerned saw the necessity of securing part of their property, by putting the persons entrusted under proper regulations; however remiss they may be in taking care of the whole. And if provision had been made, that, as a third part of the directors are to go out every year, so none should stay in above three (as I am told was at first promised), all juggling with courtiers, and raising great estates by confederacy, at the expence of the company, had, in a great measure, been prevented; though there were still wanting other limitations, which might have effectually obviated all those evils.

This was the ancient constitution of England: Our kings had neither revenues large enough, nor offices gainful and numerous enough in their disposal, to corrupt any considerable number of members; nor any force to frighten them. Besides, the same Parliament seldom or never met twice: For, the serving in it being found an office of burden, and not of profit, it was thought reasonable that all men qualified should, in their turns, leave their families and domestick concerns, to serve the publick; and their boroughs bore their charges. The only grievance then was, that they were not called together often enough, to redress the grievances which the people suffered from the court during their intermission: And therefore a law was made in Edward III's time, that Parliaments should be holden once a year.

But this law, like the late Queen's Peace, did not execute itself; and therefore the court seldom convened them, but when they wanted money, or had other purposes of their own to serve; and sometimes raised money without them: Which arbitrary proceeding brought upon the publick numerous mischiefs; and, in the reign of King Charles I, a long and bloody civil war. In that reign an act was passed, that they should meet of themselves, if they were not called according to the direction of that law; which was worthily repealed upon the restoration of King Charles II: And in the same kind fit, a great revenue was given him for life, and continued to his brother. By which means these princes were enabled to keep standing troops, to corrupt Parliaments, or to live without them; and to commit such acts of power as brought about, and indeed forced the people upon the late happy Revolution. Soon after which a new act was passed, that Parliaments should be rechosen once in three years: Which law was also repealed, upon his Majesty's accession to the throne, that the present Parliament might have time to rectify those abuses which we labour under, and to make regulations proper to prevent them all for the future. All which has since been happily effected; and, I bless God, we are told, that the people will have the opportunity to thank them, in another election, for their great services to their country. I shall be always ready, on my part, to do them honour, and pay them my acknowledgments, in the most effectual manner in my power. But more of this in the succeeding papers.

T

I am, &c.

No. 61. SATURDAY, January 13, 1722.

How free Governments are to be framed so as to last, and how they differ from such as are arbitrary. [Trenchard] ↩

[II-236]

SIR,

The most reasonable meaning that can be put upon this apothegm, that *virtue is its own reward*, is, that it seldom meets with any other. God himself, who having made us, best knows our natures, does not trust to the intrinsic excellence and native beauty of holiness alone, to engage us in its interests and pursuits, but recommends it to us by the stronger and more affecting motives of rewards and punishments. No wise man, therefore, will in any instance of moment trust to the mere integrity of another. The experience of all ages may convince us, that men, when they are above fear, grow for the most part above honesty and shame: And this is particularly and certainly true of societies of men, when they are numerous enough to keep one another in countenance; for when the weight of infamy is divided amongst many, no one sinks under his own burden.

Great bodies of men have seldom judged what they ought to do, by any other rule than what they could do. What nation is there that has not oppressed any other, when the same could be done with advantage and security? What party has ever had regard to the principles which they professed, or ever reformed the errors which they condemned? What company, or particular society of merchants or tradesmen, has ever acted for the interest of general trade, though it always filled their mouths in private conversation?

And yet men, thus formed and qualified, are the materials for government. For the sake of men it is instituted, by the prudence of men it must be conducted; and the art of political mechanism' is, to erect a firm building with such crazy and corrupt materials. The strongest cables are made out of loose hemp and flax; the world itself may, with the help of proper machines, be moved by the force of a single hair; and so may the government of the world, as well as the world itself. But whatever discourses I shall hereafter make upon this great and useful subject, I shall confine myself in this letter to free monarchical constitutions alone, and to the application of some of the principles laid down in my last.

It is there said, that when the society consists of too many, or when they live too far apart to be able to meet together, to take care of their own affairs, they can not otherwise preserve their liberties, than by choosing deputies to represent them, and to act for them; and that these deputies must be either so numerous, that there can be no means of corrupting the majority; or so often changed, that there shall be no time to do it so as to answer any end by doing it. Without one of these regulations, or both, I lay it down as a certain maxim in politicks, that it is impossible to preserve a free government long.

I think I may with great modesty affirm, that in former reigns the people of England found no sufficient security in the number of their representatives. What with the crowd of offices in the gift of the crown, which were possessed by men of no other merit, nor held by any other tenure, but merely a capacity to get into the House of Commons, and the disservice which they could and would do their country there: What with the promises and expectations given to others, who by court-influence, and often by court-money, carried their elections: What by artful caresses, and the familiar and deceitful addresses of great men to weak men: What with luxurious dinners, and rivers of Burgundy, Champaign, and Tokay, thrown down the throats of gluttons; and what with pensions, and other personal gratifications, bestowed

where wind and smoke would not pass for current coin: What with party watch-words and imaginary terrors, spread amongst the drunken 'squires, and the deluded and enthusiastick bigots, of dreadful designs in embryo, to blow up the Church, and the Protestant interest; and sometimes with the dread of mighty invasions just ready to break upon us from the man in the moon: I say, by all these corrupt arts, the representatives of the English people, in former reigns, have been brought to betray the people, and to join with their oppressors. So much are men governed by artful applications to their private passions and interest. And it is evident to me, that if ever we have a weak or an ambitious prince, with a ministry like him, we must find out some other resources, or acquiesce in the loss of our liberties. The course and transiency of human affairs will not suffer us to live always under the present righteous administration.

So that I can see no means in human policy to preserve the publick liberty and a monarchical form of government together, but by the frequent fresh elections of the people's deputies: This is what the writers in politicks call rotation of magistracy. Men, when they first enter into magistracy, have often their former condition before their eyes: They remember what they themselves suffered, with their fellow-subjects, from the abuse of power, and how much they blamed it; and so their first purposes are to be humble, modest, and just; and probably, for some time, they continue so. But the possession of power soon alters and vitiates their hearts, which are at the same time sure to be leavened, and puffed up to an unnatural size, by the deceitful incense of false friends, and by the prostrate submission of parasites. First, they grow indifferent to all their good designs, then drop them: Next, they lose their moderation; afterwards, they renounce all measures with their old acquaintance and old principles; and seeing themselves in magnifying glasses, grow, in conceit, a different species from their fellowsubjects; and so by too sudden degrees become insolent, rapacious and tyrannical, ready to catch at all means, often the vilest and most oppressive, to raise their fortunes as high as their imaginary greatness. So that the only way to put them in mind of their former condition, and consequently of the condition of other people, is often to reduce them to it; and to let others of equal capacities share of power in their turn: This also is the only way to qualify men, and make them equally fit for dominion and subjection.

A rotation therefore, in power and magistracy, is essentially necessary to a free government: It is indeed the thing itself; and constitutes, animates, and informs it, as much as the soul constitutes the man. It is a thing sacred and inviolable, where-ever liberty is thought sacred; nor can it ever be committed to the disposal of those who are trusted with the preservation of national constitutions: For though they may have the power to model it for the publick advantage, and for the more effectual security of that right; yet they can have none to give it up, or, which is the same thing, to make it useless.

The constitution of a limited monarchy, is the joint concurrence of the crown and of the nobles (without whom it cannot subsist) and of the body of the people, to make laws for the common benefit of the subject; and where the people, through number or distance, cannot meet, they must send deputies to speak in their names, and to attend upon their interest: These deputies therefore act by, under, and in subserviency to the constitution, and have not a power above it and over it.

In Holland, and some other free countries, the states are often obliged to consult their principals; and, in some instances, our own Parliaments have declined entering upon questions of importance, till they had gone into the country, and known the sentiments of those that sent them; as in all cases they ought to consult their inclinations as well as their interest. Who will say, that the Rump, or fag-end of the Long Parliament of forty-one, had any right to expel such members as they did not like? Or to watch for their absence, that they might seize to themselves, or give up to any body else, the right of those from whose confidence and credulity they derived the authority which they acted by?

With thanks to God, I own, that we have a prince so sensible of this right, and who owes his crown so entirely to the principles laid down, and I think fully proved in these letters; that it is impossible to suspect, either from his inclinations, his interest, or his known justice, that he should ever fall into any measures to destroy that people, who have given him his crown, and supported him in it with so much generosity and expense; or that he should undermine, by that means, the ground upon which he stands. I do therefore the less regard the idle suspicions and calumnies of disaffected men, who would surmise, that a design is yet on foot to continue this Parliament; a reflection the most impudent and invidious that can be thrown upon his Majesty, his ministers, or his two houses; and a reflection that can come from none but professed, or at least from concealed, Jacobites.

It is no less than an insinuation, that our most excellent sovereign King George has a distrust of his faithful subjects; that he will refuse them the means of their own preservation, and the preservation of that constitution which they chose him to preserve; that he will shut his ears against their modest, just, and dutiful complaints; and that he apprehends danger from meeting them in a new and free-chosen Parliament. This is contrary to the tenor of his whole life and actions; who, as he has received three crowns from their gift, so he lies under all the ties of generosity, gratitude, and duty, to cherish and protect them, and to make them always great, free, and happy.

It is a most scandalous calumny upon his faithful servants, to suggest that any of them, conscious of guilt and crimes, feared any thing from the most strict and rigorous inspection into their proceedings. Some of them have already stood the fiery trial, and come off triumphant with general approbation. They have, besides, the advantage of his Majesty's most gracious pardon, which they did not want, and which was not passed for their sakes. Who therefore can suspect, that patriots so uncorrupt, so prudent, and so popular, will dishonour their master, give up the constitution, ruin their country, and render themselves the objects of universal scorn, detestation, and cursing, by advising the most odious, dangerous, and destructive measures, that ever counsellors gave a prince?

It is a most ungrateful return to our illustrious representatives, to suggest, that men who have left their domestick concerns to serve their country at their own expence, and without any personal advantages, and have bestowed their labours upon the publick for a much longer time than their principals had at first a right to expect from them; and have, during all that time, been rectifying the abuses which have crept into our constitution; and have assisted his Majesty in going through two very useful and necessary wars, and have regulated our finances, and the expence of our guards and garrisons, and corrected many abuses in the fleet and the civil administration; and have taken effectual vengeance of all those who were concerned in promoting, procuring, aiding, or assisting the late dreadful South-Sea project: I say, after so many things done by them for the publick honour and prosperity, it is the basest ingratitude to surmise, that any of them would give up that constitution which they were chosen, and have taken so much pains, to preserve.

I do indeed confess, if any invasion were to be feared from Muscovy, Mecklenburg, Spain, or Civita Vecchia; if new provinces were to be obtained abroad, new armies to be raised, or new fleets to be equipped, upon warlike expeditions; if new provision were wanting for the Civil List, and new taxes to be levied, or new companies to be erected to pay off the publick debts; if the universities were to be farther regulated, or any inspection were necessary into the increase of fees and exactions of civil officers; if there were the least ground to suspect bribery or corruption in a place where it should not be; or if there were any new project on foot to banish tyrannical and popish principles far out of the land: I say, that in such a scene of affairs, I dare not be altogether so positive in my assertion, that we ought to venture, and at all events to leave to chance, that which we are in possession of already. But as we are at present in the happy state of indolence and security, at peace with all the

world and our own consciences; as little more money can be raised from the people, most of it being already in hand, which, according to the rules of good policy, unite dominion and property; as our benefactors too are generous and honourable, our boroughs not insensible or ungrateful, nor the counties themselves inexorable to shining merit; So it is much to be hoped, that another Parliament may be chosen equally deserving, and as zealous for the publick interest; or, at worst, there are honest and tried measures at hand, which will undoubtedly make them so. And I offer this as a conclusive, and I think a most convincing, argument, that the kingdom will be obliged with a new election.

T.

I am, &c.

No. 62. SATURDAY, January 20, 1722.

An Enquiry into the Nature and Extent of Liberty; with its Loveliness and Advantages, and the vile Effects of Slavery. [Gordon] ↩

[II-244]

SIR,

I have shewn, in a late paper, wherein consists the difference between free and arbitrary governments, as to their frame and constitution; and in this and the following, I shall shew their different spirit and effects. But first I shall shew wherein liberty itself consists.

By liberty, I understand the power which every man has over his own actions, and his right to enjoy the fruit of his labour, art, and industry, as far as by it he hurts not the society, or any members of it, by taking from any member, or by hindering him from enjoying what he himself enjoys. The fruits of a man's honest industry are the just rewards of it, ascertained to him by natural and eternal equity, as is his title to use them in the manner which he thinks fit: And thus, with the above limitations, every man is sole lord and arbiter of his own private actions and property. A character of which no man living can divest him but by usurpation, or his own consent.

The entering into political society, is so far from a departure from his natural right, that to preserve it was the sole reason why men did so; and mutual protection and assistance is the only reasonable purpose of all reasonable societies. To make such protection practicable, magistracy was formed, with power to defend the innocent from violence, and to punish those that offered it; nor can there be any other pretence for magistracy in the world. In order to this good end, the magistrate is entrusted with conducting and applying the united force of the community; and with exacting such a share of every man's property, as is necessary to preserve the whole, and to defend every man and his property from foreign and domestick injuries. These are the boundaries of the power of the magistrate, who deserts his function whenever he breaks them. By the laws of society, he is more limited and restrained than any man amongst them; since, while they are absolutely free in all their actions, which purely concern themselves; all his actions, as a publick person, being for the sake of society, must refer to it, and answer the ends of it.

It is a mistaken notion in government, that the interest of the majority is only to be consulted, since in society every man has a right to every man's assistance in the enjoyment and defence of his private property; otherwise the greater number may sell the lesser, and divide their estates amongst themselves; and so, instead of a society, where all peaceable men are protected, become a conspiracy of the many against the minority. With as much equity may one man wantonly dispose of all, and violence may be sanctified by mere power.

And it is as foolish to say, that government is concerned to meddle with the private thoughts and actions of men, while they injure neither the society, nor any of its members. Every man is, in nature and reason, the judge and disposer of his own domestick affairs; and, according to the rules of religion and equity, every man must carry his own conscience. So that neither has the magistrate a right to direct the private behaviour of men; nor has the magistrate, or any body else, any manner of power to model people's speculations, no more than their dreams. Government being intended to protect men from the injuries of one another, and not to direct them in their own affairs, in which no one is interested but themselves; it is plain, that their thoughts and domestick concerns are exempted entirely from its jurisdiction: In truth, men's thoughts are not subject to their own jurisdiction.

Idiots and lunatics indeed, who cannot take care of themselves, must be taken care of by others: But whilst men have their five senses, I cannot see what the magistrate has to do with actions by which the society cannot be affected; and where he meddles with such, he meddles impertinently or tyrannically. Must the magistrate tie up every man's legs, because some men fall into ditches? Or, must he put out their eyes, because with them they see lying vanities? Or, would it become the wisdom and care of governors to establish a travelling society, to prevent people, by a proper confinement, from throwing themselves into wells, or over precipices; or to endow a fraternity of physicians and surgeons all over the nation, to take care of their subjects' health, without being consulted; and to vomit, bleed, purge, and scarify them at pleasure, whether they would or no, just as these established judges of health should think fit? If this were the case, what a stir and hubbub should we soon see kept about the established potions and lancets? Every man, woman, or child, though ever so healthy, must be a patient, or woe be to them! The best diet and medicines would soon grow pernicious from any other hand; and their pills alone, however ridiculous, insufficient, or distasteful, would be attended with a blessing.

Let people alone, and they will take care of themselves, and do it best; and if they do not, a sufficient punishment will follow their neglect, without the magistrate's interposition and penalties. It is plain, that such busy care and officious intrusion into the personal affairs, or private actions, thoughts, and imaginations of men, has in it more craft than kindness; and is only a device to mislead people, and pick their pockets, under the false pretence of the publick and their private good. To quarrel with any man for his opinions, humours, or the fashion of his clothes, is an offence taken without being given. What is it to a magistrate how I wash my hands, or cut my corns; what fashion or colours I wear, or what notions I entertain, or what gestures I use, or what words I pronounce, when they please me, and do him and my neighbour no hurt? As well may he determine the colour of my hair, and control my shape and features.

True and impartial liberty is therefore the right of every man to pursue the natural, reasonable, and religious dictates of his own mind; to think what he will, and act as he thinks, provided he acts not to the prejudice of another; to spend his own money himself, and lay out the produce of his labour his own way; and to labour for his own pleasure and profit, and not for others who are idle, and would live and riot by pillaging and oppressing him, and those that are like him.

So that civil government is only a partial restraint put by the laws of agreement and society upon natural and absolute liberty, which might otherwise grow licentious: And tyranny is an unlimited restraint put upon natural liberty, by the will of one or a few. Magistracy, amongst a free people, is the exercise of power for the sake of the people; and tyrants abuse the people, for the sake of power. Free government is the protecting the people in their liberties by stated rules: Tyranny is a brutish struggle for unlimited liberty to one or a few, who would rob all others of their liberty, and act by no rule but lawless lust.

So much for an idea of civil liberty. I will now add a word or two, to shew how much it is the delight and passion of mankind; and then shew its advantages.

The love of liberty is an appetite so strongly implanted in the nature of all living creatures, that even the appetite of self-preservation, which is allowed to be the strongest, seems to be contained in it; since by the means of liberty they enjoy the means of preserving themselves, and of satisfying their desires in the manner which they themselves choose and like best. Many animals can never be tamed, but feel the bitterness of restraint in the midst of the kindest usage; and rather than bear it, grieve and starve themselves to death; and some beat out their brains against their prisons.

Where liberty is lost, life grows precarious, always miserable, often intolerable. Liberty is, to live upon one's own terms; slavery is, to live at the mere mercy of another; and a life of slavery is, to those who can bear it, a continual state of uncertainty and wretchedness, often an apprehension of violence, often the lingering dread of a violent death: But by others, when no other remedy is to be had, death is reckoned a good one. And thus, to many men, and to many other creatures, as well as men, the love of liberty is beyond the love of life.

This passion for liberty in men, and their possession of it, is of that efficacy and importance, that it seems the parent of all the virtues: And therefore in free countries there seems to be another species of mankind, than is to be found under tyrants. Small armies of Greeks and Romans despised the greatest hosts of slaves; and a million of slaves have been sometimes beaten and conquered by a few thousand freemen. Insomuch that the difference seemed greater between them than between men and sheep. It was therefore well said by Lucullus, when, being about to engage the great King Tigranes's army, he was told by some of his officers, how prodigious great the same was, consisting of between three and four hundred thousand men: "No matter," said that brave Roman, drawing up his little army of fourteen thousand, but fourteen thousand *Romans*: "No matter; the lion never enquires into the number of the sheep." And these royal troops proved no better; for the Romans had little else to do but to kill and pursue; which yet they could scarce do for laughing; so much more were they diverted than animated by the ridiculous dread and sudden flight of these imperial slaves and royal cowards.

Men eternally cowed and oppressed by haughty and insolent governors, made base themselves by the baseness of that sort of government, and become slaves by ruling over slaves, want spirit and souls to meet in the field freemen, who scorn oppressors, and are their own governors, or at least measure and direct the power of their governors.

Education alters nature, and becomes stronger. Slavery, while it continues, being a perpetual awe upon the spirits, depresses them, and sinks natural courage; and want and fear, the concomitants of bondage, always produce despondency and baseness; nor will men in bonds ever fight bravely, but to be free. Indeed, what else should they fight for; since every victory that they gain for a tyrant, makes them poorer and fewer; and, increasing his pride, increases his cruelty, with their own misery and chains?

Those, who, from terror and delusion, the frequent causes and certain effects of servitude, come to think their governors greater than men, as they find them worse, will be as apt to think themselves less: And when the head and the heart are thus both gone, the hands will signify little. They who are used like beasts, will be apt to degenerate into beasts. But those, on the contrary, who, by the freedom of their government and education, are taught and accustomed to think freely of men and things, find, by comparing one man with another, that all men are naturally alike; and that their governors, as they have the same face, constitution, and shape with themselves, and are subject to the same sickness, accidents, and death, with the meanest of their people; so they possess the same passions and faculties of the mind which their subjects possess, and not better. They therefore scorn to degrade and prostrate themselves, to adore those of their own species, however covered with titles, and disguised by power: They consider them as their own creatures; and, as far as they surmount themselves, the work of their own hands, and only the chief servants of the state, who have no more power to do evil than one of themselves, and are void of every privilege and superiority, but to serve them and the state. They know it to be a contradiction in religion and reason, for any man to have a right to do evil; that not to resist any man's wickedness, is to encourage it; and that they have the least reason to bear evil and oppression from their governors, who of all men are the most obliged to do them good. They therefore detest slavery, and despise or pity slaves; and, adoring liberty alone, as they who see its beauty and feel its advantages always will, it is no wonder that they are brave for it.

Indeed liberty is the divine source of all human happiness. To possess, in security, the effects of our industry, is the most powerful and reasonable incitement to be industrious: And to be able to provide for our children, and to leave them all that we have, is the best motive to beget them. But where property is precarious, labour will languish. The privileges of thinking, saying, and doing what we please, and of growing as rich as we can, without any other restriction, than that by all this we hurt not the publick, nor one another, are the glorious privileges of liberty; and its effects, to live in freedom, plenty, and safety.

These are privileges that increase mankind, and the happiness of mankind. And therefore countries are generally peopled in proportion as they are free, and are certainly happy in that proportion: And upon the same tract of land that would maintain a hundred thousand freemen in plenty, five thousand slaves would starve. In Italy, fertile Italy, men die sometimes of hunger amongst the sheaves, and in a plentiful harvest; for what they sow and reap is none of their own; and their cruel and greedy governors, who live by the labour of their wretched vassals, do not suffer them to eat the bread of their own earning, nor to sustain their lives with their own hands.

Liberty naturally draws new people to it, as well as increases the old stock; and men as naturally run when they dare from slavery and wretchedness, whithersoever they can help themselves. Hence great cities losing their liberty become deserts, and little towns by liberty grow great cities; as will be fully proved before I have gone through this argument. I will not deny, but that there are some great cities of slaves: But such are only imperial cities, and the seats of great princes, who draw the wealth of a continent to their capital, the center of their treasure and luxury. Babylon, Antioch, Seleucia, and Alexandria, were great cities peopled by tyrants; but peopled partly by force, partly by the above reason, and partly by grants and indulgencies. Their power, great and boundless as it was, could not alone people their cities; but they were forced to soften authority by kindness; and having brought the inhabitants together by force, and by driving them captive like cattle, could not keep them together, without bestowing on them many privileges, to encourage the first inhabitants to stay, and to invite more to come.

This was a confession in those tyrants, that their power was mischievous and unjust; since they could not erect one great city, and make it flourish, without renouncing in a great measure their power over it; which, by granting it these privileges, in effect they did. These privileges were fixed laws, by which the trade and industry of the citizens were encouraged, and their lives and properties ascertained and protected, and no longer subjected to the laws of mere will and pleasure: And therefore, while these free cities, enjoying their own liberties and laws, flourished under them, the provinces were miserably harrassed, pillaged, dispeopled, and impoverished, and the inhabitants exhausted, starved, butchered, and carried away captive.

This shews that all civil happiness and prosperity is inseparable from liberty; and that tyranny cannot make men, or societies of men, happy, without departing from its nature, and giving them privileges inconsistent with tyranny. And here is an unanswerable argument, amongst a thousand others, against absolute power in a single man. Nor is there one way in the world to give happiness to communities, but by sheltering them under certain and express laws, irrevocable at any man's pleasure.

There is not, nor can be, any security for a people to trust to the mere will of one, who, while his will is his law, cannot protect them if he would. The number of sycophants and wicked counsellors, that he will always and necessarily have about him, will defeat all his good intentions, by representing things falsely, and persons maliciously; by suggesting danger where it is not, and urging necessity where there is none; by filling their own coffers, under colour of filling his, and by raising money for themselves, pretending the publick

exigencies of the state; by sacrificing particular men to their own revenge, under pretence of publick security; and by engaging him and his people in dangerous and destructive wars, for their own profit or fame; by throwing publick affairs into perpetual confusion, to prevent an enquiry into their own behaviour; and by making him jealous of his people, and his people of him, on purpose to manage and mislead both sides.

By all these, and many more wicked arts, they will be constantly leading him into cruel and oppressive measures, destructive to his people, scandalous and dangerous to himself; but entirely agreeable to their own spirit and designs. Thus will they commit all wickedness by their master's authority, against his inclinations, and grow rich by the people's poverty, without his knowledge; and the royal authority will be first a warrant for oppression, afterwards a protection from the punishment due to it. For, in short, the power of princes is often little else but a stalking-horse to the intrigues and ambition of their minister.

But if the disposition of such a prince be evil, what must be the forlorn condition of his people, and what door of hope can remain for common protection! The best princes have often evil counsellors, the bad will have no other: And in such a case, what bounds can be set to their fury, and to the havock they will make? The instruments and advisers of tyranny and depredation always thrive best and are nearest their ends, when depredation and tyranny run highest: When most is plundered from the people, their share is greatest; we may therefore suppose every evil will befall such a people, without supposing extravagantly. No happiness, no security, but certain misery, and a vile and precarious life, are the blessed terms of such a government—a government which necessarily introduces all evils, and from the same necessity neither must nor can redress any.

The nature of his education, bred up as he ever is in perpetual flattery, makes him haughty and ignorant; and the nature of his government, which subsists by brutish severity and oppression, makes him cruel. He is inaccessible, but by his ministers, whose study and interest will be to keep him from knowing or helping the state of his miserable people. Their master's knowledge in his own affairs, would break in upon their scheme and power; they are not likely to lay before him representations of grievances caused by themselves; nor, if they be the effects of his own barbarity and command, will he hear them.

Even where absolute princes are not tyrants, there ministers will be tyrants. But it is indeed impossible for an arbitrary prince to be otherwise, since oppression is absolutely necessary to his being so. Without giving his people liberty, he cannot make them happy; and by giving them liberty, he gives up his own power. So that to be and continue arbitrary, he is doomed to be a tyrant in his own defence. The oppression of the people, corruption, wicked counsellors, and pernicious maxims in the court, and every where baseness, ignorance, and chains, must support tyranny, or it cannot be supported. So that in such governments there are inevitable grievances, without possible redress; misery, without mitigation or remedy; whatever is good for the people, is bad for their governors; and what is good for the governors, is pernicious to the people.

G

I am, &c.

No. 63. SATURDAY, January 27, 1722.

Civil Liberty produces all Civil Blessings, and how; with the baneful Nature of Tyranny.
[Gordon] ↩

[II-257]

SIR,

I go on with my considerations upon liberty, to shew that all civil virtue and happiness, every moral excellency, all politeness, all good arts and sciences, are produced by liberty; and that all wickedness, baseness, and misery, are immediately and necessarily produced by tyranny; which being founded upon the destruction of every thing that is valuable, desirable, and noble, must subsist upon means suitable to its nature, and remain in everlasting enmity to all goodness and every human blessing.

By the establishment of liberty, a due distribution of property and an equal distribution of justice is established and secured. As rapine is the child of oppression, justice is the offspring of liberty, and her handmaid; it is the guardian of innocence, and the terror of vice: And when fame, honour, and advantages, are rewards of virtue, she will be courted for the dower which she brings; otherwise, like beauty without wealth, she may be praised, but more probably will be calumniated, envied, and very often persecuted; while vice, when it is gainful, like rich deformity and prosperous folly, will be admired and pursued. Where virtue is all its own reward, she will be seldom thought any; and few will buy that for a great price, which will sell for none. So that virtue, to be followed, must be endowed, and her credit is best secured by her interest; that is, she must be strengthened and recommended by the publick laws, and embellished by publick encouragements, or else she will be slighted and shunned.

Now the laws which encourage and increase virtue, are the fixed laws of general and impartial liberty; laws, which being the rule of every man's actions, and the measures of every man's power, make honesty and equity their interest. Where liberty is thoroughly established, and its laws equally executed, every man will find his account in doing as he would be done unto, and no man will take from another what he would not part with himself: Honour and advantage will follow the upright, punishment overtake the oppressor. The property of the poor will be as sacred as the privileges of the prince, and the law will be the only bulwark of both. Every man's honest industry and useful talents, while they are employed for the publick, will be employed for himself; and while he serves himself, he will serve the publick: Publick and private interest will secure each other; all will cheerfully give a part to secure the whole, and be brave to defend it.

These certain laws therefore are the only certain beginnings and causes of honesty and virtue amongst men. There may be other motives, I own; but such as only sway particular men, few enough, God knows: And universal experience has shewn us, that they are not generally prevailing, and never to be depended upon. Now these laws are to be produced by liberty alone, and only by such laws can liberty be secured and increased: And to make laws certainly good, they must be made by mutual agreement, and have for their end the general interest.

But tyranny must stand upon force; and the laws of tyranny being only the fickle will and unsteady appetite of one man, which may vary every hour; there can be no settled rule of right or wrong in the variable humours and sudden passions of a tyrant, who, though he may sometimes punish crimes, perhaps more out of rage than justice, will be much more likely to persecute and oppress innocence, and to destroy thousands cruelly, for one that he protects

justly. There are instances of princes, who, being out of humour with a favourite, have put to death all that spoke well of him, and afterwards all that did not: Of princes, who put some of their ministers to death, for using one or two of their barbers and buffoons ill; as they did others of their ministers, for using a whole country well: Of princes, who have destroyed, a whole people, for the crimes or virtues of one man; and who, having killed a minion in a passion, have, to revenge themselves upon those who had not provoked them, destroyed in the same unreasonable fury, a hundred of their servants who had no hand in it, as well as all that had; who yet would have been destroyed, had they not done it: Of princes, who have destroyed millions in single mad projects and expeditions: Of princes, who have given up cities and provinces to the revenge or avarice of a vile woman or eunuch, to be plundered, or massacred, or burned, as he or she thought fit to direct: Of princes, who, to gratify the ambition and rapine of a few sorry servants, have lost the hearts of their whole people, and detached themselves from their good subjects, to protect these men in their iniquity, who yet had done them no other service, but that of destroying their reputation, and shaking their throne.

Such are arbitrary princes, whose laws are nothing but sudden fury, or lasting folly and wickedness in uncertain shapes. Hopeful rules these, for the governing of mankind, and making them happy! Rules which are none, since they cannot be depended upon for a moment; and generally change for the worse, if that can be. A subject worth twenty thousand pounds today, may, by a sudden edict issued by the dark counsel of a traitor, be a beggar tomorrow, and lose his life without forfeiting the same. The property of the whole kingdom shall be great, or little, or none, just at the mercy of a secretary's pen, guided by a child, or a dotard, or a foolish woman, or a favourite buffoon, or a gamester, or whoever is uppermost for the day; the next day shall alter entirely the yesterday's scheme, though not for the better; and the same men, in different humours, shall be the authors of both. Thus in arbitrary countries, a law aged two days is an old law; and no law is suffered to be a standing law, but such as are found by long experience to be so very bad, and so thoroughly destructive, that human malice, and all the arts of a tyrant's court, cannot make them worse. A court which never ceaseth to squeeze, kill, and oppress, till it has wound up human misery so high, that it will go no further. This is so much fact, that I appeal to all history and travels, and to those that read them, whether in arbitrary countries, both in Europe and out of it, the people do not grow daily thinner, and their misery greater; and whether countries are not peopled and rich, in proportion to the liberty which they enjoy and allow.

It has been long my opinion, and is more and more so, that in slavish countries the people must either throw off their cruel and destroying government, and set up another in its room, or in some ages the race of mankind there will be extinct. Indeed, if it had not been for free states, that have repaired and prevented in many places the mischiefs done by tyrants, the earth had been long since a desert, as the finest countries in it are at this day by that means. The gardens of the world, the fruitful and lovely countries of the lower Asia, filled formerly by liberty with people, politeness, and plenty, are now gloriously peopled with owls and grasshoppers; and perhaps here and there, at vast distances, with inhabitants not more valuable, and less happy; a few dirty huts of slaves groaning, starving, and perishing, under the fatherly protection of the Sultan, a prince of the most orthodox standard.

The laws therefore of tyrants are not laws, but wild acts of will, counselled by rage or folly, and executed by dragoons. And as these laws are evil, all sorts of evil must concur to support them. While the people have common-sense left, they will easily see whether they are justly governed, and well or ill used; whether they are protected or plundered: They will know that no man ought to be the director of the affairs of all, without their consent; that no consent can give him unlimited power over their bodies and minds; and that the laws of nature can never be entirely abrogated by positive laws; but that, on the contrary, the entering

into society, and becoming subject to government, is only the parting with natural liberty, in some instances, to be protected in the enjoyment of it in others.

So that for any man to have arbitrary power, he must have it without consent; or if it be unadvisedly given at first, they who gave it soon repent when they find its effects. In truth, all those princes that have such power, by keeping up great armies in time of peace, effectually confess that they rule without consent, and dread their people, whose worst enemies they undoubtedly are. An arbitrary prince therefore must preserve and execute his power by force and terror; which yet will not do, without calling in the auxiliary aids and strict allies of tyranny, imposture, and constant oppression. Let this people be ever so low and miserable, if they be not also blind, he is not safe. He must have established deceivers to mislead them with lies, to terrify them with the wrath of God, in case they stir hand or foot, or so much as a thought, to mend their doleful condition; as if the good God was the sanctifier of all villainy, the patron of the worst of all villains! He must have a band of standing cut-throats to murder all men who would sacrilegiously defend their own. And both his cut-throats and his deceivers must go shares with him in his tyranny.

Men will naturally see their interests, feel their condition; will quickly find that the sword, the rack, and the sponge, are not government, but the height of cruelty and robbery; and will never submit to them, but by the united powers of violence and delusion: Their bodies must be chained, their minds enchanted and deceived; the sword kept constantly over their heads, and their spirits kept low with poverty, before they can be brought to be used at the wanton and brutish pleasure of the most dignified and lofty oppressor. So that God must be belied, his creatures must be fettered, frightened, deceived, and starved, and mankind made base and undone, that one of the worst of them may live riotously and safely amongst his whores, butchers, and buffoons.

Men, therefore, must cease to be men, and in stupidity and tameness grow cattle, before they can become quiet subjects to such a government; which is a complication of all the villainies, falsehood, oppression, cruelty, and depredation, upon the face of the earth: Nor can there be a more provoking, impudent, shocking, and blasphemous position, than to assert all this group of horrors, or the author of them, to be of God's appointment.

*If such kings are by God appointed,
Satan may be the Lord's anointed.*

And whoever scatters such doctrine, ought, by all the laws of God, reason, and self-preservation, to be put to death as a general poisoner, and advocate for publick destruction.

All men own, that it is the duty of a prince to protect his people; And some have said, that it is their duty to obey him, when he butchers them. An admirable consequence, and full of sweet consolation! His whole business and office is to defend them, and to do them good; therefore they are bound to let him destroy them. Was ever such impudence in an enlightened country? It is perfectly agreeable to the doctrines and followers of Mahomet: But shall Englishmen, who make their own laws, be told, that they have no right to the common air, to the life and fortune which God has given them, but by the permission of an officer of their own making; who is what he is only for their sakes and security, and has no more right to these blessings, nor to do evil, than one of themselves? And shall we be told this by men, who are eternally the first to violate their own doctrines? Or shall they after this have the front to teach us any doctrine, or to recommend to us any one virtue, when they have thus given up all virtue and truth, and every blessing that life affords? For there is no evil, misery, and wickedness, which arbitrary monarchies do not produce, and must produce; nor do they, nor can they, produce any certain, general, or diffusive good.

I have shewn, in my last, that an arbitrary prince cannot protect his people if he would; and I add here, that he dares not. It would disgust the instruments of his power, and the sharers in his oppression, who will consider the property of the people as the perquisites of their office, and claim a privilege of being little tyrants, for making him a great one: So that every kindness to his subjects will be a grievance to his servants; and he must assert and exercise his tyranny to the height for their sakes, or they will do it for him. And the instances are rare, if any, of any absolute monarch's protecting in earnest his people against the depredations of his ministers and soldiers, but it has cost him his life; as may be shewn by many examples in the Roman history: For this the emperor Pertinax was murdered, and so was Galba.

Machiavel has told us, that it is impossible for such a prince to please both the people and his soldiers: The one will not be satisfied without protection, nor the other without rapine: To comply with the people, he must give up his power; to comply with his soldiers, he must give up his people. So that to continue what he is, and to preserve himself from the violence of his followers, he must countenance all their villainies and oppression, and be himself no more than an imperial thief at the head of a band of thieves; for which character he is generally well qualified by the base and cruel maxims of that sort of power, and by the vile education almost always given to such a prince by the worst and most infamous of all men, their supple and lying sycophants.

Even the Christian religion can do but little or no good in lands of tyranny, since miracles have ceased; but is made to do infinite harm, by being corrupted and perverted into a deadly engine in the hands of a tyrant and his impostors, to rivet his subjects' chains, and to confirm them thorough wretches, slaves, and ignorants. I cannot indeed say, that they have the Christian religion at all amongst them, but only use its amiable name to countenance abominable falsehoods, nonsense, and heavy oppression; to defend furious and implacable bigotry, which is the direct characteristick and spirit of Mahometism, and destroys the very genius and first principles of Christianity. All this will be further shewn hereafter. I shall conclude with observing, that arbitrary monarchy is a constant war upon heaven and earth, against the souls as well as bodies and properties of men.

G

I am, &c.

No. 64. SATURDAY, February 3, 1722.

Trade and Naval Power the Offspring of Civil Liberty only, and cannot subsist without it.
[Trenchard] ↩

[II-267]

SIR,

I have in former letters begun to shew, by an induction of particulars, and shall hereafter more fully shew, that population, riches, true religion, virtue, magnanimity, arts, sciences, and learning, are the necessary effects and productions of liberty; and shall spend this paper in proving, that an extensive trade, navigation, and naval power, entirely flow from the same source: In this case, if natural advantage and encouragements be wanting, art, expence, and violence, are lost and thrown away. Nothing is more certain, than that trade cannot be forced; she is a coy and humorous dame, who must be won by flattery and allurements, and always flies force and power; she is not confined to nations, sects, or climates, but travels and wanders about the earth, till she fixes her residence where she finds the best welcome and kindest reception; her contexture is so nice and delicate, that she cannot breathe in a tyrannical air; will and pleasure are so opposite to her nature, that but touch her with the sword, and she dies: But if you give her gentle and kind entertainment, she is a grateful and beneficent mistress; she will turn deserts into fruitful fields, villages into great cities, cottages into palaces, beggars into princes, convert cowards into heroes, blockheads into philosophers; will change the coverings of little worms into the richest brocades, the fleeces of harmless sheep into the pride and ornaments of kings, and by a further metamorphosis will transmute them again into armed hosts and haughty fleets.

Now it is absolutely impossible, from the nature of an arbitrary government, that she should enjoy security and protection, or indeed be free from violence, under it. There is not one man in a thousand that has the endowments and abilities necessary to govern a state, and much fewer yet that have just notions how to make trade and commerce useful and advantageous to it; and, amongst these, it is rare to find one who will forego all personal advantages, and devote himself and his labours wholly to his country's interest: But if such a phoenix should arise in any country, he will find it hard to get access to an arbitrary court, and much harder yet to grapple with and stem the raging corruptions in it, where virtue has nothing to do, and vice rides triumphant; where bribery, servile flattery, blind submission, riotous expence, and very often lust and unnatural prostitutions, are the ladders to greatness; which will certainly be supported by the same methods by which it is obtained.

What has a virtuous man to do, or what can he do, in such company? If he pity the people's calamities, he shall be called seditious; if he recommend any publick good, he shall be called preaching fool; if he should live soberly and virtuously himself, they will think him fit only to be sent to a cloister; if he do not flatter the prince and his superiors, he will be thought to envy their prosperity; if he presume to advise his prince to pursue his true interest, he will be esteemed a formidable enemy to the whole court, who will unite to destroy him: In fine, his virtues will be crimes, reproaches, and of dangerous consequence to those who have none. As jails pick up all the little pilfering rogues of a country, so such courts engross all the great ones; who have no business there but to grow rich, and to riot upon the publick calamities, to use all the means of oppression and rapine, to make hasty fortunes before the bow-string overtakes them, or a sudden favourite supplants them.

Now what encouragement or security can trade and industry receive from such a crew of banditti? No privileges and immunities, or even protection, can be obtained but for money, and are always granted to such who give most; and these again shall be curtailed, altered, abrogated, and cancelled, upon the change of a minister, or of his inclinations, interest, and caprices: Monopolies, exclusive companies, liberties of pre-emption, &c. shall be obtained for bribes or favour, or in trust for great men, or vile and worthless women. Some merchants shall be openly encouraged and protected, and get exemptions from searches and duties, or shall be connived at in escaping them; others shall be burdened, oppressed, manacled, stopped, and delayed, to extort presents, to wreak revenge, or to give preference of markets to favourites. Governors of port-towns, or of colonies, who have purchased their employments at court, shall be indulged and countenanced in making reprisals upon the traders, and to enable them to satisfy the yearly presents due to minions: Admirals and commanders of men of war shall press their sailors, to be paid for not doing it; and military officers and soldiers shall molest and interrupt them in the course of their commerce and honest industry.

Nor shall it be in the power of the most vigilant, active and virtuous prince, to prevent these and a thousand other daily oppressions; he must see with his ministers' eyes, and hear with their ears; nor can there be any access to him but by their means, and by their leave: Constant spies shall watch and observe the first intentions, or least approaches to a complaint; and the person injured shall be threatened, way-laid, imprisoned, perhaps murdered; but if he escape all their treacheries, and can get to the ear of his prince, it is great odds but he will be treated and punished as a calumniator, a false accuser, and a seditious disturber of his Majesty's government: No witness will dare to appear for him, many false ones will be suborned against him; and the whole posse of ministers, officers, favourites, parasites, pathicks, strumpets, buffoons, fiddlers, and pimps, will conspire to ruin him, as a common enemy to their common interests.

But if all these mischiefs could be avoided, the necessities of such a prince, arising from the profusion and vast expence of his court, from his foolish wars, and the depredations, embezzlements, and various thefts of his ministers and servants, will be always calling for new supplies, for new extortions, which must be raised by all the means by which they can be raised: New and sudden impositions shall be put upon trade, new loans be exacted from merchants; commodities of general use shall be bought up by the prince's order, perhaps upon trust, and afterwards retailed again at extravagant advantages: Merchants shall be encouraged to import their goods, upon promises of easy and gentle usage; these goods when imported shall be subjected to exorbitant impositions and customs, perhaps confiscated upon frivolous pretences. But if these, and infinite other oppressions, could be prevented for some time, by the vigilance of a wise prince, or the care of an able minister; yet there can be no probable security, or even hopes of the continuance of honest and prudent measures in such a government: For one wise prince so educated, there will be twenty foolish ones; and for one honest minister, there will be a thousand corrupt ones.

Under such natural disadvantages, perpetual uncertainties, or rather certain oppressions, no men will embark large stocks and extensive talents for business, breed up their children to precarious employments, build forts, or plant colonies, when the breath of a weak prince, or the caprice of a corrupt favourite, shall dash at once all their labours and their hopes; and therefore it is impossible that any trade can subsist long in such a government, but what is necessary to support the luxury and vices of a court; and even such trade is, for the most part, carried on by the stocks, and for the advantage of free countries, and their own petty merchants are only factors to the others. True merchants are citizens of the world, and that is their country where they can live best and most secure; and whatever they can pick up and gather together in tyrannical governments, they remove to free ones. Tavernier invested all

the riches he had amassed by his long ramble over the world, in the barren rocks of Switzerland: And being asked by the last king of France, how it came to pass that he, who had seen the finest countries on the globe, came to lay out his fortune in the worst? He gave his haughty Majesty this short answer, that he was willing to have something which he could call his own.

As I think it is evident, by what I have said before, that trade cannot long subsist, much less flourish, in arbitrary governments; so there is so close and inseparable a connection between that and naval power, that I dare boldly affirm, that the latter can never arrive to any formidable height, and continue long in that situation, under such a state. Where there is an extensive trade; great numbers of able-bodied and courageous sailors, men bred up to fatigues, hardships, and hazards, and consequently soldiers by profession, are kept in constant pay; not only without any charge to the publick, but greatly to its benefit; not only by daily adding to its wealth and power, but by venting and employing abroad, to their country's honour and safety, those turbulent and unruly spirits that would be fuel for factions, and the tools and instruments of ambitious or discontented great men at home. These men are always ready at their country's call, to defend the profession which they live by, and with it the publick happiness: They are, and ever must be, in the publick interest, with which their own is so closely united; for they subsist by exporting the productions of the people's industry, which they constantly increase by so doing: They receive their pay from the merchants, a sort of men always in the interests of liberty, from which alone they can receive protection and encouragement. And as this race of men contribute vastly to the publick security and wealth, so they take nothing from it: They are not quartered up and down their native country, like the bands of despotick princes, to oppress their subjects, interrupt their industry, debauch their wives and daughters, insult their persons, to be examples of lewdness and prodigality, and to be always ready at hand to execute the bloody commands of a tyrant.

No monarch was ever yet powerful enough to keep as many seamen in constant pay at his own expence, as single cities have been able to do without any at all: The pay of a sailor, with his provision, is equal to that of a trooper in arbitrary governments; nor can they learn their trade, by taking the sea-air for a few summer months, and wafting about the coasts of their own country: They gain experience and boldness, by various and difficult voyages, by being constantly inured to hardships and dangers. Nor is it possible for single princes, with all their power and vigilance, to have such regular supplies of naval provisions, as trading countries must have always in store. There must be a regular and constant intercourse with the nations from whom these supplies come; a certain and regular method of paying for them; and constant demands will produce constant supplies. There are always numerous magazines in the hands of private merchants, ready for their own use or sale. There must be great numbers of shipwrights, anchor-smiths, rope and sail-makers, and infinite other artificers, sure always of constant employment; and who, if they are oppressed by one master, may go to another. There must be numbers of ships used for trade, that, upon occasions, may be employed for men of war, for transports, for fireships, and tenders. Now all these things, or scarce any of them, can ever be brought about by arbitrary courts; stores will be embezzled, exhausted, and worn out, before new ones are supplied; payments will not be punctually made; artificers will be discouraged, oppressed, and often left without employ: Every thing will be done at an exorbitant expence, and often not done when it is paid for; and when payments are made, the greatest part shall go in fees, or for bribes, or in secret trusts.

For these reasons, and many others, despotick monarchs, though infinitely powerful at land, yet could never rival Neptune, and extend their empire over the liquid world; for though great and vigorous efforts have been often made by these haughty tyrants of mankind, to subject that element to their ambition and their power, being taught by woeful experience, arising from perpetual losses and disappointments, of what vast importance that dominion

was to unlimited and universal sovereignty; yet all their riches, applications, and pride, have never been able, in one instance, to effect it. Sometimes, indeed, trade, like a phantom, has made a faint appearance at an arbitrary court, but disappeared again at the first approach of the morning light: She is the portion of free states, is married to liberty, and ever flies the foul and polluted embraces of a tyrant.

The little state of Athens was always able to humble the pride, and put a check to the growing greatness, of the towering Persian monarchs, by their naval power; and when stripped of all their territories by land, and even their capital city, the seat of their commonwealth, yet had strength enough left to vanquish numerous fleets, which almost covered the sea, and to defeat an expedition carried on by armies that drank up rivers, and exhausted all the stores of the land.

The single city of Venice has proved itself an over-match in naval power to the great Ottoman Empire, though possessed of so many islands, useful ports, environed with so many sea-coasts, and abounding with all sorts of stores necessary to navigation; and in the year fifty-six gave the Turks so signal an overthrow at the Dardanelles, as put that state in such a consternation, that they believed their empire at an end; and it is thought if the Venetians had pursued their victory, they had driven them out of Constantinople, and even out of Europe; for the Grand Seignior himself was preparing to fly into Asia. The little island of Rhodes defended itself for some ages against the whole power of the Sultan, though encompassed by his dominions; and it was with great difficulty, hazard, and expence, that he at last overcame them, and drove the inhabitants to Malta, where they have ever since braved his pride, and live upon the plunder of his subjects: And notwithstanding all his numerous and expensive efforts to share with the Christians the dominion of the sea; yet there are no other seeds or traces of it left through his great and extensive territories, but what are found in the free piratical states of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli.

Neither the Sophi of Persia, the Great Mogul, the many kings who command the banks of the Ganges, nor all the haughty potentates of Asia and Africa, are able to contend at sea with the English or Dutch East-India Companies, or even to defend their subjects against but a few pirates, with all their population, and their mines of gold and diamonds.

Spain in all her pride, with the wealth of both Indies, with dominions so vast and extensive, that the sun rises and sets within them, and a sea-line, which if extended would environ the earth, yet was not able to dispute their title to that element with a few revolted provinces, who grew up through the course of an expensive war to that amazing greatness, that in less than a century they saw themselves, from a few fisher-towns encompassed with bogs and morasses, become a most formidable state, equal to the greatest potentates at sea, and to most at land; to have great kings in a distant world submit to be their vassals; and, in fine, to be protectors of that mighty nation from whom they revolted. Here is a stupendous instance of the effects of liberty, which neighbouring monarchs with twenty times the territory tremble at, and posterity will hardly believe.

France, with all its oeconomy, address, and power, with its utmost and most expensive efforts, and the assistance of neighbouring and even rival kings, has not been able to establish an empire upon that coy element. She saw it, like a mushroom, rise in a night, and wither again the next day. It is true, that at an immense expence and infinite labour, she got together a formidable fleet, and with it got victories, and took thousands of rival ships; yet every day grew weaker as her enemies grew stronger, and could never recover a single defeat, which in Holland would have been repaired in a few more weeks than the battle was days in fighting: So impossible is it for art to contend with nature, and slavery to dispute the naval prize with liberty.

Sweden and Denmark, though possessed of the naval stores of Europe, nations who subsist by that commerce, and are constantly employed to build ships for their neighbours; yet are not able, with their united force, to equip, man out, and keep upon the sea for any considerable time, a fleet large enough to dispute with an English or Dutch squadron: And I dare venture my reputation and skill in politicks, by boldly asserting, that another vain and unnatural northern apparition will soon vanish and disappear again, like the morning-star at the glimmering of the sun, and every one shall ask, Where is it?

T

I am, &c.

No. 65. SATURDAY, February 10, 1722.

Military Virtue produced and supported by Civil Liberty only. [Gordon] ↩

[II-278]

SIR,

I have shewn in my last, that trade and naval power are produced by liberty only; and shall shew in this, that military virtue can proceed from nothing else, as I have in a good measure shewn already.

In free countries, as people work for themselves, so they fight for themselves: But in arbitrary countries, it is all one to the people, in point of interest, who conquers them; they cannot be worse used; and when a tyrant's army is beaten, his country is conquered: He has no resource; his subjects having neither arms, nor courage, nor reason to fight for him; He has no support but his standing forces; who, for enabling him to oppress, are sharers in his oppression; and fighting for themselves while they fight for him, do sometimes fight well: But his poor people, who are oppressed by him, can have no other concern for his fate, than to wish him the worst.

In attacks upon a free state, every man will fight to defend it, because every man has something to defend in it. He is in love with his condition, his ease, and property, and will venture his life rather than lose them; because with them he loses all the blessings of life. When these blessings are gone, it is madness to think that any man will spill his blood for him who took them away, and is doubtless his enemy, though he may call himself his prince. It is much more natural to wish his destruction, and help to procure it.

For these reasons, small free states have conquered the greatest princes; and the greatest princes have never been able to conquer free states, but either by surprizing them basely, or by corrupting them, or by forces almost infinitely superior, or when they were distracted and weakened by domestick divisions and treachery.

The Greeks thought scarce any number of Persians too great for their own small armies, or any army of their own too small for the greatest number of Persians. Agesilaus invaded the great Persian Empire, the greatest then in the world, at the head of no more than ten thousand foot, and four thousand horse, and carried all before him; he defeated the Asiatick forces with so much ease, that they scarce interrupted his march; he subdued their provinces as fast as he entered them, and took their cities without sitting down before them: And had he not been recalled by his countrymen to defend his own city against a confederacy of other Greek cities, much more terrible foes than the greatest armies of the great king, it is very probable that that brave old Spartan would have soon robbed him of his empire.

And not long before this, when Cyrus made war upon his brother Artaxerxes for the crown, thirteen thousand auxiliary Greeks entertained by him for that end, routed the emperor's army of nine hundred thousand men, and got the victory for Cyrus, had he outlived the battle to enjoy it. And though they had now lost the prince they fought for, and afterwards Clearchus their general, who with other of their officers was treacherously murdered by the Persians when they had brought him to a parley; though they were in great straits, destitute of horses, money, and provisions, far from home, in the heart of an enemy's country, watched, and distressed by a great army of four hundred thousand men, who waited for an occasion to cut them off in their retreat, if they attempted it: yet these excellent soldiers, excellent by being freemen, commanded by the famous Xenophon, made good that retreat of two thousand three hundred miles over the bellies of their enemies, through provinces of

Persians, and in spite of a vast host of Persians, who coasted and harassed them all the way.

Alexander of Macedon, with his free Greeks, attacked the Persians, and beat them at all disadvantages in the open fields, when they were five, ten, nay, twenty times his number; and having, passed the Hellespont, with not fifteen thousand pounds in his treasury, and not above thirty-five thousand men in his army, he made himself master of that great and overgrown empire, with as much expedition as he could travel over it; and though he fought three battles for it, he scarce lost in them all one regiment of his men.

Leonidas, at the head of four thousand Greeks, fought Xerxes at the head of six and twenty hundred thousand Persians, according to Herodotus, in the straits of Thermopylae for two days together, and repulsed them at every assault with vast slaughter; nor did they at last get the better of him, till being led by a treacherous Greek a secret way over the mountains, they fell upon him in the rear, and surrounded him with their numbers; neither did he then desert his post, though all his men retreated, except three hundred Spartans, who resolutely stood by him, and were all slain with him upon the spot, with twenty thousand Persians round them.

The Romans, enjoying the same liberty, and animated by it, vanquished all the enslaved nations of the known world, with the same ease, and upon the same unequal terms. The subduing of free countries cost them long labour and patience, great difficulty, and a world of blood; and they suffered many defeats before they got a decisive victory: The inhabitants being all freemen, were all brave, all soldiers, and were exhausted before their states could be conquered: And the Volscians, Aequians, Tuscans, and Samnites, preserved their liberties, as long as they had men left to defend them. The Samnites particularly declared in their embassy to Hannibal, that having often brought great numbers of men into the field against the Romans, and sometimes defeated the Roman armies, they were at last so wasted, that they could not resist one Roman legion.

But when the Romans came to war against great and arbitrary kings, they had little else to do but to shew their swords; they gained battles almost without fighting, and two or three legions have routed three or four hundred thousand men. One battle generally won a kingdom, and sometimes two or three. Antiochus was so frightened with one skirmish with Acilius at Thermopylae, that he ran away out of Greece, and left all that he possessed there to the Romans; and being beaten afterwards by Scipio, the brother of Africanus, he quitted to them all his kingdoms and territories on this side Mount Taurus. And Paulus Aemilius, by one battle with Perseus, became master of Macedonia. Tigranes, Ptolemy, and Syphax, all monarchs of mighty territories, were still more easily vanquished. So that the great kingdoms of Asia, Aegypt, Numidia, and Macedon, were all of them much more easily overcome, and suffered much fewer defeats, than the Samnites alone, though inhabiting a small barren province.

The only dreadful foes which the Romans ever found, were people as free as themselves; and the most dreadful of all were the Carthaginians. Hannibal alone beat them oftener, and slew more of their men in battle, than all the kings in the world ever did, or could do. But for all the great and repeated defeats which he gave them; though he had destroyed two hundred thousand of their men, and many of their excellent commanders; though, at the same time, their armies were cut off in Spain, and with them the two brave Scipios; and though they had suffered great losses in Sicily, and at sea, yet they never sunk nor wanted soldiers, nor their soldiers courage; and as to great commanders, they had more and better than ever they had before: And having conquered Hannibal, they quickly conquered the world.

This vast virtue of theirs, and this unconquerable spirit, was not owing to climate or complexion, but to liberty alone, and to the equality of their government, in which every Roman had a share: They were nursed up in the principles of liberty; in their infancy they were instructed to love it; experience afterwards confirmed their affections, and shewed them its glorious advantages: Their own happy condition taught them a contempt and indignation for those wretched and barbarous governments, which could neither afford their subjects happiness nor protection: And when they attacked such governments and their wretched people, they found themselves like lions amongst sheep.

It is therefore government alone that makes men cowardly or brave: And Boccacini well ridicules the absurd complaint of the princes of his time, that their subjects wanted that love for their country which was found in free states, when he makes Apollo tell them, that no people were ever in love with rapine, fraud, and oppression; that they must mend their own administration, and their people's condition; and that people will then love their country, when they live happily in it. The old Romans were masters of mankind; but the present race of people in Rome are not a match for one of the Swiss cantons; nor could these cantons ever be conquered, even by the united forces of the house of Austria. Charles Duke of Burgundy was the last that durst invade them; but though he had been long a terror and constant rival to Louis XI of France, a crafty, politick, and powerful monarch, and often too hard for him; he paid dear for his bravery in attacking the Switzers, and lost by doing it three armies, and his own life. They were a free people, and fought in their own quarrel; the greatest incitement upon earth to boldness and magnanimity. The Switzers had a property, though in rocks; and were freemen, though amongst mountains. This gives them the figure which they make in Europe; such a figure, that they are courted by the greatest princes in it, and have supported some of them in their wars, when their own native slaves could not support them.

The Dutch, having revolted from the greatest potentate then in Europe, defended themselves against all his power for near a hundred years, and grew rich all the time, while he grew poor; so poor, that Spain has never yet recovered its losses in that war: And though they are in their constitution more formed for trade than war, yet their own bravery in their own defence is astonishing to those that know not what the spirit of liberty can do in any people: Even their women joined to defend their walls; as the women of Sparta once did, and as the women of Barcelona more lately did, though the united force of the two monarchies of France and Spain had at last the honour to take that city, especially when we, who had engaged them in the war, had also given them up.

These same Dutch in that war, when they were closely besieged in one of their towns by the Spanish Army, let in the sea upon their country, trusting rather to the mercy of that element, than to the mercy of an invading tyrant; and the sea saved them. It must be remembered too, that they had the power of the Emperor, as well as that of Spain, to contend with; both these mighty monarchs having joined their counsels and arms to subdue seven little provinces, which yet they never were able to subdue: The city of Ostend alone cost them a three years siege, and an hundred and thirty thousand men; and when they took it, they only took a heap of rubbish, to which it was reduced before it was surrendered.

In free states, every man being a soldier, or quickly made so, they improve in a war, and every campaign fight better and better. Whereas the armies of an absolute prince grow every campaign worse; especially if they be composed of his own subjects, who, being slaves, are with great difficulty and long discipline made soldiers, and scarce ever made good ones; and when his old troops are gone, his new ones signify little. This was eminently shewn in the late war with France, which degenerated in arms every year; while the English and Dutch did as evidently mend. And doubtless, if the French barrier of fortified towns had been quite broken through, as it was very near, one battle would have completed the conquest of France, and perhaps it would not have cost a battle.

And if free states support themselves better in a war than an absolute prince, they do likewise much sooner retrieve their losses by it. The Dutch, when they had been beaten twice at sea by Cromwell's admirals and English seamen, with great slaughter and loss of ships, did notwithstanding, in two months time, after the second great defeat, fit out a third fleet of a hundred and forty men of war, under the famous Van Trump: Upon this Lord Clarendon observes, that,

there cannot be a greater instance of the opulency of that people, than that they should be able, after so many losses, and so late a great defeat, in so short a time, to set out a fleet strong enough to visit those who had so lately overcome them.

This is what no arbitrary prince in Europe, or upon the face of the earth, could have done; nor do I believe, that all the arbitrary monarchs in Europe, Africa, and Asia, with all their united powers together, could do it at this day. The whole strength of the Spanish monarchy could not fit out their famous armada, without the assistance of money from the little free state of Genoa; and that invincible armada, being beaten by the English, and quite destroyed, Spain has never been able, with all her Indies, and her mountains of silver and gold, to make any figure at sea since, nor been able to pay that very money which equipped that its last great fleet.

The little city of Tyre gave Alexander the Great more resistance, and cost him more labour to take it, than to conquer the great monarchy of Asia; and though, when with infinite labour and courage he had taken it, he burnt it to the ground, slew eight thousand Tyrians in the sackage of their town, crucified two thousand more, and sold all the rest for slaves; yet some of the citizens, with their wives and children, having escaped to Carthage (a colony of their own), and others being conveyed away and saved by their neighbours the Sidonians during the siege, they returned and rebuilt their desolated city; and in so small a time as nineteen years afterwards, endured another siege of fifteen months from Antigonus, the most powerful of all Alexander's successors; nor could he take it at last, but upon honourable terms. What an instance of the blessings and power of liberty and trade!

From the moment that the Romans lost their liberty, their spirit was gone, and their valour scarce ever after appeared. In the beginning of Augustus's reign, the best and bravest of them perished by the sword, either in the civil war, where, Romans fighting against Romans, multitudes were slain, with Brutus and Cassius, the last brave men that ever drew a sword for the commonwealth; or in the bloody proscriptions that followed, in which all the excellent men and assertors of liberty, who escaped the battle, were gleaned up and murdered by soldiers and informers, and, amongst the rest, the divine Cicero. Afterwards, when Augustus had got the world to himself, *jura omnium in se traxit*; flatterers were his only favourites, and none were preferred to magistracy, but the servile creatures of his power; liberty was extinct, and its spirit gone; and though there was a universal peace, yet the power of the empire continually decayed. Augustus himself was so sensible of this, that the loss of two or three legions under Varus in Germany, frightened him, and had almost broke his heart; not from any tenderness in it, for he had butchered myriads, and enslaved all; but he knew that now Roman legions were hard to be got, and scarce worth getting. Having destroyed so many brave Romans, and made the rest base by slavery, and by the corruptions which support it, he knew the difficulty of forming a Roman army.

His successors were worse; they went on in a perpetual series of slaughters, dreading and destroying every thing that had the appearance of virtue or goodness; and even so early as Tiberius's reign, that emperor, says Tacitus, knew *magis fama quam vi stare res suas*, that his empire was supported more by the reputation of Roman greatness, than by the real strength of the Romans, who grew every day more and more weak and wretched; and though they had

now and then a little sun-shine in the reign of a good emperor, yet the root of the evil remained: They were no longer freemen, and for far the most part, their government was nothing else but a constant state of oppression, and a continual succession of massacres. Tyrants governed them, and soldiers created and governed the tyrants, or butchered them if they would not be butchers.

As to military virtue, it was no more: The Praetorian bands were only a band of hangmen with an emperor at their head; Italy and the provinces were exhausted; the Roman people were nothing but an idle and debauched mob, that cared not who was uppermost, so they had but a little victuals, and saw shews; The provincial armies were foreign hirelings, and there was not a Roman army in the Roman empire. *Inops Italia, plebs urbana imbellis nihil in exercitibus validum praeter externum.* This was said not long after the death of Augustus; nor do I remember an instance of one great Roman captain after Germanicus and Corbulo; the first murdered by Tiberius, his uncle and father by adoption; and the other by Nero, for whom he reconquered and settled the East; and after Vespasian and Titus, every Roman emperor of remarkable bravery was a foreigner, and every victory gained by them, was gained by foreigners; who, being all mercenaries, were perpetually setting up and pulling down their own monarchs. At length, being possessed of the whole power of the empire, they took it to themselves; and thus it ended, and became dismembered by several nations, and into several governments, according to their fortune; and it is remarkable, that though those nations had frequent wars amongst themselves about the countries which they invaded, yet they had nothing to apprehend from the Romans while they were seizing Roman provinces.

Tyrants are so sensible, that when they have lost their army, they have lost all, that amongst their other destructive expedients to preserve themselves, whatever becomes of their people, one of their methods is, to lay whole countries waste, and to keep them waste, to prevent an invader from subsisting; and their best provinces are by this means turned often into wildernesses. For this reason a march to Constantinople is scarce practicable to an enemy from any quarter.

I will conclude with answering an objection: It may be said, that the armies of tyrants often fight bravely, and are brave; and I own it to be true in many instances: But I desire it may be remembered, that in arbitrary countries nothing flourishes except the court and the army. A tyrant must give his spoilers part of the spoil, or else they will fight but faintly for it, or perhaps put him to death if he do not. The most absolute princes must therefore use their soldiers like freemen, as they tender their own power and their lives; and under the greatest tyrants the men of war enjoy great privileges, even greater than in free states. The privileges and immunities which they enjoy, constitute a sort of liberty, dear to themselves, but terrible always to the subject, and often pernicious to the prince: It being the certain condition of a tyrant, that to be able to oppress his people, or plague his neighbours, he must empower his soldiers to destroy himself.

The chief forces therefore of an arbitrary prince consist of freemen: Such were the Praetorian bands of the Roman emperors, and such are the Turkish janizaries; and both of them, though they maintained the tyranny, have frequently killed the tyrants; and such are the Grand Seignior's zaims, timariots, or horsemen, who have lands given them in the provinces, and are the only nobility and gentry there: And such too were the Mamalukes of Egypt, which country at last they usurped for themselves, having put the king their master to death. I might mention here the Swiss Guards, and gendarmes of a neighbouring prince, which are his janizaries. As to the Turkish janizaries, I own the Sultan may put particular men of them to death, but no sultan dares touch their privileges as a body; and two or three of their greatest emperors were deposed and destroyed by them for attempting it.

Mere slaves can defend no prince, nor enable him even to rule over slaves: So that by giving liberty, or rather licentiousness, to a few, the slavery of all is maintained.

All this does, I think, fully prove, that where there is no liberty, there can be no magnanimity. It is true, enthusiasm has inspired armies, and most remarkably of all the Saracen armies, with amazing resolution and fury; but even that was fierceness for liberty of opinion to themselves, and for subduing all men to it; and besides, this courage of enthusiasm is rarely eminent, except in the first rise of states and empires.

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I am, &c.

No. 66. SATURDAY, February 17, 1722.

Arbitrary Government proved incompatible with true Religion, whether Natural or Revealed. [Gordon] [↩](#)

[II-292]

SIR,

I shall shew, in this paper, that neither the Christian religion, nor natural religion, nor any thing else that ought to be called religion, can subsist under tyrannical governments, now that miracles are ceased. I readily confess, that such governments are fertile in superstition, in wild whimsies, delusive phantoms, and ridiculous dreams; proper to terrify the human soul, degrade its dignity, deface its beauty, and fetter it with slavish and unmanly fears, to render it a proper object of fraud, grimace, and imposition; and to make mankind the ready dupes of gloomy impostors, and the tame slaves of raging tyrants. For, servitude established in the mind, is best established.

But all these bewildered imaginations, these dark and dreadful horrors, which banish reason, and contract and embitter the heart, what have they to do with true religion, unless to destroy it? That religion, which improves and enlarges the faculties of men, exalts their spirits, and makes them brave for God and themselves; that religion, which gives them great and worthy conceptions of the Deity; and that religion which inspires them with generous and beneficent affections to one another, and with universal love and benevolence to the whole creation? No man can love God, if he love not his neighbour; and whoever loves his neighbour, will neither injure, revile, nor oppress him: Nor can we otherwise shew our love to God, than by kind, humane, and affectionate actions to his creatures: “A new commandment,” says our blessed Saviour, “I give unto you, that ye love one another.”

Almighty God, the great author of our nature, and of all things, who has the heavens for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, is raised far above the reach of our kindness, our malice, or our flattery. He derives infinite happiness from his own infinite perfections; nor can any frail power or actions of ours lessen or improve it: religion therefore, from which he can reap no advantage, was instituted by him for the sake of men, as the best means and the strongest motive to their own happiness, and mutual happiness; and by it men are taught and animated to be useful, assisting, forgiving, kind and merciful one to another. But to hurt, calumniate, or hate one another, for his sake, and in defence of any religion, is a flat contradiction to *his* religion, and an open defiance of the author of religion: And to quarrel about belief and opinions, which do not immediately and necessarily produce practical virtue and social duties, is equally wicked and absurd. This is to be wicked in behalf of righteousness, and to be cruel out of piety. A religion which begets selfishness and partiality only to a few, and its own followers, and which inspires hatred and outrage towards all the rest of the world, can never be the religion of the merciful and impartial maker and judge of the world. Speculations are only so far a part of religion, as they produce the moral duties of religion, general peace, and unlimited charity, publick spirit, equity, forbearance, and good deeds to all men: And the worship of God is no longer the worship of God, than as it warms our minds with the remembrance of his gracious condescensions, his indulgent care, bounty, and providence, exercised towards us; and as it raises and forms our affections to an imitation of such his divine and unrestrained goodness, and to use one another kindly by his great example, who uses us all so. So that our worthy, tender, and beneficent behaviour to one another, is the best way to acknowledge his to us: It is the most acceptable way that we can worship him, and the way which he will best accept our worship: And whatever devotion has not this effect, or a contrary effect, is the dry or mad freaks of an enthusiast, and ought to be

called by another and a proper name.

This is a general idea of true religion; these are the certain and only marks of it: All which, as they are opposite to the essence and spirit of an arbitrary government; so every arbitrary government is an enemy to the spirit of true religion, and defeats its ends. In these governments, in defiance of religion, humanity, and common sense, millions must be miserable to exalt an embellish one or a few, and to make them proud, arrogant, and great: Protection and security are no more; the spirit of the people is sunk, their industry discouraged and lost, or only employed to feed luxury and pride; and multitudes starve, that a few may riot and abound. All love to mankind is extinct, and virtue and publick spirit are dangerous or unknown; while vice, falsehood, and servile sycophancy, become necessary to maintain precarious safety and an ignominious life: And, in fine, men live upon the spoils of one another, like ravenous fishes and beasts of prey: They become rapacious, brutish, and savage to one another, as their cruel governors are to them all; and, as a further imitation of such masters, their souls are abject, mean, and villainous. To live upon prey, and worry [the] human race, is the genius and support of tyrants, as well as of wolves and tigers; and it is the spirit and practice of men to resemble their governors, and to act like them. Virtue and vice, in courts, run like water in a continual descent, and quickly overflow the inferior soil.

Torva Leaena lupum, &c.

Now, what can be found here to answer the spirit and precepts of the Christian religion, which is all love, charity, meekness, mutual assistance, and mutual indulgence; and must either destroy tyranny, which destroys all these, or be destroyed by it? A religion given by God, to inspire men with every social virtue, and to furnish them with every argument for social happiness, will never find quarter, much less protection, from a government, which subsists by an unrelenting war against every virtue, and all human felicity. On the contrary, all its divine doctrines shall be perverted, all its divine principles mangled, and both its principles and its precepts corrupted, disguised, and wrested, to be made free of the court: Truth will be made to patronize imposture, and meekness to support tyranny: Obedience to equal laws, and submission to just authority, shall be turned into a servile and crouching subjection to blind rage and inhuman fury; complaisant and respectful behaviour into slavish flattery, and supple homage to power; meekness and humility into dejection, poorness of spirit, and bodily prostrations; charity, benevolence, and humanity, into a fiery and outrageous zeal to propagate fashionable and gainful opinions: Christian courage shall be changed into cruelty and brutish violence; impartial justice into savage severity; protection into oppression and plundering; the fear of God into the fear of man; and the worship of the Deity into an idolatrous adoration of a tyrant.

Though God Almighty sent his only son into the world to teach his will to men, and to confirm his mission by wonders and miracles; yet, having once fully manifested himself and his law, he has left it to be propagated and carried on by human means only, according to the holy writings inspired by him; and if the powers of the world will not submit to those directions, and will neither pursue them themselves, nor suffer their subjects to pursue them, nor leave them the means of doing it; then the Christian religion must take the fate of all sublunary things, and be lost from amongst men, unless heaven interpose again miraculously in its favour. Now the experience of all ages will convince us, that all tyrannical princes will be against the religion which is against them; and either abolish it, or, which is much worse, pervert it into a deadly and unnatural engine, to increase and defend that pride and power, which Christianity abhors; and to promote those evils and miseries, which Christianity forbids, and, were it left to itself, would prevent or relieve. A religion modelled by usurped power, to countenance usurpation and oppression, is as opposite to the Christian religion, as tyranny is to liberty, and wickedness to virtue. When religion is taught to speak court-

language, and none are suffered to preach it, but such as speak the same dialect; when those who are ministers of the gospel, must be also the ministers of ambition, and either sanctify falsehood and violence, by the word of mercy and truth, or hold their tongues; when preferments and worldly honours are on the side of imposture, and galleys, racks and dungeons, are the rewards of conscience and piety; the good and efficacy of Christianity will be as effectually gone, as if it were formally exchanged for Mahometanism; and under those circumstances, if its name be retained, it is only retained to do evil, and might be as innocently banished with the thing.

The Christian religion has as rarely gained by courts, as courts have improved by the Christian religion; and arbitrary courts have seldom meddled with it, but either to persecute it, or debate and corrupt it; nor could the power and fury of tyrants ever hurt or weaken it so much, as their pretended favours and countenance have done: By appearing for it, they turn their power most effectually against it. Their avowed persecution of Christianity, did only destroy Christians; but afterwards, while they set up for protecting none but the true Christians, that is, those that were as bad as themselves, and having no religion of their own, adopted blindly the religion of their prince; and whilst they were for punishing all who were not true Christians, that is, all that were better than themselves, and would take their religion from no man's word, but only from the word of God; they lifted Christians against Christians, and disfigured, and undermined, and banished Christianity itself, by false friendship to its professors: And these professors thus corrupted, joining a holy title to an impious cause, concurred in the conspiracy, and contended fiercely in the name of Christ for secular advantages, which Christ never gave nor took, and for a secular sovereignty, which he rejected, and his gospel forbids. Thus one sort of tyranny was artfully made to support another, and both by a union of interests maintained a war against religion, under colour of defending it, and fought the author of it under his own banner; that is, as Dr. Tillotson finely says, they lied for the truth, and killed for God's sake.

The many various and contradictory opinions of weak enthusiasts, or of designing men, and all the different and repugnant interpretations of scripture, published and contended for by them, could have done but small prejudice to religion and society, if human authority had not interposed with its penalties and rewards annexed to the believing or not believing fortuitous speculations, useless notions, dry ideas, and the inconsistent reveries of disordered brains; or the selfish inventions of usurping Popes, ambitious synods, and turbulent and aspiring doctors, or the crafty schemes of discontented or oppressive statesmen: For all these have been the important causes, and the wicked fuel, of religious wars and persecutions.

It is so much the general interest of society to perform and to encourage all its members to perform the practical duties of religion, that if a stronger and more prevailing interest were not thrown by power into the contrary scale, there would be no difference amongst men about the nature and extent of their duties to magistrates, to parents, children, and to friends and neighbours: And if these social duties (the only duties which human society, as such, is concerned to promote) were agreed upon and practised, the magistrate would have no more to do with their opinions than with their shape and complexion; nor could he know, if he would, by what method to alter them. No man's belief is in his own power, or can be in the power of another.

The utmost length that the power of the magistrate can in this matter extend, beyond that of exhortation, which is in every man's power, can be only to make hypocrites, slaves, fools, or atheists. When he has forced his subjects to belie their consciences, or to act against them, he has in effect driven them out of all religion, to bring them into his own; and when they thus see and feel the professed defender of religion overturning all its precepts, exhorting by bribes, rebuking by stripes, confiscations and dungeons, and making Christianity the instrument of fury, ambition, rapine, and tyranny; what can they think, but either that he is no

Christian, or that Christianity is not true? If they come to suspect it of imposture, they grow infidels; if they grow into a belief that religion countenances bitterness, outrage, and severities, nay, commands all these, they become bigots; the worst and most mischievous character of the two: For, unbelievers, guided by the rules of prudence or good nature, may be good neighbors and inoffensive men; but bigotry, standing upon the ruins of reason, and being conducted by no light but that of an inflamed imagination, and a sour, bitter, and narrow spirit, there is no violence nor barbarity which it is not capable of wishing or acting.

Happiness is the chief end of man, and the saving of his soul is his chief happiness; so that every man is most concerned for his own soul, and more than any other can be: And if no obstruction be thrown in his way, he will for the most part do all in his power for his own salvation, and will certainly do it best; and when he has done all that he can, he has done all that he ought: people cannot be saved by force; nor can all the powers in the world together make one true Christian, or convince one man. Conviction is the province and effect of reason; when that fails, nothing but the grace of God can supply it: And what has the power and penalties of men to do either with reason or grace; which being both the gifts of God, are not to be conquered by chains, though they may be weakened, and even banished, by worldly allurements blended with Christianity, and by the worldly pride of its professors?

The methods of power are repugnant to the nature of conviction, which must either be promoted by exhortation, kindness, example, and arguments, or can never be promoted at all: Violence does, on the contrary, but provoke men, and confirm them in error; nor will they ever be brought to believe, that those who barbarously rob them of their present happiness, can be charitably concerned for their future.

It is evident in fact, that most of the different religious institutions now subsisting in the world, have been founded upon ambition and pride; and were advanced, propagated, and established, by usurpation, faction, and oppression: They were begun for the most part by enthusiasts, or by designing and unpreferred churchmen; or at least occasioned by the continued usurpations and insults of cruel and oppressive ones, and always in times of faction and general discontent. Turbulent and aspiring men, discarded and discontented courtiers, or ambitious and designing statesmen, have taken advantage from these general disorders, or from the hot and giddy spirits of an enthusiastical or oppressed people, and from thence have formed parties; and setting themselves at the head, formed national establishments, with the concurrence of weak princes, sometimes in opposition to them, by the assistance of factious clergymen and factious assemblies, often by tumults and popular insurrections; and at last, under pretence of saving men's souls, they seized their property. A small acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, and the history of the Turks and Saracens, will shew such causes as these to have given rise to most of the national religious establishments upon earth: Nor can I see how any future one can arise by other means, whilst violence and worldly interest have any thing to do with them.

Such therefore as is the government of a country, such will be made its religion; and no body, I hope, is now to learn what is, and ever will be, the religion of most statesmen; even a religion of power, to do as little good and as much mischief as they please. Nor have churchmen, when they ruled states, had ever any other view; but having double authority, had generally double insolence, and remarkably less mercy and regard to conscience or property, than others who had fewer ties to be merciful and just: And therefore the sorest tyrants have been they, who united in one person the royalty and priesthood. The Pope's yoke is more grievous than that of any Christian prince upon earth; nor is there a trace of property, or felicity, or of the religion of Jesus Christ, found in the dominions of this father of Christendom; all is ignorance, bigotry, idolatry, barbarity, hunger, chains, and every species of misery. The Caliphs of Egypt, who founded the Saracen empire there, and maintained it for a great while, were at once kings and priests; and there never lived more raging bigots, or

more furious and oppressive barbarians. The monarchy of Persia, which is also a severe tyranny, has the priesthood annexed to it; and the Sophi is at the same time the Caliph. The Turkish religion is founded on imposture, blended with outrageous and avowed violence; and by their religion, the imperial executioner is, next to their Alcoran, the most sacred thing amongst them: And though he be not himself chief priest, yet he creates and uncreates him at pleasure, and is, without the name of *mufti*, the chief doctor, or rather author of their religion; and we all know what sort of a religion it is.

In fact, as arbitrary princes want a religion suited to the genius of their power, they model their religion so as to serve all the purposes of tyranny; and debase, corrupt, discourage, or persecute all religion which is against tyranny, as all true religion is: For this reason, not one of the great absolute princes in Europe embraced the Reformation, nor would suffer his people to embrace it, but they were all bitter and professed enemies to it: Whereas all the great free states, except Poland, and most of the small free states, became Protestants. Thus the English, Scotch, the Dutch, the Bohemians, and Sweden and Denmark (which were then free kingdoms), the greatest part of Switzerland, with Geneva, and all the Hans-towns, which were not awed by the Emperor, threw off the popish yoke: And not one of the free popish states, out of Italy, could be ever brought to receive the Inquisition; and the state of Venice, the greatest free state there, to shew that they received it against their will, have taken wise care to render it ineffectual: And many of the popish free states would never come into persecution, which they knew would impoverish and dispeople them; and therefore the states of Arragon, Valencia, and Catalonia, opposed, as much as they were able, the expulsion of the Moors, which was a pure act of regal power, to the undoing of Spain; and therefore a destructive and barbarous act of tyranny. As to the Protestant countries, which have since lost their liberties, there is much miserable ignorance, and much bitter and implacable bigotry, but little religion, and no charity, amongst them.

We look upon Montezuma, and other tyrants, who worshipped God with human sacrifice, as so many monsters, and hug ourselves that we have no such sons of Moloch here in Europe; not considering, that every man put to death for his religion, by the Inquisition and elsewhere, is a real human sacrifice, as it is burning and butchering men for God's sake.

I think no body will deny, but that in King James's time, we owed the preservation of our religion to our liberties, which both our clergy and people almost unanimously concurred to defend, with a resolution and boldness worthy of Britons and freemen. And as the cause and blessings of liberty are still better understood, its spirit and interest daily increase. Most of the bishops, and many of the inferior clergy, are professedly in the principles of civil and religious liberty, notwithstanding the strong and early prejudices of education. And I hope soon to see them all as thorough advocates for publick liberty, as their predecessors were, upon grounds less just, in the times of popery; and then there will be an end of the pernicious and knavish distinction of Whig and Tory; and all the world will unite in paying them that respect which is due to their holy office.

I shall conclude with this short application; that as we love religion, and the author of it, we ought to love and preserve our liberties.

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I am, &c.

No. 67. SATURDAY, February 24, 1722.

Arts and Sciences the Effects of Civil Liberty only, and ever destroyed or oppressed by Tyranny. [Gordon] ↩

[II-305]

SIR,

Having already shewn, that naval trade and power cannot subsist but in free countries alone, I will now shew, that the same is true of domestick arts and sciences; and that both these, and population, which is their constant concomitant, and their chief cause as well as their certain effect, are born of liberty, and nursed, educated, encouraged, and endowed, by liberty alone.

Men will not spontaneously toil and labour but for their own advantage, for their pleasure or their profit, and to obtain something which they want or desire, and which, for the most part, is not to be obtained but by force or consent. Force is often dangerous; and when employed to acquire what is not ours, it is always unjust; and therefore men, to procure from others what they had not before, must gain their consent; which is not to be gained, but by getting them in lieu of the thing desired, something which they want and value more than what they part with. This is what we call trade; which is the exchange of one commodity for another, or for that which purchases all commodities, silver and gold.

Men, in their first state, content themselves with the spontaneous productions of nature, the fruits of the field and the liquid stream, and such occasional supplies as they now and then receive from the destruction of other animals. But when those supplies become insufficient to support their numbers, their next resource is to open the bosom of the earth, and, by proper application and culture, to extort her hidden stores: And thus were invented tillage and planting. And an hundred men thus employed can fetch from the bowels of our common mother, food and sustenance enough for ten times their own number; and one tenth part more may possibly be able to supply all the instruments of husbandry, and whatever is barely necessary to support these husbandmen: So that all the rest of the people must rob or starve, unless either the proprietors of the land will give them the produce of their estates for nothing, or they can find something wherewithal to purchase it.

Now in countries where no other arts are in use, but only husbandry and the professions necessary to it, and to support those who are employed about it; all the other inhabitants have no means of purchasing food and raiment, but by selling their persons, and becoming vile slaves and vassals to their princes, lords, or other proprietors of the land; and are obliged, for necessary sustenance, to follow them in their wild wars, and their personal and factious quarrels, and to become the base instruments of their ambition and pride. Great men will rather throw their estates into forests and chases, for the support of wild beasts, and for their own pleasure in hunting them, than into farms, gardens, and fruitful fields, if they can get nothing from the productions of them.

This is the forlorn condition of mankind, in most of the wild empires of the East; this was their condition in all the Gothick governments; and this is the condition of Poland and of the highlands of Scotland; where a few have liberty, and all the rest are slaves. And nothing can free mankind from this abject and forlorn condition, but the invention of arts and sciences; that is, the finding out of more materials and expedients to make life easy and pleasant; and the inducing people to believe, what they will readily believe, that other things are necessary to their happiness, besides those which nature has made necessary. Thus the luxury of the

rich becomes the bread of the poor.

As soon as men are freed from the importunities of hunger and cold; the thoughts and desire of conveniency, plenty, ornament, and politeness, do presently succeed: And then follow after, in very quick progression, emulation, ambition, profusion, and the love of power: And all these, under proper regulations, contribute to the happiness, wealth, and security of societies. It is natural to men and societies, to be setting their wits and their hands to work, to find out all means to satisfy their wants and desires, and to enable them to live in credit and comfort, and to make suitable provision that their posterity may live so after them.

Necessity is the mother of invention; and so is the opinion of necessity. Whilst things are in their own nature necessary to us, or, from custom and fancy, made necessary; we will be turning every thought, and trying every method, how to come at them; and where they cannot be got by violence and rapine, recourse will be had to invention and industry. And here is the source of arts and sciences; which alone can support multitudes of people, who will never be wanting to the means which bring them support.

Where-ever there is employment for people, there will be people; and people, in most countries, are forced, for want of other employment, to cut the throats of one another, or of their neighbours; and to ramble after their princes in all their mad conquests, ridiculous contentions, and other mischievous maggots; and all to get, with great labour, hazard, and often with great hunger and slaughter, a poor, precarious, and momentary subsistence.

And therefore whatever state gives more encouragement to its subjects than the neighbouring states do, and finds them more work, and gives them greater rewards for that work; and by all these laudable ways makes [the] human condition easier than it is elsewhere, and secures life and property better; that state will draw the inhabitants from the neighbouring countries to its own; and when they are there, they will, by being richer and safer, multiply faster. Men will naturally fly from danger to security, from poverty to plenty, and from a life of misery to a life of felicity.

And as there will be always industry where-ever there is protection; so where-ever there is industry and labour, there will be the silver, the gold, the jewels, and power, and the empire. It does not import who they are that have conquered, or inhabit the countries where silver and gold are natives, or who they are that toil for them in the mines; since they will be the possessors of the coin, who can purchase it afterwards with the goods and manufactures which the proprietors of the mine and their people want. One artificer in England, or Holland, can make manufacture enough in a week to buy as much silver and gold at the mine, as a labourer there can dig and prepare in a month, or perhaps two; and all the while that Spain and Portugal lessen their inhabitants, we increase ours: They lose their people by sending them away to dig in the mines; and we, by making the manufactures which they want, and the instruments which they use, multiply ours. By this means every man that they send out of their country is a loss to it, because the reason and produce of their labour goes to enrich rival nations; whereas every man that we send to our plantations, adds to the number of our inhabitants here at home, by maintaining so many of them employed in so many manufactures which they take off there; besides so many artificers in shipping, and all the numerous traders and agents concerned in managing and venting the produce of the plantations, when it is brought hither, and in bringing it hither: So that the English planters in America, besides maintaining themselves and ten times as many Negroes, maintain likewise great numbers of their countrymen in England.

Such are the blessings of liberty, and such is the difference which it makes between country and country! The Spanish nation lost much more by the loss of their liberties, followed with the expulsion of the Moors, than ever they got by the gold and silver

mountains of Mexico and Peru, or could get by all the mines of gold, silver, and diamonds upon earth.

Where there is liberty, there are encouragements to labour, because people labour for themselves: and no one can take from them the acquisitions which they make by their labour: There will be the greatest numbers of people, because they find employment and protection; there will be the greatest stocks, because most is to be got, and easiest to be got, and safest when it is got; and those stocks will be always increasing by a new accession of money acquired elsewhere, where there is no security of enjoying it; there people will be able to work cheapest, because less taxes will be put upon their work, and upon the necessaries which must support them whilst they are about it: There people will dare to own their being rich; there will be most people bred up to trade, and trade and traders will be most respected; and there the interest of money will be lower, and the security of possessing it greater, than it ever can be in tyrannical governments, where life and property and all things must depend upon the humour of a prince, the caprice of a minister, or the demand of a harlot. Under those governments few people can have money, and they that have must lock it up, or bury it to keep it; and dare not engage in large designs, when the advantages may be reaped by their rapacious governors, or given up by them in a senseless and wicked treaty: Besides, such governors condemn trade and artificers; and only men of the sword, who have an interest incompatible with trade, are encouraged by them.

For these reasons, trade cannot be carried on so cheap as in free countries; and whoever supplies the commodity cheapest, will command the market. In free countries, men bring out their money for their use, pleasure, and profit, and think of all ways to employ it for their interest and advantage. New projects are every day invented, new trades searched after, new manufactures set up; and when tradesmen have nothing to fear but from those whom they trust, credit will run high, and they will venture in trade for many times as much as they are worth: But in arbitrary countries, men in trade are every moment liable to be undone, without the guilt of sea or wind, without the folly or treachery of their correspondents, or their own want of care or industry: Their wealth shall be their snare; and their abilities, vigilance, and their success, shall either be their undoing, or nothing to their advantage: Nor can they trust any one else, or any one else them, when payment and performance must depend upon the honesty and wisdom of those who often have none.

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Ignorance of arts and sciences, and of every thing that is good, together with poverty, misery, and desolation, are found for the most part all together, and are all certainly produced by tyranny. In all the great empires of Morocco, Abyssinia, Persia, and India, there is not amongst the natives such a thing as a tolerable architect; nor one good building, unless we except a palace built by a Portuguese for the Abyssinian emperor; and perhaps there may be in all these vast continents a few more good houses built by Europeans. The Aethiopians have scarce such a thing as an artificer among them; their only weavers are the Jews, who are likewise their smiths, whose highest employment in iron is to make heads for their spears; and for artists of their own, their wretched trumpeters and horn-winders seem to be the highest. When the Jesuits built a few churches and chapels in their country, the whole nation were alarmed, taking them for so many castles and fortresses. The rest of their condition is a piece; they are abjectly miserable, in spite of their soil, which in many places is luxuriant, and yields three crops a year; Of such small effect are the gifts of God to his creatures, when the breath of a tyrant can blast them!

In Persia, the carpenters and joiners have but four tools for all their work, and we may guess what sort of work they make; they have a hatchet, a saw, and a chisel, and one sort of plainer, brought thither not long since by a Frenchman. As to printing, they have none; nor

any paper but coarse brown stuff, which cannot be folded without breaking to pieces. In painting, they do not go beyond birds and flowers, and are utterly ignorant of figures and history.

Egypt was once the mother of arts and sciences, and from thence Greece had them: But Egypt losing its liberties, lost with them all politeness, as all nations do; and the pyramids were built by the first Egyptian tyrants, while the knowledge of arts was not yet lost in barbarism, and before the country was dispeopled, else they never had been built. Nor could all the power of the Ottoman Empire build such in the place now, though the Turks were not savages in the sciences, as they are. "Till the time of Ramphsinitus," says Herodotus, "the Egyptians report, that liberty flourished, and the laws were the highest power." Then he tells us, that Cheops, the successor of that king, falling into all debauchery and tyranny, employed a hundred thousand of his people in drawing of stone; Diodorus Siculus says, three hundred and sixty thousand were employed in this inhuman drudgery; and then he began a pyramid. The Egyptians grew afterwards in ignorance, barbarity, and vileness, and almost any body that invaded them, mastered them; and when they were defended, the free Greeks defended them, a band of them being generally entertained for that end by the Egyptian kings. It is true, one or two of the Ptolemies, particularly the first, attempted to revive arts and learning amongst them; but the attempt came to nothing: They were slaves, incapable either of tasting or producing the embellishments and excellencies of liberty, of which they had been long deprived; and therefore the Greek artists, and the Greek professors in Egypt, had the glory of every improvement to themselves, as indeed they were the authors of all. The Romans afterwards left there many monuments of their grandeur and politeness: But when their free government ended, as tyranny succeeded, so did barbarity all over the empire, and no where more than in Egypt, which is at this day the prey of robbing and thieving Arabs, and of oppressive and devouring Turks.

I shall here subjoin a summary account given us by that judicious traveller Monsieur Bernier, concerning the condition of the three great eastern empires, best known to us. It is in his last chapter of *The History of the Great Mogul*.

There is, says he,

almost no person secure from the violence of the governors, timariots, and farmers of the royal rents; nor can the princes, though they were disposed, hinder these violences, nor prevent the tyranny of their servants over their people; which should be the chief employment of a king. This tyranny is often so extensive, that it leaves to the peasant and tradesman neither food nor raiment, but robs them of the common necessaries of life, and they live in misery, and die with hunger: They either beget no children; or, if they do, see them perish in their infancy, for want of food: Sometimes they desert their huts and land, to become lackeys to the soldiers, or fly to neighbouring nations (where their condition is not mended). In short, the land is not tilled but by force, and therefore wretchedly tilled; and great part of it lies waste and is lost: There is no body to clear the ditches and water-courses; no body to build houses, or to repair those that are ruinous. The timariot will not improve the ground for his successor, not knowing how soon he may come; nor will the peasant work for a tyrant, and starve while he does it: And neither timariot nor peasant will labour for bread which others are to eat. So the peasant is left to starve, and the land to become a desert.

Hence it is, that we see those vast states in Asia run and running to wretched ruin: Most of their towns are raised with dirt and earth; and you see nothing but ruinous towns, and deserted villages: And hence it is, that those celebrated regions of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Palestine, with those admirable plains of Antioch, and so many other countries, anciently so well manured, so fertile, and so full of people, are all at present half deserted, abandoned, and untilled, or become pestilent and uninhabitable bogs. Egypt is in the like condition; and

within these fourscore years, above the tenth part of its incomparable soil is lost by poverty, and want of hands to scour the channels of the Nile, and remove the sand which covers their fields.

From the same causes, arts languish and starve in those countries: For with what heart can an artisan labour and study for ignorant beggars, who are not judges of his work, and cannot pay him for it, or for grandees who will not? He is so far from any prospect of reward, that he is not only without all hopes of wealth, office or lands; but, to avoid being thought rich, must live poorly: He must never eat a good meal, never wear a decent coat, never appear to be worth sixpence. Nay, he is happy if he can escape the korrah, a terrible whip exercised by the great lords upon the artists; proper encouragement of ingenuity!

Indeed, the knowledge and beauty of arts had been lost in those countries long since, were it not that the kings and grandees give wages to certain handicraftsmen, who work in their houses, and, to escape the whip, do their best: Besides, the rich merchants, who share their gains with men of power, to be protected by them, give these handicraftsmen a little more pay, and but a little. We must not therefore think, upon seeing rich eastern stuffs here, that the workman there is in any condition or esteem: He works not for himself: Only necessity and the cudgel makes him work; and let him work how he will, he is doomed to live miserably, to clothe himself meanly, to eat poorly.

Traffick also in those countries is faint and decaying: For how many are there that care to take much pains; to make dangerous voyages, and take long journeys; to be constantly running up and down; to write much, to live in perpetual anxiety and care, and to risk all hazards and chances; and all for a precarious gain, which is at the mercy of the next greedy governor?

This whole chapter of Bernier deserves every man's reading: I have only room to add part of another paragraph. talking of the Turkish empire: "We have travelled," says he,

through almost all the parts of it; we have seen how woefully it is ruined and dispeopled; and how in the capital city the raising of five or six thousand men requires three whole months: And we know what a fall it must have had before now, had it not been for the supplies of Christian slaves and captives brought thither every year from all parts. Without doubt, if the same sort of government continue, that state will destroy itself: It is at this day maintained by its own weakness, and must at last fall by it. The governors are frequently changed, to make room for new oppressors; but neither has any one governor, or one subject in the whole empire, a penny that he can call his own, to maintain the least party; nor, if he had money, are there any men to be had in these wide desolate provinces. A blessed expedient this, to make a state subsist! An expedient, much like that of a brama of Pegu, who, to prevent sedition, commanded that no land should be tilled for some years together; and having thus destroyed half the kingdom with hunger, he turned it into forests: Which method, however, did not answer his end, nor prevent divisions in that state, which was reduced so low, that a handful of Chinese fugitives were like to have taken and mastered the capital city Ava.

Thus far Bernier. Sir Paul Ricaut tells us, that it is a reigning maxim in the Turkish policy, to lay a great part of their empire waste. A maxim, which they need take no pains to practise; since, without destroying deliberately their people and provinces, which yet they do, the dreadful spirit of their government creates desolation fast enough in all conscience.

The whole city of Dhili, the capital of India, is obliged to follow the Great Mogul their emperor, when he takes a journey, their whole dependence being upon the court and the soldiery; for they cannot support themselves: Nor is the country round them, which is either waste, or its inhabitants starving, able to support them. So that the citizens of this mighty metropolis, are only the wretched sutlers to a camp: They are forced to leave their houses empty, and stroll after their monarch, whenever he is graciously disposed to take a jaunt; and

are absent sometimes from home a year and a half together.

The Jesuit Nicholas Pimenta, who was in Pegu about an hundred and twenty years ago, gives this account of it: "The last king," says he,

was a mighty king, and could bring into the field a million and sixty thousand men, taking one out of ten: But his son had, by his wars, his oppressions, his murders, and other cruelties, made such quick dispatch of his subjects, that all that were left did not exceed seven thousand, including men, women, and children. What an affecting influence is here of the pestilential nature of tyranny!

It is not unlikely that some of these fatal wars were made by this inhuman prince, for white elephants; and that he either made or provoked invasions upon that score, as I have instanced in another paper: And here I shall add something to make this conjecture still more probable. Mr. Ralph Fitch, a merchant of London, was at Pegu thirteen or fourteen years before Pimenta, in the reign of the above potent king; and he says,

Such is the esteem that this king has for an elephant of this colour, that amongst his other titles, he is called King of the White Elephants; a title, which to him seems as lofty as any of the rest. And that no other prince round about him may wear his glorious title, therefore none of them must keep a white elephant, though nature gave it them; but must send it to him, or an army shall fetch it; for rather than not have it, he will make war for it.

He says, that the houses of these creatures are splendidly gilt, and so are the silver vessels out of which they are fed. When they go to the river to be washed, which they do every day, six or seven men bear up a canopy of cloth of gold or silk over them; and as many more march with drums and musical instruments before them; and when they come out of the water, their feet are washed in great silver basins by persons of quality, whose office it is thus to serve them. Bernier says, the Great Mogul allows fixed pensions (sometimes very large ones) to every elephant, with proper attendance; nay, two men are employed in the sultry months, to stand, one on each side, to fan them.

I only mention this, to shew how much more care these tyrants take of their beasts, than of their people. And it is too true of all arbitrary princes; their stable of horses is dearer to them than their subjects, and live infinitely better.

This is almost universally true where-ever there are such. Nay, they value their dogs more than they do the lives of men. When the Grand Seignior goes a hunting, a great number of peasants must enclose the ground for several leagues round, and keep in the game; this they must often do for many days together, sometimes in ice and snow, with hungry bellies. By which means their work is neglected, their grounds are destroyed, and they themselves are many times killed in the sport, or starved in attending it; and it often happens, that forty or fifty of his own followers perish in a day. Sultan Mahomet's grand falconer had once the honesty and boldness to represent to his master all this destruction and carnage which attended his endless passion for hunting; but all the answer which he received from this father of the faithful, was, "By all means take care of the dogs, let them have clothing and other accommodations."

This paper upon arts and population grows too long: I shall therefore reserve to another what I have to say further upon this subject.

G

I am, &c.



No. 68. SATURDAY, March 3, 1722.

Property and Commerce secure in a free Government only; with the consuming Miseries under simple Monarchies. [Gordon] ↩

[II-321]

SIR,

I here send you what I have to say further upon arts, industry and population. To live securely, happily, and independently, is the end and effect of liberty; and it is the ambition of all men to live agreeably to their own humours and discretion. Nor did ever any man that could live satisfactorily without a master, desire to live under one; and real or fancied necessity alone makes men the servants, followers, and creatures of one another. And therefore all men are animated by the passion of acquiring and defending property, because property is the best support of that independency, so passionately desired by all men. Even men the most dependent have it constantly in their heads and their wishes, to become independent one time or other; and the property which they are acquiring, or mean to acquire by that dependency, is intended to bring them out of it, and to procure them an agreeable independency. And as happiness is the effect of independency, and independency the effect of property; so certain property is the effect of liberty alone, and can only be secured by the laws of liberty; laws which are made by consent, and cannot be repealed without it.

All these blessings, therefore, are only the gifts and consequences of liberty, and only to be found in free countries, where power is fixed on one side, and property secured on the other; where the one cannot break bounds without check, penalties or forfeiture, nor the other suffer diminution without redress; where the people have no masters but the laws, and such as the laws appoint; where both laws and magistracy are formed by the people or their deputies; and no demands are made upon them, but what are made by the law, and they know to a penny what to pay before it is asked; where they that exact from them more than the law allows, are punishable by the law; and where the legislators are equally bound by their own acts, equally involved in the consequences.

There can be no good, where there are none of the causes of good; and consequently all the advantages of liberty must be lost with liberty, and all the evils of tyranny must accompany tyranny. I have in my last taken a view of the eastern monarchies, with regard to the miserable decay of their people and arts; I shall in this confine myself, for instances, to Europe, and begin with Muscovy, by far the greatest empire for territory in Christendom: And because the best short account that I have seen of that government, is given by Giles Fletcher, who was there in the latter end of Queen Elizabeth's time, I shall here recite part of that account.

Talking of the many wicked and barbarous arts used by the late czars of Russia, to drain and oppress their people, he says;

“They would suffer their people to give freely to the monasteries (as many do, especially in their last wills), and this they do, because they may have the money of the realm more ready at hand, when they list to take it, which is many times done; the friars parting freely with some, rather than lose all.

“John Basilowitz pretended to resign the crown to the Prince of Cazan, and to retire for the rest of his life to a monastery: He then caused this new king to call in all the ecclesiastical charters, and to cancel them. Then pretending to dislike this fact, and the misrule of the new king, he resumed the sceptre, possessed as he was of all the church lands; of which he kept

what he would, and gave new charters for the rest. By this he wrung from the ecclesiasticks a vast sum; and yet hoped to abate the ill opinion of his government, by shewing a worse.

“When they want to levy a new tax, they make a shew of want, as was done by Duke Theodore; who, though left very rich by his father, yet sold most of his plate, and coined the rest, that he might seem in necessity: Whereupon presently came out a new tax upon his people.

“They would sometimes send their messengers into the provinces to forestall and engross the commodities of the country, taking them at small prices, what they themselves listed, and selling them again at excessive prices to their own merchants, or to strangers. If they refuse to buy them, then they force them into it: The like they do, when any commodity thus engrossed, foreign or native, such as cloth of gold, broad cloth, and the like, happens to decay, by lying upon hand; it is forced upon the merchants at the emperor's price, whether they will or no.

“Besides the engrossing of foreign commodities, and forcing them upon the merchants, they make a monopoly for a season of all such commodities as are paid the prince for rent or custom; and this they do to enhance the price of them: Thus they monopolize furs, corn, wood, &c. during all which time none must sell of the same commodity, till the emperor's be all sold.

“The above-mentioned John Basilowitz sent into Permia (a country of the poor Samoides) for certain loads of cedar, though he well knew that none grew there; and the inhabitants returned answer, that they could find none. Whereupon he taxed the country in twelve thousand rubles. Again, he sent to the city of Moscow to provide for him a measure full of fleas, for a medicine. They answered, that the thing was impossible; and if they could get them, yet they could not measure them, because of their leaping out. Upon which he set a mulct upon them of seven thousand rubles.

“To these may be added, their seizures and confiscations upon such as are under displeasure, and the connivance at the oppression and extortions of the governors of the provinces, till their time be expired; and then turning all their wicked plunder into the emperor's treasury, but never a penny back again to the right owner, how great or evident soever the injury be.

“As to the people, they are of no rank or account, and esteemed no better than villains; and so they subscribe themselves in all their writings to any of the nobility, as they of the nobility do to the emperor: And indeed, no bond slaves are kept more in awe and subjection, than the common people are, by the nobility, officers, and soldiers; so that when a poor *mousick* (one of the commonalty) meets any of them upon the highway, he must turn himself about, as not daring to look them in the face, and fall down with his head to the very ground.

“And as to the lands and goods of these miserable people, they are so exposed to the rapine of the nobility and soldiers, besides the taxes, customs, and seizures, and other publick exactions laid upon them by the emperor, that they are utterly discouraged from following their trades and professions; because the more they have, the more danger they are in, not only of their goods, but even of their lives: And if they happen to have any thing, they convey it into monasteries, or hide it in woods or under ground, as men do when they are in fear of a foreign invasion. So that many villages and towns are entirely without inhabitants; and in the way towards Moscow, betwixt Volaghda and Yareslave, for about an hundred English miles, there are least fifty villages, some half a mile long, some a whole mile long, that stand wholly desolate, without a single inhabitant. The like desolation is seen in all other places of the realm, as I have been told by those that travelled the country.

“In every great town the emperor hath a drinking-house, which he rents out: Here the labouring man and artificer many times spends all from his wife and children. Some drink away all that they wear about them, to their very shirts, and so walk naked; and all for the honour of the emperor. Nay, while they are thus drinking themselves naked, and starving their families, no body must call them away, upon any account, because he would hinder the emperor's revenue.

“The capital punishments upon the people are very cruel; but if theft or murder be committed upon them by one of the nobility, he is seldom punished, or so much as called to account for it, because the people are the slaves of the nobility: Or if these crimes are committed by a gentleman soldier, perhaps he may be imprisoned at the emperor's pleasure, or perhaps fined—and that is all.”

I make this quotation chiefly upon memory, having only taken down some hints when I read it; but I can assert it to be a just one, and almost wholly in the Doctor's words.

I know much has been said of the improvements made by the present Czar, and of his many projects in favour of arts and trade: And it is very true, that he is a prince of a very active and inquisitive genius. But though he has made himself a more powerful prince than any of his predecessors were, I do not find that the numbers of his people are increased, or their general wretched condition much mended. He has a vast army constantly on foot; he keeps vast numbers of his poor subjects constantly employed in making havens and canals; great taxes are raised, great and daily waste is made of his people, who are likewise miserably oppressed by his boyars, to whom he still leaves the raising of money, and the direction of trade: So that the general oppression remains; trade is deadened and distressed; the people burdened beyond measure; sudden and arbitrary duties are laid upon commodities imported; the old way of monopolies is continued; the state of the exchange, and the allay and uncertain value of the current coin, are as bad as they can be; arts and ingenuity are really discouraged, and those who have skill in any art must conceal it, to avoid working for nothing; there are grievances without number, and like to be, for he who complains is certainly undone, and petitions are answered with stripes, sometimes with death itself. In short, the condition of the Russian people is much upon the same foot as it was in Dr. Fletcher's time; and whoever doubts it, may find full conviction from Captain Perry's state of Russia, under the present Czar.

In Poland, nothing can be more miserable than the condition of the peasants, who are subject to the mere mercy of the great lords, as to life and death and property; and must labour five days in a week, nay sometimes six, for these lords; and if they cannot subsist themselves and their families upon one day's labour in seven, they must famish. The state of the other northern kingdoms is, with respect to the people, as wretched as any yet named: They have many soldiers, endless taxes, dreadful poverty, few people, and gaudy courts. It is indeed said of some arbitrary princes in some parts of Europe, that they are merciful to their subjects, and do not use them barbarously; that is, they do not deliberately butcher them, but only take all that they have, and leave them to starve peaceably upon the rest: All the riches of the country are to be seen at court, and the people are wretchedly poor. *Cantabit vacuus*. A countryman once complained to General Kirk, that his soldiers had plundered him of all that he had in the world: “Thou art a happy man,” says the General, “for then they will plunder thee no more.”

The woeful decay of people and plenty in many states in Italy is so astonishing, that were it not obvious to every eye that sees it, and so well attested to those who have not seen it, by those who have, it would seem beyond all belief.

“When I came into the Pope's territories at Pont Centino, says Dr. Burnet,

there was a rich bottom all uncultivated, and not so much as stocked with cattle: But as I passed from Montifiascone to Viterbo, this appeared yet more amazing; for a vast champaign country lay almost quite deserted. And that wide town, which is of so great compass, hath few inhabitants, and those looked poor and miserable. When I was within a day's journey of Rome, I fancied the neighbourhood of so great a city must mend the matter; but I was much disappointed: For a soil that was so rich, and lay so sweetly, that it far exceeded any thing I ever saw out of Italy, had neither inhabitants in it, nor cattle upon it, to the tenth part of what it could bear. The surprize this gave me increased upon me, as I went out of Rome on its other side, chiefly all the way to Naples, and on the way to Civita Vecchia; for that vast and rich champaign country, which runs all along to Terracina, which from Civita Vecchia is a hundred miles long, and is in many places twelve or twenty miles broad, is abandoned to such a degree, that as far as one's eye can carry one, there is often not so much as a house to be seen. The severity of the government hath driven away the inhabitants; and their being driven away hath reduced it to such a pass, that it is hardly possible to people it.

He adds, that in Rome itself,

it is not possible for the people to live and pay taxes; which has driven, as it is believed, almost a fourth part of the people out of Rome during this pontificate.

He tells us elsewhere, that the Pope buys in all the corn of St. Peter's patrimony.

He buys it at five crowns their measure, and even that is slowly and ill paid. So that there was eight hundred thousand crowns owing upon that score when I was at Rome. In selling this out, the measure is lessened a fifth part, and the price of the whole is doubled; so that what was bought at five crowns, is sold out at twelve; and if the bankers, who are obliged to take a determined quantity of corn from the chamber, cannot retail out all that is imposed upon them, but are forced to return some part of it back, the chamber discounts to them only the first price of five crowns.

It is observed by another noble author of our country, that Mario Chigi, brother to Pope Alexander the Seventh, by one sordid cheat upon the sale of corn, is said within eight years to have destroyed above the third part of the people in the ecclesiastical state; and that that country, which was the strength of the Romans in the Carthaginian wars, suffered more by the covetousness and fraud of that villain, than by all the defeats received from Hannibal.

The country of Ferrara was formerly very populous, and the lands being fertile, were well cultivated; but since the Pope has got possession of it, it is almost depopulated; the lands are nigh desolate; and, for want of people, it is like the rest of the ecclesiastical state, unhealthy to live in. His Holiness has reduced the inhabitants from above an hundred thousand, to about twelve thousand. In the city itself, grass grows in the streets, and most of the houses are empty.

The Great Duke's dominions lie much in the same dismal solitude. When Sienna and Pisa were free states, they swarmed with people, and were rich in trade and territory: Sienna alone was computed to have had above half a million of subjects; but in a matter of an hundred and fourscore years, during which time it has been in the possession of his Highness of Tuscany, they are sunk below twenty thousand, and these miserably poor. The same is the abject condition of Pisa, Pistoja, Arezzo, Cortona, and many other great towns. Florence, his capital particularly, which, in the days of liberty, could, by the ringing of a bell, bring together, of its own citizens and the inhabitants of the valley Arno, a hundred and thirty-five thousand well armed men in a few hours' time, is now so poor and low, that it could not bring together three tolerable regiments in thirteen months.

The city of Pisa alone was reckoned, when it was free, to have had a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, all happy in liberty and commerce; and now they are about ten thousand, without liberty, and commerce, and bread. Formerly an hundred of its citizens could fit out an hundred galleys, and maintain them during a war, at their own charge; and now the whole city could not furnish out nor maintain one. Their stately palaces are desolate, like their territory; or let out for stables, or any other sorry use, at three or four pounds a year rent. Their streets are covered with grass; their territory, by being waste, is grown unwholesome; and their few remains of people are starving. And that great state, which the Great Duke could not master without the armies of Spain, are not now able to contend with his infamous crew of tax-gatherers. The people are famished slaves, their houses are ruins, their trade is gone, their land unmanured, and yet their taxes are not lessened; and if there be any plenty amongst them, 'tis only plenty of beggars.

The same is the condition of the Milanese, and other countries under the same sort of government; the people starve in the best soils: Whereas in Switzerland, and in the territories of Genoa, Lucca, and the Grisons, they are numerous, and live happily in the worst. "The people in France" (says the author of the supplement to Dr. Burnet's travels),

especially the peasants, are very poor, and most of them reduced to great want and misery; and yet France is an extraordinary good country. The people of Switzerland (which is a country of mountains) cannot be said to be very rich, but there are very few, even of the peasants, that are miserably poor. The most part of them have enough to live on. Every where in France, even in the best cities, there are swarms of beggars; and yet scarce any to be seen throughout all Switzerland. The houses of the country people in France are extremely mean; and in them no other furniture is to be found, but poor nasty beds, straw chairs, with plates and dishes of wood and earth. In Switzerland, the peasants have their houses furnished with good featherbeds, good chairs, and other convenient household-stuffs; their windows are all of glass, always kept mended and whole; and their linen, both for bedding and their tables, is very neat and white.

This was written above thirty years ago, when France was in a much better condition than it has been since. The glory of their late Grand Monarch cost them much misery, and many myriads of people. And yet even thirty years ago their miseries were great and affecting! "As I came from Paris to Lyons" (says Dr. Burnet),

I was amazed to see so much misery as appeared not only in villages, but even in big towns; where all the marks of an extreme poverty shewed themselves, both in the buildings, the clothes, and almost in the looks of the inhabitants. And a general dispeopling in all the towns, was a very visible effect of the hardships under which they lay.

What blessed circumstances that great kingdom is in now, Mr. Law, who is amongst us, can best tell; though we all pretty well know. It is really a science, and no easy one, to know the names, numbers, and quality of their taxes; which are so many, so various, and so heavy, that one of their own writers calls them, inventions proper to impoverish the people, and to enrich the dictionaries. Bulion, treasurer to Louis XIII, told his master, that his subjects were too happy, they were not yet reduced to eat grass. And the cruel spirit and politicks of that minister were afterwards so well improved, that I am apt to think their present felicity is no part of their misfortunes.

Such instances shew what hopeful methods such governors take to increase people, trade, and riches.

As to the politer arts, I own several of them have flourished under some of the Popes themselves, and some other arbitrary princes; such as painting, architecture, sculpture, and musick. But these arts, and the improvements of them, were so far from owing any thing to that sort of government, that by liberty alone, and the privileges given to the professors of them, they came to excel in them; nor would they ever have excelled upon the common foot and condition of their other subjects: So that to make them excellent, they made them free. And thus even tyrants, the enemies of liberty, were, for their furniture, luxury, pomp, pleasure, and entertainment, forced to be beholden to liberty; and for those particular purposes, they gave it to particular men. But for the rest of their subjects, they were left by them in the condition of brutes, both in point of livelihood and knowledge; For it is liberty more than shape, that makes the difference; since reason without liberty proves little better, and sometimes worse, than none. Servitude mars all genius; nor is either a pen or a pencil of any use in a hand that is manacled.

G

I am, &c.

The End of the Second Volume.



CATO'S LETTERS.

VOL. III.

[March 10, 1722 to December 1, 1722]

No. 69. SATURDAY, March 10, 1722.

Address to the Freeholders, &c. about the Choice of their Representatives. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-3]

SIR,

I beg leave to interrupt my discourse upon general liberty for one post or more, as occasion shall present; and desire you will publish the enclosed letter in your journal, in the place which used to be filled with one to yourself.

***TO THE FREEHOLDERS, CITIZENS, AND BURGHERS OF THE COUNTIES,
CITIES, AND TOWNS OF GREAT-BRITAIN.***

GENTLEMEN,

There is no natural or political body but is subject to the variations and injuries of time. Both are composed of springs, wheels, and ligaments, all in perpetual motion, and all liable to wear out and decay: And as the parts are mortal, the whole must be mortal too. But as natural bodies may continue their existence, and preserve their duration, by action, by the addition of new particles, or by removing from time to time all occasional obstructions which clog their motion, and check their vigour, as long as their stamina, first principles, or original constitution, are capable of subsisting; so a political machine may do the same: And some writers in politicks have asserted, that the same might be immortal; which is not my opinion.

But whether this be true or not, certain it is, that in many respects a political body has the advantage of a natural one. We can often look into its inmost frame and contexture; and when any of its constituent parts are decayed or worn out, can supply it with new ones (which cannot be done in the other without a total dissolution of the fabrick): And we can frequently annex additional props and buttresses to support for some time a tottering building, and hinder it from falling upon our heads. This is often all that can be done in decayed governments, when a state is in a cachexy; and this is what is every honest man's duty to do, when he can do no better. But, I thank God, the constitution of England is yet sound and vigorous: Many of its parts are active and strong; and if some members be corrupted or decayed, there are materials at hand to supply the defect. There is wealth and power in being: Our country abounds with men of courage and understanding; nor are there wanting those of integrity and publick spirit: There is an ardent desire and diffusive love of liberty throughout the kingdom; and many begin to be tired, sick, and ashamed of party-animosities, and of quarrelling with their neighbours, their relations, and often with their best friends, to gratify the pride, the ambition, and rapine of those, who only sell and betray them. It is yet in our

power to save ourselves; most men have inclination to do it; and it is only owing to the art and address of our common enemies, if we do not agree on the means of doing it.

I dare therefore affirm, that there is such a general disposition towards liberty through the whole kingdom, that if there should be found in the next House of Commons as many honest, bold, and wise men, as would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, England is yet safe, in spite of all the efforts of delusion and bribery: And I dare as freely affirm, that if some vigorous and bold resolutions are not there taken, to assist our most excellent King towards discharging the publick debts, and in redressing all sorts of publick corruptions, the liberty of Great-Britain—my heart can speak no more.

It lies upon you, Gentlemen, to give motion to the machine: You are the first springs that give life to all virtuous resolutions: Such as you shew yourselves, such will be your representatives: such as is the tree, such will be the fruit. Choose honest men, free and independent men, and they will act honestly for the publick interest, which is your interest. It is not to be expected, that criminals will destroy their own handiwork; that they will either reform or punish themselves; or, that men, who have brought our misfortunes upon us, will go about in good earnest to redress them, or even own that there are any such. Besides, deep wounds must be probed and searched to the core, before they can be cured; and those who gave them can seldom bear to see the operation, much less will they pay for the cure, if they can be at ease by the death of the patient.

Let us not therefore, my countrymen, desert or deceive ourselves, or think we can be safe, if ever such men can get into power. Let us not again be deluded with false promises and deceitful assurances; but let us judge what men will do by what they have done. What warm and plausible remonstrances have you formerly heard and received? What impetuous storms and hurricanes of false and counterfeit zeal against oppressions and miscarriages in the late reigns; against exorbitant pensions, outrageous taxes, wild and expensive expeditions; against increasing the publick debts; against standing troops quartered up and down your countries; against oppressive companies, to the destruction of your trade and industry; against private men's raising immense estates upon your ruin; and against their bribing and corrupting the guardians of the publick liberty? And are you at last perfectly easy in every one of those complaints?

Now, therefore, my best friends, is the time to help yourselves: Now act honestly and boldly for liberty, or forget the glorious and charming sound. Let not a publick traitor come within the walls of your cities and towns, without treating him, as an enemy to your king and country deserves. Throw your eyes about your several countries, and choose your patrons, your protectors, your neighbours, and your known friends; choose for your representatives men whose interests are blended with your own; men who have no hands dipped in the public spoils, but have suffered by them as much as you yourselves have suffered; men who have not jobbed for stock, nor for wages, nor for you.

Make not so foolish a bargain, as for a little loose money to give up desperately all you have; your liberties, your estates, your families. Is it for your sakes, think you, that these jobbers of stocks, and of honesty, and of their country, come to caress you, flatter you, and bow to you? Do you, or can you believe that they come to impair their own fortunes, to increase yours? Or think you not that they will have their pennyworths out of you? Depend upon it, they will; and, for every bucket of water thrown into your wells, they will pump out tuns.

Reason not therefore, as too many of you have done, and I fear yet do, that since those whom you trust make personal advantages of your confidence and credulity, you ought to share in those advantages. But throw your choice upon such who will neither buy you, nor

sell you. Whoever purchases an office at more than it is honestly worth, must be supported by him who sells it, in all dishonest gains; or else he will call for his money again, if he know how to get it. No man will bribe you into your own interests, or give you money that he may have leave to serve you by his own labour, and at his farther expence; but will think himself at liberty to make reprisals: He will find no difficulty in himself to sell those, who have before sold themselves and their country: Nor can you have any right or pretence to reprove one that does so.

Mistake not, my countrymen, in believing that men in your condition and circumstances are too low for the scythe, and that you can shrink out of publick misfortunes. For you, gentlemen, are the first principles of wealth and power. From your labour and industry arises all that can be called riches, and by your hands it must be defended: Kings, nobility, gentry, clergy, lawyers, and military officers, do all support their grandeur by your sweat and hazard, and in tyrannical governments upon the people's spoils: They there riot upon the subsistence of the poor people, whose poverty is their riches. In corrupt administrations, your superiors of all kinds make bargains, and pursue ends at the publick expence, and grow rich by making the people poor.

You feel the first effects of tyrannical government; and great men are generally made the instruments of it, and reap the advantages. Exorbitant taxes, want of trade, decay of manufactures, discouragement of industry, insolence and oppression of soldiers, exactions of civil officers, ignorance, superstition, and bigotry, are all the constant concomitants of tyranny, always produce it, and are produced by it. And all these terrible evils must fall most signally upon the middle and inferior ranks of mankind: There must be a great number of slaves to furbish up one grand monarch, and the poor people must be those slaves. He must engage many in his interest, before he can establish a power which destroys the rest; all these many must be supported, and have their condition bettered by the change; and all this charge and expence the wretched people must work for and pay.

Forget therefore, Gentlemen, the foolish and knavish distinction of High Church and Low Church, Whig and Tory; sounds which continue in your mouths when the meaning of them is gone; and are now only used to set you together by the ears, that rogues may pick your pockets, I own myself to be one of those, whom one side in respect, and the other in contumely, call Whigs; and yet I never discoursed with a candid and sensible Tory, who did not concur with me in opinion, when we explained our intentions. We both agreed in our notions of old English liberty, in a passion for freedom to ourselves, and to procure it for every one else: We were both for preserving the English monarchy, and the legal constitution of the national church against its enthusiastick friends and enemies; and were for giving liberty of conscience to those, who through a prejudiced education, or as we believed, a less capacity of judging, were so unhappy as to think differently from ourselves, in an affair which concerned us not, and which we had nothing to do with.

We both honoured and resolved to preserve upon the throne our most excellent sovereign King George, and to endeavour to continue him a glorious king over honest men, and freemen; and not to attempt to make him, what he scorns to be made, a patron of parasites, and a lord of slaves: And we thought we could not shew our duty to him more effectually, than in bringing to exemplary punishment all who had betrayed him and us:

We wished the old names of distinction and faction buried deep as the centre; and nothing heard in their room but court and country, Protestant and papist, freemen and slaves. It will lie at your door, Gentlemen, to put an end to the above silly and wicked gibberish. Choose those who have no interest to continue it, and it will not be continued.

Consider, my dear friends and countrymen, what I have said, and think what you are doing, while you are raising hue and cry after men who will betray you; while you are sending afar for courtiers, for directors of bubbles, for company-men, and publick pickpockets, to represent you; while you are giving up, perhaps for ever, to the mercy of bloodsuckers, your honest industry, and the just profits of your trade, for a poor momentary share of their infamous plunder; and thereby bringing a canker upon your subsistence, and the just resentment of heaven upon your endeavours. Shew yourselves once, and once for all, Britons and freemen, and not foreign and saleable slaves; shew that you know how to honour your king, and yet to keep your liberties; that you obey him out of choice, and not out of servile fear; that you know how to distinguish your loyalty to your prince, from a blind submission to his and your own servants; and that you can make your duty to him consistent with a vigorous resolution to punish all who betray him and you.

If you did but know, Gentlemen, how you are used above, by those who think it worth their time to flatter you below, and to your faces, you would not want my advice and admonitions. You are called the mob, the canaille, the stupid herd, the dregs and beasts of the people; and your interest is never thought of by those men, who thus miscall you; men who have no more wit, and much less honesty, than yourselves; and men whose insolence and sauciness are owing to wealth, which they have plundered from you. It depends now upon yourselves, whether you will deserve these base and reproachful names, or not; shew that you are men, and you will be used like men; but if you sell yourselves like the beasts in the field, the purchasers will have a right to sell you again, and make honest gains out of a villainous bargain.

For my own particular, I cannot give myself leave to despair of you, because I must at the same time despair of old English liberty: You are our Alpha and Omega, our first and last resource; and when your virtue is gone, all is gone. It is true, you have a wife and virtuous prince at present, who will not take advantage of your follies; and you may depend upon the same security from his son: but neither he nor his son, nor his family are immortal; and therefore I hope you will act wisely, and trust to yourselves alone. But whatever part, gentlemen, you shall think fit to take, you shall not do it blindfold, and in the dark. You shall have the fair and dark side of your conduct laid before you, and then you may choose whether you will be freemen or vassals; whether you will spend your own money and estates, or let others worse than you spend them for you: Methinks the choice should be easy. You shall hear more from me upon this subject; and you may believe me.

T

GENTLEMEN,

Your very sincere,

And most affectionate,

Humble Servant.

No. 70. SATURDAY, March 17, 1722.

Second Address to the Freeholders, &c. upon the same Subject.[Gordon] [↪](#)

[III-12]

GENTLEMEN,

You are born to liberty, and it is your interest and duty to preserve it. The constitution which you live under is a mixed monarchy, where your governors have every right to protect and defend you, none to injure and oppress you. You have a large share in the legislature; you have the sole power over your own purses; you have an undoubted right to call to account and punish the instruments of your oppression: But it depends upon yourselves alone to make these rights of yours, these noble privileges, of use to you. The best laws give no security if they are not executed, but indeed become worse than no laws; and they never will be executed, unless those who are entrusted with the execution of them have an interest in their execution.

All men desire naturally riches and power; almost all men will take every method, just or unjust, to attain them. Hence the difficulty of governing men, and of instituting a government equally proper to restrain them and protect them; and hence the insufficiency of simple forms of government, to provide for the happiness and security of societies. An arbitrary prince will quickly grow into a tyrant; the uncontrolled dominions of the nobles will as certainly produce oligarchy, or the tyranny of a few; that is, pride, combination, and rapine in the sovereigns, and misery and dejection in the many; and the unrestrained licentiousness of the multitude will beget confusion and anarchy. To provide against these certain and eternal evils, mixed forms of government were invented; where dominion and liberty are so equally tempered, and so mutually checked one by another, that neither of them can have interest and force enough to oppress the other.

These institutions have provided against many evils, but not against all; for, whilst men continue in this state of degeneracy, that is, whilst men are men, ambition, avarice, and vanity, and other passions, will govern their actions; in spite of all equity and reason, they will be ever usurping, or attempting to usurp, upon the liberty and fortunes of one another, and all men will be striving to enlarge their own. Dominion will always desire increase, and property always to preserve itself; and these opposite views and interests will be causing a perpetual struggle: But by this struggle liberty is preserved, as water is kept sweet by motion.

The nature and reason of this sort of government, is to make the several parts of it control and counterpoise one another; and so keep all within their proper bounds. The interest of the magistracy, which is the lot and portion of the great, is to prevent confusion, which levels all things: The interest of the body of the people, is to keep people from oppression, and their magistrates from changing into plunderers and murderers; the interest of the standing senate, which is, or ought to be, composed of men distinguishable for their fortunes and abilities, is to avoid ruin and dissolution from either of these extremes: So that, to preserve liberty, all these coordinate powers must be kept up in their whole strength and independency.

Names will not defend you, Gentlemen, when the thing signified by them is gone. The emperors of Rome were as absolute with the shew of a Senate, and the appearance of the people's choosing their praetors, tribunes, and other officers of the commonwealth, as the eastern monarchs are now without these seeming checks, and this shew of liberty: And in some respects they were more secure; as the infamy of their tyranny was shared by these assemblies, the advantages were all their own, and the condition of the people was rather the

worse for these mock magistrates and pretended representatives, who, under the colour and title of the protectors of the people, were, at the people's expence, the real helpers and partakers of the iniquity of the tyrant. The kings of France have parliaments, but parliaments which dare not dispute their royal pleasure; and the poor people would not fare one jot the better, if these parliaments were bribed not to dispute it.

This wretched case, Gentlemen, will be yours and the wretched case of your posterity, if ever an ambitious prince and designing minister shall hereafter be able to corrupt or awe your representatives. And whatever wicked bargains are then made, will be made at your expence, and you must pay the terrible reckoning at last. You have a king at present, from whom you have none of these things to fear. But, alas! Gentlemen, how few Tituses and Trajans were there found amongst the Roman emperors! and how few can England shew since the Conquest! It requires therefore your best thoughts and most vigorous resolutions, to preserve your constitution entire in all its parts, without suffering any one part to prevail so far over the other, as to reduce it in effect, though not in name, to a simple form of government, which is always tyranny. It will be all one to you, whether this is brought about by confederacy or by force. Whatever be the villainous means, violence, oppression, and every rank of evil, will be the end.

In order to this honest or publick design, you ought to choose representatives, whose interests are at present the same with your own, and likely to continue the same; representatives, who are not already pre-engaged, nor, from their circumstances, education, profession, or manner of life, likely to be engaged, in a contrary interest. He will prove but a sorry advocate, who takes fees from your adversary; and as indifferent a plenipotentiary, who receives a pension from the prince whom he is commissioned to treat with: Nor can there be any security in the fidelity of one, who can find it more his interest to betray you, than to serve you faithfully.

Virtue and vice will be but ill balanced, when power and riches are thrown into the wrong scale. A great Protestant peer of France having changed his religion, in compliance with his master, Henry IV of France, who had changed too, was soon after asked by that monarch publickly, which of the two religions he thought the best? "The Protestant, sir, undoubtedly is the best," said the peer, "by your own royal confession; since, in exchange for it, your Majesty has given me popery, and a marshal's staff to boot." Where boot is given, there is always a tacit confession that the exchange is unequal without it. Choose not therefore such who are likely to truck away your liberties for an equivalent to themselves, and to sell you to those against whom it is their duty to defend you. When their duty is in one scale, and a thousand pounds a year, or more, or even less, is thrown into the contrary scale, you may easily guess, as the world goes, how the balance is like to turn.

It is the right and duty of the freeholders and burghers of Great Britain, to examine into the conduct, and to know the opinions and intentions, of such as offer themselves to their choice. How can any of them be truly represented, when they know not who represents them? And as it was always their right, they had once the frequent means and opportunity to resent effectually the corruptions of those who had basely betrayed their sacred trust; of rejecting with scorn and detestation, such traitorous parricides; and of sending up honester and wiser men in their room. This, my dear countrymen, we had once the frequent means of doing: Make use now, O worthy and free Britons! make good use of this present dawn, this precious day of liberty, to recover once more that invaluable privilege. Do not wildly choose any one who has given up, or attempted to give up, your birthrights, and, above all, that right which secures all the rest. Admit no man to be so much as a candidate in your counties and boroughs, till he has declared, in the clearest manner, in the most express and solemn words declared, his most hearty and vigorous resolutions, to endeavour to repeal all laws which render you incapable to serve your king, or to punish traitors, or to preserve your original and

essential rights. This, Gentlemen, is your time; which, if you suffer it to be lost, will probably be for ever lost.

There are a sort of men who prowl about the country to buy boroughs; creatures, who accost you for your votes with the spirit and design, and in manner of jockeys; and treating you like cattle, would purchase you for less or more, just as they think they can sell you again. Can you bear this insult, Gentlemen, upon your honesty, your reason and your liberties? Or if there be any amongst you, who countenance such vile and execrable bargains, which affect and involve you in all their consequences, ought they not to be treated like publick enemies, as indeed they are, and be hunted from amongst you? I have often wondered how a little contemptible corporation, consisting, as some of them do, of broom-makers, hedge-breakers, and sheep-stealers, could stand the looks and rebukes of a rich and honest neighbourhood, after these dirty rogues had openly sold at the market-cross, perhaps for forty shillings a-piece, not only their own liberties, but, as far as in them lay, the liberties of that rich neighbourhood and all England. Such saleable vermin ought to be treated as persons excommunicate, as the pests and felons of society, which they would sell for porridge: And if proper abhorrence were every-where shewn towards them, and no commerce held with them, they would soon grow honest out of necessity; or if they did not, they might justly fear, like guilty Cain, that every man whom they met would kill them. If this method were taken, it would cure corruption of this kind: Let those who sell their country be everywhere renounced and shunned by their neighbourhood and their country, and such sale will soon be over.

The majority of you, Gentlemen, are yet uncorrupted: Indeed none but a few of the worst and poorest of you are yet corrupted. The body of the freeholders know not what it is to take money; and choose their representatives from amongst themselves, and from a thorough acquaintance, either with the men, or with their characters. The little beggarly boroughs only are the pools of corruption; with them money is merit, and full of recommendation. They engage for men without knowing their names, and choose them sometimes without seeing their faces; yet their members, when they are chosen, are as good as yours; that is, their votes are good. It is in your power, Gentlemen, and in that of your honest neighbours to cure this mighty evil, which has hitherto been incurable, or not suffered to be cured. They are but a few, and an inconsiderable few, in comparison of you; and cannot live without you, though you can without them.

Try the expedient which I propose; neither buy nor sell with those reprobate mercenaries, who sell themselves and you. Consider how much it imports you; your all is concerned in it. This is not a dispute about dreams or speculations, which affect not your property; but it is a dispute whether you shall have any property, which these wretches throw away, by choosing for the guardians of property men whom they know not, or who are only known to them by a very bad token, that of having corrupted them.

Lay not out your money with those who for money sell your liberties, which is the only source of your money, and of all the happiness which you enjoy. Remember, when your all is at stake, as it always is in an election of those who are either to guard, or to give up your all; I say, remember how wantonly and blindly upon that occasion, these wretches surrender themselves, and you, and your all, and all England, to the best bidder, without knowing, often, who he is. What mercy do these cruel slaves deserve at your hands? The most horrible thing that they can do against you and your posterity, they do.

When Hannibal had gained his last and greatest battle against the Romans, and many of the nobility were deliberating about leaving Rome, the young Scipio entered the room with his sword drawn, and obliged every man present to bind himself with an oath, not to desert their country. And will you, Gentlemen, suffer the little hireling inhabitants of boroughs, who

receive from you and your neighbours their daily bread; will you, can you suffer them to betray you, to give up your fortunes, and to comprehend you as they do, in the sale which they make of themselves? Do you not know how much you are at the mercy of their honesty, how much it depends upon their breath whether you are to be freemen or slaves: Yet will you stand stupidly by, and see them truck you away for loose guineas? Would you allow the common laws of neighbourhood to such as steal or plunder your goods, rob you of your money, seize your houses, drive you from your possessions, enslave your persons, and starve your families? No, sure, you would not. Yet will you, can you continue to treat as neighbours and friends, those rash, wicked, and merciless profligates; who, as far as in them lies, would bring upon you and your posterity all those black and melancholy evils, by committing the mighty and sacred trust of all your lives and properties to men, who hire them to betray it; and having first made them rogues, may afterwards, for ought they know, make them slaves, and you with them?

Can you bear this, Gentlemen? It is the root of all your heavy sufferings, and may yet produce worse and more heavy. You are freemen, and men of reason and spirit; awaken your spirit, exert your reason, and assert your freedom. You have a right to petition the Parliament, you have a right to address the king, to propose your thoughts and grievances to both; and to be heard and relieved when you suffer any. And from the same reason and equity, you, Gentlemen freeholders, have a right and a near concern to advise your neighbouring boroughs in the choice of their members, and to warn them of the consequences, if they make a bad one.

For God's sake, Gentlemen, and for your own, and for all our sakes, shew your spirit, your understanding, and your activity, upon this occasion; and the hearty prayers and wishes of every honest man will attend you.

Alas! Gentlemen, with tears I tell you, that the cure of corruption is left to you. A cure from another quarter is cruelly denied to us. A worthy attempt was lately made to destroy it effectually; and we hoped that no man, or set of men, pretending to common honesty, would have had the face to discourage or frustrate that attempt; but it was frustrated, and we know where, and by whom, and for what ends. Those who owe their whole figure, and fortune, and force to corruption, rather than part with it, seem determined to see the nation consumed and perish in it. Your help must be from God and yourselves; be honest, and make your neighbours honest; both are in your power, and I glory that they are. As you love your liberties exercise your virtue; they depend upon it. Remember the true but dismal picture that I have given you of slavery and arbitrary power; and if you would avoid them, be virtuous, scorn bribes, abhor the man that offers them and expose him. Consider him as an accursed tempter, and a barbarous ravisher, who would buy you out of your integrity, and spoil you of your liberties.

Give me leave now, Gentlemen, to mark out to you more particularly what sort of men you ought not to choose. Choose not those who live at a great distance from you, and whose abilities, probity and fortunes, are not well known to you. When you have chosen them, it will be too late to know them. Choose not the eldest sons of noblemen, who must be naturally in the interest of the nobility, as the nobility generally are in the interest of the court, whatever it be. Reject bigots of all kinds and sides: Those men, whose minds are shut up in band-boxes, and who walk upon stilts, have not thoughts large enough for governing society. Even their honesty, when they have any, is useless to the publick; and is often, on the contrary, made an ill instrument in the hands of those who have none. Reject also all timorous, fearful, and dastardly spirits; men, who having good principles, either dare not own them, or dare not act according to them. Choose not men who are noted for non-attendance, and who have been members of Parliament, without waiting upon the business of Parliament; men, who will probably be engaged in a fox-chase, in a tavern, or in other debauched houses,

though the kingdom were undoing. While your happiness or misery depends so much upon the breath of your representatives, it is of great importance to you, that their attendance be as constant, as their behaviour be honest. What excuse can they offer for themselves, when by their wanton absence a vote may pass, which may cost you millions? We know what bold advantages have been taken in former Parliaments, of a thin House, to raise great and unexpected sums from the nation, to enable its worst foes to carry on an unnatural conspiracy against it.

Reject with indignation those men, who, in the late execrable South-Sea conspiracy, took stock for votes; and for an infamous bribe in stock, voted your liberties and purses into the merciless claws of the South-Sea traitors, and are since many of them justly undone by the bargain. Think you, Gentlemen, that these men, who could sell their country, when they had a stake in it, will not sell it for less, when they have none? You ought to add to the same class, and treat in the same manner, all those who headed and abetted that destructive scheme, or endeavoured to protect those who did so.

You are to be particularly careful, that those whom you choose be duly qualified according to law, and that no deceit be practised in obtaining temporary qualifications. You ought to enquire into their estates, and how they came by them; and if they have none, as many who stand candidates, I am told, have not, you may guess who assists them, and what hopeful services are expected from them. Such men you may be sure will never speak your sense in Parliament, nor even their own, if they have any; nor be suffered to consult your interest. They must work for their masters against you, who ought to be so.

Neither can you expect to be well served by men, whose estates are embarked in companies: They themselves will be engaged with their fortunes in the particular interest of such companies, which are always against the interest of general trade; and they will be but too apt to fall into the juggling and artifices of courts, to raise their stock to imaginary values. A certain and known method to promote cheating, and to sink trade.

Shun likewise all those who are in the way of ambition; a passion which is rarely gratified by integrity, and an honest zeal for your good; shun all men of narrow fortunes, who are not for your purpose from obvious reasons; shun all lawyers, who have not established practice or good estates, and who are consequently more liable to corruption, and whom the court has more means of corrupting, than other men; shun all men involved in debt, all men of ill morals, and debauched, and dishonest lives; all gamesters, and all men who spend more than their income. Their extravagance makes them necessitous, and their necessities make them venal.

We do not ordinarily trust a man with a small sum without a note, or mortgage, or a bond; and such security is but reasonable: And is it not as reasonable, that, when we trust men with all that we have, as we do our representatives, we ought to seek and procure all the security which the nature of the thing will admit? Would it not be direct madness to trust our all, our whole accumulative portion in this life, to those whom no man would, in a private way, trust for five shillings? Call to mind, Gentlemen, whether some of you have never formerly made such a rash and dangerous choice; and for God's sake mend it now.

I suppose thus far you will all agree with me; as I dare say you will, when I tell you that the gentlemen of the sword are not proper representatives of a people, whose civil constitution abhors standing armies, and cannot subsist under them. The fortunes and expectations of these gentlemen depend upon observing the word of command; and it is but natural that they should support power in which they are sharers. You must not therefore expect that they will ever concur in a vote, or an address, to disband or reduce themselves; however desirable or necessary the same may be to you. Those of them who deserve well of

you, as very many of the present officers do, are doubtless entitled to thanks and good usage from you; but to shew them respect by giving them seats in Parliament, is by no means a proper, prudent, or natural way of doing it. Besides, it will create a great and unjust partiality to particular boroughs, and some shall be burdened with soldiers, when others shall be free from them; just at the mercy and expectations of the commanding officer.

It is indeed a misfortune to the army itself, to have any of its officers members of the House of Commons, since the greatest merit in the field shall not recommend a man so much to just preferment, as the want of merit sometimes shall in that House. A complaint, however, which, I hope, there is no ground for at present.

Choose not, Gentlemen, any sort of men, whose interest may, at any time, and in any circumstance, consist in confusion. Neither are men in employments the properest men for your choice. If ever your interest comes in competition with their places, you may easily guess which must give way. I think there are but few instances, where they themselves suffer, and fall in that struggle. Under this head, I would desire you, Gentlemen, to observe the behaviour of the officers of the customs and excise upon the ensuing elections; and remember, that they forfeit one hundred pounds, if they persuade or deal with any person to vote, or to forbear voting, and are made for ever incapable of holding any employment under the crown. If you find them busy and intermeddling in this election, take the advantage which the law gives you, and see it honestly put in execution against them. Besides, such conduct of theirs, and prosecution of yours, may give occasion to a new law, with more terrible penalties upon that sort of men, whom our misfortunes have made numerous.

For a conclusion. Consider, Gentlemen, Oh! consider what you are about, and whether you will bring life or death upon us. Oh! take care of yourselves, and of us all. We are all in your hands, and so at present are your representatives; but very quickly the scene will be shifted, and both you and we will be in theirs. Do not judge of them by their present humble speeches, and condescending carriage; but think what they are like to be, when they are no longer under your eye, when they are no longer suing to you, nor want you. These humble creatures, who now bow down before you, will soon look down upon you. Oh! choose such as are likely to do it with most pity and tenderness, and are most likely to relieve you of those burdens, under which we all sadly groan, and under which we must certainly sink, never to rise again, if we be not relieved.

I am, Gentlemen, with exceeding sincerity, and all good wishes,

G

Your most affectionate humble servant.

No. 71. SATURDAY, March 31, 1722.

Polite Arts and Learning naturally produced in free States, and marred by such as are not free. [Gordon] ↪

[III-27]

SIR,

In the first rise and beginning of states, a rough and unhewn virtue, a rude and savage fierceness, and an unpolished passion for liberty, are the qualities chiefly in repute. To these succeed military accomplishments, domestick arts and sciences, and such political knowledge and acquirements, as are necessary to make states great and formidable abroad, and to preserve equality, and domestick happiness, and security, at home. And lastly, when these are attained, follow politeness, speculative knowledge, moral and experimental philosophy, with other branches of learning and the whole train of the muses.

The Romans were long masters of the arts of war and policy, before they knew much of the embellishments of letters.

*Serus enim Graecis admovit acumina chartis,
Et, post Punica bella, quietus quaerere coepit,
Quid Sophocles & Thespis, & Aeschylus utile ferrent.*

These were the effects of ease, leisure, security, and plenty, and the productions of men retired from the hurry and anxieties of war, and sequestered from the tumults of the world; of men not ruffled by disappointment, nor scared with the noise of foreign invasions, nor disturbed with civil tumults; and of men not distressed by want, or wholly employed with the cares of life, and solicitous for a support to themselves and families;

—praeter laudem nullius avaris.

The Romans had secured their conquests, and settled their power, before they grew fond of the ornaments of life.

How should my Mummius have time to read,
When by his ancestors fam'd glory led
To noble deeds, he must espouse the cause
Of his dear country's liberties and laws?
Amongst rough wars how can verse smoothly flow,
Or 'midst such storms thelearned laurel grow?

L. Mummius was one of the principal men of Rome; yet so late as the taking of Corinth, he was so ignorant in the polite arts, that when he was shipping off the glorious spoils of that great city to Rome, he ridiculously threatened the masters of the vessels, that if they broke or lost any of the statues, paintings, or of the other curious Greek monuments, they should be obliged to get others made in their room at their proper expence.

But the Romans quickly improved in their taste, quickly grew fond of works of genius of every kind, having now leisure to admire them, and encouragement to imitate them. And the Greeks, from whom the Romans had them, were first great in power, and their civil oeconomy was excellently established, before they grew eminent in politeness and learning.

But neither will the single invitations of leisure and ease prove sufficient to engage men in the pursuits of knowledge as far as it may be pursued. Other motives must be thrown in; they must find certain protection and encouragements in such pursuits, and proper rewards at the end of them. The laurel is often the chief cause of the victory. The Greeks who encouraged learning and the sciences more, and preserved them longer than any people ever did, kept stated, publick and general assemblies, on purpose for the trial and encouragement of wit and arts, and for the distinguishing of those who professed them. Thither resorted all who had any pretensions that way, or had engaged in performances of that kind: All the most illustrious men in Greece, the nobility, the magistracy, the ambassadors of princes, sometimes princes themselves, were the auditors and judges: By these merit was distinguished, the contention for glory decided, the victory declared, and by these the rewards of it were bestowed. Thus glorious was the price of excelling; thus equitable, publick, and loud was the fame of it. It is therefore no wonder that it was courted by the Greeks with as much ardour and application, as the chief dignities in a state are courted by others. And, considering how strong were the stimulations of the Greeks to study, Horace might well say,

Graiiis ingenium, graiis dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui. — — —

Before this august assembly, Herodotus repeated his history with great applause; which so animated Thucydides, then very young, that, in emulation of Herodotus, he wrote a better history than that of Herodotus. Here Cleomenes recommended himself, by only repeating some verses skilfully collected out of Empedocles; and here Euripides and Xenocles contended for preference in the drama.

Indeed, the honours attending a victory upon these occasions were excessive, and, according to Cicero, did almost equal those of a Roman triumph. The victors were reckoned to have arrived to the highest human felicity, to have entailed glory upon all that belonged to them, upon their families, friends, their native city, and the place of their education. Elogiums were made upon them, statues were erected to them, and, ever after, they met every-where the same preference, which they had met at the Olympick assemblies. A preference which so fired the emperor Nero, that, when he had ridiculously stood competitor at a singing-match, and taken a journey to Greece on purpose, he first declared himself victor, and then, to destroy all marks and memory of those who had been so before him, he commanded all their pictures and statues to be pulled down, and thrown into the privies.

The Romans, as soon as they had leisure from their long and many wars, fell quickly into the same studies, and into the same emulation to excel in them. They no sooner had any acquaintance with Greece, but they were possessed with a fondness for all her refinements.

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
Intulit agresti Latio. — — —

The fierce Romans subdued Greece by their arms; and Greece made rustick Italy a captive to her arts. All the youth of Rome were charmed with the beauties of learning, and eager to possess them: Many of the Senators were caught by the same passions; even the elder Cato, who was at first against these improvements, which, he feared, would soften too much the rough Roman genius, yet changed his opinion so far afterwards, as to learn Greek in his old age.

This prodigious progress of the Romans in learning had no other cause than the freedom and equality of their government. The spirit of the people, like that of their state, breathed nothing but liberty, which no power sought to control, or could control. The improvement of knowledge, by bringing no terror to the magistrates, brought no danger to the people.

Nothing is too hard for liberty; that liberty which made the Greeks and Romans masters of the world, made them masters of all the learning in it: And, when their liberties perished, so did their learning. That eloquence, and those other abilities and acquirements, which raised those who had them to the highest dignities in a free state, became under tyranny a certain train to ruin, unless they were prostituted to the service of the tyrant.

That knowledge, and those accomplishments, which create jealousy instead of applause, and danger instead of reward, will be but rarely and faintly pursued; and for the most part not at all. No man will take great pains, spend his youth, and lose his pleasures, to purchase infamy or punishment: And therefore when such obstacles are thrown in his way, he will take counsel of self-love, acquiesce in the fashionable stupidity, and prefer gilded and thriving folly to dangerous and forbidden wisdom.

Ignorance accompanies slavery, and is introduced by it. People who live in freedom will think with freedom; but when the mind is enslaved by fear, and the body by chains, inquiry and study will be at an end. Men will not pursue dangerous knowledge, nor venture their heads, to improve their understandings. Besides, their spirits, dejected with servitude and poverty, will want vigour as well as leisure to cultivate arts, and propagate truth; which is ever high-treason against tyranny. Neither the titles nor the deeds of tyrants will bear examination; and their power is concerned to stupify and destroy the very faculties of reason and thinking; Nor can reason travel far, when force and dread are in the way; and when men dare not see, their eyes will soon grow useless.

In Turkey, printing is forbid, lest by its means common sense might get the better of violence, and be too hard for the imperial butcher. It is even capital, and certain death there, only to reason freely upon their Alcoran. A sure sign of imposture? But by imposture, stupidity, and janizaries, his throne is supported; and his vast, but thin dominions, know no inhabitants but barbarous, ignorant, and miserable slaves.

Nor is printing in other arbitrary countries of much use but to rivet their chains: It is permitted only on one side, and made the further means of servitude. Even in Christian countries, under arbitrary princes, the people are for the most part as ignorant and implacable bigots as the Turks are. And as it is rare to find a slave who is not a bigot, no man can shew me a bigot who is not an ignorant slave; for bigotry is a slavery of the soul to certain religious opinions, fancies, or stories, of which the bigot knows little or nothing, and damns all that do.

The least cramp or restraint upon reasoning and inquiry of any kind, will prove soon a mighty bar in the way to learning. It is very true, that all sorts of knowledge, at least all sorts of sublime and important knowledge, are so complicated and interwoven together, that it is impossible to search into any part of it, and to trace the same with freedom to its first principles, without borrowing and taking in the help of most, if not all, of the other parts. Religion and government, particularly, are at the beginning and end of every thing, and are the sciences in the world the most necessary and important to be known; and as these are more or less known, other knowledge will be proportionably greater or smaller, or none: But, where these cannot be freely examined, and their excellencies searched into, and understood, all other wisdom will be maimed and ineffectual, indeed scarce worth having.

Now, in all arbitrary governments, and under all created and imposing religions, nothing must be found true in philosophy, which thwarts the received scheme, and the uppermost opinions: The most evident mathematical demonstrations must not disprove orthodox dogmas, and established ideas; the finest poetical flights must be restrained and discouraged, when they would fly over the narrow inclosures and prison-walls of bigots: Nor must the best, the strongest, and the most beautiful reasoning dare to break through popular prejudices,

or attempt to contend with powerful and lucrative usurpation. A bishop was burned before the Reformation, for discovering the world to be round; and, even in the last century, the excellent Galileo was put into the dismal prison of the Inquisition, for maintaining the motion of the Earth round the Sun, as her centre. This proposition of his, which he had demonstrated, he was forced to recant, to save his life, and satisfy the Church.

Where religion and government are most deformed, as religion ever is where it is supported by craft and force, and government ever is when it is maintained by whips and chains, there all examination into either, and all reasoning about them, is most strictly forbid and discouraged: And as one sort of inquiry and knowledge begets another; and as, when the wits of men are suffered to exert themselves freely, no body knows where their pursuits may end; so no tyranny of any kind is safe, where general, impartial, and useful knowledge is pursued. Inhuman violence, and stupid ignorance, are the certain and necessary stay of tyrants; and every thing that is good or valuable in the world is against them.

In the East (if we except China) there is not a glimmering of knowledge; though the eastern people are, from their natural climate and genius, vastly capable of all knowledge. Bernier, mentioning the cruelty of the government, and the great misery of the people there, says,

From the same cause, a gross and profound ignorance reigns in those states: Nor is it possible there should be academies and colleges well founded in them. Where are there such founders to be met with? And, if they were, where are the scholars to be had? Where are those who have means sufficient to maintain their children in colleges? And, if there were, who durst appear to be rich? And if they would, where are those benefices, preferments, and dignities, which require knowledge and abilities, and animate young men to study?

I will not deny, but that, in arbitrary countries, there are sometimes found men of great parts and learning. But these are either ecclesiasticks, who, even in the greatest tyrannies, at least in Europe, are blessed with great liberty, and many independent privileges, and are freemen in the midst of slaves, and have suitable leisure and revenues to support them in their studies; or they are men invited and encouraged by the prince to flatter his pride, and administer to his pomp and pleasures, and to recommend his person and power. For these reasons alone they are caressed, protected, and rewarded. They are endowed with the advantages of freemen, merely to be the instruments of servitude. They are a sort of Swiss, hired to be the guards of their proud master's fame, and to applaud and vindicate all his wickedness, wildness, usurpations, prodigalities, and follies. This therefore is the worst of all prostitutions, and most immoral of all sort of slavery; as it is supporting servitude with the breath of liberty, and assaulting and mangling liberty with her own weapons. A creature that lets out his genius to hire, may sometimes have a very good one; but he must have a vile and beggarly soul, and his performances are at best but the basest way of petitioning for alms.

France could boast many men of wit and letters in the late reign, though it was a very severe one, and brought infinite evils upon all France and Europe. But these great wits were many of them the instruments and parasites of power, who bent the whole force of their genius to sanctify domestick oppression and foreign usurpation: Such were the characters and employment of Pelisson, Boileau, Racine, and several others. France saw at the same time several churchmen of great and exalted talents, such as the late Archbishop of Cambray, the Cardinal de Retz, Claude Joly, [*] the present Abbot Vertot, and many more excellent men, all lovers of liberty, which, by being churchmen, they possessed.

But though it be true, that the late French king encouraged all sorts of learning, that contributed to the grandeur of his name and court, and did not contradict his power, and courted great writers all over Europe, either to write for him, or not against him; yet the

nature of his government was so constant a damp upon general learning, that it was at last brought to a very low pass in that kingdom, even in his time. Monsieur Des Maizeaux tells us, in his dedication of St. Evremond's works to the late Lord Halifax, that the great geniuses of France were, about the time I speak of, so constrained, as either to have forbore writing at all, or to have expressed what they thought by halves; that La Bruyere complains, that the French are cramped in satire; that Regis, the famous philosopher, solicited ten years for a licence to publish his course of philosophy, and at last obtained it only on this condition, to retrench whatever displeased the censors; That monsieur de Fontenelle hath been obliged to depart from the freedom which he used in the first works he published; that but few of the present French authors distinguish themselves either by their learning or wit; and that all this is to be attributed to the nature of the government; which is unquestionably true.

What Mr. Des Maizeaux says upon this argument is so judicious and just, that I shall borrow another paragraph from the same dedication: "Liberty," says he,

inspires a noble and elevated confidence, which naturally enlarges the mind, and gives it an emulation to trace out new roads towards attaining the sciences; whereas a servile dependence terrifies the soul, and fills the mind with a timorous circumspection, that renders it mean and groveling, and even debars the use of its most refined natural talents. Greece and Italy never had illustrious writers, but whilst they preserved their liberty. The loss of that was followed by the decay of wit, and the ruin of polite learning. Greece, formerly the seat of the Muses, is now involved in a frightful barbarity, under the slavery of the Ottoman Empire; and Italy, which, under the influence of a Senate, was so fruitful in great and learned men, now subject to the tribunal of the Inquisition, produces no considerable works of erudition or politeness.

All the great geniuses, who lived in the days of Augustus, were born and educated in the days of liberty; and he borrowed from the commonwealth all the ornaments of his court and empire. In spite of all his boasted taste of letters, and the encouragement which he gave them, I do not remember one extraordinary genius bred under his influence: On the contrary, all that were so, died in his time, without leaving any successors. *Quicquid Romana facundia habet quod insolenti Graeciae aut opponat aut praeferat, circa Ciceronem effloruit. Omnia ingenia quae lucem studiis nostris attulerunt, tunc nata sunt. In deterius deinde quotidie data res est,* says Seneca. "Every improvement in the Roman eloquence, which either equals or excels that of assuming Greece, flourished in the time of Cicero. All the great wits, that now animate and direct our studies, were then born. But, ever since then, wit daily decays, and grows lower and lower."

This decay began in the time of Augustus, who began his reign with butchering Cicero, his patron, his father, and his friend, and the prodigy of Roman eloquence and learning; and that decay increased so fast, that from the first Roman emperor to the last, for the space of about five hundred years, the great city of Rome did not produce five great geniuses; and those that it did produce, were produced near the times of liberty, when they were yet warmed with its memory, before the tyrants had yet time utterly to abolish all that was good, though they made infinite haste. Tacitus was their last great historian, and Juvenal their last great poet, both passionate adorers of liberty. It is melancholy what the former says upon this subject, *Post bellatum apud Actium, atque omnem potestatem ad unum conferre pacis interfuit, magna illa ingenia cessere.* The Romans had no longer any great geniuses, than while they were free.

The Greeks preserved learning some time after the Romans had lost it; for, though they were conquered by the Romans, many of the Greek cities were suffered to enjoy their ancient liberties and laws: They paid only an easy homage, and no troops were quartered among them, as in the other provinces. However, as they were at the mercy of foreign masters, the

vigour of their spirit was gone, and they produced but few good authors: Dio and Plutarch are, I think, reckoned the chief. It is the observation of the learned, polite, and ingenious author of the *Reflexions critiques sur la poesie & sur le peinture*, that Greece had more great men of all kinds in the age of Plato alone, when its liberties flourished, than in all the many ages between Perseus, the last king of Macedon, and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, amounting to seventeen hundred years.

The several attempts made by Vespasian, Titus, and Trajan, to restore learning, proved almost vain. The Muses, who, frightened by tyranny, were now fled out of the world, could not be allured back to Rome, where baseness, terrors, and servitude had long reigned, and where their seats were filled by pedantick praters, by babbling and hypocritical philosophers: For, the itch and name of learning still subsisted; and therefore Seneca says, *ut omnium rerum, sic literarum quoque intemperantia laboramus*.

The root of the evil remained; the empire of mere will had usurped the throne of the laws, and the place of learning. The genius, that bold and glorious genius inspired by liberty, was gone; and the trial to restore learning, without restoring liberty, only served to shew that they who would do good to a community, which is ill constituted or corrupted, must either begin with the government, and alter or reform that, or despair of success. All that the best Roman emperors could at last do, was, not to butcher nor oppress their people; which yet they could not restrain their ministers from doing. Mucianus blackened the reign of Vespasian by his pride, insolence, and cruelties; and the ministers of Nerva, under colour of punishing the informers, a crew of rogues licensed and encouraged by the former emperors, to ensnare and destroy their dreadful foes, the innocent and virtuous, made use of that good prince's authority, and his hatred of these vermin, to banish, plunder, kill, and ruin, many of the best men in Rome.

The government, the arbitrary single government, had long discouraged and banished every thing that was good; and, with the rest, learning irretrievably.

G

I am, &c.

No. 72. SATURDAY, April 7, 1722.

In absolute Monarchies the Monarch seldom rules, but his Creatures instead of him. That Sort of Government a Gradation of Tyrants. [Gordon] ↩

[III-41]

SIR,

The advocates for absolute monarchy argue as ignorantly as perversely, and build without a foundation; since, while they contend for unlimited submission to the monarch's will, they must either suppose, that all acts of power proceed from his will, or else that the will of his ministers is also unlimited, and their orders are irresistible. So that either all his servants, instruments, and executioners, are absolute monarchs too; which none but a madman will say: Or that he himself does immediately direct every thing that is done; which no man of common sense will affirm. Indeed such princes have the least share of their own power, and seldom know what is done, or care.

Monsieur Thevenot tells us, that the Grand Seignior minds nothing but his pleasures, the pranks of mutes and buffoons, who are his constant attendants, and always studying new freaks and grimaces to divert him; and the dalliances of women, sent to him from all quarters by his bashaws. His power is absolutely despotick: His will, that is to say, his lust, his maggots, or his rage, is his only law, and the only bounds to the authority of this vicegerent of God. By virtue of his sacred power, he may rob any man, or all men, of their estates, and no man has a right to complain: He may put the best men to the most ignominious and barbarous death, and exalt the vilest criminals to the highest dignities; and no man must ask why. "This unlimited power of the Sultan," says Monsieur Thevenot, "is founded on the Mahometan religion, which enjoins a blind submission to all his commands, on pain of damnation."

A blessed and beneficent religion this! and a single sovereignty with a witness! But this monstrous and formidable power, which is holden by him, is directed by his ministers without him. They employ both him and themselves; him, far from his duty, in unmanly pleasures; themselves, in the mismanagement of his affairs, and in prostituting his name and authority, to serve their own views. He wears the crown, and lives in a brothel; they sway the sceptre, suck the people's blood, and fill their own coffers. The Grand Vizier, or first minister, is, in effect, king over his master: He has the custody of the imperial power, and discharges the office of the Grand Seignior: And as to the bashaws, who are likewise so many kings in their provinces, Thevenot says, they abuse their authority, and are more arbitrary than the Sultan himself, their design and business being to raise sudden fortunes by their spoils and oppression: And the Grand Seignior is forced to dissemble his knowledge of this rapine and exorbitancy, for want of power to punish or redress them; for that these men have the soldiers more at their devotion than he has.

As to the Turkish civil officers and judges, he says they do what they will, and judge as they please; for all their written laws being contained in the Alcoran, which is but a short book, they are so ambiguously expressed, and so loosely delivered, that the cadí, as well as the bashaw, wrests them as he pleases; and, judging without appeal, both these greedy and rapacious officers turn justice into oppression, and make it a stale to their avarice.

Such is the spirit and effects of lawless power, lodged in one man; every officer and creature of his will have it; and, by setting up one tyrant, a thousand are set up. As this power is never to be got or preserved, but by violence and oppression; all men who have any share

in executing and ministering, and defending the same, must be oppressors too. As no man is an oppressor for the mere pleasure and security of another, but only for his own sake and gratification; so all the servants of tyranny do, in their master's name, but rob and spoil for themselves; and every servant is a master. All over the Ottoman Empire, there is a great Turk in every town, and he at Constantinople is perhaps the idlest and most harmless of them all; and the exercise of the Turkish government is nothing else but a daily and general plunder, a contention between the governors who shall spoil best and get most. Nor, let them plunder and butcher as they will, is there any redress to the oppressed and expiring people; for though the imperial oppressor often forces his ministerial oppressors to disgorge, and spoils the spoiler of his booty and his life, where he dares; yet, there being no restitution made, the condition of the oppressed is not mended: It is mock-justice, and worse than none; every act of power, every degree of office there, is robbery and violence, and every officer, the least and lowest, is an irresistible tyrant.

Single and absolute monarchy therefore, or the ruling all by the will of one is nonsense and a contradiction; it is rather a multiplication of monarchs, and in fact the worst sort of oligarchy. Now, suppose we were to obey blindly the will of the prince; are we also to obey blindly the will of his eunuchs, mistresses and janizaries, who oppress without his knowledge, or against his will? Sure the instruments and delegates of tyranny are not also the Lord's anointed. How therefore shall we know their mind from his, which perhaps contradicts theirs? Or how shall we know whether he wills any thing at all, and whether they do not will for him? This is almost always the case; and then here is a monarchy of ministers, and parasites, pathicks, buffoons, women, and butchers, rule for him, and over him.

Is this government too by divine right? If it be, let us rail no longer at anarchy; which, being the absence of all government, though it leaves every man to do what he lists, yet likewise leaves every man a right to defend himself: Besides this sort of anarchy, where every one is absolutely free, will quickly settle into order, and indeed cannot subsist long. But single monarchy, which is a long gradation of tyrants, where many on one side do what they will against the most on the other side; where cruelty and lust revel without control; where wanton and inhuman power has no limits, and heavy and sorrowful oppression no remedy nor end; where the innocent and harmless suffer most, and the worst and vilest thrive best, and where none are secure; where wickedness supports power, and property is the spoil of armies: I say, this absolute monarchy is worse than absolute anarchy, by not being so general. It is a partial anarchy, with worse effects, and no remedy.

All this still further proves, that men and societies have no possible human security but certain and express laws, setting express bounds to the power of their magistrates, ascertaining the measure of power as well as subjection, and restraining alike the exorbitances of both prince and people. It is eternally true, that such as is the nature of the government, such will be the nature of the people; and that as they are happy or miserable, so they will be good or bad, as their government and governors are good or bad; and that their whole integrity and virtue, or all their corruption and baseness, does arise from that single source.

“Princes,” says Machiavel,

do, but with little reason, and an ill grace, complain of the transgressions and faults of their subjects, since by the negligence and debauched example of their prince alone, the people are, and must be, debauched: And, if the people of our times are infamous for thefts, and robberies, and plunderings, and preying upon one another, and the like enormities, it is all owing to the exorbitances and rapaciousness of their governors. Romania was a place full of all dissoluteness and iniquity, every day, and every trivial occasion, producing notorious murders and rapines: Which evils were not derived so much from any depravity in the

nature of the people (as some would falsely suggest) as from the vile corruption of their princes: For, being poor themselves, and yet ambitious to live in splendor, luxury, and magnificence [*the true causes of their poverty!*] they were forced upon execrable courses for money, and indeed refused none that could supply them.

To pass by their many other sponging projects: One of their detestable schemes was to make laws against such and such things, and after these laws were published, they themselves would be the first to break them, and to encourage others to do the same: Nor was any man ever rebuked and punished for his unobservance, till they saw enough involved in the same penalty and praemunire; and then, forsooth, the laws were to be executed with all strictness and severity, not out of any zeal for justice, but from a ravenous appetite to be fingering the fines. From whence it followed, that, by grievous mulcts and explications, the people being impoverished, were constrained to use the same violences upon those, who were less potent than they themselves were. By which means the people were not corrected for doing evil, but instructed how to do it. And all these mischiefs proceeded solely from the baseness and iniquity of their princes.

Thus it is that such courts, being continually in a conspiracy against the property and felicity of their people, and preying continually upon them by vile means and pretences, teach their people to conspire against honesty, and to prey upon one another; nay, by robbing them, they make it necessary for them to rob. Thus readily, necessarily, and naturally, is the spirit of the governors transfused into the governed, who are ever taught civil corruption by their superiors, before they practise it themselves.

Father le Compte, giving an account of the government of China, and shewing the wise provision made by the laws to check the great power of the Emperor, says,

Nor is interest a less motive than reputation to the Emperor, to be guided by the ancient customs, and to adhere to the laws, which are framed so much for his advantage, that he cannot violate them, without obvious prejudice to his own authority, nor alter them, without bringing his kingdom into confusion; for such is the temper of the Chinese, that when the Emperor is governed by violence and passion, and grows negligent of his affairs, the same perverse spirit possesses his subjects: Every mandarin thinks himself sovereign of his province or city: The chief ministers sell offices and places to worthless wretches: The vice-roys become so many little tyrants: The governors observe no rule of justice; and the people thus oppressed, are easily stirred up to sedition: Rogues multiply, and commit villainies in companies, and court all occasions to do mischief, and to break the peace. Such beginnings have occasioned fatal consequences, and put China under the command of new masters; so that the Emperor's surest way to preserve his crown, is to observe the laws, and give an entire obedience to them.

An absolute prince and his deputy-tyrants are only the instruments of one another. By their hands he executes his lust, avarice, and rage; by his authority they execute their own. He is their dupe; they are his tools: However they may differ in particular views; they are always strongly united in cruelty and oppression. And therefore, whenever there is any contention amongst them, it is only who shall be the uppermost tyrants; for tyranny is the aim, the darling and the practice of all: And when the superior and subordinate tyrants butcher one another, as they often do; the people, though they see the revenge, yet feel no relief. Whoever bears the iron rod, they feel its sharpness and its weight: For almost every tyrant grows worse and worse; yet generally leaves a successor worse than himself. What unutterable and increasing woe must be the lot of their poor subjects under continual harrows of iron, made daily more poignant and heavy! Nor is the killing of a tyrant any cure, unless the tyranny be killed with him. The nature of this power breaths nothing but destruction, private ruin, and publick desolation; the common maxims of justice and mercy are not known

to him, or known only for high treason; the very contrary are constantly practised; and his ministers, to be faithful servants, must be the worst of men, and all of them tyrants like himself.

These kings (of the East) says Monsieur Bernier, see no men about them, but men of nothing; slaves, ignorants, brutes, and such courtiers as are raised from the dust to dignities; who, for want of good education, do almost always retain somewhat of their original, and of the temper of beggars enriched. They are proud, insufferable, cowardly, insensible of honour, perfidious, void of affection, and of all regard for their king and country.

These kings, says he, must ruin all, to find means to defray those prodigious expences, which they cannot avoid, for the support of their great court, which has no other source of subsistence, but their coffers and treasures; and for maintaining constantly the vast number of forces necessary to keep the people in subjection, and to prevent their running away, and to force them to work, in order to draw from them the fruits of their work. For the people being kept continually under the dreadful yoke of oppression, and made to labour through fear, for the benefit of their governors only, and perfectly wild and desperate, and ready to do any act of despair. Captain Perry says the same of the Muscovites; that, made desperate by oppression and want, they run eagerly into tumults, murders, and rebellions: And Dr. Fletcher says, that they are so enraged with hunger and cold, that they beg in a wild and desperate tone, "Give me, and cut me; help me, and kill me," &c.

I would observe here, how much more easy, as well as glorious, it is to govern freemen than slaves. It is true, that freemen go sometimes much farther in their opposition to unjust power, than slaves go or can go; because they have more spirit, sense, virtue, and force: But that they are with more difficulty governed, is absolutely false. It is indeed difficult to oppress them, and their rebellion is generally no more than their distinguishing of government from oppression; a distinction which their governors but too seldom make, and which slaves, born to oppression, know not how to make. In truth, government is a thing not so much as known in the greatest, by far the greatest part of the earth. Government supposes, on one side, a just execution of rational standing laws, made by the consent of society; and on the other side, a rational subjection to those laws. But what has arbitrary will, wanton and outrageous lust, cruelty and oppression, to do with government, but to destroy it?

But to shew yet further the anarchy of absolute monarchy, I shall insert here what Monsieur Bernier says of the education of such sort of princes. He says, that one of the principal sources of the misery, of the misgovernment, of the dispeopling, and the decay of the eastern empires, proceeds from hence, that the children of their kings are brought up only by women and eunuchs, who generally are no other than wretched slaves from Russia, Circassia, Gurgistan, Mengrelia and Ethiopia; creatures of mean and insolent, servile and ignorant souls.

These princes become kings, without instruction worthy of men, and without knowing what it is to be a king. They are amazed when they come out of the seraglio, as persons coming out of another world, or out of some subterraneous cave, where they had spent their whole lives. They wonder at every thing which they meet, like so many ignorants. They either fear all and believe all, like children; or nothing at all, like idiots. They are commonly high and proud, and seemingly grave: But this their loftiness and gravity is so flat, so distasteful, and so unbecoming them, that it is visibly nothing but brutality and barbarousness, and the effect of some ill-studied documents. Sometimes they run into some childish civilities, still more unsavoury; or into such cruelties as are blind and brutal; or into the vile and mean vice of drunkenness, or into a gross and excessive luxury; and either ruin their bodies and understandings with their concubines, or abandon themselves to the pleasure of hunting, like some carnivorous animals, and prefer a pack of dogs before so many poor

people, whom they force to follow them in the pursuit of their game, and suffer to perish with hunger, heat, cold, and misery.

In a word, they always run into one extreme or another, and are entirely irrational or extravagant, according as they are carried away by their temper, or by the first impressions made upon them. And thus remaining, almost all, in utter ignorance of their duty, and of the state of their country, and of all publick concernments, they abandon the reins of the government to some vizier (in English, a first minister), who entertains them in their ignorance, and encourages them in their passions and follies; and their ignorance, passions and follies, are the strongest supports that these viziers can have to maintain their dominions over their masters.

These kings are also frequently given up entirely to these slaves, to their mothers, and to their own eunuchs, who often know nothing but to contrive plots of cruelty to strangle and banish one another; sometimes they murder the king himself: Nor is any one else safe in life or property. Thus far Bernier.

Thus do these princes live shut up in brothels, strangers and enemies to their people; and when an appetite for war is added to their spirit of cruelty and oppression, all the advantage from it to their subjects is, that in the warlike havock a quicker end to put to their miseries, by ending their lives with a gun or a scimitar, instead of famine.

As to the redress of their grievances, and the doing justice upon the authors of them, it is absolutely impracticable in any country which has no states and representatives; and certain and irretrievable misery, as absolute as its government, is entailed upon it to all generations, till there be an utter end either of the government or of the people. The governor of Schiras pays for his government, to the King of Persia, vast sums of ready money, with fine horses, and all the fine things and rarities to be found within his province: Besides these excessive presents to the king, he is obliged to make the like to all the great lords and favourites at court, who are never to be gained but by continual bribes; so that to defray this great and endless expence, the wretched people must suffer great and endless burdens and exactions, and the governor must be a tyrant to preserve his government. Nor can they have any possible relief, though they have sometimes attempted to find it: But when two or three villages at a time have come to complain to the king, they have, after long waiting, been forced away without any redress, with empty purses and hungry bellies, because they who should have given them admission, were bribed to debar them: So that they must stupidly submit to the barbarous extortions of a ravenous vizier. This, says Bernier, is the policy practised by all the governors and kans in the Persian dominions: And he tells us, that one day, when Sha Sefi was hunting (a prince whose justice and punishments were only acts of cruelty), a poor man deputed by a neighbouring village to make some complaint to the king, appeared behind a rock with a paper in his hand: But while the poor wretch was declaring his errand, and praying for justice, his most gracious Majesty, without making any answer, drew his bow, and shooting two arrows into his body, instantly slew him.¹⁶

Nor was this execrable royal act of his any more agreeable to the genius of that prince than to the genius of that sort of government, which is naturally barbarous and savage. An arbitrary prince is only the most exalted and successful beast of prey in his own dominions, and all the many officers under him are but so many subordinate beasts of prey, who hunt and rob and devour his people for him and themselves; and he and his officers do but constitute a long link of armed tigers terrible to behold, who leap furiously upon every man and every thing that tempts their eye or their appetite.

So that under a tyrant, there is no end of tyrants: From him that sways the scepter to him that carries a musket, all are tyrants, and every one for himself as far as he dare.

If any thing concerning these unintermitting pests of [the] human race, could possibly raise in a human soul any other passion but grief and horror, it would create mirth to hear mention made, as sometimes in books of history and travels there is mention made, of a tyrant's sitting in his seat of justice once in so many days, to hear equally all causes and persons. What mockery! It is really a farce, but a melancholy one, to hear the word *justice* come out of the mouth of a tyrant; who, by being so, is a settled enemy to the common laws of justice and mercy, and common sense, and to all that is good or lovely, or desirable amongst men. As well may he set apart one day in six to cure all the diseases of his subjects, or to make their clothes, and cook their victuals, if he leave them any to make and cook. As every subject in his dominions is oppressed, and he and his instruments are the oppressors, I know no way upon earth for him to do them any general justice, but to destroy himself and all his deputy tyrants.

G

I am, &c.

No. 73. SATURDAY, April 21, 1722.

A Display of Tyranny, its destructive Nature, and Tendency to dispeople the Earth.
[Gordon] ↩

[III-55]

SIR,

I intend to finish in this paper, what I have so largely handled in so many others, the subject of liberty and tyranny; a noble subject, superior to all others, and to the greatest genius, but fit for the consideration of every genius, and of every rank of men. It concerns the whole earth, and children ought to be instructed in it as soon as they are capable of instruction. Why should not the knowledge and love of God be joined to the knowledge and love of liberty, his best gift, which is the certain source of all the civil blessings of this life? And I have shewn that religion cannot subsist without it. And why should not the dread and hatred of Satan be accompanied with the dread and hatred of tyrants, who are his instruments, and the instruments of all the civil miseries in this life? I have often thought that the barbarians, who worship the Devil, must have borrowed their idea of him from the character and behaviour of their own princes. One might indeed defy any thing out of hell, or even in it, and all that are in it, to do half the mischief upon this earth that tyrants do.

They reduce mankind to the condition of brutes, and make that reason, which God gave them, useless to them: They deprive them even of the blessings of nature, starve them in the midst of plenty, and frustrate the natural bounty of the earth to men; so that nature smiles in vain where tyranny frowns: The very hands of men, given them by nature for their support, are turned by tyrants into the instruments of their misery, by being employed in vile drudgeries or destructive wars, to gratify the lust and vanity of their execrable lords, who suffer neither religion, nor virtue, nor knowledge, nor plenty, nor any kind of happiness, to dwell within the extent of their power.

Nothing that is good or desirable can subsist under tyrants, nor within their reach; and they themselves subsist upon nothing but what is detestable and wicked. They are supported by general ruin; they live by the destruction of mankind: And as fraud and villainy, and every species of violence and cruelty, are the props of their throne; so they measure their own happiness, and security, and strength, by the misery and weakness of their people; and continued oppression and rapine are their studied and necessary arts of reigning, as is every art by which they can render their people poor, abject, and wretched; though by such methods they do in effect render themselves so, and consequently become easy preys to the next invader. That wealth, which dispersed amongst their subjects, and circulated in trade and commerce, would employ, increase, and enrich them, and return often again with interest into their coffers, is barbarously robbed from the people, and engrossed by these their oppressors, and generally laid out by them to adorn their palaces, to cover their horses or elephants, or to embellish their own persons, and those of their concubines and attendants, or else locked up in dark caverns far from human sight and use.

Whilst it is yet in the mine, it is within the reach of pickaxes and shovels; and by the labour and industry of men, may be made useful and beneficial to men: But in the den of a tyrant, it is more securely, more irretrievably buried and guarded from the use of men. Here are literally Pluto's brass walls, and adamantine gates; here are thousands of real Cerberuses, who never sleep; all to encompass and secure this dead treasure, and to restrain a general gift of God from the use of his creatures: From thence it is rarely fetched, even upon the greatest emergencies, or for any purposes but ill ones, 'till at last it becomes the prize and booty of a

conquering enemy. Alexander found more riches in the Persian treasures, than in the hands of freemen would have conquered the world; and 'tis thought that there are more at this day in that of the Great Mogul, than would purchase the greatest and wealthiest kingdom in Europe; and it has been computed that there are thirty millions of wealth buried in the secret vaults of the Turkish seraglio, the plunder of the people, or of those who plundered them; yet they are still plundered and miserably oppressed, to increase this dead, useless, and pernicious store.

By these and the like inhuman means, the countries of tyrants are come to be in the condition which I have elsewhere described, desolate and uncultivated, and proper receptacles for such savage monsters, and ravening beasts of prey, who rather choose to live in barren fields, unhospitable deserts, and in dispeopled and empty towns, than amongst freemen in happy climates, filled with rich and numerous cities, abounding in inhabitants who are possessed of liberty, and will be bold to defend it.

Now where can all this dismal ruin, this growing depopulation end? If a continued decay in the natural body certainly ends in the extinction of life; in what can a continued and hasty decay of mankind end, but in the extinction of men? So that if the world last many centuries more in its present wasting and mournful situation, there must be a dissolution of [the] human race, before the world is dissolved.

Several new tyrannies have sprung up, like so many new plagues, within the memory of man, and like them have laid waste, but with a more regular and continued ruin, countries once strong in liberty and people: And as tyranny, like every other full-grown mischief, becomes more and more insupportable every day, the condition of mankind under it must necessarily, and does actually, grow every day worse and worse, and they themselves fewer. And even when their numbers and their substances are lessened, or rather exhausted, the demands of the tyrant upon them are not lessened, nor his rapine abated, nor his expences and exactions restrained.

When a tyrant has reduced a million of people to half that number by his cruelty and extortions, he madly expects from the remaining half the same revenue and assistance of men, which he had from the whole; and like the rest, they must perish to make good his expectations; and he often increases his troops as fast as his people decrease. So that his expence is enlarged as there becomes less to support it; but he will be supported, and his poor perishing people must do it, though they destroy themselves.

Such is the pestilent, savage, and unsatiable nature of this sort of monster, whose figure, throne and authority is established upon the ruins of reason, humanity, and nature: He takes all that his subjects have, and destroys them to get more.

A late great prince, when he had lost and destroyed two millions of his people out of twelve, and reduced the whole to a degree of poverty and servitude scarce to be expressed, what impositions did he recall, what taxes abolish, what troops disband, for their relief? Not one. On the contrary, the swellings of his insolent heart continued, as did his merciless extortions upon his people, and his perfidious designs and encroachments upon his neighbours; and he lived and died the plague and curse of Christendom. Nor can it be shewn, that other princes who govern by the same authority, that is, according to their own whims and caprice, leave their subjects more plenty or happiness, or cheat or harass their neighbours less, according to the measure of their power. In truth, the whole tribe are perpetually taking advantages, and usurping upon one another, and are constant goads and thorns in one another's sides, and in the sides of their people: nor can the subjects of a prince of this cast have one tolerable reason under the sun to defend him against another, but that he lives amongst them, and spends with them part of their own plunder, and probably the other would not: As his whole reliance must be upon his soldiers, he must increase them in proportion to

his distrust of his people; which is a confession of mutual enmity: Neither is it enough that his soldiers oppress and famish his people, for his sake and their own (for both he and they are supported by the spoils of the people), but he must keep them as constantly employed as he can; because if they be not employed in plundering, invading, and shedding of blood, they will grow unfit for such beneficent and necessary work, and may probably degenerate into humanity and mercy; than which a more terrible change could not befall their royal master; so that in mere duty they must be constantly practising mischief and rapine at home or abroad.

Thus do these general destroyers proceed to lay waste the world: The best and most countries in it are already, many of them, almost desolate, and some of them altogether, as I have shewn in many instances; and the desolation gains ground daily: Nor, when some countries are dispeopled, are there sufficient recruits, or indeed any, to be had from others as formerly. The north, formerly the hive of nations, is now as much dispeopled as any of the southern countries, which some centuries ago, were peopled from it; and both north and south have been dispeopled by tyranny. Arabia, which once over-ran the world with multitudes, is now as desolate as the rest of the world which they overran. The country of the Chozari, which was a vast empire, within these four hundred years, is now quite uninhabited, though great part of it is a fertile and beautiful country; and in its last struggle with Tamerlane, brought five hundred thousand men into the field: Such a force of people were there so lately in a country where now there are none! I think Rubriquis says, that he travelled two months through it, and in all the time saw neither man nor beast, but many great ruinous towns and cities, particularly one which had eight hundred churches in it less than four hundred years ago, but now has not one inhabitant.

What can be more affecting than this instance! Not a single soul to be met with in a vast and noble country, which a few centuries ago was a potent empire, and contained millions! In all probability, countries and empires, which now make a great noise and bustle in the world, will be lying, two or three centuries hence, in the same woeful and silent solitude, if they last so long; for depopulation makes every-where, except in a few remaining free states, a prodigious and flying progress; even in Europe, as I have before proved in many instances. And in some of those free states, the seeds of servitude, the true cause of depopulation, and of every misery, seem to be sown deep. Alas! Power encroaches daily upon liberty, with a success too evident; and the balance between them is almost lost. Tyranny has engrossed almost the whole earth, and striking at mankind root and branch, makes the world a slaughter-house; and will certainly go on to destroy, till it is either destroyed itself, or, which is most likely, has left nothing else to destroy.

The bulk of the earth being evidently almost a desert already, made so by tyrants; it is demonstration that the whole must be so, and must soon be entirely so, if the growth of tyranny be not restrained; else if the general and wide waste goes on, men will become too few for the management of societies, and for cultivation and commerce; all which are supported by numbers; and then degenerating into absolute savages, they will live straggling and naked in the woods and wildernesses, like wild beasts, and be devoured by them; or, like them, devour one another, or perish with hunger. And thus there will be an end of men; unless those states that are yet free, preserve, in the midst of this general waste, their own liberties and people, and, like the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, fill the world again, in process of time, with colonies of freemen.

That there is such a terrible waste of people in the world, cannot be denied; and it is as evident, that tyrants, are the constant, regular, and necessary cause of it. They are indeed so manifestly the authors of all that is ruinous and wicked, that if God Almighty had left it to Satan to invent an engine for the destroying of the world, and for defacing every thing beautiful, good, or desirable in it, that minister of vengeance, and enemy to God and man,

would doubtless have invented tyrants, who by their wonderful success in such ministration, have ever shewn, and do still shew, their eminent fitness for it. They shew every-where such a constant and strong antipathy to the happiness of mankind, that if there be but one free city within their ken, they are restless in their designs and snares against it, and never defend it but against one another, and practice the vilest and the meanest rogueries to become masters of it. There are instances in this age of free cities falling into the claws of tyrants, and of the miserable difference between their former opulency, and their present poorness: They have never since put off their mourning, which grows daily more black and dismal.

The breath of a tyrant blasts and poisons every thing, changes blessings and plenty into curses and misery, great cities into gloomy solitudes, and their rich citizens into beggars and vagabonds: I could name cities, which, while they governed themselves, could maintain armies, and now enslaved can scarce maintain the poor proud rogues who govern them. It is certain, that whatever country or place is subdued by a prince who governs by his will, is ruined by his government.

It is confessed, that the arbitrary princes in Europe have not yet, like those in Asia, declared themselves masters of the soil; and their people have a sort of property. How long this will continue, I know not precisely. This is certain, that the condition of their subjects, which was always bad, grows hourly worse; and their nobility, which were once rich and powerful, are now reduced very low, and greatly impoverished. These, who were the supports of royalty, having created jealousy as if they had eclipsed it, have felt the terrible effects of arbitrary power as well as others, though not so much. Besides, when the common people, already wholly exhausted, and starving under oppression, can supply the exorbitant demands of their prince no longer, the estates of the nobility will be the next resource; and, like the mastiff dog at the bee-hive, when he has sucked up all the honey, he will swallow the comb: And then most of Europe will be in the condition of Turkey, as many parts of it are at present not much better; and, like the Great Turk, most of its princes will be sole proprietors of the land, as they now make themselves of its product, which very near answers the same end. When tenants, exhausted by taxes, are unable to pay rent, the land yielding no profit, is as bad as none; and in some instances worse than none, as we are particularly told by the noble author of the *Account of Denmark*, where some landlords have begged the king upon their knees to ease them of their land, by taking it from them for good and all; for that it was taxed more than it was worth.

Most of the princes of Europe have been long introducing the Turkish government into Europe; and have succeeded so well, that I would rather live under the Turk than under many of them. They practice the cruelties and oppressions of the Turks, and want the tolerating spirit of the Turk; and if some unforeseen check be not thrown in their way, the whole polity of savage Turkey will be established by them in all its parts and barbarity; as if the depopulation which is already so quick, and taking such dreadful strides, were still too slow. It is not enough for tyrants to have consumed mankind so fast, that out of twenty parts, they have within these two thousand years destroyed perhaps nineteen (for so much at least I take to be the disproportion), but fresh machines of cruelty are still sought after, besides never laying aside any of the old, till the destruction be fully completed. They seem to think, that they shall have enemies as long as any men remain; which indeed is a reasonable apprehension: But it is astonishing at first view, that mankind should have so long borne these unrelenting slaughterers of mankind. But, alas! who knows not the force of corruption, delusion, and standing armies!

Oh liberty! Oh servitude! how amiable, how detestable, are the different sounds! Liberty is salvation in politicks, as slavery is reprobation; neither is there any other distinction but that of saint and devil, between the champions of the one and of the other.

And here I conclude this noble subject of liberty; having made some weak attempts to shew its glorious advantages, and to set off the opposite mischiefs of raging, relentless, and consuming tyranny: A task to which no human mind is equal. For neither the sublimest wits of antiquity, nor the brightest geniuses of late or modern time, assisted with all the powers of rhetoric, and all the stimulations of poetick fire, with the warmest and boldest figures in language, ever did, or ever could, or ever can, describe and heighten sufficiently the beauty of the one, or the deformity of the other: Language fails in it, and words are too weak.

Those who do not groan under the yoke of heavy and pointed vassalage, cannot possibly have images equal to a calamity which they do not feel: And those who feel it are stupefied by it, and their minds depressed; nor can they have conceptions large, bright, and comprehensive enough, to be fully sensible of their own wretched condition; and much less can they paint it in proper colours to others. We, who enjoy the precious, lovely, and invaluable blessing of liberty, know that nothing can be paid too dear to purchase and preserve it. Without it the world is a wilderness, and life precarious and a burden: Death is a tribute which we all owe to nature, and must pay; and it is infinitely preferable, in any shape, to an ignominious life: Nor can we restore our beings back again into the hands of our great Creator, with more glory to him, more honour to ourselves, or more advantage to mankind, than in defence of all that is valuable, religious, and praise-worthy upon earth, or include whatever is so.

How execrable then and infamous are the wretches, who, for a few precarious, momentary, and perhaps imaginary advantages, would rob their country, their happy country, for ever, of every thing that can render human life desirable; and for a little tinsel pageantry, and false and servile homage, unworthy of honest men, and hated by wise men, would involve millions of their fellow-creatures in lasting misery, bondage, and woe, and charge themselves with their just hatred and bitter curses! Such unnatural parricides, unworthy of the human shape and name, would fill up the measure of their barbarity, by entailing poverty, chains, and sorrow, upon their own posterity. And often it has happened, that such men have, unpitied, suffered in their own persons, the sad effects of those cruel counsels and schemes, which they intended for the ruin of all but themselves; and have justly fallen into that pit, which they had traitorously digged for others.

— — — —Nec lex est justior ulla,
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.

G

I am, &c.

No. 74. SATURDAY, April 28, 1722.

The Vanity of Conquerors, and the Calamities attending Conquests. [Gordon] ↩

[III-67]

SIR,

The condition of an absolute prince is thought the highest lot of human life, in point of splendor, plenty, and power; and is perhaps the lowest in point of happiness. The greatest appearances of pleasure are no certain proofs of pleasure; and he who can enjoy all things, has often the least enjoyment: Having little or nothing to expect, he is at a stand in life; than which there cannot be a greater unhappiness. It is an agreeable fallacy which men keep themselves under, that while they find themselves daily disappointed in the enjoyments from which they expected most pleasure, they still press forward to more enjoyments, without expecting to be disappointed in these, though they certainly will. Their happiness consists in being deceived without knowing it; and when they find that they are, they do not grow wiser, but go on to promise themselves satisfaction from things, which, upon a thousand trials, they have found gavethem none.

Our only lasting pleasure therefore is expectation. And what have absolute princes to expect; they who are in possession of all things? Yet they cannot live without expectation: They grow weary of pleasures within their power, and are therefore for stretching their power to procure more or better; which yet it will not procure. But thus their hopes beguile them.

Hence great and famous conquerors, never content with their present condition, come to be the incessant troublers of the world: And they who should have protected it, and preserved its peace, have often sought their pleasures in the tears, misery, and sorrows of millions; nay, often found their own grief, ruin, and ill fate in doing so. That this has been their character, is too universally true; and I believe it will be hard to shew one such prince in an hundred, who never laid snares either against his own people, or his neighbours; and though he never did, yet it was their duty and near concern to be upon their guard against him. They might have depended upon it, as a proposition that had infinite odds on its side, that he was not satisfied with its present condition, and that he would alter it, if he could, at their expence. Either his power was not absolute enough, or his dominions not wide enough; nor would they ever have been, whatever accessions of both accrued to him. There was still some darling point to gain, dearer than any before gained, though they were all so before they were gained.

It is the hard fate of conquerors, that their only, or chiefest remaining pleasure, is that of doing mischief: but the fate of their subjects and neighbours is harder. They are often undone to furnish out employment for their governors, who find their pleasure in destroying their people, or in doing that which destroys them. To increase power is, no doubt, the maxim of these princes; but their practice generally contradicts it, while they lessen their people and their wealth to enlarge their territory; every addition of this kind being an addition to their weakness: And therefore great empires, from the moment they are at their height, are in a continual decay; the decay and discouragement of the people being the unnatural means of their first growth; and indeed their increase contained in it, and carried along with it, certain seeds of decrease and desolation.

It may seem a contradiction, to say, that the whole can be built upon the destruction of the parts: Yet it is true of absolute monarchy, which does ever subsist by ruining and destroying those by whom it subsists; and the people, without whom it is nothing, must be undone to make it what it is. It is a power erected upon the ruin of its own strength, which is

the people; and when they are gone, the power must go, growing first impotent in proportion to their misery and thinness: And that it does make them miserable and thin, and must at last extinguish them, I have at large shewn in former letters; I think demonstrated. It may bounce and terrify for a while, and extend its bounds; but even at the time when it looks biggest and strongest, it is wearing out, and by its conquest does but dig its own grave the deeper, by consuming its old people to acquire new, whom it also consumes, and with whom it must also consume; like a debauchee in private life, the faster he lives, the less time he has to live.

The conquests of the Spaniards made a great noise in the world, and them very terrible for a time. But their gold and silver mountains of Mexico and Peru, though they be such glorious prizes as never before fell to the lot of any conqueror, have not made that nation amend for the loss and fewness of their people at home. Those that remain there cannot be said to be enriched by these vast acquisitions, whatever some particulars may be, who by their inequality and insolence oppress the whole. And for the Turkish empire, which frighted Europe and the world, and subdued great part of it, it is so wretchedly sunk in its discipline and forces, and its provinces are so desolate and poor, that, in all human probability, this generation will see it broken into an hundred pieces. It has spun itself out, as the Saracen empire did before it, into a thread too long and too small to bear its own great burden without breaking.

People are like wire: The more they are extended, the weaker they become; and the closer they are together, the richer they grow, and more potent. This is the language of common sense and experience: But ambition speaks another and a different language, for extensive empire and uncontrolled dominion; and being too well heard, puts men upon sacrificing their real strength to that which is only imaginary. Hence they become really impotent in quest of false power, and destroy men in gross for the venal breath of a few flatterers, which they call glory. But horrid and detestable are the ways to such glory, which incites them to ravage and plague, to fetter and kill [the] human race, for the sake of a pleasant dream; to which too they sacrifice all their waking quiet, and make themselves and all others miserable for this delusive vision of their own separate happiness, which, like a phantom, mocks their sight, and flies from them the more they pursue it.

Besides, whosoever considers the many difficulties and dangers, the endless uncertainties and anxieties, and the general horror and hatred, inseparable from such pursuits, will see how poorly they reward him who makes them; having long stretched out his arms to embrace happiness, he is at last forced to draw them back empty, or full of sorrows. He who seeks felicity this way, hunts a shadow, which he will never overtake: And, in truth, what can such a troubler of the earth expect, but the bitter aversion of his own people, whom he oppresses and exhausts; and the curses of mankind, whom he persecutes and lays waste? Conquest gives him no new security; but, far from it, multiplies those who have a mind to destroy him, and arms more hands against him. They who possess most, have more to fear; especially when coming to their possessions by injustice, they must maintain them by violence. Hence the endless fears and insecurity of conquerors and oppressors, and the many conspiracies against them;

Sine caede & sanguine pauci — — —

Such therefore is the bitter fruit, and such often is the terrible and bloody end, of such wild and pernicious pursuits. No wise man would, for the empire of the earth, live in perpetual or strong apprehensions of any kind; much less under a tormenting opinion, that whole nations detested him, and sought his life for making them miserable, as conquerors always do, and must consequently be considered by them as their worst enemies.

But the strange madness of conquest appears from another consideration, namely, that there is not a prince in the world, let his territory be ever so small, but must find full employment to govern it, if he govern it as he should do; and therefore there never was a great empire so well governed as private cities; and no city so well as private families. Where the governed are but few, or live in little compass, the eye of the magistrate is over them, and the eye of the law over him, where he is not above it: Complaints can be easily examined, and violence and injustice be quickly overtaken, or readily prevented. But in wide and overgrown empires, especially where all depends upon the will and care of one, let his heart be ever so upright, a thousand evils and injuries will be done, which he can never hear of, nor they who suffer them have the means of representing to him; and which probably are done or connived at by his own deputies, whom he employs to prevent or punish them.

All princes have indeed more business than they can well do; and when they look out for new business, they must neglect the old, and throw off necessary cares, to assume wanton ones, inconsistent with the other. Harmless amusements they ought to have; and whatever amusements those are, is all one to their people, provided the general security be consulted, and property and peace be preserved: But to embark in wars, and make conquests at the expence of the people, and not for the people, is a preposterous way of protecting them, and of fulfilling the duties of reigning. Such a war was that of Troy; where all the princes of Greece, leaving their several countries in a state of anarchy, and drained of their bravest men, beat their heads against stone walls for ten years together, because these walls contained, as they were told, a Greek beauty who was a great strumpet. And having sacrificed their time, their navy, and the forces of their country, to this wise resentment, at last, by a stratagem, they got their chaste and important prize, [*] and for joy and anger, burnt the city, putting the king and all the inhabitants, who had done them no wrong, to the sword.

Most of the wars in the world have been Trojan wars; but most particularly those in the Holy Land, whither most of the princes in Christendom made lunatic and ruinous expeditions, to rescue from the Saracens a grave which could not be known from other graves. Great preparations were lately made for a Trojan war at Astracan; and in Italy a Trojan war is apprehended. We too, since the reigns of the Plantagenets, have had our Trojan wars; and our English Ajaxes and Achilleuses have fought many bloody battles, in which England had no other interest, but the inward satisfaction and glory of losing its men and money.

Conquest, or fighting for territory, is, for the most part, the most shameless thing in the world. Government is either designed for the people's good, or else I know not what business it has in the world: And therefore in all contests among conquerors about territory, if natural justice and common sense were to decide it, that prince ought to carry it, who can satisfy the people that he will use them best. And sometimes they all vouchsafe to promise this, though very few of them perform it. But this consideration, which ought to be the only one, and is perhaps used by them in their manifestoes, has not the least weight with most of them. On the contrary, their chief argument to move people is often the most ridiculous, stupid, and absurd of all others, and really concerns the people the least of any other. As to the great point of using the people well, and promoting their prosperity, these are considerations so much below the thoughts of your conquerors, and so opposite to their practice, that if the people were to throw dice for one of them, they would do as wisely as if they chose him by deliberate voices, if they were at liberty to choose him, since there is rarely a better or a worse amongst them. And therefore the Persian nobles did not amiss, when they delegated the choice of such a sovereign to the horses which they rode. If Philip II of Spain had in the least aimed at governing the Seven Provinces for their good, he would never have disturbed their revolt; since he might see that they prospered a thousand times faster without him than ever they could with him. But as this reasonable and beneficent thought had no authority with

him, he exhausted in vain the forces of that great monarchy, to reduce those new states under his tyranny, and to make them as wretched and desolate as he made his other dominions.

G

I am, &c.

No. 75. SATURDAY, May 5, 1722.

Of the Restraints which ought to be laid upon publick Rulers. [Gordon] ↩

[III-75]

SIR,

After all that has been said of arbitrary power, and of its hideous nature and effects, it will fall properly in, to say something here of the restraints which all wise and fortunate nations ought to put, and have ever put, upon their magistrates. This is what I promised nine months ago to do; and this is what I propose to do in this letter and the following.

No wise nation in the world ever trusted to the sole management, mere mercy, and absolute discretion of its own magistrates, when it could help doing it; and no series of magistrates ever had absolute power over any nation, but they turned the same to its ruin, and their own wild gratifications and ill-judged profit. As long as the passions of men govern them, they will always govern by their passions, and their passions will always increase with their power. And therefore, whenever a whole people, or any part of them, cross the passions of any man that governs them, he will turn his passions against a whole people, or any number of them that offend him, and will destroy a whole people, rather than stifle his passions. This is evident in ten thousand instances; and the publick will ever, and certainly, be sacrificed to private lust, when private lust governs the publick. Nothing but fear and selfish considerations can keep men within any reasonable bounds; and nothing but the absence of fear can set men at defiance with society, and prompt them to oppress it. It was therefore well judged of the Spartan Ephori, when they erected an altar to Fear, as the most proper divinity to restrain the wild ambition of men, and to keep theirkings within the confines of their duty.

A nation has but two sorts of usurpation to fear; one from their neighbours, and another from their own magistrates: Nor is a foreign usurpation more formidable than a domestick, which is the most dangerous of the two, by being hardest to remove; and generally stealing upon the people by degrees, is fixed before it is scarce felt or apprehended: Like wild beasts in a wood, beset with toils as yet unseen by them, they think themselves free; but striving to escape, find themselves caught in the chains, which had long been preparing for them, and stealing upon them. Besides, for one people undone by foreign invaders, ten have been undone by their own native rogues, who were entrusted to defend them; but instead of it, either betrayed them to these invaders, or seized traitorously for themselves those rights which they were sworn to preserve for others; and then, by oppression and cruelty, and the other consequences of their treachery, reduced them to an utter disability of defending themselves against any invasion whatsoever.

What has made Italy and Asia deserts, and their remaining inhabitants starving and contemptible cowards? Not the inundation of barbarous nations; though that inundation was owing to the weakness of the inhabitants, weakened and undone by their base and tyrannical governors: But they have been made deserts by the continued depredations of their execrable princes, who have acted as if they had been scythes in the hand of Satan to mow down the race of men. There is a certain old Italian tyrant, now living, who, though he has by studied rapine converted into a wilderness a country which nature has made a paradise, yet is not weary nor ashamed of his rapine, but goes on to suck and squeeze the remaining blood of his ghostly subjects; and next to his visiting seven altars a day (a way which he has of compounding with God for being a pestilent tyrant to his creatures), I say, his only employment, besides this his devout and impudent mockery of God, is to sit contriving with his faithful ministry, which of his subjects may probably be worth a hundred pounds, and

how to cheat him or rob him of that hundred pounds.

This same grand prince has now scarce any other business for his soldiers, but that of employing them directly against his own people; nor are they fit for any other employment; for one English regiment would beat seven of his. So that his paltry forces, many of them, are placed upon his frontiers, not to defend him from an invasion, a task which they are not equal to, but to keep his wretched subjects from running away from famine and his government. A relief which is however barbarously denied them by this old polite tyrant! They must stay and perish under him; nor will he suffer them to seek elsewhere that support of life, of which his diabolical government deprives them at home; as if when he had robbed them of their labour and their life, he also wanted their skins.

There is not upon earth a nation, which having had unaccountable magistrates, has not felt them to have been crying and consuming mischiefs. In truth, where they are most limited, it has been often as much as a whole people could do to restrain them to their trust, and to keep them from violence; and such frequently has been their propensity to be lawless, that nothing but violence, and sometimes nothing but a violent death, could cure them of their violence. This evil has its root in human nature; men will never think they have enough, whilst they can take more; nor be content with a part, when they can seize the whole. We are, indeed told of some absolute princes, who have been very good men and no oppressors. But the nature of their power rendered their good qualities almost useless, and gave to others an opportunity of doing in their name, and by their authority, mischiefs which perhaps they themselves abhorred. Besides, in any series of arbitrary princes upon earth, scarce out of ten can one be named who was tolerable, and who either did not himself prove an inhuman tyrant, or suffered his ministers to be so: And when an absolute prince has had great parts, they generally went to his grave with him, and scarce ever proved hereditary. In truth, the children of great princes have almost always proved very unlikethem.

I own, the first of the line has sometimes acted plausibly, and gained, by doing so, dangerous credit and popularity. But if he were an angel, he is never to be forgiven, because it is out of his power what his successor shall prove. The crocodile's egg does no mischief whilst it continues an egg; but out of it is hatched a crocodile, and by it the cursed race of destroyers is continued. D. Heinsius says very justly, *Nec unquam servitus, ne speciosa quidem, legit quibus serviat, sed accipit*. "The most plausible slavery is attended with this eternal misfortune, that it has no choice of a master, but must accept of a master, such a chance sends." Vespasian left to the Romans for their prince the beneficent Titus; but he also left them the raging and bloody Domitian.

If Julius Caesar and Augustus had been really gods, as their flatterers made them; yet their leaving behind them such a race of successors (who proved a race of daemons) entitles them to the characters of detestable tyrants to all eternity. Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, were the precious and bloody blessings which these beneficent princes left! Names universally abhorred, whilst those of Caesar and Augustus are generally adored: And yet to Caesar and Augustus were mankind indebted for these pests of mankind: Nor were they so great pests as were Caesar and Augustus, who did much more mischief, and destroyed the world more than either Nero or Caligula, besides leaving them to destroy it still further.

People rarely think of this, but it is literally true. What! will some say, the generous Caesar and the mild Augustus do more mischief than the wild Caligula and the savage Nero! Yes, fifty to one: Nero destroyed his twenties, Caesar and Augustus their twenty thousands; and for Nero, we may thank Julius and Augustus. Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero, took Rome chiefly for the scene of their cruelty, and destroyed many great and good men, some out of wantonness, and more out of jealousy: But Caesar and Augustus made Rome and the world their slaughterhouse, and destroyed more great and good men by far than the other

four, as butchering monsters as they were: And as to publick rapine and general depopulation, they exceeded them still further. Indeed, as to heroick and diffusive mischief and villainy, the difference between them was as great as between Jack Straw and a late Grand Monarque. The truth is, Caesar and Augustus had art and great qualities, which are far from excusing the evils which they did; and their successors, having all their ambition, but wanting their great qualities and discretion, took the direct road to hatred.

An unrestrained power in one man, or in a few, over all, is such an extravagant deviation from reason and nature, that neither Briareus with his many hands, nor the Hydra with its numerous heads, nor the Centaurs, half man and half beast, were things more unshapen, monstrous, and frightful: Nor would these fictions appear more fabulous and improbable, than such power would be to a free people, who never had heard of it before. What could seem to common sense a wilder chimera, than that one man, not created with features and endowments different from other men, should have a lasting right from his blood, or his pride, or his madness, to domineer over all men, and to rule, kill, starve, famish, banish, and imprison, as many as he pleased?

This power is indeed so monstrous, that it turns men that have it into monsters; and therefore the most amiable and unexceptionable man upon earth is not to be trusted with it. Men change with their stations, and power of any sort rarely alters them for the better; but, on the contrary, has often turned a very good man into a very bad. This shews that men forbear evil, chiefly to avoid the ill consequence of it to themselves, and for want of opportunity and protection; and finding both in power, they prove, by making use of them, that their virtue was only self-love, and fear of punishment. Thus men of the best and brightest characters have often done most mischief, and by well serving their country, have been enabled to destroy it: And they were good and evil from one and the same motive; a passion for themselves, and their own security or glory.

Thus the house of the Medicis, by being very good commonwealth-men, and by serving and obliging almost every family in Florence, gained credit enough by this their generous behaviour, to enslave that great and powerful city. *Idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, quod pars servitutis erat.* Pericles administered the government of Athens with great sufficiency; but he broke down the fences of its liberty, and ruled arbitrarily all his days. Agathocles fought successfully for the city of Syracuse, and as successfully against it; and having defended the citizens against their enemies, he afterwards shewed himself their greatest, by killing in one great massacre all the chief and best of them, and by crowning himself tyrant over all the rest. Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, were great and excellent commanders, and conquered many great kings and nations: But they made all the fruits of their victories their own; and from being very good soldiers, made themselves most pernicious and arbitrary magistrates.

Now all these great men derived, from the good which they did, a capacity to do much more evil: So that as a power to do great good, does naturally include in it an opportunity of doing much evil; so those who are in the possession of power, as all magistrates are, ought, above all other men, to be narrowly watched, and checked with restraints stronger than their temptations to break them; and every crime of theirs ought to be more penal, as it is evidently more pernicious, than the same crime in any other sort of men. For, besides that *quales in republica principes essent, tales reliquos solere esse cives*; that is, that people are generally virtuous or corrupt as their magistrates are; there is something exceeding solemn and important in the nature of this great trust; and accordingly as it is observed or betrayed, a country is happy or miserable: And when any one breach of it passes once off with impunity, another will soon follow it; and in time it will be considered no longer as a trust, but an estate.

So dangerous a thing is an ill precedent, which is often an inlet to an endless train of mischiefs; and so depraved is the nature of man, that we justify ourselves in wickedness by examples that cannot be justified. An action at first reckoned dishonest, by being practised once or twice, becomes unblameable; and that which was at first accounted an extortion, grows by use to be thought but a perquisite. Thus evil is mitigated, nay, cancelled, by repetition, which is a real aggravation of evil; and there are certain rogueries in office, which being long practised, and by many, are at last reckoned as sacred as the trust against which they are committed: A sufficient reason for providing, by great and certain penalties, that none be committed.

G

I am, &c.

No. 76. SATURDAY, May 12, 1722.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[III-84]

SIR,

How cautiously and partially men in power are to be trusted, and how much to be restrained, appears from hence, that almost every civil evil begins from courts, and the redress of every civil evil from an opposition to the pretensions and excesses of courts. This is so universally true, that no nation ever continued happy, whose chief magistrate was its absolute master; and no nation miserable, whose supreme power was properly checked and divided. Nations are then free, when their magistrates are their servants; and then slaves, when their magistrates are their masters: The commonwealth does not belong to them, but they belong to the commonwealth. Tacitus says with great truth, *Nec unquam satis fida potentia ubi nimis est*: “Power without control is never to be trusted.” Every nation has most to fear from its own magistrates; because almost all nations have suffered most from their own magistrates.

Cicero, mentioning the condition of Cilicia, of which he was proconsul, in a letter to Appius Pulcher, says, that he was “moved by pity, as well as justice, to relieve from their miseries the undone provincial cities; undone chiefly by their own magistrates.” It seems Cicero was that sort of whimsical man, that he had really at heart to do good to the people whom he governed: An odd and impracticable character; which, had he lived since, would have rendered him utterly unfit for any manner of preferment. He did not so much as know that he was to make the most of his place and his power, let what would become of the people. A lesson which other governors have amply learned.

Aristotle makes it the great argument and proof of liberty, that they who command do also obey; and indeed all legal and just power being but a trust, whoever executes the same, does an act of obedience as well as command: And every trust is best executed, where those who have it are answerable for it, else it never will be executed; but, where it is great and publick, is much more likely to be abused, violated, and turned to the destruction of those, who, for their own preservation, gave it. Nor is a people to be told, that such as want to be trusted with extraordinary power of any kind, have always been enemies to arbitrary power; for so are all men when they have it not, and expect no advantage from it. Who was a greater patriot than Sir Thomas Wentworth? And who was a more arbitrary minister than Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford? All men are for confining power when it is over them; and for extending it when they are in it. Oliver Cromwell was once heartily in the principles of liberty, and afterwards more heartily in those of tyranny: And I could name two great parties in England, who, when they were out of power, seemed to place the sum of publick spirit, in intrenching upon the royal authority; and when they were in power, to know no other law but the prerogative royal. So unlike is the same man to himself in different situations; and yet still very consistent with the genius of human nature!

Men sometimes do actually good, in order to do evil, *Sejanus, incipiente adhuc potestate, bonis consiliis notescere volebat*: “Sejanus, in the beginning of his administration, would found the reputation of a good minister in laudable measures.” But there never proved a worse minister than Sejanus. Solyman, the Turkish emperor, used to say, that a prince, to be well served by any minister, must never use any minister above once: And this saying is thus far true generally, that men, the longer they grow in power, the worse they grow. I think it is Tacitus who says, *Superbire homines etiam annua designatione; quid si honorem per*

quinquennium agitent? “If an annual election to power make men insolent; what must be their pitch of insolence, if they hold it five or seven years?” Aristotle finds great fault with the senate of Sparta, for being perpetual; and I think he says, that an unchanged or an hereditary senate falls into dotage.

Many of the ecclesiasticks have been for trusting their favourite princes (and no other) with unlimited power over others: But in every thing that regarded themselves and their interest, they have never failed to stipulate for the strictest limitations upon all princes, even upon those whom over the rest of the world they wished arbitrary, and endeavoured by every means to make so. Nor did ever any man give up the freedom of his country, but he meant to preserve his own; and hoped to continue a freeman; as a reward of his helping to make other people slaves; and no man ever set up a tyrant, but in hopes of going shares in his tyranny: And upon these terms and expectations alone it is, that any body of men, or indeed any army, is brought to aid and establish any usurper. Passive obedience was always intended for other people than those who preached it. Interest cannot lie; though he does, who says that he will submit to servitude, when he can avoid it.

Who would establish a bank in an arbitrary country, or trust his money constantly there? In Denmark, the ministers and minions of the prince, think their money safest out of his dominions, and generally transmit the same to Hamburgh, and other free cities, where the magistrates have no divine right to lay violent hands upon what is none of theirs. Even what we gain by rapine in a land of oppression, we are willing to save by the just laws of liberty, in a country of liberty. In England itself, and in our own free constitution; if the Bank of England were put under the absolute direction and power of the court, I doubt stock would soon grow very cheap, and sellers multiply very fast. Or if the government of the Bank, which is purely republican, were improved into monarchical; I fancy our highest monarchymen would rail at the change, and hasten to sell out, notwithstanding their inviolable attachment to the divine right of monarchy: Unless perhaps they think that absolute monarchy does best protect their power, but a free state their money. I am indeed of opinion, that upon such a change, the Bank would be broke, and shut up in three days.

All this shews, that even men who are against liberty in general, contend for it in particulars, and in all particulars which affect themselves. Even Lauderdale, a Tyrconnel, or a Jefferies, who were all for making the crown absolute, as long as they could be as they were, the absolute ministers of oppression under it, would none of them, I dare say, have encouraged the maxim of the prince's rewarding his ministers and faithful oppressors with the bow-string; as well as they themselves were entitled to that reward, and as much as the Turkish genius of government did in other instances suit their own!

When we hear any sort of men complain, as some sort of men do frequently complain, that the crown wants power; we should ask them, whether they mean over themselves? And if they answer, no; as certainly they will, if they speak truth; we may further ask them, Why should they judge for themselves any more than others; or claim to themselves a liberty and an exemption which they will not allow to others? The truth is, they who complain thus, only want to increase the power of the crown, because by it their own would be increased, and other advantages acquired.

The fox in the fable, wanting to rob a hen-roost, or do some such prank, humbly besought admittance and house-room only for his head; but when he got in his head, his whole body presently followed: And courts, more crafty, as well as more craving, than that designing animal, have scarce ever gained an inch of power, but they have stretched it to an ell; and when they have got in but a finger, their whole train has followed. Pisistratus, having procured from the city of Athens fifty fellows armed only with cudgels, for the security of his person from false and lying dangers, improved them into an army, and by it enslaved that free

state. And I have read somewhere, of the States of a country, who having wildly granted to their prince a power of raising money by his own authority, in cases of great necessity; every case, ever afterwards, was a case of great necessity; and his necessities multiplied so fast, that the whole wealth of the country was swallowed up to supply them: As it always will be in every country, where those who ask are suffered to judge what ought to be given. A practice contrary to common sense, and which renders liberty and property perfectly precarious; and where it is continued, will end in taking without asking.

I have heard of a court somewhere abroad, which having asked upon a particular occasion four hundred thousand pounds of the States, found ways and means of stretching that sum to two millions. It was observed of the same court, that it had the art of raising mole-hills into mountains, and of sinking mountains into mole-hills; of disbanding armies without breaking them; of increasing debts by the means of paying them; of being engaged in an expensive war during a profound peace; of gaining for the country at a vast charge, advantages which the country never reaped, nor saw; of employing money obviously against the interest of that nation, and yet getting the nation to pay it; of purchasing other countries at the expence of their own, and against its interest; of procuring from the country at one time a great sum, without telling why it was wanted, but promising to tell, and yet never telling; and, in fine, after many other the like feats, of obtaining, by an arret of security, remission for all their past faults, without owning any, and yet going on to commit more: For as Tully well observes, *Qui semel verecundiae fines transierit, eum bene & naviter oportet esse impudentem.* Cicer. epist. ad Luceium, Quinti fil.

But these things concern not us; and I only bring them for examples, like other old stories of Greece and Rome. I hope that we shall never fall into the like misfortunes and mismanagements ourselves.

G

I am, &c.

No. 77. SATURDAY, May 19, 1722.

Of superstitious Fears, and their Causes natural and accidental. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-90]

SIR,

As my design in these letters is to endeavour to free and manumit mankind from the many impositions, frauds and delusions, which interrupt their happiness; so I shall, in this, and some of the succeeding ones, attempt to remove the popular impressions and fears of spirits, apparitions, and witches; which more or less afflict and terrify the greatest part of the world: and consequently it will conduce much to their ease and felicity, if I can lay these phantoms.

There is a strange propensity in human nature to prodigy, and whatever else causes surprize and astonishment, and to admire what we do not understand. We have immediate recourse to miracle, which solves all our doubts, and gratifies our pride, by accounting for our ignorance. We are not affected by things which we frequently see; or if we can trace but one link of the infinite chain of causes, our admiration ceases; though we are then as far from our journey's end, as when we set out: for all the works of providence are miraculous to us, who cannot do them ourselves, or know how he, who is the author of them, does them. And in this sense every thing is a miracle to us; though we ought to be no more surprized at seeing a blazing star, which makes its revolution but once in five hundred years, than in seeing the sun every day.

For many ages the phenomena of meteors, eclipses and comets seemed unaccountable; and the causes of thunder and lightning were unknown to the world; as they are to most people in it at this day. Great guns were esteemed, by the Americans, to be angry deities; ships, floating monsters; the sun to be the God of the world; watches to be living animals; paper and ink to be spirits, which conveyed men's thoughts from one to another: And a dancing mare was lately burnt for a witch in the inquisition of Portugal.

All nature is in perpetual rotation; and in the great variety of actions which it produces, some must appear very extraordinary and unaccountable to us, by all the powers of matter and motion which fall within our narrow observations; and yet may, and undoubtedly have as certain and regular causes and effects, as the most obvious mechanick operations. We see into the bottom and internal frame and constitution of no one thing in the world, and probably never can do so, whilst we continue in these frail bodies. We see not into the principles and contexture of animal or vegetable beings; and consequently cannot know what nature can spontaneously produce, or how she works. We see only the outside and film of things; and no more of them than what is necessary to the preservation or convenience of ourselves, and not the thousandth part of what is so. Almighty God hath hid all the rest from our eyes; to baffle our foolish curiosity, to raise our admiration of his power, and to excite our homage and adoration to him, the great author of all things.

Nature (as is said in print elsewhere) works by infinite ways; which are impenetrable to our vain and fruitless inquiries.

The loadstone draws iron to it; gold, quicksilver. The sensitive plant shrinks from the touch. Some sorts of vegetables attract one another, and twine together; others avoid one another, and grow farther apart. The treading upon the torpedo affects, and gives raging pains to, our whole bodies. The bite of a mad dog causes madness. Turkey-cocks and pheasants fly at red. A rattle-snake, by a sort of magical power in his eyes, will force a squirrel to run into

his mouth. Musick will cure the bite of a tarantula. The frights and longings of women with child, will stamp impressions upon the babes within them. People, in their sleep, will walk securely over precipices and ridges of houses, where they durst not venture whilst awake. Lightning will melt a sword without hurting the scabbard.

And there are very many other surprizing instances of the powers of matter and motion, which we every day see and feel; and without doubt, there are infinite others which we know nothing of.

If some men could follow scents, like dogs, or see in the dark, like cats, or have the same presages and prognosticks of fair weather or tempests, which other animals seem to have; how many things would they know and do, unaccountable to the rest of mankind? If Almighty God had thought fit to have bestowed upon any man one or more senses above the rest of the species, many of his actions must have appeared miraculous to them.

But if these minute and pretty works of nature cause so much our surprize and astonishment, how ought we to admire and adore the Author of all nature, in the greater works of his creation! The Earth itself is but as a mustard-seed to the visible world; and doubtless that is infinitely less in comparison of the invisible one. It is very likely, that its many fellow-planets, which move about the sun, as we do, are filled with inhabitants, and some of them probably with more valuable ones than ourselves: And 'tis next to certain, that the numerous fixed stars, nightly seen by us, and the more numerous ones frequently discovered by new and better glasses, are so many different suns, and possibly with each a different chorus or system of worlds moving about them, and receiving vital warmth and nourishment from their beams; for 'tis impossible to believe, that the all-wise disposer of all things should place so many orbs, many thousand times greater than this Earth, in the vast abyss of space, far out of our sight, and of no use to us, unless to serve suitable purposes of his providence.

We are not, nor can we be, sure that there are no other beings who are inhabitants of the air or aether, with bodies subtle enough to be adapted to, and nourished by, these thin elements; and perhaps with senses and faculties superior to us: for the works of Almighty God are as infinite as is his power to do them. And 'tis paying greater deference to him, and having higher conceptions of his omnipotence, to suppose that he saw all things which have been, are, or ever shall be, at one view, and formed the whole system of nature with such exquisite contrivance and infinite wisdom, as by its own energy and intrinsic power, to produce all the effects and operations which we daily see, feel, and admire; than to believe him to be often interposing to alter and amend his own work, which was undoubtedly perfect at first; though in the pursuit of his eternal decrees, and in the course, progress, and unbroken chain of his original system, he seems to us sometimes to act occasionally; when, in compliance to our weak comprehensions, and in condescension to our low capacities, he speaks and appears to act after the manner of men. We have not faculties to see or know things as they are in themselves, but only in such lights as our creator pleases to represent them in to us: He has given us talents suited to our wants, and to understand his will, and obey it; and here is our *ne plus ultra*, the farthest we can go. We may be very sure that we are not obliged to know what is beyond our power to know; but all such things are as non-entities to us.

Whensoever therefore we hear of, or see any surprizing appearances or events in nature, which we cannot trace and connect to their immediate causes; we are not to call in supernatural powers, and interest heaven or hell in the solution, to save our credit, and cover our own folly, when there are so very few things in the world which we know any thing of, and of those few we know but very little. We are not to measure the works of God by our scanty capacities; and to believe that he miraculously interposes in the course of human

affairs, but only when he pleases to intimate to us that he does, or intends to do so; much less ought we to introduce daemons into his system of the universe, unless as objects or instruments and executioners of his vengeance; but not to intrude into his government of the world, to trepan and mislead his creatures, and to thwart and oppose himself, and every now and anon to cut the chain, stop the wheels, and interrupt the course of his providence.

We are very sure that God can do, and empower any other beings to do, every thing which he would have done; but we are not obliged, by any precept, moral or divine, to believe every thing which weak, crazed, or designing men tell us in his name; and the disbelieving their foolish and fantastical stories, is not questioning the power of God, but the veracity or judgment of the persons who tell them: For sure there can be no occasion of recurring to supernatural causes, to account for what may be very easily accounted for by our ignorance of natural ones, by the fraud or folly of others, or by the deception of ourselves. There can be no wonder at all in a man's telling a lie, or in his being deceived.

Which of our senses does not often deceive us? Strangling, or strong pressure of the eyes, causes all things to appear on fire; that of the ears, makes us hear noises; straight things in the water appear crooked; bodies by reflexion or refraction appear otherwise, and in other places, than they are in nature. All things appear yellow to men in the jaundice: To those in calentures, the sea appears like a green meadow; and if not restrained, they will leap into it: Melancholy and enthusiastick persons fancy themselves to be glass bottles, knives, and tankards; madmen often believe themselves gods or princes, and almost always see spirits; and a reverend divine, some time since, thought himself big with child, and could not be persuaded to the contrary, till a man midwife pretended to deliver him of a false conception.

In fevers and malignant distempers, people see visions and apparitions of angels, devils, dead men, or whatever else their imaginations render most agreeable or terrible to them; and in dreams all men see, or fancy that they see, such false appearances. Their imaginations, in sleep, are often so lively and vigorous, that they can scarcely be persuaded of their mistake when they awake out of it, and would not be so, if they did not find themselves in bed; and therefore, if a credulous, fearful, or melancholy man, should carelessly nod himself to sleep in his closet or his garden, and receive a vigorous representation of an angel, daemon, or dead man, speaking to him, or delivering a message, and after wake on a sudden, without observing his own sleeping (as often happens) I cannot see how he should distinguish this appearing phantom from a real vision or revelation, and I should be glad to have a rule to do it by.

The frame and contexture of our bodies betrays us to these delusions. For, as all objects and images from without are let in upon the mind by the windows or conduits of the outward senses, and the mind afterwards ranges, methodizes, operates, and reasons upon them; so it can only work upon such materials as it receives: and consequently, when the organs of sensation are wrong framed in their original contexture, or depraved afterwards by sickness or accidents, the mind must be misled too, and often mistake appearances for real beings: When the spies, scouts, and out-guards, are seized, corrupted, or deceived, the intelligence will be fallacious, or none at all.

It is evident, in a thousand instances, that the mind and body mutually act and operate upon one another; both grow and increase by age and exercise, both are impaired and enervated by distempers and accidents, and all the noble faculties of the former are often destroyed and extinguished by accidental injuries done to the latter, and by other fortuitous events and occasional strokes of fortune. Common experience shews us, that if men are born without one or more of their senses, so many conduits of knowledge are stopt: If a child comes into the world without the faculties of seeing or hearing, he can have no understanding at all, unless he afterwards acquire them; and if he loses them again, all further progress is at

an end: The vigour and capacity of our mind depend very much, if not altogether, upon the organization of our bodies; and are altered, improved, and increased, by proper diet, action, or education; and oppressed, lessened, and sometimes quite lost, by drunkenness, gluttony, laziness or misfortunes. I have often almost fancied that men may be dieted into opinions; as experience shews us, they may be educated into the most absurd ones by custom, conversation, and habit.

Every passion or affection of the mind produces visibly a suitable and correspondent disposition of the muscles and lineaments of the face, and consequently must affect and alter the whole mechanism of the body; and by like reason every thought or motion of the mind must do the same in a lesser degree (though not equally subject to common observation) by forcing or directing the blood, juices, or animal spirits, into peculiar tubes, conduits, or vessels: and when by frequent use those channels and passages become habitual to them, they will often flow thither of their own accord, or are easily driven thither; and so, by working backwards, will cause those passions and perceptions which at first caused them, and in consequence the same impressions and dispositions of the organs of sense.

If this observation be true, it will account for our delusions in dreams, when exterior objects are shut out, which must otherwise control and overpower the weaker and more faint operations of the internal machine; and this too will account for the many panick and unreasonable fears and prejudices which we are subject to from education, custom, and constitution, as well as for the difficulty, if not impossibility, of our shaking off and conquering any other habits of mind or body acquired by early and continued practice.

I shall in my next apply these general principles to the system of spirits; and shew that philosophy and religion both contradict the commonly received opinions of them.

T

I am, &c.

No. 78. SATURDAY, May 26, 1722.

The common Notion of Spirits, their Power and Feats, exposed. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-99]

SIR,

As I have shewn at large, in my last letter, that, in very many instances, our senses are subject and liable to be deceived in objects evidently material; so in this I shall endeavour as fully to shew, that we can have no possible ideas of any other. When we call God a spirit, we do not pretend to define his nature, or the modus of his existence, but to express the high conception which we have of his omnipotence, by supposing him most unlike to ourselves, and infinitely superior to every thing which we see and know; and then we are lost and buried in the abyss of our own ignorance: but we can have no other possible conception of what we mean by the word *spirit*, when applied to him.

We cannot have even the most abstracted images of things, without the ideas of extension and solidity; which are the mediums of conceiving all things that we can conceive at all. As the organs of our senses are all material, so they are formed only to receive material objects; and but a small part of those which are so. The ear cannot hear, the hands feel, the palate taste, the nose smell, or the eye see, bodies, but of certain magnitudes, dimensions, and solidity; and these vary too in different men, and in the same men at different times, and at different ages. There are millions of insects that cannot be seen without glasses; and probably infinite others, which cannot be seen with them: the subtle effluvia, or other minute causes of pestilential distempers, are not within the reach and observation of any of our senses. We cannot see wind and common air, much less pure aether, which are all too thin and too subtle bodies for the fabrick of the eye; and how should we see spirits, which we are told have no bodies at all, and in the dark too, when the contexture of the eye will not afford us the use of that organ.

I cannot conceive why the dreams of the old heathen philosophers should be adopted into the Christian system: or from what principles of reason or religion we should be told that the soul is *totum in toto*, and *totum in qualibet parte*; that is, that all of it is diffused through the whole body, and yet all of it is in every part of the body: That spirits take up no place; and that ten thousand of them may stand upon the point of a needle, and yet leave room for a million times as many more; that they may move from place to place, and not pass through the intermediate space; and that they are impenetrable themselves, and yet can penetrate every thing else. Is not this fine gibberish, and pretty divinity? And yet it is esteemed by some a sort of atheism to disbelieve it; but neither philosophy nor scripture tell us any such matter. It is true indeed, we are told, that spirits have neither flesh nor bones; no more than wind, air, or aether, and thousands of other things, which yet are bodies: but we are no where told, as I remember, that spirits have no extension or solidity: And if we were told so, we could understand no more by it, than that they were beings of which we neither had, nor could have, any other than negative ideas.

I think, therefore, that I may venture to assert, that either God hath created no beings independent of matter, or that such cannot be objects of our senses: But if there be any such, they are of a nature so different from us, and so incomprehensible by the faculties which he has given us, that we can form no propositions about them; and consequently are not obliged to believe or disbelieve any thing concerning them, till he pleases further to inform us.

But there are an humble sort of philosophers, who want the sagacity to conceive how any substance can exist without extension and solidity; and consequently are modest enough to confess, that they do not understand the distinction between material and immaterial substances; and that they cannot, with their most refined imaginations, have any notion of a middle state of things, between extended beings and no beings at all; between real essences and shadows, phantoms or images of disordered brains; or that any thing can exist in the universe, and at the same time in no part of it. And yet these gentlemen will not give up the general system of spirits, but suppose them to be beings of subtle aerial contexture, that in their own nature are not objects of our senses; but gave powers, by assuming more dense bodies, to make themselves so, and have capacities to do many things unaccountable to us, and beyond the limits and reach of our apprehensions. All which I think no man will affirm to be impossible; but I think any man may safely affirm, that such agents are not permitted to molest human affairs, and seduce or mislead men, by doing supernatural actions, or what must appear to us to be so.

A contrary supposition must destroy the very use of miracles: for if other beings, either by the energy of their own nature, or the will and permission of God, can do miracles, or actions which we cannot distinguish from miracles; then nothing can be proved by them, and we shall lose the best evidence of the truth of our holy religion. For if signs and wonders may be promiscuously shewn and performed by the best of all beings and by the worst, they may be done and used to promote error, imposture, and wickedness, as well as virtue and true religion; nor can I find out any criterion, or sufficient mark, whereby we can distinguish which are done by the preserver, and which by the professed enemy, of mankind. To say that the truth of the miracle shall be tried by the doctrine which it is brought to propagate, or the precepts which it commands, is to invert the very use and end of miracles, which is, to give credit and authority to the doer, who is always supposed to act by God's power, in order to declare his will; and consequently, if the wonders which he does are to be tried by the doctrine which he teaches, there would be no use of any wonders at all, to prove not only what proves itself, but what is to prove the truth of the miracle, which is to prove the truth of the doctrine.

We are very sure, that the great Creator of heaven and earth, and the sole author of all our happiness, does not leave us in these uncertainties, to be tossed and tumbled in the thick mist and dark chaos of ignorance and deceit. How can we know the truth of any revelation, without knowing the revealer himself to be true? We must be first certain, that a good and beneficent being speaks to us, before we can believe any thing which he tells us. Whenever therefore Almighty God, by means becoming his infinite wisdom, and from causes impenetrable to us, communicates his intentions by appearances and representations to our senses, or by any other ways out of the ordinary course of his providence, he always gives us sure marks whereby we can distinguish his works from delusion and imposture, which often ape truth itself, and mislead ignorant and unwary men. We are told in Holy Writ, that "young men shall see visions, and old men dream dreams"; which frequently happens; and that "false prophets shall arise and do wonders, which shall deceive almost the elect"; but we are bid to disbelieve them; which, if they worked true miracles, we could not do, without rejecting all miracles. For how can we believe any thing to be miraculous, and at the same time disbelieve another thing to be so, without being able to shew any difference between them? And therefore we may acquiesce in an assurance that such pretenders must be cheats, and their actions impostures and deceits upon our senses.

Whenever God works wonders, or produces those events which shall appear as such to us, he always does them for wise reasons, either to warn and inform men, to make them examples of his justice, or to communicate his will, and teach us some doctrine; and he takes the most proper and effectual means to attain his ends, and coerce our belief, by making such

applications to our outward senses, and such impressions upon our understandings, as we must submit to and acquiesce in, unless we resolve to give up all certainty; or else by predictions which are justified by the event, and which are undoubtedly miracles. He does them in the most open manner before crowds at once; but our modern miracle-mongers do them all in secret, in corners, and in the dark; and their spirits and apparitions are seen only by melancholy, enthusiastick, and dreaming old men and women, or by crazy young ones, whose heads are intoxicated and prepared for these stories long before; and they are generally seen but by one at once, who is always in a fright when he does see them; or else they are the tricks and juggles of heathen and popish priests, or pretended conjurers, to pick men's pockets, and promote some knavish and selfish design. They are never done before a House of Lords or Commons, or in a prince's court, or in the streets before multitudes of people, or in the sight of several men at the same time, of clear and unprejudiced understandings, or of unquestionable integrity.

When our Saviour appeared to all his disciples together, he appealed to their senses, and bid them not be afraid, but to put their hands into his side, and believe themselves: He made his ascension before five hundred people at once: His miracle of the loaves and fishes was before five thousand: His turning water into wine was at a publick wedding; and the rest were of the same kind: He went through Judea from place to place, publickly doing miracles, confirming and convincing all, who were not willfully blind, of the truth of his mission; and teaching a doctrine of infinite advantage to mankind: Whereas our present workers or seers of miracles never tell us any thing worth knowing; and we have no other evidence that they are seen or done, but the veracity of those who tell them, who may be deceived themselves, or invent lies to deceive others. The proof ought always to be equal to the importance of the thing to be believed: For, when it is more likely that a man should tell a lie, or be deceived, than that a strange phenomenon should be true, methinks there should be no difficulty to determine on which side of the question we should give our assent; though in fact most men are so prepared by education to believe these stories, that they will believe the relation of them in these cases, when they will believe the relaters in nothing else.

If one or two men affirm that they saw another leap twenty yards at one leap, no one will doubt but they are liars; but if they testify that they saw a goblin with saucer eyes and cloven feet in a church-yard, leap over the tower; all the town is in a fright, and few of them will venture to walk abroad in a dark night. Sometimes these phantoms appear to one who is in company with others, and no one can see them but himself, and yet all the rest are terrified at his relation, without reasoning that they have the same or better faculties of seeing than he has; and therefore that his organs must either be indisposed, or that he designs to impose upon them: but it passes for a miracle; and then all doubts are solved, and all enquiries at an end. All men believe most of those stories to be false; and yet almost all believe some of them to be true, upon no better evidence than they reject the rest. The next story of an old woman inhabiting a cat, or flying in the air upon a broomstick, sets them a staring, and puts their incredulity to a nonplus. We often hear of a spirit appearing to discover a silver spoon, a purse of hidden money, or perhaps a private murder; but are never told of a tyrant, who by private murders has slaughtered thousands, and by publick butcheries destroyed millions, ever dragged out of his court by good or evil spirits, as a terror to such monsters: Such an instance would convince all mankind; and if Almighty God thought fit to work by such engines, and intended that we should believe in them, or any of them, it is impossible to believe but that he would take the properest methodsto gain our assent.

From what I have said, and much more which might be said, I think I may with great assurance conclude, that these capricious and fantastical beings are not suffered to interfere and mingle with human affairs, only to mislead men, and interrupt them in the pursuit of their duty; nor can I see any foundation, in nature, reason, or scripture, to believe that there are any

such as they are usually represented to us; which neither agree and keep up to the characters, dignity, and excellence of good angels, or the sagacity, office, and use of bad ones. Where are we commanded to believe that the Devil plays hide and seek here on earth; that he is permitted to run up and down and divert himself, by seducing ignorant men and women; killing pigs, or making them miscarry; entering into cats, and making noises, and playing monkey-tricks in church-yards and empty houses, or any where else here on earth, but in empty heads?

We know that he was cast headlong from heaven, is chained fast in the regions of the damned, and kept by the power of the Almighty from doing mischief to his creatures; and to say the contrary seems to me the highest blasphemy against heaven itself: For when we every day see and feel the many delusions to which human condition is subject, how we are the properties of impostors, the slaves to tyrants, and perpetual dupes of one another, and indeed are subject to daily and endless frauds and impositions; how shall we be a match for the most subtle and most sagacious being out of heaven? And is it possible to believe, that the good, merciful, and all-wise God should desert, leave, and betray us to so unequal a combat, without giving to us suitable precautions, capacities, and powers to defend ourselves?

I shall conclude by observing, that the heathen poets first invented these stories, and the heathen priests stole them from them; as badgers dig holes for themselves, and afterwards are stunk out of them by foxes.

T

I am &c.

No. 79. SATURDAY, June 2, 1722.

A further Detection of the vulgar Absurdities about Ghosts and Witches. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-108]

SIR,

I have endeavoured, in my last, to shew, that no such beings as spirits and daemons are permitted by the good God to mingle with, and perplex, human affairs; and if my reasoning be good, the whole system of conjurers and witches falls to the ground: For I think it is agreed by all, if they have any powers supernatural, they receive them from evil spirits; and if these have no such powers themselves, they can transmit them to none else.

But, methinks, the advocates for Satan's empire here on earth are not very consistent with themselves; and in the works which they attribute to him, do not give credit enough to his abilities and power.

*They make this prince a mighty emperor:
But his demands do speak him proud and poor.*

They give him a power to do miracles; make him prince of the air, lord of the hidden minerals; wise, rich, and powerful, as well as false, treacherous, and wicked; and are foolish and presumptuous enough to bring him upon the stage as a rival for empire with the Almighty; but at the same time put a fool's coat and cap upon him. His skill has hitherto gone no farther than to cram pins down children's throats, and throw them into fits; to turn wort, kill pigs; to sell winds (dog cheap too), to put out candles, or to make half-blind people see two at once; to help hares to run away from the dogs; to make noises, or to discourage his faithful votaries at Newgate, by interloping upon their trade of discovering stolen goods; and such like important feats of daemonship. And, what is yet worse, I cannot find in these last eighteen hundred years, that with all his cunning he has invented one new trick, but goes on in the same dull road; for there is scarce a story told of a spirit, or a witch, who has played pranks in the next parish, but we have the same story, or one very like it, in Cicero's tract *De Divinatione*.

He always plays at small games, and lives mostly upon neck-beef. His intrigues are all with old women, whose teats he sucks (which, by the way, shews but a scurvy taste); and when he has gained his ends of them, feeds them only with bread and water, and gives them a groat in their pockets to buy tobacco; which, in my mind, is very ungallant, not to say niggardly and ungenerous, in so great a potentate, who has all the riches of the hidden world within his dominions. I cannot find, in all my reading, that he has expended as much in five hundred years last past as would have carried one election.

Methinks he might have learned a little more wit from his faithful emissaries here on earth, who throw and scatter about money, as if there was never to be an end of it; and get him more votaries in a week, than he can purchase for himself in a century, and put him to not a penny of charge neither; for they buy people with their own money: But to keep such a coil and clutter about an old woman, and then leave her to be hanged, that he may get her into his clutches a month sooner, is very ungrateful; and, as I conceive, wholly unsuitable to a person of his rank and figure.

I should have imagined, that it would have been more agreeable to the wisdom and cunning always attributed to him, in imitation of his betters, to have opened his purse-strings, and have purchased people of more importance, and who could do him more real service. I fancy that I know some of them, who would be ready to take his money, if they knew where he was to be spoken with; and who are men of nice honour, and would not betray or break their word with him, whatever they may do with their countrymen.

Besides, I conceive it is very impolitick in one of his sagacity, and in one who has so many able ministers in his own dominions and elsewhere, to act so incautious a part. It is very well known, that a plot discovered, or a rebellion quelled, gives new credit and reputation to the conquerors, who always make use of them to settle their own empire, effectually to subdue their enemies, to lessen their powers, and to force them for the most part to change sides; and, in fact, one witch hanged or drowned, makes old Beelzebub a great many adversaries, and frightens thousands from having any more to do with him.

For these reasons, I doubt, he is shrewdly belied by those from whom he might expect better usage; and that all the stories commonly told about, and believed concerning him, are invented and credited by such only as have much less wit, or not much more honesty, than himself. To enter into a detail of them is endless, as well as unnecessary to my purpose; it having been unquestionably shewn already by the worthy Dr. Hutchinson, [*] from very many instances, that these stories are fictions, cheats, or delusions, and that the belief of them is neither consistent with reason nor religion. But I shall add some more observations of my own, to what he hath with great piety and judgment published upon this subject; and shall begin with tracing the genealogy of these phantoms.

The first inventers of them, as far as we know any thing of the matter, were the Egyptians; who believed, that the spirits of the deceased always attended their bodies wherever they were deposited; and therefore embalmed them with rich gums and spices, to preserve their figure entire, and entombed them in stately mausoleums, with costly apartments for their souls to solace in: Which opinion gave occasion to their building the expensive and useless pyramids, to receive souls of a higher degree. From Egypt these airy beings were transplanted into Greece, and thence to Rome; and the Greek and Roman poets embellished their fictions with them, and the priests made their advantages of them; and both priests and poets added many more inventions of their own: They filled their woods, groves, rivers, rocks, houses, and the air itself, with romantick deities: They had their demi-gods, satyrs, dryads, hemi-dryads, penates, lares, fauns, nymphs, &c. And when the general belief of the existence of such beings was well established, without doubt they were often seen and talked with.

*For fear does things so like a witch,
'Tis hard to find out which is which.*

They animated almost every thing in nature; and attributed even the passions and qualities of the mind to peculiar deities, who presided over them, or directed and caused them: Mars inspired courage and magnanimity; Venus, love; Mercury, cunning; and Apollo and his Muses, wisdom, and poetick raptures, &c. A good and evil genius attended every man, and his virtues and vices were esteemed to be spirits: A wicked man had an evil spirit; a virtuous man, a good one; a wrangler had a spirit of contradiction; people who could not speak, had a dumb spirit; a malicious man, a spirit of envy; and one who wanted veracity, a spirit of lying; and so on. Distempers too which were uncommon, and could not easily be accounted for, as apoplexies, epilepsies, and other fits and trances, were imputed to spirits and daemons; and at last these delusions, which were only the sallies of poets, or the inventions of priests, became the real opinions and religion of the common people, who are always ready to lick up the froth of their betters.

When the heathens came into Christianity, they brought in these phantoms with them, and accounted for oracular predictions, and the other cheats and juggles of their former priests, by the powers of these daemons; and the popish priests have since improved upon their pagan predecessors, and made their fictions turn to a much better account than putting them in verse. The heathen dryads and nymphs were changed into fairies; good and evil genii into conjurers and black and white witches; and saints are made to supply the offices of demi-gods: and by this lucky turn they made a very good penny of their charms, exorcisms, beads, relicks, and holy water; and were paid for many masses, to invoke their saints; in whom, it seems, they had a very good interest.

There was scarce a church-yard, an old or empty house, which was not pestered with these airy inhabitants; nor a man who had murdered himself, or who was murdered by another, or had forgot something in his life-time, who did not appear to tell his own story; nor could be persuaded to quit his new abode, till the holy man had laid him in the Red Sea; who, without doubt, was very well paid for his skill and pains. We may be sure so gainful a trade was duly cherished and cultivated by constant juggles and impostures, and all advantages were taken of surprizing and unusual phenomena of nature. By the help of glasses, unusual voices and noises, phosphorus, magick lanthorns, feats of legerdemain, and collusion and confederacy, these prejudices were artfully kept up, and weak and enthusiastick people were made to believe, sometimes to see, and afterwards to publish to others their visions, or whatever else their deceivers had occasion for; whose power at the same time was so great, that the few intelligent men who saw and detested these impieties, durst not contend with the prejudices of the people, abetted by the rage of the popish priests.

Many of our first reformers were but weak men, and I doubt some of them were not very honest ones; and therefore generally fell into these stories: However, they lost a great deal of ground in Queen Elizabeth's reign; but were returned upon us with a full swing by her successor, who brought from Scotland with him whole legions of these subterranean inhabitants; who, methinks, should more properly have come from a warmer climate. That bright, sagacious, and royal author wrote and published a very learned book of daemonology, which effectually confuted all disbelievers; for sure no man, who hoped for any preferment, ecclesiastical or civil, would have the ill manners to dispute his Majesty's great judgment and royal authority. When Nero proclaimed himself the best poet in his dominions by sound of trumpet, no man durst contend for the laurel with one who had fifty legions at his command. So an act of Parliament was passed for hanging of witches; and his Majesty himself was graciously pleased to inform his judges by what marks they might be known; and many of them were hanged accordingly: But, as ill luck would have it, they multiplied like the blood of the martyrs; and the more they hanged, the more were leftbehind, during his whole reign.

In King Charles I's time they began to decrease again, by letting them alone; till, at the end of the Civil War, a new set of saints got into the saddle; and then again a fresh persecution began against old women, who were hanged plentifully at every Assizes.

*Some only for not being drown'd,
Others for sitting above ground
Whole days and nights upon their breeches,
And feeling pain, were hang'd for witches.*

There were professed witch-finders, who knew them at first sight; so that there was scarce a poor, withered, old wretch, with a mole or a wart in any part of her body, but was in danger of her life.

When King Charles II returned, and the nobility, clergy, and gentry resumed their proper seats, old women began again to live and die in quiet; and, during that prince's long reign, there were but few instances of witches hanged; and, considering the prepossessions of the people, occasioned by so many late murders, under the pretences of zeal, it is not to be wondered at if there were a few: But since the Revolution there has not, as I remember, been one witch hanged; nor do I think that one lawyer in England would condemn one, or any special jury of gentlemen find her guilty; though we are often told, and, if we may judge by other effects, have reason to believe, that Satan is as busy now as he has been in the memory of man.

But in a neighbouring country witches are almost as plentiful as ever; for as soon as the successors of the aforesaid holy men came into play again, and ruled the earth, they turned as they usually do upon their old benefactor, and hanged immediately a dozen or two of his accomplices; and did the same soon after in New-England, of which some were poor Quakers (whom they could not be permitted to hang merely for want of orthodoxy) and it is thought there was not an old woman in Fairyland (who was unfit for use), but would have undergone the same fate, if the government had not interposed.

Notwithstanding this, I do not find that the Devil has in the least changed his measures, or is more afraid of the saints than he used to be; but is constantly working under their noses, and every now and anon kidnapping some of their flocks; but it is always of such as can pay no tithes: for it is agreed by all, that a little money in their pockets will keep him out: But what seems very remarkable is, that at the same time that he makes so bold with these holy men, who have power to cast him out, he keeps a respectful distance from men of carnal sense, and plain natural understandings; and most of all from those incredulous persons, who cannot be persuaded to believe that the merciful God will permit him to outwit and destroy ignorant and unwary Christians, whom the Saviour of the world died to redeem from his power.

This is so true, that those stories are believed through the world, in exact proportion to the ignorance of the people, and the

integrity of their clergy, and the influence which they have over their flocks. In popish countries there is a spirit or witch in every parish, in defiance of holy water, and of constant *pater nosters*; and there are more of them in ignorant popish countries than in knowing ones, in poor than in rich ones; and they appear oftener in arbitrary governments than in free states. The King of Spain's and Pope's dominions have more of them than France and the German principalities, where priest-craft does not ride so triumphant; and these have more than Venice, Genoa, and the popish Hans towns.

The same is equally true of Protestant countries: Muscovy, Sweden, Denmark, and Lapland, have more of them than Scotland and Ireland; and Scotland and Ireland more than England, where no clergymen of any credit abet these frauds; and consequently the Devil's empire here is almost at an end, how considerable soever it has been formerly: and in Holland he has nothing at all to do; though that country lies so near his other territories, that I wonder he should not sometimes shorten his journey, or at least now and then take it in his way, though only to try what may be done among the Hogan Mogans.

From all that has been said I think I may reasonably conclude, that he is kept at home by the will of the Almighty, suffering the punishment due to his rebellion; and has no power over others, till, for their disobedience to the commands of heaven, they are delivered into his custody to be tormented, and made just objects of divine vengeance: And I shall take the liberty further to add, that true religion is so well supported by reason and revelation, that there is no necessity of telling lies in its defence, and putting it upon the same bottom with

the heathen superstitions, and the popish forgeries and impostures; which, when discovered will make twenty infidels for one true believer that is made by such methods.

T

I am, &c.

No. 80. SATURDAY, June 9, 1722.

That the two great Parties in England do not differ so much as they think in Principles of Politicks. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-118]

SIR,

Machiavel tells us, that it is rare to find out a man perfectly good or perfectly bad: Men generally swim between the two extremes; and scarce any man is as good as he himself, his friends, or his party, make him; or as bad as he is represented by his personal or party enemies. Ask a Whig the character of a neighbouring Tory, and he represents him as a Jacobite, an enemy to publick liberty, and a persecutor; and, on the other side, if you enquire the other's character from his Tory godfather out of baptism, he shall pass for a commonwealth's man, an enemy to all sorts of monarchy, and an encourager of all kinds of licentiousness and faction: whereas an indifferent man, conversing with each of them, shall find both aim at the same thing, and their opposition to proceed only from their not conversing together, from an intention to thwart one another, or from the intrigues of those who reap advantage by setting them together by the ears. 'Tis too great a compliment to pay to our adversaries, to suppose them to act upon a mistaken principle against their real interest; and it is certainly the interest of every man to be free from oppression; and he will join in measures to be so, if he be not terrified by the fear of greater oppression. It is undoubtedly true, that there are many Jacobites in England; but it is thinking better of them than they deserve, to believe that they will be so against their own interests: And therefore, excepting the very few who can hope to receive the advantages of such a revolution, the rest may be converted, by shewing them that they can find better protection and security from the present establishment, than by hazarding their lives and estates, and their country's happiness, in bringing their designs to pass. The only dangerous Jacobites that I ever feared, were those who took the same methods to keep out the sonas turned out the father.

Whilst men enjoy protection, plenty, and happiness, they will always desire to continue them, and never look after revolutions; but when they lose, or fancy that they lose those advantages, which they ever will think they have a right to enjoy, they will endeavour to change their condition, though in the attempt they often change it for the worse. Whoever therefore would endeavour to preserve a present establishment, must make the people easy and contented under it, and to find their own account in the continuance of it. The instruments of tyranny (of which I hope we shall never have any amongst us) are never to be depended upon in any exigency; they will always be able to shift for themselves, and know how to make an interest with a new government, by betraying the old: which was the case of the late King James, and will ever be the case of others in the like circumstances.

Every man therefore, who is sincerely and heartily attached to the interest of his present Majesty, will endeavour to cherish, cultivate, and make a proper use of his excellent dispositions to protect and make his people happy, and to preserve our constitution in church and state upon its true and solid basis. Old land-marks are never to be removed, without producing contests and law-suits, which for the most part ruin both parties. We have an excellent constitution at present; and if not the best which can be formed in an utopian commonwealth, yet I doubt the best that we are capable of receiving. The present distribution of property renders us incapable of changing it for the better; and probably any attempt to change it for the better, would conclude in an absolute monarchy. There are so many interests engaged to support it, that whoever gets power enough to destroy these interests, will have power enough to set up himself; as Oliver Cromwell did, and every one else will do, in the

same circumstances; or at least, no wise man will trust to his moderation.

No man of sense and fortune will venture the happiness which he is in full possession of, for imaginary visions; and throw the dice for his own estate: Such desperate gamesters carry their whole about them; and their future expectations depend upon confusion, and the misery of others: but such as have much to fear, and little to hope for, will acquiesce in their present condition. This being the true circumstance of the nobility, clergy, gentry, rich merchants, and the body of the people, I hope they will concur in such measures as will most effectually preserve our present establishment, and support the just rights of the crown, and the liberties of the people, oppose all usurpations on either side, and endeavour, in the most exemplary manner, to punish all who shall dare to interpose between the king and the subject, and spoil that harmony which alone can make them both happy.

This is the interest of all parties, and of every man in them (except a very few, who make their market of the others' differences), and I could never yet see a just bone of contention between them. It can be of no consequence to either party, if they are governed well, whether a man of one denomination or another governs them: and if they are oppressed, it is no consolation, that it is done by one whom they formerly called a friend; whereas if they would agree together, no one durst oppress them. Those who are called Whigs, have no intention to injure the legal establishment of the church; and seven years' experience, when they have had the whole power in their hands, may convince any one that they did not intend it; and the Tories tell us, that they desire no more than that establishment, and have no thoughts of breaking in upon the Act of Toleration, which is the right of all mankind. The Whigs can have no motive to do the one, nor the Tories the other, when party opposition is laid aside: for how is a Whig injured by another's receiving advantages which he has no right to, and receives no prejudice by, but may receive benefit from, by providing for his children, relations, or friends? And how is a Tory injured in a quiet neighbour's worshipping God in his own way, any more than if he did not worship him at all; which is the case of thousands who are unmolested? The distinctions about government are at an end: Most of the Tories are ashamed of their old arbitrary principles, and many of the modern Whigs ought to be ashamed of taking them up; and indeed they have no right to reproach one another with either practices or principles: for both have shewn their wrong ends in their turns; and they have brought matters at last to that pass, that whilst they have been throwing the dice for victory, sharpers have been drawing the stakes.

Indeed, I cannot see what we differ about: we fight at blindman's-buff, and fall upon our friends, as well as enemies. All the grounds of distinction are now at an end, and the honest and wise men of all parties mean the same thing, and ought to lay aside and forget the old names, and become one party for liberty, before that name is forgotten too. It is yet in our power to save ourselves. We are sure we have a prince, who has every disposition to help us, if we lend our own assistance, and shew him the means of doing it; and we are answerable to God, our country, and ourselves, if we do not use our own endeavours. The means are easy, obvious, and legal; and the motives as strong as ever did, or ever can, happen in any circumstance of human affairs. It is no less than the safety and preservation of the best king, and the best constitution upon earth, and indeed of almost the only people amongst whom there are any remains of liberty, knowledge, or true religion; all which depend upon the steady, loyal, and uniform proceedings of the next Parliament.

For my own part, I have no quarrel to names or persons, and would join in any just measures, or with any party, to save the kingdom; and will oppose, to the utmost of my power, all who will not; and I believe that there are thousands of the same sentiments; and methinks great men should accept so favourable a disposition to forget the mischiefs which ambition, covetousness, or inadvertency have brought upon us. We will not look with eagle's eyes into past faults, provided a proper atonement is made by future services; nor envy

particular men's growing rich, if they will let the publick thrive with them; and it is certainly safer, and more creditable, to do so by the consent of their countrymen, than by constant struggles, broils, and contention, to overcome popular opposition; which must get the better at last, or their country, and probably they themselves, must be buried in it.

England is yet in a condition to make the fortunes of a few men, if they are not in too much haste to make them; and will consent, or connive at their doing so, if they deserve well in other respects. There are many useless, and yet profitable, employments in England, and few men are concerned how they are disposed of; whether to lord's valets, or whether they are the perquisites of foreign or domestick favourites, provided the offices which regard the administration of justice, of the state, church, or revenue, be properly bestowed. Those who have the fortune to get into the highest stations, will expect to raise suitable estates, especially when they have in a great measure the means in their hands of making them, and the power of carving for themselves; and all but rivals will compound for their doing it by such ways as are consistent with the publick benefit, or such as the publick does not suffer much by; and I doubt the legal advantages belonging to few offices in England will answer the expectations of men in the first station.

It is often urged, that princes must be served upon their own terms, and their servants must sometimes comply against their inclinations, to prevent greater mischief; which I believe is rarely the case. I confess, princes ought and must be always treated with tenderness and delicacy, and regard must be had to their opinions or prejudices; but it is so much their interest to be honoured and beloved by their people (who from a thousand motives will be always ready to make them personally easy, and to gratify even their wanton desires, when they are not absolutely destructive to themselves), that there is much less address and management necessary to shew them their real interest, and bring them into it, than to engage them in designs which will ever produce disaffection and danger; and it is certainly the interest of their ministers and servants, rather to set themselves at the head of publick benevolences, and receive the thanks and applause due to such benefits, than to have them extorted from them always with general curses and detestation, and often with personal hazard.

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I am, &c.

The Established Church of England in no Danger from Dissenters. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-125]

SIR,

I have in my last letter said, that no wise man will remove ancient land-marks; and for the imaginary prospect of enjoying something which he does not enjoy, and has a mind to enjoy, run the hazard of losing what he is already in possession of. Those who have nothing to lose, can lose nothing by their feats of knight-errantry; but those that have, are seldom gainers by them. I considered this subject in that paper as it regarded the state; and I shall do it here with relation to our Church differences. The constitution of our Church is excellently well adapted to our civil government. The bishops answer to the Lords, and the inferior clergy to the Commons in the state; and all are subject to the legislative power mediately, and immediately to the crown. The king has the power of creating the chief ecclesiastical officers, as he has of creating the civil; and they both receive their beings and existence from him; and consequently they must ever be in the interest of monarchy; and the monarch must ever be in the interest of an establishment from which he derives so much power. The nobility and gentry too, whose birth, character, and fortunes always give them the means of easy access to the throne, must be equally in the same interest; for, as no man can suffer by another's enjoying possessions which he has no right or pretence to; so they will share largely in these possessions, by having more frequent and better opportunities than their fellow-subjects, of preferring their children, relations, friends, and dependents; not to mention what presentations they have in their own power. Indeed, every man, of any condition, has an interest in them, as he has a chance of sharing preferments himself, or getting them for his family: and therefore it is wild to fear that any interest in England can shake an establishment which so many interests must concur to support; unless those who are in possession of its advantages should, by endeavouring to take away from others their rights, force them to make reprisals, and to do what, I dare say, no man in England now intends, and but few desire.

I have wondered, therefore, to hear some men of good understanding and unquestionable integrity apprehend any danger to the legal constitution of the Church, and cannot guess from what quarter they can fear it. The Independents, Anabaptists, and Quakers, are no candidates for ecclesiastical power, but are by principle against all church establishments amongst themselves. The Quakers have no clergy at all; and the two former allow their ministers no superiority above the rest of their congregations; and it is certain, that all of them have much more favourable opinions of the national clergy than of the Presbyterians (the only rivals for church-power), from whom they apprehend, and have always found, much worse usage than from the Church. They desire nothing but liberty of conscience, and do not envy other preferments which they cannot enjoy themselves. It is true, the Presbyterians are candidates for church-dominion; and without doubt their priests have hawks' eyes at the church preferments, and wish often for them, if wishes would get them; but what facility, or, indeed, possibility, have they of obtaining them? They are an inconsiderable body as to their number; and as to their figure less; and as they grow rich, and leave estates behind them, their sons (for the most part) desert their congregations and interest: Besides, they are divided now into two parties, *viz.* the Subscribers, and Nonsubscribers; the latter of which, much the most considerable for fortune and understanding, are come, for the most part, into the principles of general liberty and independency, nor will ever trust their clergy with the power which they pretend to, and which they claim from scripture; and by degrees many of these, in all

probability, will come into the Church.

No prince can ever be in the interest of Presbytery; and I believe that there never was one in the world who was a true Presbyterian: for, as that government is purely democratical, so it is calculated only for a popular state; and, in fact, subsists no-where else in the world, unless in Scotland, where there have been frequent struggles between the crown and them. King James I was so plagued with them, that he was visibly partial to the papists against them: Charles I, by violence, destroyed their establishment; and King Charles II, though called in by them, and supported by them against his Parliament, yet immediately turned upon them: For, though they would have been glad to have had a king modelled to serve their purposes, yet that king had more wit than to have them. For the same reasons, the nobility and gentry of few countries, who by their births, fortunes, and near access to the throne, claim and enjoy a distinction above the inferior rank of mankind, can never be heartily in the interest of that sort of government; and it is certain, that many of the nobility and gentry in Scotland have never been favourable to it. And this is the true, perhaps the chief, reason why so many of them now are Jacobites.

The Presbyterian clergy claim a right, from scripture, to be independent of the civil power in all things which relate to spirituals, of which they pretend to be judges; and, in fact, their synods in Scotland, whatever they do now, formerly did not allow the crown power to adjourn or dissolve them, though they were forced to submit to it; and I am told, at present, they always adjourn by their own authority, though they take especial care it shall be to the same time that the crown appoints; which still keeps up their claim against a proper occasion. I do not avouch the truth of this, and hope that it is not true. Now it is certain, that the nobility and gentry of England, who have actually the power of governing their clergy, will never be governed by them, whatever visions weak men of any denomination may flatter themselves with; nor will ever submit to the Presbyterian discipline, and to let monks and cynics govern their families, turn the heads of their wives, children, and servants, and control their own actions. Nor will the other sectaries, as has been said, who are already possessed of a free liberty of conscience, endeavor to put power into the hands of those who will be sure to take it away; as they did in New-England, though they went there to get it for themselves. So that the danger of settling Presbytery in England is a mere chimera; and when, by the chance of a long Civil War, they were actually got in possession of a power, which during the continuance of it they disclaimed, they could not hold it even for a few years.

The only ball of contention which seems to be now amongst churchmen, is the Sacramental Test, which excludes dissenters from offices; which they think they have a right to in common with their fellow-subjects, having done nothing to forfeit it: But this seems to me to be a dispute only about a non-entity: for it is certain, that no one dissenter in England would be in any office of value, if that law was repealed, more than there are now; for they always qualify themselves, if they can get good places, and take advantage of the law to keep themselves out of chargeable ones: so that the churchmen alone suffer by the statute. The king, by act of Parliament, as well as interest and education, will be of the established Church; and the nobility are all, or almost all, so too, and no doubt but they will give the preference in all preferments to those of their own opinions: nor can it ever happen but that men, who can have qualifications to fill any considerable employments, will have wit enough to find out that there is no religious difference between the Church and Presbyterian establishments, except in the interests of their clergy; which no wise man will think considerable enough to differ about, and to separate upon that score from the national discipline, very few excepted, who will find their account in setting themselves at the head of a faction, and selling it. So that this question appears to me only to be a party puncto, and scarce worth asking on the one side, or denying on the other. Those amongst the Whigs, who most desire it, would not have the appearance of persecution stand in a law, when in effect

there is no real persecution; and it is certainly the interest of the clergy to gratify and oblige their dissenting brethren in what costs them nothing: for one act of kindness will make more converts in a year, than they can make by preaching at them in twenty; however, till they see the advantage in doing it themselves, I think that no prudent man will give them any cause of jealousy, by doing it against their consent.

This being, as I conceive, the true state of our church differences, I shall conclude this letter, by application to our national clergy. It is not to be wondered at, that so many of their predecessors regretted the diminution which they suffered of their former revenues and grandeur at the Reformation; and that they often looked back with wishing eyes, and could not easily lose sight of so agreeable a prospect, without weighing enough the impossibility of recovering their lost power from the crown, and their lands from the nobility and gentry, who had got possession of them: Indeed it would have been a wonder if they had done otherwise. But now almost two hundred years' experience may convince them of the impossibility of succeeding in such a design. They have once lost all, by endeavouring to recover a part; and lately had like to have lost their possessions and religion too, by attempting to give the crown a power, which they intended should be employed for their own benefit, but was actually used against them; and I hope they are now pretty generally of opinion, that it is their interest to stand to their present establishment, and be contented with the same security for their own possessions as the rest of their fellow-subjects have, and to join with them in the defence of liberty, and the laws of the land.

I see, with a great deal of pleasure, many of them falling into these opinions; and hope, that it will soon be the opinion of the greatest part of them; and then I dare boldly affirm, that all religious distinctions will soon be at an end, which are now kept up more by party animosities, than any essential difference of opinion: for men will always fly from the sentiments of those whose persons they hate, and whose oppression they fear; and such as are little concerned about metaphysical, and, as they think, useless, notions in divinity, will support any party against those who would oppress all; and therefore the most laudable, and indeed only way of the clergy's being safe themselves, is to make other people safe; and then they will have the good wishes, the respect, and protection of every honest man in England; and multitudes of the dissenters, who will not be frightened or bullied out of their opinions, will insensibly quit them of their own accord, if it be only to save the charge of paying separate ministers, and to be in the fashion, when they can once give themselves leave to consider coolly, that they differ about nothing, or nothing that is essential to religion, or their own interests. The heat of the sun made the traveller immediately quit his cloak, when the blustering of the north wind had made him wrap it closer about him.

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I am, &c.

No. 82. SATURDAY, June 23, 1722.

The Folly and Characters of such as would overthrow the present Establishment.
[Trenchard] ↩

[III-132]

SIR,

It gives equal occasion of mirth and concern to wise men, to see so many of the other sort, persons of seeming reverence, and with grave faces, exerting themselves with warmth and zeal for opinions and parties, with each a separate train or chorus of lesser and subordinate planets attending their motions, and dancing after them. Whoever views these solemn spectres at a distance, will see nothing but conscience, contempt of worldly honours and preferments, and minds superior to all temptations; whereas all this grimace, to a nice observer, will appear only to be a project for picking pockets, and getting away other people's money; which, in reality, at present makes, and ever did make, most of the squabbles which at any time have disturbed the world. This I may possibly hereafter shew to be true, in most of the conspicuous instances of publick and private life; but at present I shall confine myself to those gentlemen who deal in revolutions.

There are a considerable number of politicians in all governments, who are always enemies to the present establishment; not because it is an ill one, or because those who administer it betray their trust (which is a just and reasonable ground of complaint), but because they themselves are not in it: If they are so, all is well; but if they cannot be accepted upon their own terms, or are after wards turned out for misbehaviour, then upon a sudden there is no faith in man, fundamentals are struck at, no honest man can serve, and keep his integrity, and there is no remedy but a total change, and if that happen, and they can get into power, nothing is mended but their own faces and their fortunes. Without a doubt, every man has a right to liberty, and to come at it by all ways which do not bring a greater inconvenience with it than the benefit proposed promises advantage; and all just attempts of that kind are commendable: but I speak now of a sort of cattle, who think nothing but their fodder, who do not care who feeds them, or who is their master, provided they have a belly-full; nor whether it be lawful pasture, or trespass and encroachment upon the neighbouring soil.

I am so unfortunate as always to think, that a man who is a knave in his private dealings, will never be a saint in politicks; and whoever does not do reasonable and just things in respect to his neighbours, relations, and acquaintances, which he knows, will have little real concern for the titles of princes whom he knows not. Indeed it seems to me, that there cannot be a greater ridicule in nature, than for any man to pretend to be concerned for the personal interest of another, whom he is not acquainted with, has no means of being acquainted with, and probably would not be acquainted with upon equal terms, unless he can hope to find a farther account in it, in going snacks with him.

It is certain, that every man's interest is involved in the security and happiness of a good prince, from whom he receives protection and liberty; but for one who has no concern for publick or private justice, who does not care what becomes of his neighbour's rights and possessions, who would make no difficulty of cheating any prince whom he served, or oppressing those in his power; I say for such an one to set up for loyalty, and the right line, and to hazard his life and family, for conscience sake, is such a farce, that if men's thoughts were not so wholly taken up with their own cheating, that they minded not other people's, no one could be deceived by such false appearances.

I must beg leave, therefore, of these gentlemen to take it for granted, that all this zeal is for themselves, and only a struggle for money and employments, and to get that by a revolution, which they want merit or means to get without it; and I will endeavour to shew them, that they are taking abundance of pains, and running much hazard to attain what they never will catch. But I would not be understood here to apply myself to those men who are in desperate circumstances, and whose condition may be bettered, and cannot be made worse by confusion; nor to the poor visionaries and enthusiasts, who are the cat's-feet to the former, and are by nature prepared to be dupes and tools of ambition and design; but to the very few amongst them who are tolerably easy in their own affairs, and do not want common understanding; and to these I may safely say, that their passions and prejudices hurry them away from their real interests, to pursue shadows and imaginations, and to make those whose greatness they envy, yet much greater.

A prince long kept out of what he calls his dominions, will, upon a restoration, always bring back with him a junto of upstart Mamamouches, with a huge train of half-starved beggars dangling after them, who through necessity have followed his fortunes, flattered his vices, and will expect to have his ear, and the disposal of his favours. This ragged crew, who have been long the outcasts of fortune, know, for the most part, nothing of government, or the maxims necessary to preserve it, unless to talk about the divine right of their master, and the injury done to so good a prince; but with arbitrary principles picked up in their travels, minds soured with wants and disappointments, hungry bellies, and ravenous and polluted claws, finding themselves at once metamorphosed from mock ministers and magistrates to real ones, glutted with sudden plenty, and rioting in profusion, which they before enjoyed only in imagination, will become of course proud, insolent, and rapacious, and think of nothing but to redeem the time which they have lost, to raise hasty fortunes, and will endeavour to get them as they can; and consequently will sell their master to those who can or will give most for him, which will be ever those who have got most bykeeping him out.

The court language will be immediately changed: It will be said, that the prince must submit to the necessity of his affairs; that his enemies must be brought into his interest, who may be otherwise able to perplex his new government; and besides, having by long experience been used to employments, and the management of the publick revenue, must be continued till others are equally qualified to supply their offices; that his Majesty has a grateful memory of the faithful services of his true friends; that he will provide for them all by degrees, as fast as the others can be turned out; but they must have a little patience, and not be too importunate: And so, after two or three years daily attendance, with old coats new furbished, some good words, now and then a good dinner, and the honour of whispering and joking with his lordship, they will find themselves just where they set out, only with less money in their pockets; will see their enemies in possession of all the employments; find out at last, that courts and courtiers are alike, become new malcontents, and form themselves into a faction against the government which they ventured their lives to bring about.

This was the case upon the restoration of King Charles II when the Round-heads had all the offices, having got money enough, whilst they were in power, to buy them; and the poor starved Cavaliers, who had nothing but a good conscience, and past services to plead, were laughed at, and could hardly get admittance into the ante-chamber. The descendants of these are the modern Whigs; and of the other, for the most part the present Tories. Nor can it happen otherwise in the nature of things: for those who have no merit to offer but their money, will always offer enough of it; and those who want it, will always take it. Besides, such as are conscious of their own demerit to their prince, will use double diligence to please him, and to wipe off past scores; whereas those who pretend that they have sacrificed all for him, will esteem his favours received only as payments of just debts; and their expectations are seldom to be satisfied, or they to be persuaded that their services are enough considered.

And it must proceed from a consummate ignorance in human nature, not to know, that almost all men, and especially princes and great men, would rather engage new debtors to themselves, than pay off old debts to other people; would sooner create fresh dependents, by conferring favours which will be esteemed obligations, than satisfy the clamours and importunities of such pretended creditors and duns, who will never be satisfied.

Besides, princes, for the most part, think all that can be done for them is no more than duty; and will throw off old servants, who can do them no more good, as easily as old shoes; grow weary of their long-winded tales about past services, and will think themselves at liberty to pursue their present interests, and employ such who are most capable of serving them for the present, as those undoubtedly are who have established interests, most experience in affairs, and money always at hand to back their pretensions.

Besides, when matters in any country are prepared for a revolution, the poor starved followers, or discontented well-wishers to an abdicated prince, will never have the merit and honour of making it; and can never, or very rarely, have power enough to do so: for those who enjoy the advantages of the government in possession, who are deep in its councils, command its fleets and armies, and perhaps made it odious by their wicked councils and actions, are always the first to veer about, and make their interest with the new government, by being instrumental to bring it in: They have it often in their power to do it, and great sums of money always at command to buy their peace, and very frequently to keep their employments; and so to go on where they left off: for a poor wandering prince, eager to get a crown (which he will conceit to be his own), will fall into any measures, or join with any persons, to obtain it; and for the most part to be ready to drop his necessitous followers, as easily as they would drop him, if they found it equally their interest.

Of this sort we have pregnant instances in the triumviri of Rome; of General Monk, and others formerly among ourselves; and of a very great lord in the latter end of King James's time: But why should I name particular instances, when every revolution which almost ever happened in the world, furnishes us with numerous ones, and will ever do so to the end of the world? unless the power by which the revolution is made is so great, and so much in the prince's disposal, that he is under no necessity of keeping measures with any person or party, but is wholly at liberty to follow his inclinations, and gratify his revenge and passions; or is so entirely an instrument of the power which he makes use of, or rather which makes use of him, that he must do whatever they would have him do; as was the case in a good measure of Marius and Sulla, but I think cannot be the circumstance of any person now living; and I hope that few of those who wish for a revolution would accept it upon those terms.

The starved crew who deal in revolutions, are seldom conjurers in politicks: for no man of fortune, or a grain of understanding, would venture a single hair of his head for the interest of another, educated in pride and ingratitude, and very probably one too of whom he knows nothing, and who knows nothing of him, nor will have the least regard to his hazard and services. Besides, is not such an one a worthy hero, and his particular interest a worthy cause for a man of common sense, and tolerable fortune, to venture his life and estate for, by involving his country too in a civil war?

But there is another reason still behind, which I fear these doughty politicians never think of; namely, that they are doing the work which they pretend to oppose; which has sometimes inclined me to believe, that they have been employed and hired to act as they do. It is certain, that their ill-digested libels, without the least notions of the principles of government, or shewing the least disposition to mend it; their stupid cant of a right in princes independent of the happiness of the society; their ill-mannered reflections upon the person of the sovereign, whom most of them have sworn to; and their constant invectives and reproaches upon all men, who are honester and wiser than themselves, do more mischief to this country, than

their united force, counsels, and understanding could do good, if they were inclinable to do it.

Weak men, who know or suspect their designs, will take no measures with them for a common good; and those who laugh at their follies, and are not afraid of being over-reached and outwitted by them, are ever reproached with their silly designs. In fine, they are the only support of those whom they pretend most to abhor; and I believe I may venture to say, are the only friends in the kingdom, which some persons of figure lately had, without intending to be so.

In my next letter I will endeavour to shew, that it is impossible to bring their wild projects to bear; not with any hopes of making many of them wiser, but to convince better people, that they ought not to be bullied by the sound of Jacobitism, and so diverted from concurring in the necessary measures to serve their king, their country, and themselves, by bugbears and phantoms: for I dare venture to assert, that there is no possibility of restoring the Pretender to England, but by taking such measures to keep him out, as will be more terrible to the people than letting him in, if such can possibly be; and I am sure that every honest man ought to do all in his power to prevent any attempts of that kind, which we are certain will receive no countenance from his Majesty, and, I hope, from none of his present ministry.

T

I am, &c.

The vain Hopes of the Pretender and his Party. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-141]

SIR,

I have promised in my last to shew, that the Pretender's game is altogether desperate in England, unless those whose duty and interest in the highest manner oblige them to keep him out, pave the way for his return: And this I shall do, by shewing, that there is no interest within the kingdom, or out of it, capable of bringing about such a revolution, and willing to do it. Indeed, such a convulsion would shake the very foundations of the earth, and turn all nature topsy-turvy. God knows, one Revolution is enough for one age. I do not deny, but such an event might have been brought about, if favoured by the crown, by the ministers and officers in power under it, and abetted by a great neighbouring potentate. Which case many people (I hope falsely) think was ours in a late reign; and even then the success would not have been certain; and if it had succeeded, I dare venture to be positive, that those who had been most forward to have brought him in, would have been amongst the first to have turned him out again.

I think no man is now to learn, that conscience and the opinion of right have little or nothing to do in revolutions, but the resentments of men, and the gratifying the views and expectations of private persons, or of aggregate bodies; and no formidable set of men could have found their account amongst us, in continuing him upon the throne, upon the terms he must have sat there. He is certainly a very weak man, a great bigot, and of a saturnine and morose temper; and the near prospect of the possession of three crowns could not make him temporize with his then interest, nor disguise his religion to those who were contented to be deceived, that they might deceive others. And therefore it is impossible to believe, that a prince so qualified, provoked by his expulsion, acquainted personally with few or none amongst us, and educated in the religion and maxims of France and Rome, restored by their means, and supported by them, would act afterwards upon other maxims than what he had before imbibed, and what would be constantly inculcated into him by his foreign tutors abroad, and his priests at home.

Such conduct would quickly have made those who most espoused his interest at first, soon turn upon him, as they did before upon his father; and so many interests in Europe were concerned to separate England from a dependence upon France, that they would never have wanted a strenuous assistance, as his father found to his cost, when all the popish princes, except France, preferred the interests of their states before the interests of their religion, as France itself would have done upon the like motives. I hope I shall be forgiven by the gentlemen of this cast of loyalty, if I say, that they have sufficiently shewn to the world, that they will espouse the interest of no prince any longer than he serves theirs; and I conceive it impossible to suppose a circumstance which that prince could be in, to answer both their views, considering his prejudices and dependencies.

But whatever might have been practicable then, the case is far otherwise now. We have a King upon the throne, who will not be sung out of his dominions, as the late King James was: He will have some troops at home, who will certainly stand by him: He has great dominions of his own abroad, and is sure of the support of powerful neighbors: His strength, and that of his allies, at sea, is so great, that no invasion can be made upon him, but by stealth; and that must be always a very inconsiderable one, and cannot be supported but by accidents. Very many, and I hope by far the greatest part, of the nobility, gentry, and people, are devoted to

his person and title, and would be glad to serve him upon the bottom of liberty and his true interest: The dignified clergy shew their loyalty in the manner which is most acceptable to him, and every month adds to their number by new creations; and we may reasonably hope, that the rest will not be long left behind.

All who were concerned in the publick funds, which contain a fourth or fifth part of the wealth of the kingdom, must support an establishment which supports them, and which if lost, they are undone and lost with it; and every man, who has property, or the means of acquiring property, and has an uncommon understanding, and a love for himself and liberty, must know that so many interests, and so supported, cannot be shaken but by a long civil war, and by making England the stage and field for all the nations in Europe to fight out their quarrels in; and that such a war must end in making us the prize of the victor, and subject us either to a foreign power or a domestic tyrant, if we have not the happiness to be restored to our present establishment again; and then we shall have had a civil war for nothing.

If we did not see by daily experience, that there is not an opinion in philosophy, religion, or politicks, so absurd, but it finds our heads wrong enough turned to embrace it; I should not think it possible, that any person, who is not a professed or concealed papist, could wish for such a revolution, or any one else fear it, and much less that they should fear it from abroad.

It is certain, that the Emperor has so many personal as well as political ties and motives to engage him in the king's interests, arising from obligations received, from more expected, and as it is said contracted for in regard to his Italian dominions, from their mutual dependencies upon one another in Germany, and above all, from the interests of their several dominions, that it is politically impossible but that he must do all in his power to support him in his throne: for when two nations are so situated, that they have nothing to fear from one another, and have a common interest to watch and oppose a third power formidable to both, they must be natural allies without the help of treaties; and whatever little occasional or personal differences may happen between the princes who govern them, yet whilst the interest of their dominions are friendly, they will never long continue enemies; and though they do so, yet will always help one another upon any emergency.

I think I may safely say, that the King has much to hope, and nothing to fear, from the lesser princes of Germany, in respect to his English dominions; for many of them can and will help him, and none of them can do him any harm.

The safety and preservation of Holland is so entirely dependent and wrapped up in our present establishment, that they must venture all to defend it. We are obliged, by interest as well as treaties, to support them against every power that is capable much to offend them; and their interest is, to keep us in a situation and condition to do so: And though, without doubt, they emulate and fear the great naval power of England, and our possession of Gibraltar; and would please themselves, and laugh in their sleeves, to see us increase our burdens, and enervate our state, by airy and romantick expeditions to do their business, whilst they lie still, ease their subjects, and pay off their debts; yet they will never suffer England to fall under the dependence of France, Spain or Rome; though they very well know how to make mercantile advantages of the weakness of those whom they have to do with.

The crowns of Sweden and Denmark can never have a joint interest to insult us; and at present neither of them have so: For it is said, that we are engaged by alliances to support them against one another, and every one else who has power enough much to annoy them; nor can they be sure that ever England again will find its glory and advantage in the heroic gallantry of engaging in the squabbles of the north, when France and Holland (vastly more concerned with the event) find theirs in lying still, and letting them agree as they fall out.

The Czar can have no motives, from the interest of his dominions, to quarrel with a people from whom his subjects enjoy an advantageous trade, and with a power too which he cannot hurt, and which can hurt him: We are no rivals for adjacent territories; and he cannot rival us in maritime power and trade; and both of us can find our account in friendship, and neither in enmity. His encroachments in the Baltic have hitherto done us no mischief; but on the contrary, have opened a new market for naval stores, and rendered our supplies from Sweden and Denmark less precarious: Indeed his conquering either of those crowns would be very mischievous, but much more so to other nations than to us, who may be easily supplied with naval stores from our own plantations; and therefore if his neighbouring or distant trading nations apprehend such an event, they will certainly join together to oppose it, and implore our assistance upon our own terms; though undoubtedly they will be much better pleased, if we do it for them without asking theirs.

If, therefore, any subjects of ours have given him just cause of offence, and made him a personal enemy to our country, we ought to deliver them up, or punish them at home; and if any nation in alliance with us, and in enmity with him, can find their interest in quarrelling with him, let them quarrel by themselves, and make up their squabbles as they can, or get the assistance of those who have political motives to oppose his progress, and put a stop to his growing power: I doubt we shall have enough to do to defend ourselves; and therefore I hope we shall not undo ourselves yet further to conquer for others, and in instances too which in times to come may prove fatal to ourselves.

The states of Italy are interested to preserve the naval power and greatness of England, if we pursue the measures which are most advantageous to ourselves; namely, to meddle no farther with their affairs, than to carry on an advantageous trade with them; and, by friendly offices, proper negotiations, and perhaps sometimes by the shew of force, to protect them against the greater powers which threaten them. It is certainly their interest, that we should keep possession of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, if we make a right and honest use of them; for we have nothing to desire from them, but what it is their interest to give, nor they to fear from us, whilst we act as Englishmen: but if we should ever sacrifice our own interests to such as are not our own, we must thank ourselves if we make enemies of those who would be glad to be our friends.

It is certainly the interest of the kingdom of France, to have an impotent administration, and a distracted state of affairs in England, and a prince at the head of them, that either from weakness cannot, or from other motives and dependences will not, obstruct the union of the Spanish monarchy to their own, which would soon give them the possession of it as effectually as if they had conquered it; but the interest of the Regent, who governs France, is far otherwise: The appearing prospect, and probable chance of that crown's descending to him, or his posterity, will engage him to support a power which can alone support him, and which has every motive to do so. In such a circumstance of affairs, no interest in France, except his immediate dependents, can abet his personal pretensions against the interest of all France; and therefore he must depend upon foreign alliances; and England alone can be safely relied upon, who have no claim to any part of his dominions, or interest and desire to seize them; which cannot be said of the Emperor, or any other potentate, who has power and motives enough to assist him.

I have wondered therefore at the weakness of many among ourselves, who can be so often elated or terrified with the designs of the Regent, who can never conspire against us, without conspiring against himself; and no provocation even on our part could make him undermine or betray, in so tender an instance, his own interest. I doubt not but he wishes Gibraltar out of our hands; and if negotiations or big words can prevail upon us to part with it, I presume they are easily to be obtained, but he will never join with Spain to force it: This danger therefore is a mere bugbear, made use of to delude the Jacobites, and intimidate

honest men, and, by making the first plot, or prate and bounce, to govern the others.

So that, the Pope excepted, who can do us no harm by his own force, the King of Spain alone is the power in Europe that can be concerned to favour the Pretender's interest; nor could he find his account in it, unless to open his way to the crown of France, in case of the young King's death.

The divine right of monarchy in the right line is so well established in arbitrary countries, that I dare say that prince will be sorry to depend upon a forced renunciation and the power of Spain, to defend himself against his nephew, if other powers were not at hand to assist him; and no power in Europe can do it effectually but England: and whilst there is a king at the head of it, who will pursue his own and his people's true interest in protecting him, and preserving the friendship which for more than an age has been propitious to both kingdoms, and has the means, by the possession of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, of resenting any injury done on his part; it is wild to think, that at great hazard and expence he would attempt to bring about a revolution which may engage us in a long civil war, and disenable us to give him the protection he can receive no where else.

If, therefore, he is favourable to the Pretender's interest, it must be owing to personal resentments, or his views towards the crown of France. I hope that we shall give him no more cause for the first; and as to the latter, he has the interests of the Regent, of all Germany, Italy, the states of Holland, and indeed of all Europe, against him, as well as the united interest of his own subjects, who will not be contented to be a province to France; and I may venture to assert, that whilst we keep the possession of Gibraltar, and make a proper use of it, he can neither effect the one nor the other; namely, he can never make himself King of France, nor the Pretender King of England.

T

I am, &c.

No. 84. SATURDAY, July 7, 1722.

Property the first Principle of Power. The Errors of our Princes who attended not to this.
[Trenchard] ↩

[III-150]

SIR,

The subjects which men understand least are generally what they talk of most, and none so much as of government; which almost every man thinks he has talents to direct, and, like Sancho Pancho, believes he can make a very good viceroy: He thinks nothing is necessary, but to get at the helm, where his business is, to command, and that of others, to obey; and then, as the aforesaid Sancho (viceroy-like) says, "Who but I?" But to govern a state well, is the most difficult science in the world; and few men, who have ever been in the possession of power, have known what to do with it, or ever understood the principles upon which all power is founded; and their mistakes have made endless havock amongst mankind.

Government is political, as a human body is natural, mechanism: both have proper springs, wheels, and a peculiar organization to qualify them for suitable motions, and can have no other than that organization enables them to perform; and when those springs or principles are destroyed by accident or violence, or are worn out by time, they must suffer a natural or political demise, and be buried, or else smell above ground; and though neither of them ought to be murdered, yet, when they are dead, they ought to be interred.

Now it is most certain, that the first principle of all power is property; and every man will have his share of it in proportion as he enjoys property, and makes use of that property, where violence does not interpose. Men will ever govern or influence those whom they employ, feed, and clothe, and who cannot get the same necessary means of subsistence upon as advantageous terms elsewhere. This is natural power, and will govern and constitute the political, and certainly draw the latter after it, if force be absent; and force cannot subsist long without altering property; so that both must unite together, first or last, and property will either get the power, or power will seize the property in its own defence: for, it is foolish to think, that men of fortunes will be governed by those who have none, and be plundered to make such whom they despise, and have every day new reasons to hate, rich and insolent: And, on the other hand, men will contentedly submit to be governed by those who have large possessions, and from whom they receive protection and support, whilst they will yet always emulate their equals. Though the people of Rome extorted a law from the Senate, that commoners might be admitted into the chief offices of the state jointly with the nobles; yet all the address and power of the tribunes could not for a long time make them choose one of their own body into those offices, till commoners had got estates equal to the nobility; and then the balance of property turning to the people, they carried all before them.

The only true despotick governments now in the world, are those where the whole property is in the prince; as in the eastern monarchies, that of Morocco, &c. where every man enjoying what he has by the bounty of his sovereign, has no motive or means to contend with him, but looks upon him as his benefactor; and such as have no property, do not think themselves to be injured: But when men are in possession of any thing which they call their own, and think they have a right to enjoy it, they will ever contend for it, when they have the means to do so, and will always take advantage of every exigence in their prince's affairs to attain that right. Other princes, who have a mind to be as arbitrary as the former, and who want either the capacity or the power to acquire his natural dominion, seize by violence and productions of their subject's estates and industry; which is a constant state of force on one

side, and oppression on the other: It perpetually provokes the people, and yet leaves them often the means of revenging the injustice done them, and must end in restoring the old government, or in setting up some new form by the extinction of the present usurpation; whereas in states truly despotick, though the monarchs be often destroyed, yet the monarchy is preserved entire, there being no interest in the state capable of shaking it.

But both these sovereignties have one mischief in common, and inseparable from them; *viz.* as they ever subsist by standing armies, so they must ever be subject to the caprices and disgusts of the military men, who often depose and murder their sovereigns; but in the latter much oftener than in the former: for whilst the people have the name, and, as they think, a right to property, they will always have some power, and will expect to be considered by their princes, and the soldiers will expect to have leave to oppress them, which will make continual struggles; and the prince, finding himself obliged to take part with one of them, often falls in the struggle; which was the case of the Roman emperors, most of whom were slaughtered either by the people, or their own soldiers: whereas in a natural absolute government, there is no danger but from the latter alone; and if he can please them, all is well, and he is safe.

But neither of these ought to be called by the name of government: both indeed are only violence and rapine, and the subjection of many millions of miserable wretches to the wild and wanton will of often the worst man among them: They deface human nature, and render the bountiful gifts of indulgent providence useless to the world; and the best which can be said of them is, that they make the grand tyrant and his inferior oppressors as miserable and unsafe as the poor wretches whom they oppress; nor should I have mentioned them as governments, but to make what I have further to say the better understood.

All other dominions are either limited monarchies, simple aristocracies, democracies, or mixtures of them; and the actions and operations in those governments, or the continuance of those governments, depend upon the distribution and alteration of the balance of property; and the not observing the variation and the frequent changes of the *primum mobile*, causes all the combustions that we see and feel in states. Men who fancy themselves in the same situation, as to outward appearances, stare about them and wonder what is become of the power which their predecessors enjoyed, without being able to judge how they lost it by the floating of property: They think they have a right to enjoy the same still; and so, in spite of nature, use fraud and violence to attain what they cannot hold, if it were attained: However, they will struggle for it; and this struggle produces contentions and civil wars, which most commonly end in the destruction of one of the parties, and sometimes of both.

Now it seems to me, that the great secret in politicks is, nicely to watch and observe this fluctuation and change of natural power, and to adjust the political to it by prudent precautions and timely remedies, and not put nature to the expence of throws and convulsions to do her own work: I do not mean by altering the form of government, which is rarely to be done without violence and danger; and therefore ought not to be attempted when any thing else can be done, but by gentle and insensible methods. Suppose, for example, a limited monarchy, which cannot subsist without a nobility: If the nobles have not power enough to balance the great weight of the people, and support the crown and themselves, it is necessary to take some of the richest of the commoners into that order; if they have more power than is consistent with the dependence upon their monarch, it is right to create no more, but to let those already created expire and waste by degrees, till they become a proper balance: If the people by trade and industry grow so fast, that neither the crown nor nobles, nor both together, can keep pace with them; then there is no way left, but either, by using violence, to hazard, by an unequal contest, what the two latter are already in possession of, or, by using moderation and a beneficent conduct, to let the former enjoy all they can hope to get by a struggle, and voluntarily to give up all odious powers of doing mischief, though

miscalled prerogative; which must ever be understood to be a power of doing good, when ordinary provisions fail and are insufficient.

Harry VII dreading the strengths of the nobles, who had always plagued, and sometimes destroyed his predecessors, found means to make them alienate a great part of their estates, which threw a proportionable power into the Commons; and his son, by seizing the revenues of the ecclesiasticks (who usually caballed with them), and dispersing those estates amongst the people, made that balance much heavier: which Queen Elizabeth wisely observing (though she loved power as well as any that went before her), yet caressed them with so much dexterity, that she preserved not only the crown upon her head, but wore it in its full lustre; and by encouraging trade, and letting nature take its course, still increased the people's wealth and power: which her successor early saw, and often lamented; but wanting her moderation, abilities, and experience, did not know how to temporize with an evil which he could not help, but took a preposterous way to cure it; and endeavoured, by the assistance of the governing clergy (who hoped by his means to recover what they lost by the Reformation) to regain a power, by pulpit-haranguing and distinctions, which he durst not contend for with the sword; and so his reign was a perpetual struggle between himself and his Parliaments: When they were quiet he bounced; and when he had thoroughly provoked them, he drew back, and gave good words again: but by such conduct he sowed the seeds of that fatal and bloody Civil War which sprang up in the reign of his son, and ended in the dissolution of the monarchy, and soon after of all liberty; for the general of the conquering army set himself (as all others will ever do in the same circumstance): But the property remaining where it was, this new tyranny was violent, and against nature, and could not hold long, and all parties united against it; and so the nation was restored to its ancient form of government.

King Charles II came in with all the exterior advantages requisite to enslave a people: The nation was become weary of the sound of liberty, having suffered so much in their struggle for it, and lost all that they struggled for: The clergy were provoked by the loss of their dignities and revenues; the nobility and gentry were universally distasted and alienated by sequestrations, and by being so long deprived of the offices and distinctions which they claimed by their birth; and the body of the people had been harassed and exhausted by a long Civil War, and were weary of being tossed and tumbled once in a month out of one government into another; and all were prepared to accept and fall into any measures which might satiate their revenge upon those who had oppressed them, and to root out the very principles of liberty, the abuse of which had brought such mischiefs upon them.

That prince got a Parliament to his mind (as all princes will do upon a revolution, when parties run high, and will do any thing to mortify their opponents) and kept it in constant pension; but property remaining in the people, it insensibly gained ground, and prevailed at last: The people grew universally disaffected, and looked upon the Parliament as a cabal of perjured hirelings, and no longer their representatives; and the nation was worked up into such a ferment, that their betrayers would not or durst not serve the court, nor the court keep them any longer. That prince had wit enough to drive things no farther than they would go, and knew when it was time to give back; but his brother, with less understanding, and a much worse religion than his predecessor openly professed; hoped to accomplish what he had attempted, or despaired of bringing about; and how he succeeded we all know. I gladly throw a veil over what has happened since; and hope I shall hereafter have no reason to repent it.

I shall only observe, before I conclude this letter, that there is no need of the caballing of different interests, the uniting in joint councils, and concerting regular measures, to bring about some of the greatest events in human affairs; and consequently in great publick exigencies, oppressors will find no security in the appearing opposition of parties, who, like a pair of shears, will cut only what is between them, when they seem most to threaten one another. When nature has prepared the way, all things will tend to their proper center; and

though men for some time will dally and play with their lesser interests, yet at last they will mechanically fall into their great ones, and often without intending or knowing it: Men will always feel their strength, when they cannot reason upon it, or are afraid to do so. I could name a party that for above thirty years together have acted in the interests of liberty, and for the greatest part of the time could not bear the sound of liberty, till at last great numbers of them are caught by the principles which they most detested; which I intend as a seasonable caution to all those who have the honour to sit at the helm of states, or to advise princes, who may at any time hereafter want such a memento.

I shall, in my next letter, endeavour to shew, upon the principles here laid down, that England at present is not capable of any other form of government than what it enjoys, and has a right to enjoy; and that another neighbouring state will, with very great difficulty, preserve the constitution which they now are in possession of.

T

I am, &c.

No. 85. SATURDAY, July 14, 1722.

Britain incapable of any Government but a limited Monarchy; with the Defects of a neighbouring Republick. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-159]

SIR,

Tacitus observed of the Romans in his time *Nec totam libertatem nec totam servitutum pati posse*; That they could neither bear full liberty, nor perfect slavery. This is certainly the case of England at present, if by liberty be understood what I presume he meant by it, a republican form of government. But I conceive that liberty may be better preserved by a well poised monarchy, than by any popular government that I know now in the world, whatever forms may exist in imagination. However, whether this be true or

not, it is certainly true that no man in his wits will lose the benefit of a very good present establishment, and run infinite hazards, to try to get one a little better, if he could have any prospect of attaining it: And I shall endeavour to shew, that the effecting such a project is impossible; and that during the present distribution of property, we can preserve liberty by no other establishment than what we have; and in the attempt to alter it, must run great hazard of losing what we are in possession of, or perhaps of falling into an absolute monarchy; or at best must return to the same form again, as we have done once already by such feats of gallantry.

It proceeds from a consummate ignorance in politicks, to think that a number of men agreeing together can make and hold a commonwealth, before nature has prepared the way; for she alone must do it. An equality of estate will give an equality of power; and an equality of power is a commonwealth, or democracy: An agrarian law, or something equivalent to it, must make or find a suitable disposition of property; and when that comes to be the case, there is no hindering a popular form of government, unless sudden violence takes away all liberty, and, to preserve itself, alters the distribution of property again. I hope that no one amongst us has a head so wrong turned, as to imagine that any man, or number of men, in the present situation of affairs, can ever get power enough to turn all the possessions of England topsy-turvy, and throw them into average, especially any who can have a will and interest in doing it; and without all this it is impossible to settle a commonwealth here; and I dare say, that few desire it, but such as having no estates of their own, or means and merit to acquire them, would be glad to share in those of other people.

Now it is certain, that the distribution of property in England is adapted to our present establishment. The nobility and gentry have great possessions; and the former have great privileges and distinctions by the constitution, and the latter have them in fact, though positive laws give but few of them: For their birth and fortunes procure them easy admittance into the legislature; and their near approach to the throne gives them pretences to honourable and profitable employments, which create a dependence from the inferior part of mankind; and the nature of many of their estates, and particularly of their manors, adds to that dependence. Now all these must ever be in the interest of monarchy whilst they are in their own interest; since monarchy supports and keeps up this distinction, and subsists by it: For it is senseless to imagine, that men who have great possessions, will ever put themselves upon the level with those who have none, or with such as depend upon them for subsistence or protection, whom they will always think they have a right to govern or influence, and will be ever able to govern, whilst they keep their possessions, and a monarchical form of government, and therefore will always endeavour to keepit.

All the bishops, dignitaries, or governing clergy, all who have good preferments in the church, or hope to get them, are in the interest of monarchy, for the reasons which I gave in a former letter, and for some others which I choose not to give now. They know very well too, that a popular government would take away all possessions which it should think fit to call superfluous, would level all the rest, and be apt to reason, that Christianity would fare never the worse, if its professors were less politicians, of which they see before their eyes a pregnant and very affecting instance in Holland. All great and exclusive companies are in the interest of monarchy (whatever weak people have alleged to the contrary); for they can much easier preserve their separate and unwarrantable privileges by applications to the vices and passions of a court, than by convincing a popular assembly; and for the same reason, all officers who have great salaries and exorbitant fees must ever be sure friends to monarchy. Rich merchants, and indeed all rich men, will be equally in the same interest, and be willing to enjoy themselves, and leave to their posterity all the advantages and distinctions which always attend large fortunes in monarchies.

After these (many of whom are men of virtue and probity, and desire only to enjoy the rights which they are born to, or have acquired) there follows a long train of debauchees, and riotous livers, lewd women, gamblers, and sharpers; with such who get by oppression and unequal laws, or the non-execution of good ones: All these are ever for monarchy and the right line, as expecting much fairer quarter from the corruption of courtiers, than they can ever hope to meet with in popular states, who always destroy and exterminate such vermin, of which sort (I thank God) we have none amongst us at present; but who know how soon we may?

Now, without entering into the question, which is the best government in theory, a limited monarchy, or a democratical form of government? I think I may safely affirm, that it is impossible to contend against all these interests, and the crown too, which is almost a match for them all together; so that the phantom of a commonwealth must vanish, and never appear again but in disordered brains. If this be the true circumstance of England at present, as I conceive it indisputably is, we have nothing left to do, or indeed which we can do, but to make the best of our own constitution, which, if duly administered, provides excellently well for general liberty; and to secure the possession of property, and to use our best endeavours to make it answer the other purposes of private virtue, as far as the nature of it is capable of producing that end.

I have purposely declined the speaking of aristocracies, because there can be no imaginary danger of establishing such a government here: for the nobility have neither property nor credit enough to succeed in such an act of knight-errantry, or will to attempt it; and the gentry will ever oppose them, unless their interests be also taken into the project; and both together are not able to contend with the crown and the body of the people, the latter of which will ever be in the interests of equality.

And now having mentioned aristocracies, I shall make some observations upon a neighbouring state, which is vulgarly mistaken for a commonwealth, and is so in nature, according to the balance of property there; but is politically an union of several little aristocracies, in many respects like some states of Italy in the first time of the Romans, but contrived with much worse policy. As it was jumbled together in confusion, so it seems to me to subsist by chance, or rather by the constant dread of the two great successive powers of Europe, *viz.* that of Spain formerly, and France since; for the natural power being in the people, and the political in the magistrates, it has all the causes of dissolution in its contexture. Every town is governed and subject to a little aristocracy within itself, who have no foundation of suitable property to entitle them to their dominion; and each of those is independent of its provincial state, and indeed of the States-General, nor have any check upon their own actions, but the tumult and insurrections of the people, who have the real and

natural power: and indeed, to do the magistrates right, they judge so well of their own weakness and the power of the people, that they seldom or never give them just cause of provocation; but by frugality, public economy, wise and timely compliances, impartial justice, and not raising great estates to themselves at the other's expence, they make their subjects easy, and find their own account in the submission of those whom they want power to govern by the force of authority; and probably will continue to make them so, whilst they keep to the same maxims and their present conduct. But this is no steady and durable dominion; nor, unless mankind are formed there with other appetites and passions than in all other parts of the world, can the same prudence be always observed; which seems to me to be owing only to their necessities, and that virtue, moderation, and frugality, which is conspicuous in the first rise of states, and is not yet quite spent there, but cannot last much longer: for when they cease to be kept together by the constant dread of overgrown neighbours, they will certainly think themselves at liberty to play their own games at home. Those who are in possession of power will know what it is good for; and those who have great riches will fall into luxury, then into extravagance, at last into necessity; and others will vie with them, and follow their example.

When their magistrates have impaired their estates, or fancy that they want greater, they will plunder the publick; and others of equal condition will emulate them, and begin to ask what right the others have to the sole enjoyment of privileges and employments, which they think themselves to all respects equally entitled to, and will not be content to be always subjects to those who are no better than they are; and the people will be impatient in continuing to pay large taxes to such who pocket them, and will endeavour to right themselves, and have power enough to do so. These opposite interests must raise convulsions in the body politick, and produce all the mischiefs which have happened in other states upon the like occasions. Those who have power, will endeavour to keep it; those who suffer under it, will endeavour to take it away; and the event will be in the will of heaven alone, but in all likelihood will besome other form of government.

I take my account of the constitution of this state from others, who possibly may not be well informed of it, and I hope are not so: for I should be very sorry to see the most virtuous and flourishing state which ever yet appeared in the world, perish of an internal distemper; a state which, ever since its institution, has been the champion of publick liberty, and has defended itself, and in a great measure its neighbours, from the two greatest tyrannies which ever threatened Europe and the Christian religion.

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I am, &c.

No. 86. SATURDAY, July 21, 1722.

The terrible Consequences of a War to England, and Reasons against engaging in one.
[Trenchard] ↩

[III-166]

SIR,

I propose in this letter to shew, and I hope to do it unanswerably, that nothing can be a greater disservice to his Majesty's interest, more fatal to his ministry, or more destructive to his people, than to engage them in a new war, if there be but a bare possibility of preventing it, let the pretences be what they will. A new fire seems to be now kindling in Italy, which in all likelihood will blaze out far and wide; and, without doubt, many princes will warm their hands at it, whilst their subjects will be burnt to death: But I hope we shall have wit enough to keep out of its reach, and not be scorched with its flames; but, like some of our wiser neighbours, lie still, and know how to make our markets of the follies and misfortunes of others. We have been heroes long enough, and paid the price of our gallantry and credulity. We are got near sixty millions in debt, and have nothing for it but Gibraltar and Port Mahon; and it is said, that some of our allies have had the presumption to expect these from us too; and I am sure, if they should be lost, or given away, we have nothing left wherewith to compensate any power which we shall vanish hereafter.

I hope no man will be wild enough to make any proposition for a new war to us; nor can I guess at any one argument for it, but what I hope will be called treason to his sovereign and his country. Old threadbare reasons will hold no longer: People will not always deceive themselves, nor be deceived by others. We shall not bear being told again, that England need but send a message, or a bucket full of water, and the fire will be extinguished. That argument has already cost us the terror and expence of providing against two invasions, or intended invasions; has lost or spoiled several great fleets, destroyed numbers of our merchant ships, increased our national debts many millions, perhaps brought upon us that noble project to pay them off, and created the general want of trade, and, I doubt, that great disaffection which is so often complained of; and all the reward which we have met with, has been a struggle to keep what we were in possession of before, what was yielded to us by treaties, and what there was no pretence for demanding, if we had thought it our interest to have lain still.

I hope we shall never engage in a new war, before we have considered all the consequences which will necessarily or probably happen from such an engagement, and have thought how we shall get out of it, as well as how to get into it. The first step draws in all the rest; and when we are in, we must go through. We may begin with thousands, but must go on with millions. A message will produce a quarrel, but fleets and armies must end it.

We well know, and have long felt, the moderation of our allies. We can no sooner engage in their squabbles, but they become our own; and then we must pay them for doing their own business, and largely too, or else they threaten to leave the war upon us; and when it is ended through our means, always divide the spoil amongst themselves, and endeavour to make us pay likewise for the peace. I would be glad to know what any of them have ever done for us, or would suffer us to do for ourselves, in return for all that we have done for them; or what courtesy they have ever shewn to us Englishmen, as Englishmen: I hope therefore, that we too shall at last, in our turn, consider only our own interests, and what is best for ourselves; and not ruin ourselves yet further, and let others have the whole advantage. But if we had no occasion given us for these complaints, we have another and shorter answer to give to our

good allies; namely, that by helping them so long, we are rendered incapable of helping them any longer; and that all treaties must cease and become void, when it is impossible to perform them without utter ruin to one of the parties, and without destroying all the ends for which these treaties were made.

Let us take a short prospect of the journey which we are to go, and consider what will be the result of such an undertaking. All naval armaments must be made at our charge, and employed at a great distance from home, to the ruin of our ships and our seamen, and the obstruction of our commerce: Armies must be sent abroad, or money, in the name of subsidies, found out to pay those which are there already: More armies must be kept at home to oppose invasions, and keep the people quiet: Great land-taxes must be raised, our publick funds be every year increased, the people frightened with perpetual alarms, which will sink the price of the old stocks, and consequently set an exorbitant price upon the raising of new ones: We shall lose a beneficial trade to Spain and the Mediterranean; and probably Portugal will take that opportunity to execute what they lately attempted. The Czar too may think it a favourable one to acknowledge some past obligations; and other nations may judge it a proper time to bite the stone that was thrown at them; and then we shall have little or no trade at all, all our commodities and manufactures will lie upon our hands, and the people be starved, or subsist by ways which no honest man can wish, and all men ought to dread.

If France engage on the different side, we must have her too for our enemy; if on the same side, there can be no need of our assistance. But if she think it her interest to lie still, she, who is the next neighbour to both the combatants, and is vastly more concerned in the event; what have we to do with them at this distance, we who are no wise concerned whether the emperor or Spain uses the Italians worst, or who has the Provinces contended for? When Spain had them, we suffered nothing by it; nor do I hear what we have got by the Emperor's being in possession of them. I purposely avoid saying any thing of the States-General, because they will certainly have wit enough to hug themselves in the folly of others, and profit by it.

And what shall we get by such feats of knight-errantry, but the disinterested glory of serving others to our own disadvantage, and the character of pious Christians, in treating those kindly who despitefully use us? Oh, but some tell us, that we are bound by treaties to preserve the neutrality of Italy. Whether this be true, or the contrary be true, I know not: but if it be true, I doubt not but we shall be told how England came to be a party to such a treaty; what were the motives for making it; what equivalent we had for it; what interest of ours was served by it; or what other country, which we were concerned to preserve, was to reap the advantage of it. And we ought to enquire too, how treaties, made for our benefit, have been kept by our allies; because we are told (I hope falsely) that one of them had once in his custody the Pretender to the king's throne, with several other traitors to the government; and yet, instead of delivering them up, set them at liberty: and lately one of them refused, or declined, to deliver up a much greater traitor, when earnestly requested by the Parliament, and, without doubt, importunately pressed by the king's ministers.

I do not find that we have any thing to fear from the King of Spain, if we do not give him provocation; for the Secretary of State assured the Lord Mayor, in his letter since printed, that no foreign potentate abetted, or gave any countenance to, the last intended insurrection; and if he would not assist a conspiracy, actually, and, as we are told, deeply laid, there can be no reason to believe that he will form a new one against a state that intends him no harm, and can do him a great deal of good; and surely it is not our interest at this time of day to provoke him to do it in his own defence. If he and the Emperor have a mind to make a feast in Italy, let them bid whom they please to the banquet, which without doubt will be a long one, and many neighbouring princes will be gorged at it; but for us, we have no business there, unless to be caterers, to supply the greatest part of the provision, and to pay the reckoning for the

rest. I once knew a wager of forty to one staked down to be spent. But instead of engaging our country in such expensive and wild whims, I hope we shall catch at so favourable an opportunity, when those who can most molest us are together by the ears, to do our own business, pay off our debts, settle our trade, and reform all the abuses of which we so justly complain.

But if such a war were ever so necessary, how shall it be supported? We find by woeful experience, that three shillings in the pound has not maintained the current expence of the government, but we have run still in debt. The money given for the Civil List has not defrayed that charge, but new and large sums have been given to pay off the arrears; which, it is said, are not yet paid off. New salaries and new pensions have been found necessary to satisfy the clamours of those who will never be satisfied; and the greater occasions which the courtiers have, and the greater necessities which they are in, the more will still be found necessary: for it is no news for artful men to engage their superiors in difficulties, and then to be paid largely for helping them out of them again. The customs and excise are anticipated and mortgaged almost beyond redemption: The salt, leather, windows, and almost every thing else that can be taxed, is already taxed, and some of them so high, as to lessen the produce, and they are appropriated to pay off debts due to private men.

What new sources will be found out to maintain a foreign war, and a much larger expence in our own country, which will be necessary to defend us against enemies abroad, whom we shall provoke, and against discontented people at home, who, it is to be feared, may say that they are oppressed and starved? One additional shilling in the pound upon land, if the Parliament can be persuaded to give, and the people be easy in paying it, will be but as a drop of water thrown into the ocean, whatever may be pretended at first; and then for all the remainder we must run in debt, if we can get any one to trust us; and, where shall we raise new funds? Here I doubt our publicans and inventors of new grievances will be at their wit' end: It is certain that the greater the difficulty is in raising them, the greater must be the price for raising them; and the present stocks will be less valuable in proportion as new demands make more necessary.

But suppose, that, to the infinite dissatisfaction of the people, and the utter ruin and destruction of all trade, the little which is not already taxed could be taxed, and turned into funds, to create new markets for stock-jobbers, and enough could be raised to maintain a war two or three years; what shall we do next? It is most sure, that the difficulty of obtaining a peace will grow in exact proportion as we become less capable to carry on the war; and what assistance, think ye, my countrymen, shall we have from our good allies to obtain a peace? Without doubt we shall pay the piper at last, and they will parcel out the contended dominions amongst themselves, and attempt to make us give up Gibraltar and Port Mahon to bind the bargain; nay, to pay besides a large sum of money for the ships which we shall have destroyed, and the other mischiefs which we shall have done, and which we need not do. I hope it will never be our lot to assist some of our neighbours at a vast expence, and then reward them at a further expence for accepting our assistance; and to beat others of our neighbours, to our own loss as well as theirs, and pay them afterwards for having beat them: What would the world think of us in this case, but that as France had got the plague, England had got the frenzy; and that we were weakening ourselves as fast with our own hands, as the divine hand had weakened them?

But if, after all, we cannot get a peace, or shall think fit not to submit to the honourable conditions which our honest and faithful confederates shall judge good enough for hereticks, what shall we do then? They will have no motives to serve us when they have done their own business, or rather when we have done it for them: They have sufficiently shewn already what inclination they have to serve us; and if ever they have done it, they have been well paid for their pains. What condition shall we then be in to oppose one or more powerful

neighbours, and perhaps victorious ones too, when we are enervated and exhausted, when our people are discontented at home, and we have no regular means to maintain fleets and armies, who must be forced to maintain themselves, if we cannot maintain them? These mischiefs (and terrible ones they are) may be easily foreseen, and ought to be prevented, if we would prevent absolute and conclusive ruin. What, think you, must, in such a circumstance of affairs, become of the funds? If we lie still, they are lost of course; and if we apply them to our necessary defence, thousands and thousands of innocent people must be undone and become desperate, and infinitely inflame the popular discontents, and still make more taxes, more oppressions, necessary: And yet who will be found so hard-hearted, as not to sacrifice the interests of thousands to the safety of millions, when no other resource is left?

Beware, my friends, of the first step, and know your whole journey before you move one foot; when you are up to the ears in mire, it will be too late to look back. At first we may be told by our confederates and their creatures, that we need only bounce a little, and make a shew of force, and every thing will go to our mind; but a burnt child will dread the fire: When we are engaged, we cannot retreat; one step will draw another; it will not depend upon ourselves, whether we shall go on or not; the game will be then in other hands, who will play it to their own advantage, without regarding ours; and what we begin in wantonness, will probably end in our confusion.

What then must we think of any men amongst us, who would draw all these mischiefs, these inevitable mischiefs, upon their country! They must certainly be egregiously foolish, or consummately wicked. I hope, and believe, there are no such; but if there be, without doubt they have taken their measures, and have thought how to save themselves, whatever becomes of their country; but in that too they may chance to be mistaken.

If it be necessary to the publick safety to keep eight or ten camps in readiness for action in times of full peace, when there is no outward appearance of publick disturbances, and no foreign power promotes or abets any such; how many camps will be necessary when we have enemies assaulting us from abroad, and combining and intriguing with our own native traitors at home; especially if the people should be made still more uneasy, by laying burdens upon them which they cannot bear nor stand under? For my own part, I can see no steady source or continuing cause for the disaffection so much complained of, but the great and heavy variety of taxes, of which our ancestors knew nothing, and which it is a sort of a science now to know; and I doubt that disaffection will not be cured by adding to the number.

We can never, therefore, behave ourselves with more true duty to his Majesty, give better advice and assistance to his ministry, or acquit ourselves with more fidelity to our country, than by opposing, in the most vigorous manner, such measures as threaten them all with ruin' and by shewing the utmost resentment against any ill-designing persons, who would wickedly and traitorously sacrifice a great, free, and opulent kingdom, to mad whimsies, or the pitiful mean interests of little states.

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I am, &c.

No. 87. SATURDAY, July 28, 1722.

Gold and Silver in a Country to be considered only as Commodities. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-176]

SIR,

Boccalini tells us, that Archimedes was beat by the bravoes in Parnassus, for finding out a mathematical demonstration, by which it was plainly proved, that all the design of great, as well as private men, was dexterously to get money out of other people's pockets, and put it in their own. And it is certain, that this is the grand design and business of all mankind, the chief if not the only spring of all their actions, and animates and inspires their best as well as worst performances. And how commendable soever this may be in private men, who already enjoy all the conveniences of life, it is certainly the interest and duty of states, by all prudent and just methods to increase their wealth and power, and in consequence their security and protection. As government is only the union of many individuals for their common defence; so they cannot attain that desirable end, unless by accident of situation, superior policy, or by sufficient number, they can render themselves strong enough to repel the injuries, and oppose the insults, of ambitious and unruly neighbours; otherwise they must submit to be undone, or throw themselves under the protection of some greater potentate, and accept such conditions as he pleases to give, and for no longer duration than he pleases.

As this is the greatest mischief which human nature can suffer, so every honest and wise man will endeavour to free himself, his family, and his country, from such an abject, lamentable, and forlorn condition, and contribute all in his power to make the state which he lives under great, rich, and formidable. I have already at large shewn, that no state in a small tract of ground can be so, but by liberty, which always produces riches, and every quality, which can grace and adorn the mind, and render mankind preferable to the brute creation.

Now nothing can be called riches, but as it is applicable, or rather as it is applied, to the use of men. The vast tracts of North-America feed only a few scattered and half-starved inhabitants, whilst the barren rocks of Switzerland maintain in plenty great numbers of wealthy and happy people. All Greece, Macedon, and Epirus, together, have not so much power now as single cities in them had formerly. Countries without inhabitants will not defend themselves, nor are worth defending; nor will they maintain inhabitants without their own industry and application. Every nation is rich and powerful, in exact proportion to the numbers, the employment, or the idleness of the people; and the power of the state is the accumulative wealth of the whole; that is, what every man can spare for the common defence, over and above what is necessary for his own subsistence: so that to make a state great, the people must be made rich and happy: Their private happiness will make them willing to defend their country, and their wealth will enable them to do it.

The riches of private men are such things as are necessary or conducive to their personal support, convenience, or pleasure; but many other things are necessary for the defence and augmentation of states. There must be fortresses, artillery, armed ships, and magazines of war, and proper encouragements given to skillful persons to make use of them: There must be often great armies at land, and fleets at sea, maintained and paid at the publick expence, for the publick security; all which must be maintained out of the superfluities of those who stay at home; and if they have not all those materials necessary to their preservation, or conducive to their private happiness, in their own country (as few countries have), they must purchase them abroad with the produce of their own country, or by silver and gold, which purchases all commodities. Indeed, by the universal consent of mankind, silver and gold is

become the medium of all commerce; and every state, as well as private man, is rich and powerful in proportion as he possesses or can command more or less of this universal commodity, which procures all the rest: All other things are riches only *hic & nunc*; but these will command every thing, and almost every person in the world.

Gold and silver are the natives but of few countries, and the propriety but of few persons in those countries, and can be obtained by others only by their consent, or by force and rapine; and consequently, no state can grow more considerable than their native soil will make them, but by robbing their neighbours of what they themselves want or desire, or by persuading them to part with it willingly; that is, either by arms or trade; and which of these two will conduce most to the happiness, security, and augmentation of empires, shall be the subject of this letter.

If we consider this question under the head of justice and humanity, what can be more detestable than to murder and destroy mankind, in order to rob and pillage them? War is comprehensive of most, if not all the mischiefs which do or ever can afflict men: It depopulates nations, lays waste the finest countries, destroys arts, sciences, and learning, butchers innocents, ruins the best men, and advances the worst; effaces every trace of virtue, piety, and compassion, and introduces confusion, anarchy, and all kinds of corruption in publick affairs; and indeed is pregnant with so many evils, that it ought ever to be avoided, when it can be avoided; and it may be avoided when a state can be safe without it, and much more so when all the advantages proposed by it can be procured by prudent and just methods.

All the advantage procured by conquest is to secure what we possess ourselves, or to gain the possessions of others, that is, the produce of their country, and the acquisitions of their labour and industry; and if these can be obtained by fair means, and by their own consent, sure it must be more eligible than to extort them by force.

This is certainly more easily and effectually done by a well regulated commerce, than by arms: The balance of trade will return more clear money from neighbouring countries, than can be forced from them by fleets or armies, and more advantageously than under the odious name of tribute. It enervates rival states by their own consent, and obligates them, whilst it impoverishes and ruins them: It keeps our own people at home employed in arts, manufactures, and husbandry, instead of murdering them in wild, expensive, and hazardous expeditions, to the weakening their own country, and the pillaging and destroying their neighbours, and only for the fruitless and imaginary glory of conquest: It saves the trouble, expence, and hazard, of supporting numerous standing armies abroad to keep the conquered people in subjection; armies, who, for the most part too, if not always, enslave their own country, and ever swallow up all the advantages of the conquests. I have often wondered at the folly and weakness of those princes, who will sacrifice hundreds of thousands of their own faithful subjects, to gain a precarious and slavish submission from bordering provinces, who will seek all opportunities to revolt; which cannot be prevented but by keeping them poor, wretched, and miserable, and consequently unable to pay the charges of their own vassalage; when, if the same number of men and the sums of money were usefully employed at home, which are necessary to make and support the conquest, they would add vastly more to their power and empire.

It is not the extent of territory, and vast tracts of barren and uncultivated land, which make states great and powerful, but numbers of industrious people under a proper oeconomy, and advantageously and usefully employed; and the same number will be always more powerful in a small tract of ground than a great one: They are here always at hand to assist one another, to carry on manufactures, and to promote and execute any great designs: All the materials of trade and industry are in place, and by that means the charges of carriage prevented, which swallows the advantages of commerce, and renders it unprofitable. The

impossibility of subsisting by idleness renders them industrious, emulation rouses their ambition, and the examples of others animate them to desire to live in splendor and plenty; and all these passions concur to set their hands and wits to work, and to promote arts, sciences, and manufactures, to strike out new trades, form new projects, and venture upon designs abroad, to enrich their own country at home.

Great numbers of people crowded together, are forced by their necessities to turn every stone, and try every method to support themselves and families, and by doing so will trace and discover by degrees all the sources of wealth. All ways will be found out to make trade commodious and profitable; numerous contrivances be thought on to come at the materials of manufactures easily and at cheap rates, and to work them again at the lowest prices. Rivers will be made navigable, engines invented, which with the assistance of few hands, shall supply the labour of multitudes; store-houses will be built to deposit goods in, whilst they wait for markets; fisheries will be erected, colonies planted to furnish new commodities and new materials of commerce, and will vent too and carry off those turbulent and unruly spirits, who are unfit to live in a peaceable state, and must rob, hang or starve there. By all these laudable methods, and many more, riches will be amassed, money become cheap, and the interest of it lessened; and the lowering the interest of money will open new trades, and still bring in more money, as well as improve the native territory, increase vastly the purchase of land, and encourage the building of cities and towns: for the less men expect for the interest or profit of their principal, the more they can afford to lay out in trade, building, or husbandry, to return but the same income; and consequently can grow rich by the commerce and the same improvements, which will undo nations where the interest of money is higher.

There are few countries in the world, but by a due culture would maintain many times the inhabitants which possess it, better than they are at present maintained. Our indulgent mother will readily yield up her hidden stores to such of her children as make a proper courtship and application to her. The treasures of the earth and seas are inexhaustible: One acre of ground well manured, cultivated, and sowed with corn, will produce ten times as much for the sustenance of man, as ten acres not cultivated, or ill cultivated; and one acre in gardens will produce ten times as much as in corn; and it is much easier, cheaper, and profitable, to improve our own country, and so increase its productions, than to fetch the like productions by force from others. It is more safe, as well as virtuous, to accept the willing and chaste embraces of conjugal affection, than by violence to extort forbidden and dangerous pleasures, and which for the most part, if not always, fail our expectations.

But supposing the soil belonging to any nation should not be sufficient to support all its inhabitants, which I believe is the case of Holland; yet it is certain they may purchase from their neighbours what they want, for very much less than they can earn at home in arts and manufactures. Labour in husbandry is the least profitable employment in the world; and ten men so employed will not earn the wages of one good artist, and the meanest mechanicks and artificers earn more than husbandmen; and consequently have a surplus from their own labour, after they have bought the production of the other's industry. This is the circumstance of cities and trading towns, who have no growth of their own, and yet grow rich by retailing and manufacturing the growth of the neighbouring countries, over and above what they consume for their own subsistence and use; and the same is true of trading states. As Tyre, and other free states did formerly, so Holland at present grows vastly rich and formidable, by keeping its neighbours employed in the poor and menial trade of husbandry, whilst they employ their own people in arts and manufactures; a small part of which supplies them with the productions of the other's labour, and with the rest they purchase a great part of the riches of the world. By those means they have made themselves more considerable in that little spot of land, than great empires have done by conquest, which always corrupts, and often enslaves, the conquerors as well as the conquered.

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I am &c.

No. 88. SATURDAY, August 4, 1722.

The Reasonableness and Advantage of allowing the Exportation of Gold and Silver, with the Impossibility of preventing the same. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-184]

SIR,

Having in my last letter considered silver and gold as the only certain durable, and universal riches; and since the attaining them is the chief view and design of all mankind; I shall in this consider a question which puzzles the greatest part of the world, and which, as I think, they for the most part determine wrongly; namely, when a nation is once possessed of them, whether it is their interest to let them be exported again? In this I have the opinion of most states against me, who prohibit the carrying them out under the severest penalties, sometimes before, and sometimes after they are converted into their current coin; and to me nothing seems more injurious, impertinent, and impotent, than to make such laws.

No soil or climate produces all commodities, and no nation works all sorts of manufactures, which are of common and necessary use; nor can any man by his own skill and labour, make or acquire any considerable part of such things as he wants or desires; and consequently he can have no means of attaining them, but by exchanging what he does not want for what he does. But since it does and will most commonly happen, that the person who is possessed of the commodity which one man desires, does not want what he has to give in lieu of it, or not enough of it to answer the value of what he parts with; therefore something else must be found out to make the account even.

From hence mankind have found themselves under a necessity to agree upon some universal commodity which shall measure the value of all the rest, and balance all accounts at last. Hitherto nothing has been discovered which will answer that purpose so effectually as silver and gold: Their contexture hinders them from being perishable, their divisibility qualifies them to answer all occasions, their scarcity enhances their price, so as to make a great value lie in a narrow compass, and easily portable; and the more regular and equal supplies of them than of other commodities, render them proper standards for the valuation of other things. These therefore being, by general and almost universal agreement, the mediums of commerce, the balance of all traffick, and the ultimate view and chief advantage proposed by it; we are to consider how far those ends and advantages can be answered by exporting them again.

Now it is certain, that many commodities of absolute and indispensable use are in the possession of nations who do not want those which we have to give in exchange for them; or, knowing our necessities will not part with them but for silver and gold; and therefore we must have them upon their terms, or not have them at all. Some of them are the materials of our manufactures, which will return to us again many times the money which we advance in procuring them; and very often they are necessary to carry on trade in general, and enabling the merchants to make assortments of goods proper for particular markets; or are the materials of navigation, or magazines for war and common defence.

No country wants always the same supplies, or has the same growth and quantity of manufactures to purchase them; nor can any merchant have a clear view of the whole commerce of the country which he deals with; nor do the commodities always bear the same price: so that the balance will often vary, and must be paid at last in those universal commodities. No nation or private man will deal with another, who will not pay his debts;

and if he has not other commodities to pay them with, or if those which he has are not wanted, or will not be accepted in payment, he must pay them in such as will; and, whatever it costs him, must deliver them into the custody, or to the order and satisfaction, of his creditor.

It is foolish to imagine, that any precautions, or the greatest penalties, will keep money in any country, where it is the interest of numbers to carry it out: The experience of every nation may convince us of this truth; gold and silver lie in so little compass, are so easily concealed, and there are so many conveniences, and opportunities to carry them off, that small encouragements will always find adventurers, and those adventurers will almost always succeed. There is no way in nature to hinder money from being exported, but by hindering the occasions of it; that is, by hindering the use and consumption of those things which it is sent out to buy; for when they are bought they must be paid for, or all traffick is at an end.

These propositions being, as I conceive, self-evident, it is next to be discussed, whether it be the interest of a state to permit their money to go out freely; or, by annexing penalties to the exporting it, enhance the difficulty, and raise the price of carrying it out, by obliging the exporter to pay himself largely for his own hazard, as well as the hazard of the seas: And I think nothing is more demonstrable, than that the greater the obstacle that is laid in his way, and the greater hazard which he runs, the more he will be obliged to export; for whatever he has agreed to pay beyond sea, must be discharged, whatever it costs him to get it thither, and he is to be paid besides all the charges of getting it thither.

Bills of exchange only serve the purpose, and save the expence of paying the carrier; for if one man has money due to him abroad, and the other wants the same sum here, they will both save the charges of carriage, by one's paying it where he does not want it, and the other's receiving it where he does: But if there be more demands by the merchants of one country upon their correspondents in another, than the others can pay by the produce of their effects, or from debts due to them elsewhere, which will be accepted as payment; the surplus must be returned in silver and gold, and they must pay too the persons who carry it; and other merchants seeing their necessity, will take advantage of it, and receive premiums for as much as they can return in bills, in proportion to the charge which it will cost to send it in specie, and the haste which their creditors are in to receive it: But herein they will not have regard only to the commerce between those particular nations, but to the course and balance of general trade; for bills often travel from country to country, and take a large circuit, before they center, and the account is finally made up at home. And this I take to be the whole mystery of exchange, which is either paying, or saving the charge of paying, the carrier; and if you do not do it yourself, others who do it for you, will reap advantage from it.

Since then money or bullion must be exported, when debts are contracted abroad, I think it is eligible to send out the first rather than the latter, or at least to leave the people at liberty to export which they please. Indeed they are the same thing; for all money is bullion, and all bullion is easily converted into money; and all that is not otherwise manufactured, would be converted into it, if there were no disadvantage in doing so. The advantages are obvious, and the charge to the proprietors nothing; for the stamp of authority ascertains the weight and the fineness; and the dividing it into small parcels, makes it more useful for commerce, which renders it more valuable abroad as well as at home; and consequently foreigners will be contented to pay part, if not the whole, of the charge of coining it. It could in no circumstance be of less value, if it were not denied a privilege and advantage which it had before it was coined; which is the liberty of exportation, and being used in foreign as well as domestick trade: for, whilst free liberty of exportation is allowed to one, and denied to the other, and yet there are frequent and necessary occasions of exporting one or the other, it must happen that either money will be melted into bullion, and so the manufacture be lost, or bullion must be bought by money at a price answerable to the necessity or the hazard of carrying it in specie

abroad, or of melting it down at home, and the expence of conscience afterwards in swearing it to be foreign bullion; which sometimes has raised the price 8 or 10 per cent.

Now it must be obvious to any one, who the least considers this question, how much such prohibitions must affect our general trade, they being equivalent to the putting an equal duty upon the exportation of our own commodities, which all wise nations encourage by all ways that they can, and often by giving premiums to the exporter. They give other nations the means and opportunity to trade so much per cent cheaper than we can; which must certainly carry away from us many valuable trades: They enhance the value of all foreign materials which we use in our manufactures, that are bought with bullion or money, as many of them are; which must in consequence raise the price of these manufactures, and hinder their sail; and above all, make the materials of navigation dear to us, upon which all trade in a great measure depends, and the carriage-trade wholly.

But not only those trades, which are altogether, or partly carried on by bullion or money, will be affected by them, but all trade whatsoever: For, as I have before shewn, that bullion, being the medium of the value of all commodities between nation and nation, as money is between people of the same nation; if the latter be of equal weight and fineness with the former, and yet less valuable; then of necessary consequence home commodities must be sold cheaper in foreign countries, and theirs must sell dearer here; which must alter the balance proportionably to our disadvantage: for we sell at home for our own money and buy abroad with bullion; which are equally valuable in themselves, the coinage excepted, and will be equally bought in foreign markets for the same quantity of commodities.

Suppose for example, that corn bore the same price in respect of silver and gold here as in Holland, and yet we must give more for it when that silver and gold is converted into money than they do, who get the difference by importing their silver; then it is evident that they can afford to buy it of us, and sell it again to foreign markets cheaper than we can, and sometimes to ourselves; and consequently must carry away that trade from us. These events are inevitable, unless we let our money be exported, or turn all our coin into bullion, and make that the medium of domestick as well as foreign commerce; which must soon be our case, and every day grows more and more so: for who will give himself the trouble of carrying his bullion to the mint, to have it made less valuable than before? Whereas if money had the same liberty of exportation as bullion has, all the silver not otherwise manufactured would immediately be carried thither and coined, and less of it be carried out afterwards for the reasons before given.

But whilst it remains upon the present foot, whatever contracts are made for English goods in English money, will be paid for with less bullion than will coin into the same quantity of money; and whatever are bought abroad will cost us more money than the same is worth in bullion: So that foreigners will choose to carry off our money, rather than our bullion or goods, and will afterwards melt it down, and find their account in returning it upon us again for more money; and so on till they have got all that we have; which can be prevented alone by putting coined and uncoined silver upon the same foot, and giving them equal advantages, the coinage excepted.

Till this be done, we must suffer in our exchange with most, if not all the countries in the world: For whilst our coin in quantity is less valuable than bullion, and theirs equal or more valuable, every thing that we buy or sell must be affected by it; and we must pay our debts with more silver, and receive them in less than they do; which must make a vast difference in the return of our whole trade.

This is so much the interest of every party, and almost every man in every party, that I have often wondered how so many able patriots that have sat at the helm should never once think of doing their country this great service. I cannot doubt but men of their great abilities must understand this plain proposition; and methinks they should sometimes find it their interest and duty to save a little money for their countrymen, and not always to be taking from them, especially when they themselves lose nothing by doing so much good to others; and though some people, who do not understand the benefit of such a law, may be at first distasted by it, yet I could wish to see that those who have had no regard to their opinions when they were doing mischief to them, would not be so over-scrupulous of offending them in once doing them and their country this great and general benefit.

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I am, &c.

No. 89. SATURDAY, August 11, 1722.

Every Man's true Interest found in the general Interest. How little this is considered.
[Trenchard] ↩

[III-192]

SIR,

Most men see the advantage of trade to a country, and to every man in it; but very few know how to improve those advantages, and much fewer endeavour to do so. As soon as any law is enacted, or proposed for publick benefit, particular men set their wits to work how to draw separate advantages, from those provisions, whatever becomes of the publick; and indeed it is not to be hoped, must less expected, that they should ever do otherwise. But what is most to be lamented is, that the publick very often suffers by their not consulting their real interest, and in pursuing little views, whilst they lose great and substantial advantages. A very small part of mankind have capacities large enough to judge of the whole of things; but catch at every appearance which promises present benefit, without considering how it will affect their general interest; and so bring misfortunes and lasting misery upon themselves to gratify a present appetite, passion, or desire.

This is certainly true in almost every circumstance of publick and private life: The latter falls within all men's observation; and the other happens as often, though not as often taken notice of. How many are there, who do not prefer a servile office or pension before the general interest of their country, in which their own is involved; and so sacrifice their liberty and the protection which they receive from equal laws, for momentary and precarious advantages; and by such means lose or hazard a large inheritance, or make it much less valuable, for trifling benefits, which will not pay half the difference?

Nothing is so much the interest of private men, as to see the publick flourish: for without mentioning the pleasure and internal satisfaction which a generous mind must receive, in seeing all people about him contented and happy, instead of meagre and starved looks, nakedness and rags, and dejected and melancholy faces; to see all objects gay and pleasing; to see fruitful and well manured fields; rich splendid, and populous cities, instead of barren rocks, uncultivated deserts, and dispeopled and empty towns: I say, besides avoiding all this horror, every man's private advantage is so much wrapt up in the publick felicity, that by every step which he takes to depreciate his country's happiness, he undermines and destroys his own: when the publick is secure, and trade and commerce flourish, every man who has property, or the means of acquiring property, will find and feel the blessed effects of such a circumstance of affairs; all the commodities which he has to dispose of will find a ready vent, and at a good price; his inheritance will increase every day in value; he is encouraged, and finds it his interest, to build, and improve his lands, cultivate new trades, and promote new manufactures; and by these means the people will be employed, and enabled to live in plenty, to marry, increase, and pay for the productions of the land, which otherwise will have little or no production: foreigners will be invited to partake of our happiness, and add to the publick stock; and even the poor and helpless will have their share in the general felicity, arising from the superfluities and charity of the rich. But the reverse of this glorious and happy scene shews itself in enslaved and corrupted nations.

But as this is abundantly the interest of private men, it is much more so of princes: The riches of a prince are the riches of his people, and his security and happiness are their affections: They do not consist in pompous guards, splendid courts, heaped up and extorted wealth, servile and flattering parasites, numerous, expensive, and glittering attendants,

profusion, and extravagance; but in the steady and faithful duty and devotions of a grateful and contented people, who derive and own their happiness to flow from his care and beneficence. Flatterers and parasites often will find it their interest to betray him (and what else can be expected from those who betrayed their country first?), his guards often revolt from him, and sometimes murder him, and neither can be depended upon in any exigency of his affairs; his amassed wealth shall be often their plunder, and his destruction the price of their new engagements. But a whole people can never have an interest separate from the interests of a good prince: Their diffusive wealth will be always at his call, because it is to be expended for their own benefit: Their persons will ever be at his command, to defend themselves and him: This is a source of wealth and power, which can scarce ever be exhausted. When men fight for themselves and their all, they are not to be conquered till they are extinguished; and there are few instances where they have been ever conquered, at least till they were not worth conquering.

Besides, the superfluities and wanton gifts of a free and happy people will bring more money into his coffers, than racks and armies can extort from enslaved countries. The states of Brabant alone gave more money formerly to the Dukes of Burgundy and to Charles V than in all probability the whole seventeen provinces would have yielded to Spain since, if they had been all subdued; and I dare say, if England ever loses its liberties, its princes, in a little time, would not be able with whips and chains, to force as much money out of it in seven years, as we have seen it pay in one: They might fetch blood and tears from their subjects, but little else. It is undeniably therefore true, that the publick interest is the interest of both prince and people, which almost every one owns in words; and yet how few do so in their actions?

Every man sees the advantage of being formidable abroad, and safe at home, and knows that we cannot attain either but by being at the charge of it; and that the more equally and impartially taxes are laid, the fewer will be necessary, and more money raised: Yet how few men will come into equal and impartial taxes? And what have any got by contrary methods? It is certain, that less taxes than are now paid to one another, if fairly levied at first, would have ended all our wars, and not left us one penny in debt; whereas every landed man in England now owes the fourth or fifth part of his estate to the publick engagements, by declining the payment of perhaps the tenth part of it when it was due, or ought to have been due; and besides, has rendered all the rest insecure, by disabling the publick to defend it.

Who, that is interested in the national funds, does not see, that if some method be not soon taken to pay them off, they can never be paid at all; that no nation will deliver themselves up to a foreign enemy, or be contented to languish, expire and perish, at home, to make good juggling and extorting bargains, cooked up between courtiers and brokers; that publick necessities will happen in the course of human affairs, and those necessities will justify or colour uncommon measures; and that corrupt ministers, in times to come, may advise their masters to extraordinary courses, and desperate acts of power? And yet how many are there among these gentlemen (the greatest part of whose fortunes depends upon these events) who will fall into any effectual measures to make the payment of these debts due to themselves practicable, or that are not ready to catch at and to promote the raising of a new fund; though they must see that every step which they take towards it renders the payment of the old ones desperate?

How many courtiers have we seen in our days, that have not done every thing which they condemned in their predecessors; though by doing so they undermined the ground upon which they stood and played the game into their enemies' hands again, who did the same before into theirs? How often have we seen them decline any means of raising money, though ever so fatal to trade or their country? Or when have we seen them expend it afterwards with frugality and prudence, to prevent the necessity of raising it over again? And yet, by acting

thus, they lessened their own interest with the people, and in consequence too with their prince; who generally will find it necessary to discard them when they become odious and contemptible; and sometimes will think it prudent to recommend himself to his people by delivering them up as sacrifices to publick vengeance: whereas if they acted a faithful and just part, they might grow old in power, and be double blessings to their prince and to their fellow-subjects.

Who does not see the benefit of navigable rivers, which makes the carrying out our own commodities, and the bringing to us what we want, cheap and easy; and consequently increases the price of the former, and lessens the price of the latter? And yet a project of that kind always meets opposition from any people upon trifling motives, without ever considering the advantages on the other side, which most commonly must overbalance their imaginary losses, by computing their whole income and expence.

All private men see the benefit that would accrue to England, and to almost every man in it, by bringing all the materials of navigation, and particularly iron, from our own plantations, which are for the most part bought for money from rival states, who may be, and are often our enemies. Though this would settle our naval power upon a fixed and solid foundation, and leave it no longer to depend upon accidental and precarious supplies liable to the impositions and caprices of those nations, and subject to be intercepted by others who may be in war with us; yet we have seen, oftener than once, that gentlemen of great estates have denied their countries this general good, and preferred the little advantage of selling a particular wood at an advanced price, or the encouragement of a private iron-work, to so great a benefit to themselves and their country; without ever giving themselves leave to balance the much greater augmentation of wealth and security, which would accrue personally to them by keeping so much money in their country, and by bringing in a great deal more from foreign states, by making navigation easy and cheap, by supplying themselves and their tenants with the instruments and utensils of husbandry, building, and house-keeping, at lower rates, and so enabling themselves to make greater profit of their lands, and their tenants to pay them greater rents; and, above all, by increasing the publick safety and power, of which every member will soon find the sensible effects in his own private affairs.

I confess it to be generally true, that the interest of any country is to make all sorts of manufactures themselves, rather than fetch them from neighbouring countries, or even from their own plantations; but it is always an exception to that truth, when those manufactures are necessary to carry on other trades which will return much greater benefit; and more so when they are necessary to carry on all trade in general, as iron and shipping undoubtedly are, upon the cheapness of which all the trade in the world in a great measure depends.

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I am, &c.

No. 90. SATURDAY, August 18, 1722.

Monopolies and exclusive Companies, how pernicious to Trade. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-199]

SIR,

I have in my last letter given some instances of men, who, separating themselves from the publick, act against their own interest, by being too partial to it; but I confess it sometimes happens, that private persons may receive personal advantages from publick losses; and then, considering the depravity of human nature, we are not to hope, and less to presume upon their acting against themselves for other advantages. The chief inducement which men have to act for the interest of one state before another, is, because they are members of it, and that their own interest is involved in the general interest; and the same motives which for the most part engage them to promote the advantage of that peculiar society of which they are a part, before all others, will also engage them to prefer themselves and their own family before the interests of every member, or all the members together, of the same society, whatever becomes of conscience, honour, and generosity, men will be men, in spite of all the lectures of philosophy, virtue, and religion.

This will be often the interest of particular men, but can never be the interest of the whole society, or the major part of them; whose interest must ever be the general interest, that is, the diffusive advantage of the whole, which must suffer in proportion to what any man gets irregularly, and therefore it is their common duty to prevent the unfair gains and depredations of one another; which indeed is the business of the government; *viz.* to secure to every one his own, and to prevent the crafty, strong, and rapacious, from pressing upon or circumventing the weak, industrious, and unwary.

I have often wondered how whole societies (every one of which intends most religiously himself and his own benefit) can yet, all together, so easily be made the dupes of one another, or of lesser societies among themselves, not only in such matters as do not fall within vulgar observation, but in instances which are obvious to the meanest capacities. All the gentlemen through England have their estates ransacked, and are deprived of whatever makes their tables elegant and curious, to put fishmongers and poulterer' wives, at London, in laces and jewels, without adding to the plenty there, much of it being destroyed, or suffered to rot or stink, by those miscreants, to keep up the price: Their cattle sell for little in the country, and will not pay the grazier, who must pay them their rents; and yet, by the jugglings and combinations of butchers and salesmen, the markets are not cheaper supplied; but those insects swallow up the rents of the landlord, and the labour of the husbandmen; as some of the factors do that of the manufacturer: The old useful laws against regraters, forestallers, &c. all lie fast asleep, and no new ones are thought on to enforce them; yet the nobility and gentry of England spend many months every year in Parliament, see all this, buy their own productions at a price by many times greater than they sell them; but are so wholly taken up with other much less views, that they suffer this great mischief to go on, and every day to increase, upon no other pretence than the privileges of particular societies of tradesmen, who pretend a right to oppression; as if any man could have a right or privilege inconsistent with the publick good, and were not ever to be subservient to it. It is true, that no government ought to take away men's natural rights, the business and design of government itself being to defend them; but sure such partial and adventitious advantages as they receive to the detriment of others by ill laws may be taken away by good ones: But no sooner any attempt is made to remedy these universal grievances, but the clamour and solicitation of these humble and inferior oppressors puts an end to the remedy.

I do not wonder, that those who subsist by oppression themselves should countenance all other sorts of it; it is their common interest to protect one another. But that the country gentlemen, who suffer by all kinds of it, and who have the means in their hands to prevent them, should suffer themselves to be plundered and impoverished, to enrich harpies and pick-pockets, and enable them to live in pride and luxury, is so stupendous, that it could not be believed, if we did not constantly see it.

But these are petty abuses, when compared to the much greater grievances of uniting great numbers of artful and wealthy merchants into conspiracies and combinations against general trade; and by that means giving or selling the industry and acquisitions of a whole nation to satiate and glut a few over-grown plunderers, and in the end to destroy the trade itself; which must ever be the case, when trade is committed to the management of exclusive companies. The success and improvements of trade depend wholly upon supplying the commodities cheap at market; and whoever can afford those of equal goodness at but half per cent cheaper than his neighbour, will command any sale. Now it is impossible that any company can do this upon equal terms with a private merchant, nor would they if they could. Private men will think of every way to come at their goods cheap, will make it their whole business to work up the manufactures themselves, or buy them at the best hand, will search narrowly into their excellencies or defects, will procure carriage at the lowest prices, see them shipped themselves, and sometimes sell them in person, and as they find proper and advantageous opportunities; and the mutual emulation and contention with one another for the preference of markets, obliges them to sell often for little profit, and sometimes to loss, in expectation of better fortune at other times; but nothing of this is ever done by companies.

Those who have the direction of their affairs, have often but small part of their fortunes embarked in their stock, and always have an interest separate from that of the company, and commonly if not always, raise vast estates at their expence; the materials of their ships, and the commodities which they carry, are generally sold by themselves, or bought of their friends and relations by confederacy, at exorbitant prices: Favourite shipwrights are employed for presents; their relations or creatures are made captains or masters of their vessels, to carry on private commerce, to the detriment of the company; governors of forts, factors, and agents, are sent abroad to get great estates upon the publick, and perhaps share them with their patrons at home; their goods shall be set in such lots, and sold at such times as shall be most for the private interest of the governing directors, who will have them often bought up in trust for themselves or friends; and by these means, as the company oppresses the rest of the nation, the governors and directors cheat the company. But if these trustees be ever so honest, they will not take the same pains for others as for themselves; nor can it be expected that men of their fortunes will employ their whole time for such allowances as are or can be afforded by the society who employs them.

Besides, it is the interest of the nation to sell their commodities at as good a price as the markets abroad can afford to buy them, and to bring in foreign commodities as cheap as they can afford to sell them; especially such as do not interfere with our own (which ought to be prohibited when it can be done without greater inconvenience) and the interest of companies is directly contrary to all this: for other people being prohibited to deal in the same commodities, they can put what price they please upon both, and ever will put what is most for their advantage, and so starve the manufacturer at home, at the same time that their agents charge great prices to the company, and sell the commodities which they bring in return of them at extravagant advantages, often to the discouragement of our own manufactures, which depend upon their cheapness; their business being always to increase the price of stock, without increasing trade.

Besides all this, they keep forts abroad at a great expence, to colour the necessity of such monopolies, and to oppress and rob the natives there with security; for it is a jest to imagine that they can any ways conduce to fair trade. Every nation in the world that has any thing to buy or sell, will see their account in doing so, and will find it their interest to encourage a fair commerce, which will be ever for their own advantage; and if they do not, there is no trading with them against their own consents, though their country be encompassed with forts, which will only provoke and make them enemies; and, in fact, the private traders to Africa pay the Company ten per cent towards their forts, and seldom or never come near them, or receive any benefit by them, and yet have broke the Company, whilst they thrive themselves. The same was true of the interlopers to India formerly, who neither desired nor were suffered to take any advantage of the Company's forts, and always were oppressed by their governors, or agents, and captains of ships, and yet wouldsoon have undone them, if they had been suffered to go on.

The Dutch make other advantages of their forts and garrisons, which is to keep great conquered realms and powerful kings in subjection, and secure to themselves the whole commerce of their countries, by which means they have almost the monopoly of the spices of the world; of which, it is said, they every year burn mountains to keep up the price, as all exclusive companies will ever do: But we have scarce any trade to some of those places, where we are at the charge of keeping forts, which stand there no mortal can tell why. But supposing that forts were necessary to carry on any particular trade, what colour is there to deny that they ought to be kept at the publick expence, or by the contributions of all the merchants, who are to receive advantage from them in proportion to the trade which they carry on; or what pretence is there to confine an advantageous trade to one town alone, and to but few men in that town?

So that, upon the whole, if we consider these companies only as they regard trade, which is the only pretence for establishing them, they are the bane of all fair commerce, the discouragement of our manufactures, the ruin of private and industrious traders, and must end in the ruin of themselves, and all trade whatever; and no one receives advantages from them, but the governors, directors, commanders, or agents, at home and abroad, who have ever raised immense estates, whilst the kingdom has been impoverished, and the company undone. But there are other mischiefs still behind, which strike yet much deeper; namely, the influence and violence that they bring upon our constitution; which shall bethe subject of my next letter.

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I am, &c.

No. 91. SATURDAY, August 25, 1722.

How exclusive Companies influence and hurt our Government. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-206]

SIR,

In my last letter I have considered exclusive companies as they affect the trade and commerce of the kingdom: In this I shall view them in relation to our constitution; and shew, that they alter the balance of our government, too much influence our legislature, and are ever the confederates or tools of ambitious and designing statesmen.

Very great riches in private men are always dangerous to states, because they create greater dependence than can be consistent with the security of any sort of government whatsoever; they place subjects upon too near a level with their sovereigns; make the nobility stand upon too great an inequality in respect of one another; destroy, amongst the Commons, that balance of property and power, which is necessary to a democracy, or the democratic part of any government, overthrow the poise of it, and indeed alter its nature, though not its name: For this reason, states who have not an agrarian law, have used other means of violence or policy to answer the same ends. Princes often, either by extraordinary acts of power, by feigned plots and conspiracies, and sometimes by the help of real ones, have cut off these excrescent members and rivals of their authority, or must have run the hazard of being cut off by them. Aristocracies put them upon expensive embassies, or load them with honorary and chargeable employments at home, to drain and exhaust their superfluous and dangerous wealth; and democracies provide against this evil, by the division of the estates of particulars after their death amongst their children or relations in equal degree.

We have instances of the first in all arbitrary monarchies, as well as in all the Gothic governments formerly, and in Poland at present, which are constant states of war or conspiracy between their kings and nobles; and which side soever gets the better, the others are for the most part undone. By doing the second, the nobles of Venice keep up their equality; and Holland, Switzerland, and the free states of Germany, make the provision last named; which, as I have said, answers in some measure the purposes of an agrarian law: But by waiting for the division of overgrown substance in private hands, other states have been undone; and particularly Florence was enslaved by the overgrown power of the house of Medici.

And as great riches in private men is dangerous to all states, so great and sudden poverty produces equal mischiefs in free governments; because it makes those who by their birth and station must be concerned in the administration, necessitous and desperate; which will leave them the means, and give them the will, to destroy their country: for the political power will remain some time in their hands after their natural power and riches are gone; and they will ever make use of it to acquire that wealth by violence and fraud which they have lost by folly and extravagance. And as both of these extremes are certainly true of particular men, so they are more dangerous in numbers of men joined together in a political union; who, as they have more wealth than any particular man ever had or can have, so they will have the separate interest of every individual to assist them, arising from the dependence of friendship, relation, acquaintance, or creatures, without that emulation and envy which will always be raised by the sudden and exorbitant riches of private men. It is certain, that they both make too violent an alteration in property, and almost always produce violent convulsions in government.

Now companies bring all these mischiefs upon us; they give great and sudden estates to the managers and directors, upon the ruins of trade in general, and for the most part, if not always, bring ruin upon thousands of families, who are embarked in the society itself. Those who are in the direction and the secret of the management besides all their other advantages, draw out and divide all their principal, and what they can borrow upon their credit; persuade innocent and unwary people to believe that they divide only the profits of their trade, and, by a thousand other artifices heightening their advantages, draw them in to share in them; and when they have wound up the cheat to the highest pitch that it can go, then like rats leave a falling house, and multitudes of people to be crushed by it. This was the case of the East-India and African Companies formerly, whose stock sold for 300 per cent when it was not worth a groat; and how far it is the case of the present East-India Company, their members are concerned to enquire.

What ruin, devastation, and havock of estates! What public misery, and destruction of thousands, I may say millions, have we seen by the establishment and wicked intrigues of the present South-Sea Company, only to make a few unshapely and monstrous members in the body politic! What has that Company done for the benefit of trade, which they were established, forsooth, to promote? They have suffered numbers of our manufactures to rot in their ships, hindered private traders from carrying on an advantageous commerce to the lower parts of America and the South-Sea; and, like the dog in the manger, will neither eat themselves, nor let any one else eat; and, it is said, by their wise conduct, have lost a million or two of the Company's principal.

The benefits arising by these companies, generally, and almost always fall to the share of the stock-jobbers, brokers, and those who cabal with them; or else are the rewards of clerks, thimble-men, and men of nothing; who neglect their honest industry to embark in those cheats, and so either undo themselves and families, or acquire sudden and great riches; then turn awkward statesmen, corrupt boroughs, where they have not, nor can have, any natural interests; bring themselves into the legislature with their pedling and jobbing talents about them, and so become brokers in politicks as well as stock, wanting every qualification which ought to give them a place there.

It is a strange and unnatural transition from a fishmonger or pedlar to a legislator: However, as such doughty statesmen, by their single abilities, can do no good, so they can do but little harm; but when united in a body under the direction of artful managers combining with great men, they can turn all things into confusion, and generally do so. When men have great sums of money to give, and will give it, they will ever find people to take it; and there can be no standing against them in a body, how contemptible soever they are in particulars. How often have the cries of the whole kingdom of England been able to prevail against the interest of the East-India Company? What by proper application in former reigns made to our courts, to ministers and favourites, and to the members of each House of Parliament, they have been able to contend and get the better of the tears and complaints of the whole kingdom besides, and to lay asleep the true and real interest of those who assisted them; and if ever hereafter our three great companies should unite together (as it is to be feared they will always do when their interests do not clash), what power is there in being to oppose them, that will be able and willing to do it? In Holland, which is a more jealous government than ours, the East-India Company governs the state, and is in effect the state itself; and I pray God that we may never see the like elsewhere!

What have we been able to do to redress the ravages brought upon us by the South-Sea project? Which yet must have produced much greater, if we had not suffered these. When it was in its meridian, I have heard some persons argue the reasonableness of their having a monopoly of the trade of England, since they were possessed of most of the property of England; and I do not see by what means it could have been prevented. They would have

filled the legislature with their own members, all our great men must have been their pensioners, and the crown itself been obliged to have kept measures with them; they would have been the only shop to have gone to for money, would not have parted with it but upon their own terms, and would have been ever lying upon the catch, to purchase more privileges and advantages: so that the nobility and gentry of England must either have embarked their fortunes and expectations in this monopoly, or have been humbly contented to have been governed by a faction composed for the most part of pedlars, grocers, and brokers, or such as lately were so; and the constitution itself had been gone, and changed into a stock-jobbing cabal.

We have seen but few instances where the private traders of England, and the interests of general trade, have been able to dispute with the interests of little companies or particular societies of tradesmen, or the peculiar privileges of corporations; though they are burdens and a dead weight on the estates of every person in both Houses, lessen their income, and increase their expences: Such is the fascination and witchcraft of political confederacy! What will be the event of these combinations no man can foresee, and every wise man must dread. Indeed, I do not see how we can prevent their dismal consequences, but by paying off our debts; and, by dissipating those factious combinations, dissolve the enchantment.

After all that I have said, I must confess that the East-India Company is liable to less objections than any other trading monopoly, but not for the reasons which they give, but for a reason which is worth an hundred of theirs: for as all beneficial trades are most successfully carried on by free and open commerce, so all losing ones do less mischief when monopolized; and as the first ought to receive all possible encouragement, so the other ought to be put under suitable discouragements: And since we can have no prospect at present of that trade's being put upon an advantageous foot, the next best thing that we can desire, is to let it go on upon the present establishment; which in all probability will soon destroy it, and perhaps put it upon a good one, if that can be: for it is certain, that if it could be carried on with its full swing, it would ease us of every penny of our money, and destroy every manufacture in the kingdom, as well as every man in it; which in a proper time may be shewn at large.



In fine, monopolies are equally dangerous in trade, in politicks, in religion: A free trade, a free government, and a free liberty of conscience, are the rights and the blessings of mankind.

T

I am, &c.

No. 92. SATURDAY, September 1, 1722.

Against the Petition of the South-Sea Company, for a Remittance of Two Millions of their Debt to the Publick. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-213]

SIR,

It has been justly observed of corporations, or political combinations of men, that they have bodies, but no souls, nor consequently consciences. What calls this observation to my mind, is an *Address to his Majesty from the South-Sea Company*, which I have lately seen in print, most modestly requesting, that in this great profusion of money, general affluence, and overflowing of trade, the nation will give them two millions: and the reasons which they give for it are, 1st, that they want the money; next, that they have agreed with the Bank; and 3dly, that they will do what without doubt is the interest of all their members, except directors and brokers, to do; that is, they will consent that a considerable part of their stock shall be turned into annuities (and they had been the wiser if they had said all, for then no more of it could have been lost by management): And to wind up their whole oratory, they add a fourth reason, which is, the benefit that the publick has received already by their interest being reducible in a few years to four per cent, which reduction was part of their original bargain that was purchased for the seven millions, of which five have been remitted already, and now it is to be a consideration for remitting the other two.

I can never give myself leave to believe (whatever may be furnished by others) that any person (employed by his Majesty) in the present great exigencies of the kingdom, the almost universal poverty in the country, the want of trading stocks and credit in cities, and in great as well as little towns, the prodigious load of debt under which the nation groans, and the general uneasiness conspicuous in the faces, and too observable in the discourses, of people of all sects and denominations; I say, I cannot think that, under such circumstances of publick affairs, any minister can countenance so wild a proposition, as wantonly to desire us to give away two millions of the nation's money, only to bind a bargain between two stock-jobbing societies; which could not be obtained from a late assembly, who I presume will not be disoblged if I say no more of them.

I must therefore believe, if any person in power has been concerned in this negotiation, that he has effectually taken care of the publick, and has comprehended its interest in the agreement; and I am the rather induced to believe this, because of an expression in the address itself, to wit, *that the company will be ready to do any thing for the publick service, &c.* with a caution notwithstanding, *that it be consistent with the security of their present fund*: I hope that this sentence has an allusion to some project intended to be proposed to buy off the two millions, and that they design to offer to sink one hundredthousand pounds *per annum* of their annuities, which is the interest of two millions: And this will answer all honest purposes, will indemnify the publick, ease them of the difficulty of raising so great a sum, and lessen the income of particular members, not above six or seven shillings per cent yearly.

It is impossible to suspect that those gentlemen, who for some years together opposed wild schemes and wilder expences in carrying them on, and who (if they are to be believed themselves) rather chose to throw up their then advantages and expectations, than comply with such gallantries, should at last lose the merit of so much virtue, by wantonly and unnecessarily discharging one company from their contract, only to prevent another from performing theirs, and this at two millions loss to their country: Sure England is not in a condition to discharge all reckonings at home and amongst foreign states too; if so, every

man ought to bring in his bill, and then we shall all be upon the square.

On the contrary, I persuade myself that the gentlemen, whose deserts have now set them at the helm, have, during their retirement from business, observed the miscarriages of their predecessors, design to avoid the rocks upon which the others have split, and consequently have put on steady resolutions to extricate the kingdom out of its present calamities; and, possessed with this opinion, I am determin'd (as I believe many others are) to give them my hearty assistance to attain those good ends, and to forget past errors if new ones do not rub up our memories: I neither envy their preferments, nor I believe shall court them; but shall ever esteem my services to be overpaid, if I can contribute to save my country.

We all know what a noble project has been lately authorized; what ends were designed to be, and have been, served by it; how many thousands were directly ruined by it, and how many more by the fatal consequences which have ensued: but all the arts of the projectors could never have succeeded, if many well-meaning people had not been drawn in to consent to this iniquity, by the prospect of seeing the publick debts put in a method of being paid off; which they thought would atone for many evils that were foreseen by wise men, who yet did not foresee the hundredth part of the mischief which has since happened; and after we had suffered more than words can express, the greatest part of the consideration which drew us into these sufferings has been remitted, I will not say by any of those, but, to those, who brought all our misfortunes upon us; and now the poor remainder is modestly called for; and, if obtained, the wretched people, and, amongst the rest, all who vigorously opposed this vile project, must bear the loss, and the contrivers of the wickedness must carry off the plunder.

Sure such a proceeding sounds very odd, and ought to be supported by obvious reasons! It is a very singular sort of generosity, to punish the innocent, in order to reward the guilty; to fine or tax those who did their utmost to oppose the progress of publick mischiefs, to repair the losses of those who, through guilt, covetousness, or folly, contributed to it. In great publick calamities there must be many sufferers, and some who do not deserve to be so; yet I never heard that they called for reprisals upon their countrymen. Provinces are laid waste, cities and towns burnt, in war, and ships taken by pirates; and yet no bills brought in, or demands made, upon the publick: In pestilential distempers, families are shut up in their houses, and whole cities within their walls, where thousands die for want of food or proper necessaries, and those who are left alive are mostly undone; and yet no nations think themselves obliged to make good their losses: In such cases every one must bear his own misfortunes, even when they come from the hand of God, and he himself does not contribute to them; and all that wise states can do, is to take care of the whole, relieve particulars as far as is consistent with the publick safety, and leave the rest to providence.

But, besides the shrewd reasons which are in print, and are above repeated, let us hear what others are offered to load the publick with this loss. First, we are told that the people's representatives have drawn the subscribers into it; and therefore the people are bound in conscience to repair them: A very notable way of arguing indeed! and which, if carried to its extent, would provide admirably well for the security of nations. Suppose the States of any country should make a foolish law, or engage it in a foolish war, by which a third part of the people are undone, must the rest make them amends, who perhaps are half undone themselves? The Pensioner Parliament, in King Charles II's time, were chosen by the people to act for the common benefit of the kingdom, and they betrayed their principals, and took money from the court to act against it; and was that a good reason for the next Parliament to give a sanction to all the mischief that their predecessors did, or to pray for it? Sure the last Parliament were as much the representatives of the South-Sea Company as of the rest of the kingdom, and acted as agreeably to their inclinations and their desires, or else their acknowledgments weremuch misplaced.

They tell us, that the publick is better able to bear the loss than private men; which certainly is not true at present; for the publick is much poorer than most private men in England, if regard be had to their occasions and their debts: But if it were so, are they therefore to take the ill bargains of all private men to themselves, and protect them in their good ones? Must every man who has suffered by playing the fool, or playing the knave, call upon the nation for reprisals? But supposing only innocent and unwary people (as all the members of the present South-Sea Company undoubtedly are) ought to be objects of publick compassion; who shall make recompence to the millions of others who have suffered in their estates, by the universal confusion occasioned by this worthy project? Who shall repair the many bankrupts, the many creditors who have lost their debts, the many young ladies who have lost their fortunes, the mechanicks and shopkeepers who have lost their business, spent their stocks, and yet have run in debt to subsist their families; and the gentlemen, merchants, and farmers, who can get little for their commodities and products of their estates, farms, and trades? And must all these contribute at last, out of what remains, to repair the misfortunes of those who brought all these evils upon them?

But because I would avoid giving offence to tender ears, by seeming to take too much part with the inconsiderable interests of men who are vulgarly called the mob, I shall represent the case of persons who much better deserve some people's consideration; I mean brokers, stock-jobbers, dealers in funds, and such who, for many years together, have supported the government, by making twice or thrice the advantage of their money that they could do any where else. Who shall repair the losses of the contractors for stock or subscriptions, or of those who lent them money at five, ten, and twenty per cent *per mensem*, and cannot be paid again? Who pay the many sums lost in the hands of goldsmiths, and by their pretended subscriptions of effects without the owner's consent? Who the losses of those who bought in the East-India Company and Bank at two or three hundred per cent all occasioned by this worthy project; or of those who bought in this Company at eight or nine hundred, and sold at one or two? Who those who bought, or were hindered from selling out of the stocks of all companies by that honest and serviceable bargain to the publick made between the Bank and the South-Sea? Who shall pay the losses in the bubbles, some of which were established or countenanced by Parliament, and others by patents, all which have equal right to put in their claims? And lastly, who shall make satisfaction to the whole kingdom, who must be reduced by such means to an incapacity of paying its debts, and consequently of defending itself? I have heard of no project yet for lessening the public expences, or of the courtiers lessening their own stated incomes, or occasional gains.

And what, after all, are the particular merits of these gentlemen to whom so much favor is to be shewn; and who will receive the benefit of it? Those who remain of the original company have no pretence to it; and at present their capital, with the addition which they have received by the division of the fictitious stock, is more valuable than at first; I believe much more so: Those who have bought in since the fall, have as little pretence to be considered, because they knew the terms upon which they bought: Such as have raised fortunes by dabbling in the publick, ought not to complain if they have lost by one project what they got by another; and those who have great or plentiful offices in other respects, must be very immodest if they expect to repair their follies out of the estates of those who are more necessitous than themselves. So that the few that can hope for relief are the poor and helpless, who were trepanned by the rest to buy in at a great price, and could not sell out again before the fall; and I dare appeal to all mankind, whether such could get relief, if their interests were separated from their oppressors: If it be so, we have reason to sing *Te Deum*, for the world is finely mended; but till I can find some other instances of this tender regard to mercy and innocence, I must beg leave to suppose, that there is already, or is to be, some other consideration for the remitting these two millions, if ever they are remitted.

There is another reason left behind, and a shrewd one it is; namely, that we must support publick credit, by enabling the Bank to support the South-Sea, and in consequence enabling them both to sell their stocks for twice as much as they are worth (and so leave a new loss upon other people, who with equal reason must be again repaired); for it is certain, that all or most of the company-stocks fell at present above their real value. Now, with all due submission to the gentlemen of the Alley, it seems to me to be a very odd way of supporting credit, to render the publick incapable of paying its debts: But it is no new thing amongst some sort of people, to endeavour to support credit by the means which destroy all credit. My head has been ever so ill turned, as to think that nations must preserve the opinion of their integrity by the same rules and maxims that private men find necessary; that is, always by selling good merchandise, and not stuffing their bales and casks with counterfeit wares, and covering them at top with those which look well. But we have heard of those times when moonshine and shadows have sold for silver and gold, for lands and tenements; and the wisdom of states has been employed to keep up the imaginary, fraudulent value of this sort of airy merchandise; when thousands and thousands of unwary people have been undone by such purchases, new projects have been formed and countenanced by authority to do as many more: I mean, this has been lately done in France, whose example should not be followed by any who design not to introduce the government of France.

All wise and honest governments ought to protect their innocent, industrious, and unguarded, subjects, against the snares of cheats and frauds of pickpockets; and not combine with such wretches, and be perpetually forming schemes to ruin multitudes for the enriching a few, and to prostitute their power, and their publick honour, to patronize and establish combinations of oppression; and when one sort of it can be supported no longer, to set their wits to work to find out another. It puts me in mind of a story told of Dr. Barebone, who had once drawn an eminent merchant into a building project at Mile-End, whereby he lost many thousand pounds; and when he complained of it, the doctor promised to make him reparation, by letting him share in another which he had just begun at the farther end of Westminster, whereby he lost as much more; and when his Bubble, justly provoked, drew his sword upon the doctor, and bid him draw too, he, like a true stoick, with great calmness, and wholly unconcerned, asked, whither he would be drawn; for that he had drawn him from one end of the town to the other already? Whatever has been done in neighbouring countries, I am persuaded we are in no danger of any such attempts here.

And now having, as I conceive, fully answered the pretences of the South-Sea Company for getting the two millions remitted to them, which pretences they are pleased to call reasons; I shall offer them one of my own why they should not desire it, for that they will be losers upon the whole by it. As I remember, the price of their stock rather decreased than increased upon the remitting the five millions; and it is fallen now upon the expectation of having the rest remitted: and the reason is obvious; for nothing can keep up the credit of publick or private men, but an opinion that they are able to pay their debts, and are willing to do so; and no man in his wits will believe either, if he do not see them endeavour to pay off their old debts, and avoid all occasions of contracting new ones. When a man owes more than he can pay, he must compound with his creditors, lie in gaol, or run away, unless he has privilege; and then they have nothing left to do, for the most part, but to shake their ears, rail, and run away too. People must be very weak not to know, if ever a question should arise, whether a nation will be undone, or undo a small part of it? which it will choose; and therefore every wise man, whose fortune lies in publick securities, will think himself concerned to make the payment of them practicable, and therefore will consider whether it is not his interest to lose a small part of his income, to secure the whole; and every man would consider this over and over, if he did not design at all adventures to save one, and leave the storm to fall upon others: And how well all hitherto have succeeded in this honest intention, we have had as many instances as we have had publick calamities, and lately a very pregnant

one, when every man designed to sell, and no one could do so but managers and brokers.

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I am, &c.

No. 93. SATURDAY, September 8, 1722.

An Essay upon Heroes. [Gordon] ↩

[III-244]

SIR,

I design this letter as a dissertation upon heroes, who were at first a sort of brave disinterested men, that having more courage and prowess than others, went about doing good to others, and to all, at their own expence and danger. They established and reformed communities, and taught them laws, and punished those who violated justice and law: They destroyed publick robbers and monsters, and the greatest of all publick robbers and monsters, tyrants; and lived the patterns of virtue and useful valour. Hence they were called heroes, a sort of middle beings, superior to other men, and akin to the gods.

But so wild is the nature of man, and so impudent the nature of ambition, that whereas the primitive heroes were the bulwarks of society, and the preservers of men, those who pretended to succeed them, were the disturbers of society, and the destroyers of men; and such tyrants and monsters as the old heroes had destroyed, did themselves (impudently) set up for heroes. With the same modesty, superstition, which destroys religion, has, in the greatest part of the world, usurped the place of religion; tyranny, which is the extirpation of government, calls itself government: And thus arose persecuting priests and lawless kings. But so are words and the world abused; and with so much safety, and even applause, is mischief committed, when it has but a good name.

Alexander deified himself, and Caesar was deified by others, for being universal murderers; and Coke of Bury was hanged for attempting one murder: Had he been at the head of a hundred thousand cut-throats, and murdered a million, he might have been recorded for a hero, his name been handed down to after-ages with eulogiums, and publick declamations made in the schools upon his conduct and virtues.

Child, the highwayman, robbed the mail, and was put to death; but, instead of the mail, had he robbed a nation (I mean any nation but this) he might probably have governed it; and, instead of hanging in chains, led a whole people in chains, and been dubbed an able statesman, and a faithful minister.

Mischief is inseparable from the profession of a present hero, whose business and ambition is to multiply conquests, and consequently miseries, upon those whom he conquers. What a wild and inhuman spirit! to plague the world, in order to make a figure in it; to commit great villainies, for a good name; to destroy the peace and prosperity of mankind, to gain their esteem; and to shed their blood, to shew themselves fit to govern them! For none gain by such accomplishments of theirs, but their soldiers, whose lives too they throw away as wantonly as these take away the lives of others. The chief gainers therefore are only a few officers, servants and strumpets, who are about their persons, and execute their will and rage for their own ends: And so, to glut a restless tyrant and his instruments, men and nations must be slaughtered or enslaved. This is the heroism, this the glory, of conquering!

Such is the difference between the old original heroes and these their apes, who, by fraud, violence, perjury, and restless cruelty, make war upon their subjects and neighbours; and, by sacrificing the virtuous and the brave, or, by making them their instruments to sacrifice others, and by distressing, exhausting, plundering, and chaining, all, push human misery as far as it can go. These are the wolves and tigers of [the] human race; imperial beasts of prey who if the world would preserve itself, ought to be driven out of the world, or hung up in it *in*

terrorem; or, like these their more innocent brethren, who only kill for food, be locked up in dens, and shewn, as they are, for monsters: Or perhaps it would be still a more equitable punishment, if they could be caught, to shut up a number of them in a madhouse with their beloved arms about them, there to fight and tear one another's flesh, and spill their own detestable blood, till they had no more to spill. This would be giving a sort of satisfaction to mankind, for so much human blood outrageously and wantonly spilt.

But this is not the only mock-heroism in the world; there is yet another sort as mischievous, but still more ridiculous; and that is, a violent appetite for war, and victory, and conquest, without engaging personally in the danger, or coming near it; but being very valorous by proxy, and fond of fighting without drawing a sword. This was the prudent bravery of a late aged conqueror, who was never tired of war, yet never tired his own person in it: In the heat of a battle fought for his glory, he ran no risk, but sat securely at a great distance with the wise old woman his mistress, waiting for laurels of other people's winning. When his agents had bought a town for him treacherously, or his generals stolen a province as treacherously, still it was victory, still fair conquest; and the glory was his at three hundred league' distance: for every thing that he did was glorious, the meanest and the basest things; and by these means he became immortal, immortal in conquest without a scar.

The primitive heroes ventured their lives for the good of others: These mock-heroes expose others to danger and death for the good of themselves, and their own personal renown; and all the time stay at home, and wait for fame in a whole skin. They slaughter thousands who obey them, and undo millions who ought not to obey them; and all to enslave others, who neither wish nor do them any harm, and with whom they have nothing at all to do. Even most of the instruments which they make use of, are made as miserable as they make those whom they oppress; and few or none share the benefit of the plunder, but such as, wanting merit of their own to gain an honest subsistence, prey upon the industry of those that do. So strongly does misery thrive under their influence, and nothing else!

They keep themselves poor, suspicious, and in a state of war with their own subjects, whom they justly suspect for their worst enemies, because they supply them with constant reasons to be so; and therefore they live in a perpetual state of rapine and enmity towards them, and in a continued dread of violence and revolts from them; instead of giving them fatherly protection on one side, and receiving from them dutiful and sincere allegiance on the other; and all for the fruitless and imaginary glory of conquest, and of dominion over their fellow creatures against their will; or, in other words, of being skillful pillagers and oppressors, and successful murderers.

It is, however, not to be wondered at, that whilst so many princes are beset with sycophants, always ready to applaud at a venture, their wildest sallies and designs; or with traitors, who, finding their own vile advantages in them, are ever determined to abet and execute them: I say, it is not strange, that princes in these circumstances should run frequently into wild freaks, and pernicious enterprises, to the ruin of themselves and their subjects. But it is stupendous, that these their baneful instruments and worst foes should be able, in any instance, to persuade nations to dance after their destructive maggots, and be contented to be undone, to make some of the worst of men amongst themselves rich and saucy.

What have the people in any monarchical government ever gained by the conquests made by their prince, but to be made slaves; or if they were slaves before, worse slaves, and to have their chains rivetted yet faster? For, besides that these conquests give him a pretence and an ability to keep more troops, and consequently increase his power over them; the conquered nation will find a sort of a revenge in joining to reduce their new masters to the same wretched condition with themselves, and perhaps find an opportunity of conquering the

conquerors. One nation will be played upon another, and neither will be trusted to the guard of their own countrymen; but the soldiers of one country will be quartered upon the other, and kept at a great distance from home, lest by constant conversation with their relations, friends, and neighbours, they should, contrary to their duty, warp towards the love and interest of their country: And indeed in most countries where troops are kept, they are always removed from place to place, to prevent their friendship and correspondence with the natives.

What did England gain formerly by their conquests upon the Continent, but constant wars, slaughter, and poverty to themselves, and to their princes precarious foreign provinces at an English expence; and had standing armies been then the fashion of the world, England would doubtless have conquered itself into slavery. The Romans, when they had extended their conquests so far and wide, that they were forced to keep provincial armies to awe and preserve the conquered countries, became a prey to those armies; and their emperors afterwards durst no longer trust to Roman troops, but increased their slavery by the help of those nations whom they had conquered, and who became, in their turns, masters of those who had mastered them.

When Alexander had ventured his own army of Macedonians, and the best men in Greece, to ruin Persia, and a great part of the world, which had given him no provocation; what advantages did Greece and Macedon reap from his mighty victories and conquests; but to become a little province of a great barbarous empire, which by their arms and prowess he conquered, and exhausted them of all their bravest men to preserve? Their condition would still have been worse, if he had left a successor behind him to have preserved his whole empire entire, who would have made Persia, or some other province, the seat of it, and governed Greece at a distance by bashaws: As it was, he left it in a state of constant war and depredation, and they were tossed and tumbled from one oppression to another, till they found a sort of relief in being conquered by the Romans.

What did the French gain by the long wars and many conquests of their late great monarch, but extreme poverty, straiter servitude, great depopulation, and general bankruptcy? So much did they suffer by his acquisitions, and so dear did they pay for his pernicious glory.

What did the Swedes gain by the conquests of the late king, but to lose them again, as they got them, at a vast expence of blood and treasure; and to be reduced to such weakness, as to want the assistance of their neighbours to preserve them from falling under the power of a prince, whom, by conquering him, they taught to conquer them?

And if the conquering countries are such miserable losers by conquest, what must be the doleful condition of the conquered, which are considered only as the sources of plunder, and the professed objects of oppression? Almost all Europe are witnesses of the brutish havock which the conquerors make, and of the dismal scenes of ruin that they leave behind them. If the late French king could have conquered, or bought, or surprized the United Provinces (which by all these generous means he endeavoured) from the richest and most populous republic upon earth, they would have been now a nest of beggarly fishermen, and in a lower condition, if possible, than any of the fine French provinces, which had the honour of being governed by that paternal prince. Never was such mockery, as for a prince to publish reasons to a people, with whom he had nothing to do, why they should be conquered by him; when, let their condition be as ill as it will, it is an hundred to one, nay it is almost certain, that he will make it ten times worse.

“Alas! for that nation whose prince is a hero!” says an excellent and amiable French writer, who saw, with sorrow, the woeful condition of his own nation, from the merciless and unnatural affectation of heroism in the then king.

The same admirable author, in another place, gives us a lively image of heroes and conquests in these words, which he makes Telemachus speak, as he views the field of battle filled with carcasses, and drenched with blood:

Such are the heavy evils that follow wars! What blind fury urges unhappy mortals! So few are the days that they have to live upon this earth, and so miserable do they make these few days! Why will they run thus headlong into the jaws of death, which is of itself making hasty approaches to devour them? Why add so many frightful desolations to a short and bitter life, made so by heaven already? Men are all brethren, and they tear and butcher one another, more unnaturally fierce and cruel than the wild beasts of the desert! Lions make not war upon lions, nor tigers upon tigers: They attack only animals of a different species. Man! Man alone, in spite of his reason, does things that creatures without reason would never do.

But why these consuming wars? Is there not land enough in the universe to satisfy all men with more than they can cultivate? Are there not vast tracts of desert lands, so vast that mankind is not sufficient to fill them? How then! A false glory, a vain title of Conqueror, which a prince is fond of, kindles a war far and wide; and one single man, thrown by heaven into the world, in wrath, sacrifices brutally so many others to his vanity! His glory requires it, and all must perish before him: Countries swim in blood, towns and cities suffer devouring flames; and what escapes from the sword and the fire, famine, more cruel than both, must consume; and all that this man, who thus sports himself with throwing all human nature into pangs, may find in this general destruction his pleasure and his glory. What monstrous glory! Can we too much despise, too much abhor, these monstrous men who have thus forgot humanity? Without being men, they set up for demi-gods; and earn the curses, instead of, what they aim at, the admiration of ages to come.

Oh! with what tenderness should princes undertake wars! That they ought to be strictly just, is not enough; they must be strictly necessary, necessary for the publick good. The blood of the people ought never to be shed but to save the people; and the occasion ought to be extreme. But flattering counsels, false ideas of glory, vain jealousies, boundless rapaciousness under specious disguises, and rash engagements, draw almost all princes precipitately or insensibly into wars which prove fatal to them. In them they hazard all without necessity, and do as much mischief to their subjects as to their enemies.

Thus the divine late archbishop of Cambray, from whom I have translated this affecting passage. It is a book that has ten thousand excellencies, and ought to be read by all mankind.

I will conclude with wishing, that all nations would learn the wisdom of the prudent Sancho, who, when the hero his master madly attacked the wind-mills and the lions, stood at a safe distance in a whole skin. If their governing Don Quixotes will fight, right or wrong, let them fight by themselves, and not sit at home and wantonly sacrifice their people against wind-mills and fulling-mills.

G

I am, &c.

No. 94. SATURDAY, September 15, 1722.

Against Standing Armies. (Trenchard AND GORDON) ↪

[III-234]

SIR,

When, in King William's reign, the question was in debate, Whether England should be ruled by standing armies? the argument commonly used by some, who had the presumption to call themselves Whigs, and owned in the *Ballancing Letter* (supposed to be written by one who gave the word to all the rest), was, that all governments must have their periods one time or other, and when that time came, all endeavours to preserve liberty were fruitless; and shrewd hints were given in that letter, that England was reduced to such a condition; that our corruptions were so great, and the dissatisfaction of the people was so general, that the publick safety could not be preserved, but by increasing the power of the crown: And this argument was used by those shameless men, who had caused all that corruption, and all that dissatisfaction.

But that gentleman and his followers were soon taught to speak other language: They were removed from the capacity of perplexing publick affairs any more: The nation shewed a spirit that would not submit to slavery; and their unhappy and betrayed master, from being the most popular prince who ever sat upon the English throne, became, through the treachery of his servants, suspected by many of his best subjects, and was rendered unable by their jealousies, to defend himself and them; and so considerable a faction was formed against his administration, that no good man can recollect, without concern and horror, on the difficulties which that great and good King was reduced to grapple with during the remainder of his troublesome reign.

I have lately met with some creatures and tools of power, who speak the same language now: They tell us that matters are come to that pass, that we must either receive the Pretender, or keep him out with bribes and standing armies; that the nation is so corrupt, that there is no governing it by any other means; and, in short, that we must submit to this great evil, to prevent a greater: As if any mischief could be more terrible than the highest and most terrible of all mischiefs, universal corruption, and a military government. It is indeed impossible for the subtlety of traitors, the malice of devils, or for the cunning and cruelty of our most implacable enemies, to suggest stronger motives for the undermining and overthrow of our excellent establishment, which is built upon the destruction of tyranny, and can stand upon no other bottom. It is madness in extremity, to hope that a government founded upon liberty, and the free choice of the assertors of it, can be supported by other principles; and whoever would maintain it by contrary ones, intends to blow it up, let him allege what he will. This gives me every day new reasons to believe what I have long suspected; for if ever a question should arise, whether a nation shall submit to certain rules, or struggle for a remedy? these gentlemen well know which side they will choose, and certainly intend that which they must choose.

I am willing to think, that these impotent babblers speak not the sense of their superiors, but would make servile court to them from topics which they abhor. Their superiors must know, that it is raving and frenzy to affirm, that a free people can be long governed by impotent terrors; that millions will consent to be ruined by the corruptions of a few; or that those few will join in their ruin any longer than the corruption lasts: That every day new and greater demands will rise upon the corrupters; that no revenue, how great soever, will feed the voraciousness of the corrupted; and that every disappointment will make them turn upon

the oppressors of their country, and fall into its true interest and their own: That there is no way in nature to preserve a revolution in government, but by making the people easy under it, and shewing them their interest in it, and that corruption, bribery, and terrors, will make no lasting friends, but infinite and implacable enemies; and that the best security of a prince amongst a free people, is the affections of his people; which he can always gain, by making their interest his own, and by shewing that all his views tend to their good. They will then, as they love themselves, love him, and defend him who defends them. Upon this faithful basis his safety will be better established than upon the ambitious and variable leaders of a few legions, who may be corrupted, disobliged, or surprised, and often have been so; and hence great revolutions have been brought about, and great nations undone, only by the revolt of single regiments.

Shew a nation their interest, and they will certainly fall into it: A whole people can have no ambition but to be governed justly; and when they are so, the intrigues and dissatisfactions of particulars will fall upon their own heads. What has any of our former courts ever got by corruption, but to disaffect the people, and weaken themselves? Let us now think of other methods, if it be only for the sake of the experiment. The ways of corruption have been tried long enough in past administrations: Let us try in this what publick honesty will do; and not condemn it before we have fully proved it, and found it ineffectual; and it will be time enough to try other methods when this fails.

That we must either receive the Pretender, or keep up great armies to keep him out, is frightful and unnatural language to English ears. It is an odd way of dealing with us, that of offering us, or forcing upon us, an alternative, where the side which they would recommend is full as formidable as the side from which they would terrify us. If we [are] to be governed by armies, it is all one to us, whether they be Protestant or popish armies; the distinction is ridiculous, like that between a good and a bad tyranny. We see, in effect, that it is the power and arms of a country that form and direct the religion of a country; and I have before shewn, that true religion cannot subsist where true liberty does not. It was chiefly, if not wholly, King James's usurped power, and his many forces, and not his being a papist, that rendered him dreadful to his people. Military governments are all alike; nor does the liberty and property of the subject fare a bit the better or the worse for the faith and opinion of the soldiery. Nor does an arbitrary Protestant prince use his people better than an arbitrary popish prince; and we have seen both sorts of them changing the religion of their country according to their lust.

They are therefore stupid politicians, who would derive advantages from a distinction which is manifestly without a difference: It is like, however, that they may improve in their subtleties, and come, in time, to distinguish between corrupt corruption and uncorrupt corruption, between a good ill administration and an ill good administration, between oppressive oppression and unoppressive oppression, and between French dragooning, and English dragooning; for there is scarce any other new pitch of nonsense and contradiction left to such men in their reasonings upon publick affairs, and in the part which they act in them.

Of a piece with the rest is the stupid cunning of some sort of statesmen, and practised by most foreign courts, to blame the poor people for the misery which they bring upon them. They say, that they are extremely corrupt; and so keep them starving and enslaved by way of protection. They corrupt them by all manner of ways and inventions, and then reproach them for being corrupt. A whole nation cannot be bribed; and if its representatives are, it is not the fault, but the misfortune, of the nation: And if the corrupt save themselves by corrupting others, the people, who suffer by the corruptions of both, are to be pitied, and not abused. Nothing can be more shameless and provoking, than to bring a nation, by execrable frauds and extortions, against its daily protestations and remonstrances, into a miserable pass, and then father all those villainies upon the people, who would have gladly hanged the authors of them. At Rome the whole people could be entertained, feasted, and bribed; but it is not so

elsewhere, where the people are too numerous, and too far spread, to be debauched, cajoled, and purchased; and if any of their leaders are, it is without the people's consent.

There is scarce such a thing under the sun as a corrupt people, where the government is uncorrupt: it is that, and that alone, which makes them so; and to calumniate them for what they do not seek, but suffer by, is as great impudence as it would be to knock a man down and then rail at him for hurting himself. In what instances do the people of any country in the world throw away their money by millions, unless by trusting it to those who do so? Where do the people send great fleets, at a great charge, to be frozen up in one climate, or to be eaten out by worms in another, unless for their trade and advantage? Where do the people enter into mad wars against their interest, or, after victorious ones, make peace without stipulating for one new advantage to themselves; but, on the contrary, pay the enemy for having beaten them? Where do the people plant colonies, or purchase provinces, at a vast expence, without reaping, or expecting to reap, one farthing from them; and yet still defend them at a farther expence? Where do the people make distracted bargains, to get imaginary millions; and, after having lost by such bargains almost all the real millions which they had, yet give more millions to get rid of them? What wise or dutiful people consent to be without the influence of the presence of their prince, and of his virtues; or of those of his family, who are to come after him? No, these things are never done by any people; but wherever they are done, they are done without their consent; and yet all these things have been done in former ages, and in neighbouring kingdoms.

For such guilty and corrupt men, therefore, to charge the people with corruption, whom either they have corrupted, or cannot corrupt, and, having brought great misery upon them, to threaten them with more; is in effect, to tell them plainly, "Gentlemen, we have used you very ill, for which you, who are innocent of it, are to blame; we therefore find it necessary, for your good, to use you no better, or rather worse: And, if you will not accept of this our kindness, which, however, we will force upon you, if we can, we will give you up into the terrible hands of raw-head and bloody-bones; who, being your enemy, may do you as much mischief as we, who are your friends, have done you." I appeal to common sense, whether this be not the sum of such threats and reasonings in their native colours.

The partizans of Oliver Cromwell, when he was meditating tyranny over the three nations, gave out, that it was the only expedient to balance factions, and to keep out Charles Stuart; and so they did worse things to keep him out, than he could have done if they had let him in. And, after the king's restoration, when there was an attempt made to make him absolute, by enabling him to raise money without Parliament (an attempt which every courtier, except Lord Clarendon, came into), it was alleged to be the only expedient to keep the nation from falling back into a commonwealth: as if any commonwealth upon earth were not better than any absolute monarchy. His courtiers foresaw, that by their mad and extravagant measures they should make the nation mad, and were willing to save themselves by the final destruction of the nation: They therefore employed their creatures to whisper abroad stupid and villainous reasons, why people should be content to be finally undone, lest something not near so bad should befall them.

Those who have, by abusing a nation, forfeited its affections, will never be for trusting a people, who, they know, justly detest them; but, having procured their aversion and enmity, will be for fortifying themselves against it by all proper ways: and the ways of corruption, depredation, and force, being the only proper ones, they will not fail to be practised; and those who practise them, when they can no longer deny them, will be finding reasons to justify them; and, because they dare not avow the true reasons, they must find such false ones as are most likely to amuse and terrify. And hence so much nonsense and improbability uttered in that reign, and sometimes since, to vindicate guilty men, and vilify an innocent people, who were so extravagantly fond of that prince, that their liberties were almost gone,

before they would believe them in danger.

It is as certain, that King James II wanted no army to help him to preserve the constitution, nor to reconcile the people to their own interest: But, as he intended to invade and destroy both, nothing but corruption and a standing army could enable him to do it; and (thank God) even his army failed him, when he brought in Irish troops to help them. This therefore was his true design, but his pretences were very different: He pleaded the necessity of his affairs, nay, of publick affairs; and of keeping up a good standing force to preserve his kingdoms, forsooth, from insults at home and from abroad. This was the bait; but his people, who had no longer any faith in him, and to whom the hook appeared threatening and bare, would not believe him, nor swallow it; and if they were jealous of him, restless under him, and ready to rise against him, he gave them sufficient cause. He was under no hardship nor necessity, but what he created to himself; nor did his people withdraw their affections from him, till he had withdrawn his right to those affections. Those who have used you ill will never forgive you; and it is no new thing wantonly to make an enemy, and then calumniate and destroy him for being so.

When people, through continual ill usage, grow weary with their present ill condition, they will be so far from being frightened with a change, that they will wish for one; and, instead of terrifying them, by threatening them with one, you do but please them, even in instances where they have no reason to be pleased. Make them happy, and they will dread any change; but while they are ill used, they will not fear the worst. The authors of publick misery and plunder may seek their own safety in general desolation; but to the people nothing can be worse than ruin, from what hand soever it comes: A Protestant musket kills as sure as a popish one; and an oppressor is an oppressor, to whatever church he belongs: The sword and the gun are of every church, and so are the instruments of oppression. The late directors were all staunch Protestants; and Cromwell had a violent aversion to popery.

We are, doubtless, under great necessities in our present circumstances; but to increase them, in order to cure them, would be a preposterous remedy, worthy only of them who brought them upon us; and who, if they had common shame in them, would conceal, as far as they could, under silence, the heavy evils, which, though they lie upon every man's shoulders, yet lie only at the doors of a few. The plea of necessity, if it can be taken, will justify any mischief, and the worst mischiefs. Private necessity makes men thieves and robbers; but publick necessity requires that robbers of all sizes should be hanged. Publick necessity therefore, and the necessity of such pedant politicians, are different and opposite things. There is no doubt, but men guilty of great crimes would be glad of an enormous power to protect them in the greatest; and then tell us that there is a necessity for it. Those against whom justice is armed will ever talk thus, and ever think it necessary to disarm her. But whatever sincere services they may mean to themselves by it, they can mean none to his Majesty, who would be undone with his subjects by such treacherous and ruinous services: And therefore it is fit that mankind should know, and they themselves should know, that his Majesty can and will be defended against them and their Pretender, without standing armies; which would make him formidable only to his people, and contemptible to his foes, who take justly the measure of his power from his credit with his subjects.

But I shall consider what present occasion there is of keeping up more troops than the usual guards and garrisons; and shall a little further animadvert upon the arts and frivolous pretences made use of, in former reigns, to reduce this government to the condition and model of the pretended *jure divino* monarchies, where millions must be miserable and undone, to make one and a few of his creatures lawless, rampant, and unsafe.

T and G

No. 95. SATURDAY, September 22, 1722.

Further Reasonings against Standing Armies. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-244]

SIR,

It is certain, that liberty is never so much in danger, as upon a deliverance from slavery. The remaining dread of the mischiefs escaped, generally drives or decoys men into the same or greater: for then the passions and expectations of some run high; the fears of others make them submit to any misfortunes, to avoid an evil that is over; and both sides concur in giving a deliverer all that they are delivered from. In the transports of a restoration, or victory, or upon a plot discovered, or a rebellion quelled, nothing is thought too much for the benefactor, nor any power too great to be left to his discretion, though there can never be less reason for giving it him than at those times; because, for the most part, the danger is past, his enemies are defeated and intimidated, and consequently that is a proper juncture for the people to settle themselves, and to secure their liberties, since no one is likely to disturb them in doing so.

However, I confess, that custom, from time immemorial, is against me, and the same custom has made most of mankind slaves. Agathocles saved the Syracusans, and afterwards destroyed them: Pisistratus, pretending to be wounded for protecting the people, prevailed with them to allow him a guard for the defence of his person; and by the help of that guard usurped the sovereignty: Caesar and Marius delivered the commons of Rome from the tyranny of the nobles, and made themselves masters of both commons and nobles: Sulla delivered the Senate from the insolence of the people, and did them more mischief than the rabble could have done in a thousand years: Gustavus Ericson delivered the Swedes from the oppression of the Danes, and made large steps towards enslaving them himself: The Antwerpians called in the Duke of Alençon to defend them against the Spaniards; but he was no sooner got, as he thought, in full possession of their town, but he fell upon them himself with the forces which he brought for their defence: but the townsmen happened to be too many for him, and drove these their new protectors home again: Which disappointment, and just disgrace, broke that good duke's heart. Oliver Cromwell headed an army which pretended to fight for liberty; and by that army became a bloody tyrant: As I once saw a hawk very generously rescue a turtle dove from the persecution of two crows, and then eat him up himself.

Almost all men desire power, and few lose any opportunity to get it; and all who are like to suffer under it ought to be strictly upon their guard, in such conjunctures as are most likely to increase and make it uncontrollable. There are but two ways in nature to enslave a people, and to continue that slavery over them; the first is superstition, and the last is force: By the one we are persuaded that it is our duty to be undone; and the other undoes us whether we will or no. I take it, that we are pretty much out of danger of the first, at present; and, I think, we cannot be too much upon our guard against the other: for, though we have nothing to fear from the best prince in the world; yet we have every thing to fear from those who would give him a power inconsistent with liberty, and with a constitution which has lasted almost a thousand years without such a power, which will never be asked with an intention to make no use of it.

The nation was so mad upon the restoration of King Charles II that they gave him all that he asked, and more than he asked: They complimented him with a vast revenue for life, and almost with our liberties and religion too; and if unforeseen accidents had not happened to

prevent it, without doubt we had lost both; and if his successor could have had a little patience, and had used no rogues but his old rogues, he might have accomplished the business, and popery and arbitrary power had been of divine institution at this day: But he made too much haste to be at the end of his journey, and his priests were in too much haste to be on horseback too; and so the beast grew skittish, and overthrew them both.

Then a new set of deliverers arose, who had saved us from King James's army, and would have given us a bigger in the room of it, and some of them foreigners. They told us that the King longed for them, and it was a pity that so good a prince should lose his longing, and miscarry: but he did lose it, and miscarried no otherwise than by losing a great part of the confidence which many of his best subjects before had in his moderation; which loss made the remainder of his reign uneasy to him, and to every good man who saw it. I remember that all men then declared against a standing army, and the courtiers amongst the rest, who were only for a land force, to be kept up no longer than till the King of France disbanded his, and till the kingdom was settled, and the people better satisfied with the administration; and then there was nothing left to do, in order to perpetuate them, but to take care that the people should never be satisfied: An art often practised with an amazing success!

The reasons then given for keeping up an army were, the great number of Jacobites, the disaffection of the clergy and universities, the power and enmity of France, and the necessity of preserving so excellent a body of troops to maintain the Treaty of Partition, which they had newly and wisely made. But notwithstanding that the army was disbanded, no plot, conspiracy, or rebellion, happened by their disbanding. The Partition Treaty was broke; a new army was raised, which won ten times as many victories as the former; and Europe, at last, is settled upon a much better foot than it would have been by the Partition Treaty. The Emperor is as strong as he ought to be. The Dutch have a good barrier. Another power is raised in Europe to keep the balance even, which neither can nor will be formidable to us without our own fault; France is undone, and the Regent must be our friend, and have dependence upon our protection: So that some few of these reasons are to do now, what all together could not do then, though we are not the tenth part so well able to maintain them as we were then.

I should be glad to know in what situation of our affairs it can be safe to reduce our troops to the usual guards and garrisons, if it cannot be done now. There is no power in Europe considerable enough to threaten us, who can have any motives to do so, if we pursue the old maxims and natural interest of Great Britain; which is, to meddle no farther with foreign squabbles, than to keep the balance even between France and Spain. And this is less necessary too for us to do now than formerly; because the Emperor and Holland are able to do it, and must and will do it, without us, or at least with but little of our assistance; but if we unnecessarily engage against the interests of either, we must thank ourselves, if they endeavour to prevent the effects of it, by finding us work at home.

When the army was disbanding in King William's reign, a prince was in being who was personally known to many of his former subjects, had obliged great numbers of them, was supported by one of the most powerful monarchs in the world, that had won numerous victories, and had almost always defeated his enemies, and who still preserved his power and his animosity: His pretended son was then an infant, and, for any thing that then appeared, might have proved an active and a dangerous enemy; and it was to be feared, that his tutors might have educated him a half Protestant, or at least have taught him to have disguised his true religion. At that time the Revolution and revolution principles were in their infancy; and most of the bishops and dignified clergy, as well as many others in employment, owed their preferments and principles to the abdicated family; and the reverse of this is our case now.

France has been torn to pieces by numerous defeats, its people and manufactures destroyed by war, famine, the plague, and their Mississippi Company; and they are so divided at home, that they will find enough to do to save themselves, without troubling their neighbours, especially a neighbour from whom the governing powers there hope for protection. The prince who pretended to the thrones of these kingdoms is dead; and he who calls himself his heir is a bigoted papist, and has given but little cause to fear any thing from his abilities or his prowess. The principles of liberty are now well understood, and few people in this age are romantick enough to venture their lives and estates for the personal interests of one whom they knew nothing of, or nothing to his advantage; and we ought to take care that they shall not find their own interest in doing it; and, I conceive, nothing is necessary to effect this, but to resolve upon it. Almost all the dignified clergy, and all the civil and military officers in the kingdom, owe their preferments to the Revolution, and are as loyal to his Majesty as he himself can wish. A very great part of the property of the kingdom stands upon the same bottom with the Revolution. Every day's experience shews us how devoted the nobility are to gratify their King's just desires and inclinations; and nothing can be more certain, than that the present House of Commons are most dutifully and affectionately inclined to the true interest of the crown, and to the principles to which his Majesty owes it. And besides all this security, a new conspiracy has been discovered and defeated; which gives all occasion and opportunity to prevent any such attempts for the future; which can never be done, but by punishing the present conspirators, and giving no provocation to new ones: In both which, I hope, we shall have the hearty concurrence of those who have the honour to be employed by his Majesty; by which they will shew, that they are as zealous to prevent the necessity of standing armies, as I doubt not but the Parliament will be.

I presume, no man will be audacious enough to propose, that we should make a standing army part of our constitution; and if not, when can we reduce them to a competent number better than at this time? Shall we wait till France has recovered its present difficulties; till its king is grown to full age and ripeness of judgment; till he has dissipated all factions and discontents at home, and is fallen into the natural interests of his kingdom, or perhaps aspires to empire again? Or, shall we wait till the Emperor and King of Spain have divided the bear's skin, and possibly become good friends, as their predecessors have been for the greatest part of two centuries; and perhaps cement that friendship, by uniting for the common interests of their religion? Or, till Madam Sobiesky's heir is at age, who may have wit enough to think, that the popish religion is dearly bought at the price of three kingdoms? Or, are we never to disband, till Europe is settled according to some modern schemes? Or, till there are no malcontents in England, and no people out of employments who desire to bein them?

It is certain, that all parts of Europe which are enslaved, have been enslaved by armies; and it is absolutely impossible, that any nation which keeps them amongst themselves can long preserve their liberties; nor can any nation perfectly lose their liberties who are without such guests: And yet, though all men see this, and at times confess it, yet all have joined in their turns, to bring this heavy evil upon themselves and their country. Charles II formed his guards into a little army, and his successor increased them to three or four times their number; and without doubt these kingdoms had been enslaved, if known events had not prevented it. We had no sooner escaped these dangers, than King William's ministry formed designs for an army again, and neglected Ireland (which might have been reduced by a message) till the enemy was so strong, that a great army was necessary to recover it; and when all was done abroad that an army was wanted for, they thought it convenient to find some employment for them at home. However, the nation happened not to be of their mind, and disbanded the greatest part of them, without finding any of these dangers which they were threatened with from their disbanding. A new army was raised again when it became necessary, and disbanded again when there was no more need of them; and his present

Majesty came peaceably to his crown, by the laws alone, notwithstanding all his endeavours to keep him out, by long measures concerted to that purpose.

It could not be expected, from the nature of human affairs, that those who had formed a design for restoring the Pretender, had taken such large steps towards it, and were sure to be supported in it by so powerful an assistance as France was then capable of giving, should immediately lose sight of so agreeable a prospect of wealth and power, as they had before enjoyed in imagination: Yet it seems very plain to me, that all the disturbance which afterwards happened might have been prevented by a few timely remedies; and when at last it was defeated with a vast charge and hazard, we had the means in our hands of rooting out all seeds of faction and future rebellions, without doing any thing to provoke them; and it is certain, that his Majesty was ready to do every thing on his part for that purpose, which others over and over promised us; and what they have done, besides obliging the nation with a Septennial Parliament, increasing the publick debts a great many millions, and by the South-Sea project paying them off, I leave to themselves to declare.

However, I confess, an army at last became necessary; and an army was raised time enough to beat all who opposed it: Some of them have been knocked on the head, many carried in triumph, some hanged, and others confiscated, as they well deserved. And, I presume, the nation would scarce have been in the humour to have kept up an army to fight their ghosts, if a terrible invasion had not threatned from Sweden; which, however, was at last frightened into a fleet of colliers, or naval stores, indeed I have forgot which. This danger being over, another succeeded, and had like to have stole upon us from Cadiz, notwithstanding all the intelligence that we could possibly get from Gibraltar, which lies just by it; and this shews, by the way, the little use of that place: But we have miraculously escaped that danger too; the greatest part of their fleet was dispersed in a storm, and our troops have actually defeated in the highlands some hundreds of the enemy, before many people would believe they were there. Since this we have been in great fear of the Czar; and last year one reason given by many for continuing the army was, to preserve us against the plague.

But now the King of Sweden is dead, the Czar is gone a Sophi-hunting, the plague is ceased, and the King of Spain's best troops have taken up their quarters in Italy, where (if I guess right) they will have employment enough; and what are we to keep up the army now to do, unless to keep out the small-pox? Oh! but there is a better reason than that, namely, a plot is discovered, and we cannot find out yet all who are concerned in it; but we have pretty good assurance, that all the Jacobites are for the Pretender; and therefore we ought to keep in readiness a great number of troops (which are to sleep on horseback, or lie in their jack-boots) which may be sufficient to beat them all together, if they had a twelve-month's time given them to beat up for volunteers, to buy horses and arms, to form themselves into regiments, and exercise them; lest, instead of lurking in corners, and prating in taverns, and at cock-matches, they should surprize ten or twelve thousand armed men in their quarters. I dare appeal to any unprejudiced person, whether this be not the sum of some men's reasonings upon this subject.

But I desire to know of these sagacious gentlemen, in what respect shall we be in a worse state of defence than we are now, if the army were reduced to the same number as in King William's time, and in the latter end of the Queen's reign; and that it consisted of the same proportion of horse and foot, that every regiment had its complete number of troops and companies, and every troop and company had its complement of private men. It is certain, that, upon any sudden exigency, his Majesty would have as many men at command as he has now, and, I presume, more common soldiers, who are most difficult to be got upon such occasions; for officers will never be wanting, and all that are now regimented will be in half-pay, and ready at call to beat up and raise new regiments, and fast as the others could be filled

up, and they may change any of the old men into them, which reduces it to the same thing. By this we shall save the charge of double or treble officering our troops, and the terror of keeping up the corps of thirty or forty thousand men, though they are called only thirteen or fourteen; and sure it is high time to save all which can be saved, and, by removing all causes of jealousy, to unite all, who, for the cause of liberty, are zealous for the present establishment, in order to oppose effectually those who would destroy it.

I will suppose, for once, what I will not grant, that those called Whigs are the only men amongst us who are heartily attached to his Majesty's interest; for I believe the greatest part of the Tories, and the clergy too, would tremble at the thought of popery and arbitrary power, which must come in with the Pretender: But taking it to be otherwise, it is certain that the body of the Whigs, and indeed I may say almost all, except the possessors and candidates for employments or pensions, have as terrible apprehensions of a standing army, as the Tories themselves. And dare any man lay his hand upon his heart, and say, that his Majesty will find greater security in a few thousand more men already regimented, than in the steady affections of so many hundred thousands who will be always ready to be regimented? When the people are easy and satisfied, the whole kingdom is his army; and King James found what dependence there was upon his troops, when his people deserted him. Would not any wise and honest minister desire, during his administration, that the publick affairs should run glibly, and find the hearty concurrence of the states of the kingdom, rather than to carry their measures by perpetual struggles and intrigues, to waste the Civil List by constant and needless pensions and gratuities, be always asking for new supplies, and rendering themselves, and all who assist them, odious to their countrymen?

In short, there can be but two ways in nature to govern a nation: One is by their own consent; the other by force: One gains their hearts; the other holds their hands. The first is always chosen by those who design to govern the people for the people's interest; the other by those who design to oppress them for their own: for, whoever desires only to protect them, will covet no useless power to injure them. There is no fear of a people's acting against their own interest, when they know what it is; and when, through ill conduct, or unfortunate accidents, they become dissatisfied with their present condition, the only effectual way to avoid the threatening evil is, to remove their grievances.

When Charles, Duke of Burgundy, with most of the princes of France, at the head of an hundred thousand men, took up arms against Lewis XI this prince sent an embassy to Sforza, Duke of Milan, desiring that he would lend him some of his veteran troops; and the duke returned him for answer, that he could not be content to have them cut to pieces (as they would assuredly have been) but told him at the same time, that he would send him some advice which would be worth ten times as many troops as he had; namely, that he should give satisfaction to the princes, and then they would disperse of course. The King improved so well upon the advice, that he diverted the storm, by giving but little satisfaction to the princes, and none at all to those who followed them. The body of the people in all countries are so desirous to live in quiet, that a few good words, and a little good usage from their governors, will at any time pacify them, and make them very often turn upon those benefactors, who, by their pains, expence, and hazard, have obtained those advantages for them. Indeed, when they are not outrageously oppressed and starved, they are almost as ready to part with their liberties as others are to ask for them.

By what I have before said I would not be understood to declare absolutely against continuing our present forces, or increasing them, if the importance of the occasion requires either, and the evils threatened be not yet dissipated: But I could wish, that if such an occasion appear, those who think them at this time necessary, would declare effectually, and in the fullest manner, that they design to keep them no longer than during the present emergency; and that, when it is over, they will be as ready to break them, as I believe the

nation will be to give them, when just reasons offer themselves for doing so.

T

I am, &c.

No. 96. SATURDAY, September 29, 1722.

Of Parties in England; how they vary, and interchange Characters, just as they are in Power, or out of it, yet still keep their former Names. [Gordon] ↩

[III-258]

SIR,

The English climate, famous for variable weather, is not less famous for variable parties; which fall insensibly into an exchange of principles, and yet go on to hate and curse one another for these principles. A Tory under oppression, or out of a place, is a Whig; a Whig with power to oppress, is a Tory. The Tory damns the Whig, for maintaining a resistance, which he himself never fails to practice; and the Whig reproaches the Tory with slavish principles, yet calls him rebel if he do not practice them. The truth is, all men dread the power of oppression out of their own hands, and almost all men wish it irresistible when it is there.

We change sides every day, yet keep the same names for ever. I have known a man a staunch Whig for a year together, yet thought and called a Tory by all the Whigs, and by the Tories themselves. I have known him afterwards fall in with the Whigs, and act another year like a Tory; that is, do blindly what he was bid, and serve the interest of power, right or wrong: And then all the Tories have agreed to call him a Whig; whereas all the while he was called a Tory, he was a Whig: Afterwards, by joining with the Whigs, he became an apostate from Whiggism, and turned Tory.

So wildly do men run on to confound names and things: We call men opprobriously Tories, for practicing the best part of Whiggism; and honourably christen ourselves Whigs, when we are openly acting the vilest parts of Toryism, such parts as the Tories never attempted to act.

To know fully the signification of words, we must go to their source. The original principle of a Tory was, to let the crown do what it pleased; and yet no people opposed and restrained the crown more, when they themselves did not serve and direct the crown. The original principle of a Whig was, to be no farther for the interest of the crown, than the crown was for the interest of the people. A principle founded upon everlasting reason, and which the Tories have come into as often as temptations were taken out of their way; and a principle which the Whigs, whenever they have had temptations, have as vilely renounced in practice. No men upon earth have been more servile, crouching, and abandoned creatures of power than the Whigs sometimes have been; I mean some former Whigs.

The Tories therefore are often Whigs without knowing it; and the Whigs are Tories without owning it. To prove this, it is enough to reflect upon times and instances, when the asserting of liberty, the legal and undoubted liberties of England, has been called libelling by those professed patrons of liberty, the Whigs; and they have taken extravagant, arbitrary, and violent methods to suppress the very sound of it; whilst the Tories have maintained and defended it, and put checks upon those, who, though they had risen by its name, were eager to suppress the spirit, and had appointed for that worthy end an inquisition, new to the constitution, and threatening its overthrow: An inquisition, where men were used as criminals without a crime, charged with crimes without a name, and treated in some respects as if they had been guilty of the highest.

Parties like or dislike our constitution, just as they are out of power, or in it: Those who are out of power like it, because it gives them the best protection against those who are in power; and those who have been in power have blamed it, for not giving them power enough to oppress all whom they would oppress. No power cares to be restrained, or to have its hands tied up, though it would tie up all hands but its own: Like sects in religion, who all abhor persecution, and disclaim its spirit, while it is over them, but fall almost all into it when they are uppermost. The papists among us make a great outcry against persecution and oppression; because, though they be protected in their lives and estates, their mass-houses are taken from them, and they are taxed double, though they do not pay double: Yet it is most certain, that their religion makes it a sin to tolerate any other religion, and obliges its votaries, on pain of damnation, to burn and destroy all who will not blindly, and against conscience, submit to its absurd and contradictory opinions, and to its impious and inhuman spirit.

The golden rule prevails little in the world; and no man scarce will bear, if he can avoid it, what almost all men will make others bear, if they can. Men who have the government on their side, or are in the government, will never see its excesses while they do not feel them; nay, they will be very apt to complain, that the government wants more power; and some, in those circumstances, have said, and called in God Almighty for a witness and a voucher, that it ought to be irresistible: But when they dislike the government, and the government is jealous of them, their tone is quickly and entirely changed, they are loud with the first against the long hands of power, and its encroachments and oppressions, and often make faults as well as find them.

In King Charles II's reign, at the trial of Mead and Penn, for preaching (a great crime, in those days, out of a church) one of the King's Counsel declared, that he now saw the wisdom, necessity, and equitableness of the Spanish Inquisition, and thought that it would never be well with the church and monarchy, till one was established here; or words to that effect. Now, can any one think that this wicked and impudent man, with all his malice against his country, would not have hated and dreaded the Inquisition as much as any other man, but that he was determined to be of the same side?

I never yet met with one honest and reasonable man out of power who was not heartily against all standing armies, as threatening and pernicious, and the ready instruments of certain ruin: And I scarce ever met with a man in power, or even the meanest creature of power, who was not for defending and keeping them up: So much are the opinions of men guided by their circumstances! Men, when they are angry with one another, will come into any measures for revenge, without considering that the same power which destroys an enemy, may destroy themselves; and he to whom I lend my sword to kill my foe, may with it kill me.

Men are caught, and ruled, and ruined, by a present appetite; and, for present gratification, give up even self-preservation. So weak is reason, when passion is strong! Most of the instruments of arbitrary power have been sacrificed to it as wantonly as they had sacrificed others; and were justly crushed under a barbarous Babel of their own raising. But that has been no lesson to others, who have been for complimenting their prince with a power which made all men, and themselves amongst the rest, depend for their life and property upon his breath; for no other reason, than that it made many others depend at the same time upon theirs.

Nothing is more wild, fickle, and giddy, than the nature of man; not the clouds, nor the winds. We swallow greedily to day what we loathed yesterday, and will loathe again tomorrow; and would hang at night those whom we hugged in the morning. We love men for being of our opinion, when we are in the wrong; and hate them afterwards, if they be in the right. We are enraged at those who will not renounce their sense, to follow us in our anger;

and are angry at them for being angry, when we have made them so. We boast of being guided by our own sentiments; but will allow no body to be directed by theirs, if theirs thwart ours. We are governed by our own interest, and rail at those that are. We oppose those who will not purchase our friendship; and when they do, we oppose all that oppose them. Those who are for us with reason on their side, provoke us, if they are not so without reason. We commend human reason, and mean only our own folly. And our religion, however ridiculous, is always the best for all men, who are in a dangerous way, if they be not in our absurd one. If we adhere to our opinions, and will not alter our conduct, we cannot forgive those who will join with us; and if they do, we do not forgive them when we change, if they do not change too.

Thus inconsistent, foolish, and shameless, is the nature of men; selfish and prone to error. Methinks those who were once in our circumstances and sentiments, might, at least, forgive us, if, when they leave us and their own principles for a very bad reason, we still adhere to ours for a very good one: But this piece of plain equity is not to be expected. Men are so partial to themselves, that almost every man, if he could, would set up the arbitrary standard of his own will, and oblige all men blindly to follow it. The story of Procrustes is full of excellent instruction, and a lively emblem of human nature: That tyrant had an iron bed, which he seemed to intend for the standard of human stature; those who were too long for it, had their legs chopped off; those who were too short, had their bodies extended by a rack; and both the long and the short were made to fit the tyrant's bed. What is the Inquisition, what is tyranny, and what is any extravagant power, but Procrustes's bed? And who would not be Procrustes, if he had his will, in some respect or other?

The very name of France used to be an abomination to the Whigs: They hated the country for the sake of its government; and were eternally upbraiding the Tories with a fondness for that government. Who would have expected, after all this, that ever the Whigs, or any of them, could have spoken with patience, much less with approbation, of the French government? Any the least hint of this kind was shameful and unpardonable in a Whig. But there are Whigs, who, not content to shew their dislike and resentment of every thing said or done in behalf of liberty, and the English constitution, have boldly told people how such things would be rewarded in France: That is to say, the government of France is defended by galleys, wheels, racks, and dragoons, and we want the same methods here; for, if they dislike such methods, how come they to mention them? If men commit crimes against the English government, there are English laws to punish them; but if they be guilty of no crime against the laws of England, why are they thought worthy of the arbitrary punishments of France, unless those who think that they are, thirst after the arbitrary power of France? Or, if they mean not thus, why do they talk thus; and, shewing rage without provocation, scatter words without a meaning? I know no sort of Englishmen worthy of French chains, and French cruelty, but such apostate Englishmen as wish for the power and opportunity of inflicting them upon their countrymen, and of governing those by terrors and tortures, who despise weak capacities, and detest vile measures.

And have Whigs at last the face to tell us how they rule in France? Here is an instance of Toryism which every modern Tory, of any sense, disclaims and abhors; and which some modern Whigs have modestly avowed, and are therefore become old Tories. Thus do parties chop and change. One party, by railing with great justice at another, gets into its place; and loses it as justly, by doing the very things against which it railed.

By these means, and by thus acting every one of them contrary to their professions, all parties play the game into one another's hands, though far from intending it; and no party has ever yet found their account in it, whatever their leaders may have done: For the most part, a revolution of five or six years subjects them to oppressions of their own inventing. Others get into their seat, and turn their own hard measures upon them; nor can they complain, with a

good grace, that they suffer those evils which they have made others to suffer; and their own conduct having been as bad as that of which they complain, they have not sufficient reputation to oppose the progress of publick mischief and miscarriages, which perhaps they began.

It is therefore high time for all parties to consider what is best for the whole; and to establish such rules of commutative justice and indulgence, as may prevent oppression from any party. And this can only be done by restraining the hands of power, and fixing it within certain bounds as to its limits and expence. Under every power that is exorbitant, millions must suffer to aggrandize a few, and men must be strangely partial to themselves and their own expectations, if, in the almost eternal changes and revolutions of ministries they can hope to continue long to be any part of those few.

G

I am, &c.

No. 97. SATURDAY, October 6, 1722.

How much it is the Interest of Governors to use the Governed well; with an Enquiry into the Causes of Disaffection in England. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-266]

SIR,

No man, or small number of men, can support themselves in power upon their own proper strength, without taking in the assistance of a great many others; and they can never have that assistance, unless they take in their interests too, and unless the latter can find their own account in giving it: for men will laugh at bare arguments brought to prove that they must labour, be robbed of that labour, and want, that others may be idle, riot and plunder them. Those governments therefore, which are founded upon oppression, always find it necessary to engage interests enough in their tyranny to overcome all opposition from those who are tyrannized over, by giving separate and unequal privileges to the instruments and accomplices of their oppression, by letting them share the advantages of it, by putting arms in their hands, and by taking away all the means of self-defence from those who have more right to use them.

But when a government is founded upon liberty and equal laws, it is ridiculous for those in the administration to have any hopes of preserving themselves long there, but by just actions, or the appearance of just actions; and by letting the people find, or fancy that they find, their own happiness in their submission. It is certain, that people have so just a dread of publick disturbances, that they will bear a great deal before they will involve themselves in tumults and wars; and mankind are so prone to emulation and ambition, and to pursue their separate interests, that it is easy to form them into parties, and to play those parties in their turns upon one another; but all parties will at last confer notes, and find out, that they are made use of only as cudgels in the hands of wicked men, to assault each other by turns, till they are both undone. It is downright madness, to hope long to govern all against the interests of all; and such knight-errants have qualifications only to be sent to Bedlam, or to be shut up in some other mad-house.

People will for some time be dallied with, and amused with false reasonings, misrepresentations, and promises, wild expectations, vain terrors, and imaginary fears; but all these hopes and apprehensions will vanish by degrees, will produce a quite contrary effect, and no wise man will think it prudent to provoke a whole people. What could the late King James do against his whole people? His ministers betrayed him, his family deserted him, his soldiers revolted from him: And it was foolish to expect any thing else; for how could he hope, that those who could have no motive to stand by him, besides their own personal interest, and every motive to oppose him arising from conscience and honour, would not leave him when that interest changed, and when they could serve themselves better by serving their country?

I laugh at the stupid notions of those, who think that more is due from them to their patrons, who are trusted to dispose of employments for the publick benefit, than to their country, for whose sake, and by whose direction, those employments were first instituted, out of whose pockets the profits of them arise, and from whose confidence or credulity their pretended benefactors derive all their power to give them. Those who receive them, accept the gift upon the terms of the constitution; that is, to execute them faithfully for the publick good, and not to take the people's money to destroy the people.

What did the whole power of Spain do against a few revolted provinces, when all the people were enraged by oppression? How many armies were lost, how many millions foolishly squandered, to recover by force what a few just concessions would have done at once? Her generals no sooner took one town, but two revolted; and they sometimes lost ten without striking a stroke, for one that they gained by the sword: What by the mutinies of her own soldiers, and other common events, which usually happen in such cases, they twice lost all together, and were forced to begin their game anew; and so destroyed a mighty empire, to oppress a little part of it, whose affections might have been regained by doing them but common justice.

It is senseless to hope to overcome some sorts of convulsive distempers, by holding the patient's hands, and tying him with ropes, which will only increase the malady; whereas the softest remedies ought to be used: Violent methods may stop the distemper for a little time; but the cause of the grief remains behind, and will break out again the more furiously. What did King James get by all his bloody executions in the west, by his manacling us with chains, and keeping up a military force, to lock them on, but to frighten his friends, still more to provoke his enemies, and at last to unite them all against himself? And yet, I believe, I may venture to assert, that if, instead of throwing his broad seal into the Thames, and deserting his people, he had suffered his Parliament to sit, and given up some of the instruments of his tyranny, and had permitted them to have taken a few proper precautions to have hindered it for the future, he need not have been a fugitive through the world.

It is certain, that if King Charles had made at first, and with a good grace, but half of those concessions which were extorted from him afterwards, that bloody war, so fatal to himself and his family, had been prevented, and the ambition or malice of his personal enemies had been suppressed, or turned to their own confusion, and he himself might have reigned a happy prince, with as much power as he had right to by the constitution: Whereas, if my Lord Clarendon [is] to be believed, the whole kingdom (very few excepted) took part against the court at first, and continued to do so, till some leading men in the House of Commons discovered intentions to overturn the monarchy itself. And I will add further, that if some men, whom I could name, had set themselves at the head of these prosecutions against the South-Sea directors, and their directors, agents, and accomplices, and had proposed, or shewn an inclination to have come into effectual methods to have paid off the publick debts, and to have lessened the publick expences, the name of a Jacobite had been as contemptible as it is now dreadful; and a few constables might possibly have saved the charge of a great many camps.

It is foolish therefore to be frightened with apprehensions which may be removed at pleasure: The way to cure people of their fears, is, not to frighten them further, but to remove the causes of their fears. If the kingdom be disaffected (as its enemies of all sorts would make us believe), let enquiry be made into the motives of that disaffection. It cannot be personally to his Majesty, who is a most excellent prince; and his greatest opponents neither do nor can object to him those vices, which too often accompany and are allied to crowns: Nor is there the least pretence to accuse him of any designs of enlarging his prerogative beyond its due bounds; but on the contrary it is said, that he was content by the Peerage Bill to have parted with a considerable branch of it in favour of his people, whatever use others intended to make of that concession. It is certain, that when he came to the crown, he had a large share in the affection of his people, and he himself has done nothing to make it less.

It cannot be to his title, which is the best upon earth, even the positive consent of a great and free nation, and not the presumptive consent of succession: Besides, all his subjects of any degree have sworn and subscribed to his title, and the ink is yet wet upon their fingers; nor can any formidable number of them (whilst they are governed justly and prudently) have any motives to call in a popish pretender, educated in principles diametrically opposite to

their civil and religious interests.

Whence therefore should such disaffection arise, if there be any such, as I hope there is not? And it appears plainly, that there is not, or that it is not general, by the dutiful reception which his Majesty met with in all places throughout his late progress in the west. And the same loyal disposition would appear more and more every day, if those who have the honour to be admitted to his more immediate confidence would represent honestly to him, how acceptable his presence would always be to his people.

It is childish to say, that a few flies and insects can raise a great dust; or, that a small number of disappointed and unpreferred men can shake a great kingdom, with a wise prince at the head of it, supported with such powers and dependences. A great fire cannot be raised without fuel, and the materials which make it must have been combustible before. And if this be our case, we ought to ask, how they came to be so? and, who made them inflammable? Who laid the gunpowder? as well as, who fired, or intended to fire, it? When we have done this, we ought to remove the causes of the distemper, allay the heat of the fever by gentle lenitives, throw in no more fiery spirits to inflame the constitution, but do all that we can to soften and cool it.

Every country in the world will have many malcontents; some through want and necessity; others through ambition and restlessness of temper; many from disappointments and personal resentment; more from the fear of just punishment for crimes: But all these together can never be dangerous to any state, which knows how to separate the people's resentments from theirs. Make the former easy, and the others are disarmed at once. When the causes of general discontent are removed, particular discontents will signify nothing.

The first care which wise governors will always take, is, to prevent their subjects from wanting, and to secure to them the possession of their property, upon which every thing else depends. They will raise no taxes but what the people shall see a necessity for raising; and no longer than that necessity continues: And such taxes ought to be levied cautiously, and laid out frugally. No projects ought to be formed to enrich a few, and to ruin thousands: for when men of fortune come to lose their fortunes, they will try by all means to get new ones; and when they cannot do it fairly, they will do it as they are able; and if they cannot do it at all, will throw all things into confusion, to make others as miserable as themselves. If people are poor, they will be desperate, and catch at every occasion, and join with every faction, to make publick disturbances, to shuffle the cards anew, and to make their own condition better, when they find it cannot be worse.

Wise statesmen will see all this at a distance; will use the best precautions, and most prudent measures, to procure general plenty, increase trade and manufactures, and keep the people usefully employed at home, instead of starving, and prating sedition in the streets. They will not be perpetually provoking them with constant injuries, giving them eternal occasions and reasons for dissatisfaction, and then quarrel with them for shewing it, and be still increasing their discontents, by preposterously endeavouring to put a stop to them by new shackles, armed bands, bribery and corruption, and by laying on them fresh burdens and impositions to maintain such oppressions; and so when they have raised resentment to the highest pitch, vainly hope to stop the tide with their thumbs. This is what the King of Spain did formerly in the Dutch provinces, and King James II lately in England, but what, I hope, will never be seen here again.

But it will be said, that people will be sometimes dissatisfied without any just provocations given to them by their governors: The necessities of all states will sometimes subject them to greater taxes and other seeming oppressions, than they can well bear; and then, like sick men, they will quarrel with their physicians, their best friends, and their

remedies, and reproach all who have the direction of their affairs; as a countryman once cursed Cardinal Mazarine, when his ass stumbled (perhaps justly, for the oppressions of that minister might have rendered him unable to feed his ass, and to keep him in good heart).

When this happens to be the case, there ought to be double diligence used to prevent any ill consequences from such disaffection: No war ought to be continued longer than is absolutely necessary to the publick security; nor any new one to be entered into out of wantonness, ambition, or, indeed, out of any other motive than self-defence: No more money ought to be raised than is strictly necessary for the people's protection; and they are to be shewn that necessity, and are to see from time to time, the accounts of what they give, that it is disbursed frugally and honestly, and not engrossed by private men, lavished upon minions, or squandered away in useless pensions to undeservers; and that the product of the whole people's labour and substance is not suffered to be devoured by a few of the worst of the people. For (as it is said elsewhere)

What can be more invidious, than for a nation, staggering under the weight and oppression of its debts, eaten up with usury, and exhausted with payments, to have the additional mortification to see private and worthless men riot in their calamities, and grow rich, whilst they grow poor; to see the town every day glittering with new and pompous equipages, whilst they are mortgaging and selling their estates, without having spent them; to see blazing meteors suddenly exhaled out of their jakes, and their mud, as in Egypt, warmed into monsters? [*]

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I am &c.

No. 98. SATURDAY, October 13, 1722.

Address to the Members of the House of Commons. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-275]

SIR,

I have hitherto directed my letters to yourself; but I desire you will direct the enclosed to the illustrious deputies of the whole people of England. Not that I presume to think myself capable to inform them of their duty, or that they want such information, or would accept it from me; but I intend to shew my good wishes to my countrymen, and to prepare them to expect the blessed effects of their discreet choice; not in the least doubting but their worthy representatives will speak aloud the almost unanimous sentiments of the whole nation; and by so doing, preserve the dignity of the crown, and the liberty of the people whom they represent.

TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT HOUSE OF COMMONS

GENTLEMEN,

You have now the political power of all the commons of Great Britain delegated to you; and, as I doubt not but you will make an honest use of it, so will you have their natural power too at your command; that is, you will have their thanks, their wishes, their prayers, and their persons, as well as their purses, to serve your king and country. This is the greatest trust that can be committed by men to one another; and contains in it all that is valuable here on earth, the lives, the properties, the liberties, of your countrymen, and in a great measure of all Europe, and your own present and eternal happiness too. This great trust, Gentlemen, is not committed to you for your own sakes, but for the protection, security and happiness of those whom you represent. And you are accountable to your own consciences, and to the high tribunal of heaven, for the just execution of this great authority: Not to mention the applauses and blessings of millions of people, which will attend the faithful discharge of your duty; and the detestation, reproaches, and curses, with their other worse consequences, which ought to pursue corruption and bribery, and which I am sure you will never deserve.

You have, Gentlemen, the purest religion in the world to cherish and support; the interests, reputation, and security, of the best of princes to guard and defend: You have a great and populous nation, abounding with men of understanding, integrity and courage, imploring your assistance; whom you are obliged, by all the ties of gratitude, justice, and generosity, by all the laws of God and man, to protect and preserve: A people loaded with debts, enervated by war, and in former reigns plundered by miscreants, and just ready to sink under those burdens, unless they can receive sudden help from your healing hands. Here is a scene of glory, an opportunity put by gracious heaven into your hands, to exercise your virtues, and to obtain a reputation far above the tinsel triumphs of fabulous and imaginary heroes. Virtuous men could not ask more of providence; nor could providence bestow more upon mortal men, than to set them at the head of a corrupted and almost undone people, and to give them the honour of restoring their power, and reforming their manners. I cannot doubt, but these strong and forcible motives will call up all your virtue, generosity, and publick spirit; and inspire you with resolutions to assist our gracious sovereign in redressing all our grievances, and in making us once more a great and happy people. It is in your power to do so; and from your endeavours we hope and expect it.

Every man whom you represent has a right to apply to and to petition you for protection and redress, and with modesty and humility to complain of his own or his country's sufferings; and, by virtue of this undoubted right, I address to you in my own behalf, and in the behalf of millions of my fellow-subjects, who, next to God and our gracious sovereign, are to receive their preservation and whole happiness from your breath. Your own personal security too is nearly linked and blended with theirs; for you can make no laws, countenance no corruptions, nor bring or suffer any mischiefs upon your country, but what must fall upon yourselves and your posterity; and for these reasons, as well as from your known principles of honour and virtue, I assure myself that you will act for your own and the publick interest.

The most notorious conspirators, and chief instruments of power, who headed that detestable Parliament that gave up the liberties of a neighbouring nation, involved themselves in the general ruin, and were amongst the first who lost their estates. Even the Pensionary Parliament in King Charles II's time stopped short, and turned upon that corrupt ministry, when the last stroke was levelled against our liberties: They well saw that when they should become no longer necessary, they would be no more regarded, but be treated as traitors always are by those who take advantage of their treason: for it is a steady maxim always with oppressors, to court and gratify the people whom they enslave, by sacrificing the instruments which they make use of, when they can be no longer serviceable; a maxim which discharges all obligations to them, and gives some recompence to their unhappy and undone subjects, by shewing them the grateful sight of their worst and most implacable enemies caught in their own snare.

View, Gentlemen, the dismal and melancholy scene before your eyes: Behold, not above thirty years since, a powerful nation engaged in an expensive, but successful war, for defence of their own liberties, and of all Europe; which might have been equally carried on with less money than is now paid for interest, without leaving us one penny in debt; but a nation in late reigns almost undone by the vile and despicable arts of stock-jobbers, combining with others, from whom we expected preservation, and now loaded with numerous taxes: Their finances discomposed; their trade loaded with various and burdensome duties, or manacled with exclusive companies; and in debt almost sixty millions; and by that means (as we have lately experienced) unable to contend with small powers, without every year increasing our debts and burdens; and no effectual method ever yet taken to pay them off, or lessen them, but always new methods found out to enhance the account.

Sure, Gentlemen, none of you can hope that neighbouring nations will sit still, and not take advantage of our weakness; even those nations for whose sakes we are brought into this forlorn condition. The vicissitude of human affairs must bring new wars among us, though none among ourselves could find their accounts in courting them; and how think you, in such a circumstance, we shall defend our country? For my own part, I can see but one remedy at hand, and that is a dreadful one; unless we take speedy and effectual methods to lessen the publick expences, to cut off all exorbitant fees, pensions, and unnecessary salaries, to encourage trade, regulate our finances, and all defects in the administration; and by such means save all which can be saved, and apply it to the discharge of the publick burdens.

I wish that our dabblers in corruption would count their gains, and balance their losses with their wicked advantages. Let them set down in one column their mercenary gifts, and precarious dependences; sometimes half purchased with money, sometimes by dividing the profits with parasites, and always with the loss of their integrity and reputation; and on the other side, let them write down expensive contentions, and constant attendance in town to the neglect of their families and affairs, and a manner of living often unsuitable to their fortunes, and destructive to their health, and at least one fourth part of their estates mortgaged, and liable to the discharge of the publick debts; and, above all the rest, the insecurity of what remains, which must be involved in every species of publick misery: And then let them cast

up the account, and see where the balance lies. This is not a fictitious and imaginary computation, like South-Sea stock, but a real and true state of the unhappy case of twenty dealers in corruption, for one who has been a gainer by it; without mentioning the just losses which many of them have suffered by the last detestable project.

Consider too, what a figure they make in their several countries amongst their neighbours, their acquaintance, their former friends, and often even amongst their own relations. See how they have been hunted and pursued from place to place, with reproaches and curses from every honest man in England; how they have been rejected in countries, and populous and rich boroughs, and indeed only hoped for success any where by the mere force of exorbitant corruption, which has swallowed up a great part of their unjust extortions. Then let them set against all these evils a good conscience, a clear reputation, a disengaged estate, and being the happy members of a free, powerful, and safe kingdom; all which was once their case, and might have continued so, if they had acted with integrity. Sure it is worth no man's time to change an estate of inheritance, secured to him by steady and impartial laws, for a precarious title to the greatest advantages at the will of any man whatsoever.

But even these corrupt advantages are no longer to be had upon the same terms. The bow is stretched so far, that it must break if it goes farther. Corruption, like all other things, has its bounds, and must at last destroy itself, or destroy every thing else. We are already almost mortgaged from head to foot. There is scarce any thing which can be taxed, that is not taxed. Our veins have been opened and drained so long, that there is nothing left but our heart's blood; and yet every day new occasions arise upon us; which must be supplied out of exhausted channels, or cannot be supplied at all. How think you, Gentlemen, this can be done? What has been raised within the year, has not been found sufficient to defray the expences of the year: And will any one amongst you, in times of full peace, consent to new mortgage the kingdom to supply the current service? And if you could be prevailed upon to consent to it, how long do you believe it can last, or you find creditors? And what can be the consequence of such credit? Sure it must make the payment desperate; and if ever that grows to be the case, what think you will be the event? Who do you imagine will have the sweeping of the stakes? Do you believe that those who brought your misfortunes upon you will pay the reckoning at last, or save themselves, by endeavouring to complete their wickedness? There is no way, Gentlemen, to prevent all these evils which lower over and threaten you and us, but by preventing or removing the causes of them; and I hope, that you will think it worthy of your best considerations, and most vigorous endeavours, to do so, rather than to suffer under, and be undone by, them.

By doing this great service to your country, you will not only consult your reputation, your own interests, and the interests of those whom you represent; but in the most effectual manner will serve your prince, by making him a glorious king, over an happy, satisfied, dutiful, and grateful, people. A great and rich people can alone make a great king; their diffusive and accumulative wealth is his wealth, and always at his command, when employed for his true glory, which is ever their happiness and security; and the figure which he does or can make among foreign states, bears exact proportion to the affections which he has amongst his own people: If his people be disaffected, his neighbours and his enemies will despise him; and the latter will insult him, if they think his subjects will not defend him. And therefore, since nothing is wanting on his Majesty's part, to make him beloved, honoured, I had almost said, adored, by his people; it lies upon you, Gentlemen, to remove all those causes, which at any time hereafter, by the fault of others, may sully and blemish his high character. It is your duty and your interest too, to acquaint him with all miscarriages in the inferior administration, which you have frequent opportunities of knowing, and which is next to impossible he should otherwise know. Princes are seated aloft in the upper regions, and can only view the whole of things, but must leave the detail and execution of them to

inferioragents.

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I am, &c.

No. 99. SATURDAY, October 20, 1722.

The important Duty of Attendance in Parliament, recommended to the Members.
[Gordon] ↩

[III-283]

SIR,

I know not a more laudable ambition in any man, than that of procuring, by his credit with the people, a place in the legislature; and when it is procured this way, it is a testimony given by his country to his uprightness, and to his capacity to serve it. This is as high an honour as an Englishman can arrive at, and few but Englishmen can arrive at it; and the trust is still as high as the honour, and increases it. The liberty, the property, nay the virtue, credit, and religion of his country, are in his hands. Can heaven or earth afford stronger motives for diligence, probity, and attendance? When the happiness or misery, the security or bankruptcy, the freedom or servitude, of a nation, and all the good or evil which this life affords, depend upon his behaviour, he will find sufficient cause, from virtue, tenderness, and duty, to call up all his care, industry, and zeal.

But so it has often happened in the world, that all the activity and attendance, or most of it, have been on the wrong side; and as the evil that is in the world does infinitely over-balance the good, they who pull down are vastly more numerous, as well as more busy, than they who build up. Vice reigns amongst men, while virtue scarce subsists; and in many countries the publick has been as vigorously assaulted, as it has been slowly and faintly defended. Thus it is that liberty is almost every where lost: Her foes are artful, united, and diligent: Her defenders are few, disunited, and unactive. And therefore we have seen great nations, free, happy, and in love with their own conditions, first made slaves by a handful of traitors, and then kept so by a handful of soldiers: I mean a handful in comparison of the people, but still enough to keep them in chains.

So that in most nations, for want of this particular zeal in every man for his country, in which all men are comprised, the publick, which is every man's business, becomes almost any man's prey. It was thus under the first triumvirate, when Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar, three citizens of Rome, were, by the assistance of Roman armies, sharing out the Roman world among themselves: Nay, they procured the authority of the Senate, and the sanction of the people, for this monstrous three-headed tyranny over Senate and people; and procured it by means that will always procure it: Some they bought, others they terrified, and all they deceived, corrupted, and oppressed. The tribunes of the people, who were the people's representatives, and should have been their protectors, they bribed; and the people were betrayed and sold by their tribunes.

Such is the misfortune of mankind, and so uncertain is the condition of human affairs, that the very power given for protection contains in it a sufficient power to destroy; and so readily does government slide, and often start into oppression! And only by watching and restraining power, is this monstrous and dreadful transition prevented. For this good purpose we have Parliaments, to whom our ministers are accountable; and by whom the administration is supported, and its limits and power fixed. And to our having Parliaments, it is owing that we are not groaning under the same vile vassalage with the nations round about us. They had once their parliaments as well as we; but in the room of parliaments their governors have substituted armies, and consequently formed a military government, without calling it so: but, whatever it be called, that government is certainly and necessarily a military government, where the army is the strongest power in the country: And it is eternally true,

that a free Parliament and a standing army are absolutely incompatible, and can never subsist together.

By parliaments therefore liberty is preserved; and whoever has the honour to sit in those assemblies, accepts of a most sacred and important trust; to the discharge of which all his vigilance, all his application, all his virtue, and all his faculties, are necessary; and he is bound, by all the considerations that can affect a worthy mind, by all the ties that can bind a human soul, to attend faithfully and carefully upon this great and comprehensive duty: A duty, which, as it is honestly or faithfully executed, determines the fate of millions, and brings prosperity or misery upon nations.

Whatever has happened in former reigns, we have reason to hope, that none come now into Parliament, with an execrable intention to carry to market a country which has trusted them with its all; and it would be ridiculous to throw away reason upon such banditti, upon publick enemies to human society. Such men would be worse than cannibals, who only eat their enemies to satisfy their hunger, and do not sell and betray into servitude their own countrymen, who trust them with the protection of their property and persons. But, as I have heard that some men formerly, to whom this important trust has been committed, have been treacherous enough, through negligence, to sacrifice their duty to laziness or pleasure, I shall endeavour to shew the deformity of such conduct.

The name of a Member of Parliament has a great and respectful sound; his situation is attended with many privileges, and an eminent figure! All which make men ambitious of acquiring a seat there; though I am told that some of them have scarce ever appeared there. The glory and terror of the name was enough for them; which glory they tarnished, and converted into their crime and their shame, by neglecting the duty which was annexed to it, and alone produced it. Small and ridiculous must be the glory of that general, who never attends the duties of war, and is always absent upon the day of battle; or of a minister, who, while he should be making dispatches, or concerting schemes for the publick, is wasting his time at ombre, at chess, or with a mistress.

It would scarce be believed, if it had not been felt, that the insensibility of men, as to all that is good and honourable, should go so far as to carry the directors and guardians of the publick to a cock-match, a race, or a drunken bout, when a question has been upon the stage which has concerned the very being of the publick. This passion for pleasure is strangely preposterous upon such occasions, and to follow it is cruel; cruel and disloyal to our country, and ever to ourselves. All our happiness, and consequently all our reasonable pleasures, are contained in the general happiness; and when that is gone, or lessened, through our neglect, we need not be surprised, but may thank ourselves, if in the publick misfortunes and curse we find our own.

When a pernicious question has been carried, it is a poor apology to allege, and had better be left unalleged, that *I was not there*. Why were you not there? Was it not your duty to be there? And were you not bound, by the solemn and awful trust which you undertook, to have been there? Had you been there, perhaps it would not have been carried, perhaps not attempted; or if both, you would have acquitted your own soul, and had the honourable testimony of your country, and of a good conscience.

Every body knows, that in the pensionary Parliaments, in Charles II's time, the session was almost always drawn out into a tedious length, on purpose to tire the members, and drive them all out of town, except the trusty creatures of the court, who were in Parliament with no other view than to make a penny of their betrayed principles, and to pick the publick purse, for the promise of having shares with those who set them on. Were not the absent members answerable, in a great degree, for the treachery of those staunch and patient parricides, by

leaving them an opportunity to commit it, when they knew that they would commit it? When a man leaves his wife with a known ravisher, and his money in the hands of a noted thief, he may blame himself if he suffer loss and dishonour.

Members of Parliament are set in a high place, as publick stewards and guards (the best and only sure guards that a free country can have) to watch for the publick welfare, to settle the publick expences, and to defend publick and private property from the unclean and ravenous hands of harpies; and they are obliged, by every motive that can oblige, to adhere to their station and trust: When the major part neglect or desert it, who knows but in times to come there may be always enough remaining to give it up, and be remaining for that very end? He who does not prevent evil when he may, does in effect commit it, by leaving others to do so, who he cannot be sure will not do it.

I have heard that some of these truants from Parliament have boasted that they never voted wrong: But how often have they been out of the way when they should have voted right, and opposed voting wrong? And is not this omission of voting well the next crime to voting ill? And where it is habitual, is it not worse than even now and then voting ill? He who commits but two murders is less guilty, as to the community, than he who robs ten thousand pounds from the publick, is a more innocent man than he who suffers it to be robbed of an hundred thousand: Or, if he who does not prevent a great evil, be less guilty in his own eyes than he who actually commits a less; the publick, which feels the difference between ten and twenty, must judge far otherwise, and consider him as the more pernicious criminal of the two, as they who are traitors within the law are the most dangerous traitors of all.

How ridiculous is it to take a great deal of pains, and to spend a great deal of money, to come into Parliament, and afterwards come seldom or never there, but keep others out, who would perhaps give constant attendance? It is foolish to allege, that the adversary is so strong, that your attendance will be useless; for it has rarely happened, that any dreadful mischief has been carried in a full house, or indeed attempted; but opportunities have always been taken from the absence of the country members. Besides, how often has it happened, that one extravagant attempt has given a steady majority to the other side? The Pensionary Parliament itself, in King Charles II's time, turned upon that corrupt court: King James's first loyal and passive obedience Parliament did the same, when he declared for governing by armies; and in King William's time, the anti-court party, who for many years together could scarce ever divide above eighty or ninety, yet grew so very considerable, upon the attempt for a standing army, that the court, for several years after, could not boast of a much greater number of followers; and though I confess that this produced many real mischiefs to the publick, yet the courtiers had no one to blame but themselves for it. How absurd is it for men to bring themselves into such a dilemma, as either to submit to certain ruin, or, in some instances, to hazard their lives and estates to get rid of it, by an unequal struggle; when both may be easily prevented, by doing what they have promised to do, what is their duty, and ought to be their pleasure, to do, and what may be done without further expence, than making an honest use of two monosyllables?

The notions of honour generally entertained, are strangely wild, unjust, and absurd. A man that would die rather than pick a private pocket, will without blushing, pick the pockets of a million: And he who would venture his life to defend a friend, or the reputation of a harlot who has none, will not lose a dinner, or a merry meeting, to maintain the wealth and honour of his country. There have been gentlemen of this sort of honour, who really wished well to the publick; yet, rather than attend to a debate of the utmost consequence to the publick, would with infinite punctualness meet a company of sharpers, to throw away their estates at seven or eleven. So much stronger is pernicious custom than publick virtue and eternal reason, which alone ought to create and govern custom; and so much to the publick

shame and misfortune are such wicked customs, from the influence of which even wise men are not entirely exempted! So weak and wild a thing is the nature of man!

It is observed of Cato the Younger, that he always came first to the Senate, and left it last. Pompey and his faction, finding that he would never be persuaded nor frightened into their execrable designs against their country, contrived a thousand treacherous devices to keep him out of the way: But he saw their ill arts, and disappointed them. He said, that he entered upon the business of the state, as the business of every honest man; that he considered the publick as the proper object of his care, zeal, and attendance, and not as a bank for his own private wealth, or a source of personal honours; that it was a hideous reproach for men who are guided by reason, and by it superior to all other creatures, to take less care of the society to which they belong, than such insects as bees and ants take of their hives and common stores; that he would never prefer private interest or pleasure to that of the publick, and that none of those considerations should ever withhold him from attending faithfully in the Senate.

Here is a virtuous and illustrious example, which I would leave upon the minds of my readers, and particularly recommend to those who may most want it. When Caesar had, by all manner of wicked ways, by violence, by fraud, and by bribery, procured the government of Gaul and Illyricum for five years, with an army of four legions, with which he afterwards enslaved Rome itself; Cato could not reproach his own heart, that he had been absent when that fatal law passed: He opposed it with all his zeal and eloquence, and with the hazard of his life; and told those who made it, what they afterwards sadly felt, that they were placing an armed tyrant in their citadel.

Consider, for God's sake, Gentlemen, the extent and sacredness of your trust: Your country and constitution are in your hands: One unjust, one rash law, may overturn both at once, and you with them, and cancel all law and all property for ever; and one good and wise law may secure them to your latest posterity. Can it be indifferent to you, whether the one or the other of these laws pass? And if it be not indifferent, will you avoid attending? Be but as assiduous against evil as others have been for it, and you have a fair chance to prevent it for ages. Why should not honour, virtue, and good conscience, be as active and zealous as falsehood, corruption, and guilty minds? Consider the injustice, the barbarity, the treachery, and the terrible consequences, of sloth and absence. Liberty, when once lost, is scarce ever recovered, almost as rarely as human life, when it is once extinguished.

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I am, &c.

No. 100. SATURDAY, October 27, 1722.

Discourse upon Libels. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-292]

SIR,

I intend in this, and my next letter, to write a dissertation upon libels, which are liberties assumed by private men, to judge of and censure the actions of their superiors, or such as have possession of power and dignities. When persons, formerly of no superior merit to the rest of their fellow-subjects, came to be possessed of advantages, by means which, for the most part, they condemned in another situation of fortune, they often have grown, on a sudden, to think themselves a different species of mankind; they took it into their heads to call themselves the government, and thought that others had nothing to do but to sit still, to act as they bade them, and to follow their motions; were unwilling to be interrupted in the progress of their ambition, and of making their private fortunes by such ways as they could best and soonest make them; and consequently have called every opposition to their wild and ravenous schemes, and every attempt to preserve the people's right, by the odious names of sedition and faction, and charged them with principles and practices inconsistent with the safety of all government.

This liberty has been approved or condemned by all men, and all parties, in proportion as they were advantaged or annoyed by it. When they were in power, they were unwilling to have their actions scanned and censured, and cried out, that such licence ought not to be borne and tolerated in any well-constituted commonwealth; and when they suffered under the weight of power, they thought it very hard not to be allowed the liberty to utter their groans, and to alleviate their pain, by venting some part of it in complaints; and it is certain, that there are benefits and mischiefs on both sides the question.

What are usually called libels, undoubtedly keep great men in awe, and are some check upon their behaviour, by shewing them the deformity of their actions, as well as warning other people to be upon their guard against oppression; and if there were no further harm in them, than in personally attacking those who too often deserve it, I think the advantages which such persons receive will fully atone for the mischiefs which they suffer. But I confess, that libels may sometimes though very rarely, foment popular and perhaps causeless discontents, blast and obstruct the best measures, and now and then promote insurrections and rebellions; but these latter mischiefs are much seldomer produced than the former benefits; for power has so many advantages, so many gifts and allurements to bribe those who bow to it, and so many terrors to frighten those who oppose it; besides the constant reverence and superstition ever paid to greatness, splendor, equipage, and the shew of wisdom, as well as the natural desire which all or most men have to live in quiet, and the dread which they have of publick disturbances, that I think I may safely affirm, that much more is to be feared from flattering great men, than detracting from them.

However, it is to be wished, that both could be prevented; but since that is not in the nature of things, whilst men have desires or resentments, we are next to consider how to prevent the great abuse of it, and, as far as human prudence can direct, preserve the advantages of liberty of speech, and liberty of writing (which secures all other liberties) without giving more indulgence to detraction than is necessary to secure the other: For it is certainly of much less consequence to mankind, that an innocent man should be now and then asspersed, than that all men should be enslaved.

Many methods have been tried to remedy this evil: In Turkey, and in the eastern monarchies, all printing is forbidden; which does it with a witness: for if there can be no printing at all, there can be no libels printed; and by the same reason there ought to be no talking, lest people should talk treason, blasphemy, or nonsense; and, for a stronger reason yet, no preaching ought to be allowed, because the orator has an opportunity of haranguing often to a larger auditory than he can persuade to read his lucubrations: but I desire it may be remembered, that there is neither liberty, property, true religion, art, sciences, learning, or knowledge, in these countries.

But another method has been thought on, in these western parts of the world, much less effectual, yet more mischievous, than the former; namely, to put the press under the direction of the prevailing party; to authorize libels to one side only, and to deny the other side the opportunity of defending themselves. Whilst all opinions are equally indulged, and all parties equally allowed to speak their minds, the truth will come out; even, if they be all restrained, common sense will often get the better: but to give one side liberty to say what they will, and not suffer the other to say any thing, even in their own defence, is comprehensive of all the evils that any nation can groan under, and must soon extinguish every seed of religion, liberty, virtue, or knowledge.

It is ridiculous to argue from the abuse of a thing to the destruction of it. Great mischiefs have happened to nations from their kings and their magistrates; ought therefore all kings and magistrates to be extinguished? A thousand enthusiastick sects have pretended to deduce themselves from scripture; ought therefore the holy writings to be destroyed? Are men's hands to be cut off, because they may and sometimes do steal and murder with them? Or their tongues to be pulled out, because they may tell lies, swear, or talk sedition?

There is scarce a virtue but borders upon a vice, and, carried beyond a certain degree, becomes one. Corruption is the next state to perfection: Courage soon grows into rashness; generosity into extravagancy; Frugality into avarice; justice into severity; religion into superstition; zeal into bigotry and censoriousness; and the desire of esteem into vainglory. Nor is there a convenience or advantage to be proposed in human affairs, but what has some inconvenience attending it. The most flaming state of health is nearest to a plethory: There can be no protection, without hazarding oppression; no going to sea, without some danger of being drowned; no engaging in the most necessary battle, without venturing the loss of it, or being killed; nor purchasing an estate, going to law, or taking physick, without hazarding ill titles, spending your money, and perhaps losing your suit, or being poisoned. Since therefore every good is, for the most part, if not always, accompanied by some evil, and cannot be separated from it, we are to consider which does predominate; and accordingly determine our choice by taking both, or leaving both.

To apply this to libels: If men be suffered to preach or reason publicly and freely upon certain subjects, as for instance, upon philosophy, religion, or government, they may reason wrongly, irreligiously, or seditiously, and sometimes will do so; and by such means may possibly now and then pervert and mislead an ignorant and unwary person; and if they be suffered to write their thoughts, the mischief may be still more diffusive; but if they be not permitted, by any or all these ways, to communicate their opinions or improvements to one another, the world must soon be over-run with barbarism, superstition, injustice, tyranny, and the most stupid ignorance. They will know nothing of the nature of government beyond a servile submission to power; nor of religion, more than a blind adherence to unintelligible speculations, and a furious and implacable animosity to all whose mouths are not formed to the same sounds; nor will they have the liberty or means to search nature, and investigate her works; which employment may break in upon received and gainful opinions, and discover hidden and darling secrets. Particular societies shall be established and endowed to teach them backwards, and to share in their plunder; which societies, by degrees, from the want of

opposition, shall grow as ignorant as themselves: Armed bands shall rivet their chains, and their haughty governors assume to be gods, and be treated as such in proportion as they cease to have human compassion, knowledge, and virtue. In short, their capacities will not be beyond the beasts in the field, and their condition worse; which is universally true in those governments where they lie under those restraints.

On the other side, what mischief is done by libels to balance all these evils? They seldom or never annoy an innocent man, or promote any considerable error. Wise and honest men laugh at them and despise them, and such arrows always fly over their heads, or fall at their feet. If King James had acted according to his coronation oath, and kept to the law, Lilly-Bulero might have been tuned long enough before he had been sung out of his kingdoms. And if there had been no South-Sea scheme, or if it had been justly executed, there had been no libels upon that head, or very harmless ones. Most of the world take part with a virtuous man, and punish calumny by the detestation of it. The best way to prevent libels, is not to deserve them, and to despise them, and then they always lose their force; for certain experience shews us, that the more notice is taken of them, the more they are published. Guilty men alone fear them, or are hurt by them, whose actions will not bear examination, and therefore must not be examined. It is fact alone which annoys them; for if you will tell no truth, I dare say you may have their leave to tell as many lies as you please.

The same is true in speculative opinions. You may write nonsense and folly as long as you think fit, and no one complains of it but the bookseller: But if a bold, honest, and wise book sallies forth, and attacks those who think themselves secure in their trenches, then their camp is in danger, they call out all hands to arms, and their enemy is to be destroyed by fire, sword, or fraud. But it is senseless to think that any truth can suffer by being thoroughly searched, or examined into; or that the discovery of it can prejudice true religion, equal government, or the happiness of society, in any respect: Truth has so many advantages above error, that she wants only to be shewn, to gain admiration and esteem; and we see every day that she breaks the bonds of tyranny and fraud, and shines through the mists of superstition and ignorance: and what then would she do, if these barriers were removed, and her fetters taken off?

Notwithstanding all this, I would not be understood, by what I have said, to argue, that men should have an uncontrolled liberty to calumniate their superiors, or one another; decency, good manners, and the peace of society, forbid it: But I would not destroy this liberty by methods which will inevitably destroy all liberty. We have very good laws to punish any abuses of this kind already, and I well approve them, whilst they are prudently and honestly executed, which I really believe they have for the most part been since the Revolution: But as it cannot be denied, that they have been formerly made the stales of ambition and tyranny, to oppress any man who durst assert the laws of his country, or the true Christian religion; so I hope that the gentlemen skilled in the profession of the law will forgive me, if I entrench a little upon their province, and endeavour to fix stated bounds for the interpretation and execution of them; which shall be the subject of my next letter.

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I am, &c.

[III-300]

SIR,

I have been told that in some former reigns, when the attorney-general took it in his head to make innocent or doubtful expressions criminal by the help of forced innuendos, the method of proceeding was as follows: If the counsel for the prisoner insisted, that the words carried no seditious meaning, but might and ought to be understood in a reasonable sense; he was answered, that his exception would be saved to him upon arrest of judgment; in the mean time the information was tried, and the malign intention of the words was aggravated and left to a willing jury; and then, upon a motion in behalf of the prisoner, to arrest judgment, because the words were not criminal in law, he was told, that the jury were judges of the intention; and having found it an ill one, it was too late to take the exception. Whether this was ever the truth, I have not lived long enough to affirm from my own knowledge; or, whether this method of proceeding be law now, I have not skill enough in that science to determine: But I think I may justly say, that if it be law, it is worth the consideration of our legislature whether it ought to continue so.

It is certain, that there is no middle in nature, between judging by fixed and steady rules, and judging according to discretion, which is another word for fancy, avarice, resentment, or ambition, when supported by power, or freed from fear. And I have said in my former letter, that as there can be no convenience but has an inconvenience attending it, so both these methods of judging are liable to objections. There is a constant war between the legislature and the pleader; and no law was ever enacted with so much circumspection, but flaws were found out afterwards in it, and it did not answer all the purposes intended by the law-makers; nor can any positive law be framed with so much contrivance, but artful men will slip out of it, and particularly in relation to libels. There are so many equivoques in language, so many sneers in expression, which naturally carry one meaning, and yet may intend another, that it is impossible by any fixed and stated rules to determine the intention, and punish all who deserve to be punished. But to get rid of this inconvenience at the expence of giving any man, or number of men, a discretionary power to judge another's intentions to be criminal, when his words do not plainly denote them to be so, is subverting all liberty, and subjecting all men to the caprices, to the arbitrary and wild will, of those in power. A text in scripture cannot be quoted, without being said to reflect on those who break it; nor the ten commandments read, without abusing all princes and great men, who often act against them all.

I must therefore beg leave to think, that it is a strange assertion, which, as I have heard, has been advanced by lawyers in Westminster-Hall; *viz.* That it is an absurdity to affirm, that a judge and jury are the only people in England who are not to understand an author's meaning; which, I think, may be true in many instances, when they act judicially, and the words which he uses, candidly construed, do not import that meaning. Tiberius put many Senators to death, for looking melancholy or dissatisfied, or enviously at his power; and Nero many others, for not laughing at his play, or laughing in the wrong place, or sneering instead of laughing; and very probably both judged right in their intentions; but sure no body will think amongst us, that such examples ought to be copied. A man, by not pulling off his hat, or not low enough, by a turn upon his heel, by a frowning countenance, or an over-pleasant one, may induce his spectators to believe that he intends a disrespect to one to whom it is criminal to own it; yet it would be a strange act of power to punish him for this unobservance. So

words may be certainly chosen with such art, or want of it, that they may naturally carry a compliment, and perhaps may mean it; and yet other people, by knowing that the person intended does not deserve one, may think him abused And if this way of judging may be indulged in Westminster-Hall, the Lord have mercy upon poets, and the writers of dedications, and of the epitaphs too upon great men. Surely it is of less consequence to mankind, that a witty author should now and then escape unpunished, than that all men should hold their tongues, or not learn to write, or cease writing.

I do agree, when the natural and genuine meaning and purport of words and expressions in libelous writings carry a criminal intention, that the writer ought not to escape punishment by subterfuge or evasion, or by a sly interpretation hid in a corner, and intended only for a court of justice, nor by annexing new names to known things, or by using circumlocutions instead of single sounds and expressions; for words are only arbitrary signs of ideas; and if any man will coin new words to old ideas, or annex new ideas to old words, and let this meaning be fully understood, without doubt he is answerable for it. But when words used in their true and proper sense, and understood in their literal and natural meaning, import nothing that is criminal; then to strain their genuine signification to make them intend sedition (which possibly the author might intend too) is such a stretch of discretionary power, as must subvert all the principles of free government, and overturn every species of liberty. I own, that with such a power, some men may escape censure who deserve censure, but with it no man can be safe; and it is certain, that few men or states will be aggrieved by this indulgence, but such as deserve much worse usage.

It is a maxim of politicks in despotick governments, that twenty innocent persons ought to be punished, rather than one guilty man escape; but the reverse of this is true in free states, in the ordinary course of justice: For since no law can be invented which can give power enough to their magistrates to reach every criminal, without giving them, by the abuse of the same law, a power to punish innocence and virtue, the greater evil ought to be avoided: And therefore when an innocent or criminal sense can be put upon words or actions, the meaning of which is not fully determined by other words or actions, the most beneficent construction ought to be made in favour of the person accused. The cause of liberty, and the good of the whole, ought to prevail, and to get the better of the just resentment otherwise due to the impertinence of a factious scribbler, or the impotent malice of a turbulent babbler.

This truth every man acknowledges, when it becomes his own case, or the case of his friends or party; and almost every man complains of it when he suffers by it: So great is the difference of men's having power in their hands or upon their shoulders! But at present, I think that no party amongst us can find their account either in the suppression or in the restraint of the press, or in being very severe in their animadversion upon the liberties taken by it. The independent Whigs think all liberty to depend upon freedom of speech, and freedom of writing, within the bounds of manners and discretion, as conceiving that there is often no other way left to be heard by their superiors, nor to apprise their countrymen of designs and conspiracies against their safety; which they think ought to be done boldly, though in respect to authority, as modestly as can be consistent with the making themselves understood; and such among them as have lately quitted their independence, think themselves obliged to handle a subject tenderly, upon which they have exerted themselves very strenuously in another circumstance of fortune.

Very many of the Tories, who may be at present ranked amongst the former sort of men, and who every day see more and more the advantages of liberty, and forget their former prejudices, will not be contented hereafter to receive their religion and politicks from an ignorant licenser, under the direction of those who have often neither religion nor politicks. And even the Jacobites themselves are so charmed with their own doughty performances, that they would not lose the pleasure of scolding at or abusing those whom they cannot hurt.

Many of our spiritual guides will not be deprived of doing honour to themselves, and advantage to their flocks, from informing the world what they ought to believe by their particular systems; and the dissenting preachers are willing to keep their own flocks, and would not have the reasonableness of their separation judged of alone by those who differ from them, and have an interest in suppressing them. And I believe that all our world would be willing to have some other news besides what they find in the *Gazette*; and I hope that I may venture to say, that there is no number of men amongst us so very popular, as by their single credit and authority to get the better of all these interests.

But, besides the reasons that I have already given, there is another left behind, which is worth them all; namely, that all the methods hitherto taken to prevent real libels have proved ineffectual; and probably any method which can be taken, will only prevent the world from being informed of what they ought to know, and will increase the others. The subjecting the press to the regulation and inspection of any man whatsoever, can only hinder the publication of such books, as authors are willing to own, and are ready to defend; but can never restrain such as they apprehend to be criminal, which always come out by stealth. There is no hindering printers from having presses, unless all printing be forbidden, and scarce then: And dangerous and forbidden libels are more effectually dispersed, enquired after, and do more mischief, than libels openly published; which generally raise indignation against the author and his party. It is certain, that there were more published in King Charles II's and King James's times, when they were severely punished, and the press was restrained, than have ever been since. The beginning of Augustus's reign swarmed with libels, and continued to do so, whilst informers were encouraged; but when that prince despised them, they lost their force, and soon after died. And, I dare say, when the governors of any country give no occasion to just reflexions upon their ill conduct, they have nothing to fear but calumny and falsehood.

Whilst Tiberius, in the beginning of his reign, would preserve the appearance of governing the Romans worthily, he answered a parasite, who informed him in the Senate, of libels published against his person and authority, in these words; *Si quidem locutus aliter fuerit, dabo operam ut rationem factorum meorum dictorumque reddam; si perseveraverit, invicem eum odero*: "If any man reflect upon my words or actions, I will let him know my motives and reasons for them; but if he still go on to asperse and hate me, I will hate him again." But afterwards, when that emperor became a bloody tyrant, words, silence, and even looks, were capital.

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I am, &c.

[III-307]

SIR,

The first reasonable desire which men have, is, to be in easy circumstances, and as free from pain and dangers as human condition will permit; and then all their views and actions are directed to acquire homage and respect from others; and, indeed, in a larger sense, the latter are included in the former. Different ways are taken to attain this end; arts, arms, learning, power, but most of all, riches, are sought after; and when just and proper means are used to acquire them, the pursuit is reasonable, and always to be commended. But when they are gained by injustice, the end is frustrated for which alone they are valuable; that is, the respect is lost which they are intended to procure: For, who does not value an honest man in moderate circumstances, before another grown rich by oppression? Who does not esteem a steady patriot, who despises threats, bribes, and dignities, when they stand between him and his duty to his country, before an over-grown plunderer, who has sacrificed a nation to his ambition? Men will indeed bow down in the House of Rimmon, but they detest the idol in their heart. It is all false homage. Such men are adored publicly, and cursed privately; and most of those who seem to adore them, would with much more pleasure follow them to the scaffold.

How many have we seen in our days, who are thought to have died martyrs to their pride and covetousness, hooted with the reproaches and detestation of every honest man in England, and, I doubt not, with the private curses of many of their own followers? And how many are there in all countries, who are never seen or spoken of but with contempt and indignation, even in the midst of greatness?

What is there in this world worth being a knave for; especially a man's being so, who already enjoys all the conveniencies of life? Who would lose the just applause of honest men, wise men, and free men, for the servile incense of flatterers? How much more preferable is it, to make millions of people happy, and receive the grateful acknowledgments of a thankful nation, than to purchase their hatred and resentments, by making them abject, poor, and miserable, and themselves and their families so too in consequence? And what is all this for? To create false dependents, who flatter them, in order to cheat them, or otherwise make their advantages of them, instead of steady and true friends: For a certain degree of familiarity is necessary to friendship, or free conversation; without which no conversation is agreeable, or worth having. Few men take pleasure in the company of those who are much their superiors, who always strike them with awe, and most commonly with emulation; and what is got amongst them is generally spent among equals.

I have seen many supple and bowing guests at the table of a great man, whom, for his vanity, he treated magnificently, and at a great expence; none of which he would have kept company with in any other place, nor perhaps they with him. Men of virtue and understanding are conscious of their own worth: They will be sought after, and can be brought rarely to contribute to the pride, grandeur, and ostentation of those whom they privately hate, fear, or contemn: And therefore the latter, in their own defence, are obliged to associate with the most worthless part of mankind, with flatterers and parasites, hunters of good tables, sharpers, and pick-pockets; which are the usual attendants and ornaments of their greatness. Their domestick followers are generally made up of insolent and debauched beggars, who fancy themselves to be gentlemen; and as they cheat their master to be so, so

depending upon his protection, they insult his neighbours, ride over the country people, and are perpetually annoying the peaceable and industrious farmers and labourers, and giving examples of prodigality and lewdness; insomuch that an estate is some years' purchase less valuable that lies within the influence of such malignant constellations.

Their sons are educated in idleness, debauchery, and ignorance; taught to believe, that greatness consists in pride, insolence, and extravagance; and so, for the most part, want every qualification proper to adorn their characters, to serve their prince or country, or to direct their own conduct, govern their families, or manage their own estates; which generally become the property of their stewards, bailiffs, or debauched followers, whilst they themselves often pay large interest to them for their own money, run in debt to tradesmen and mechanicks for the common conveniences of life, whom they either pay not at all, or pay treble values to; till at last their necessities make them submit to a paltry pension; and, instead of being the generous asserters of publick liberty, they become the mean and humble instruments of power.

Their daughters partake of this happy education; they are bred up to be above looking to their own families, or to know any thing of their own affairs; and, indeed, it is become a qualification now, to be good for no one thing in the world, but to dance, dress, play upon the guitar, to prate in a visiting-room, or to play amongst sharpers at cards and dice: And when they cannot be exercising these laudable accomplishments, they are always in the vapours and the spleen; and so they can get no husbands, or ruin those who are indiscreet enough to marry them. The necessities of their parents, arising from their profusion in all other respects, will not afford fortunes great enough to marry them to men of their own quality, who run into the city for grocers' and mercers' daughters, to repair their shattered affairs, and generally use them as such. For all private gentlemen (whose alliance is worth courting) are ever afraid of her ladyship, and think themselves not worthy of so much honour; very few instances excepted of vain and inconsiderate young gallants, who are caught with outside shew and pageantry, and drawn in to make great settlements, and repent it all their lives after.

I do not say that this is always the case: For virtue and good sense is not confined to any order of men or women; and without doubt there are excellent men and ladies amongst the quality. But I appeal to general experience, whether what I have said be not most commonly the real truth. And who dares be so sanguine, as to hope that it will not be the case of his own posterity, if something be not done to mend the present education of youth; which never can be done, without mending that which must mend every thing else? For those who have an interest in keeping the nobility and gentry ignorant, debauched, and extravagant, and consequently necessitous and dependent, will never voluntarily endeavour to lessen their own power and influence.

This is indeed a melancholy, but true, scene of modern greatness. And is this a condition to be envied or courted by any who have plentiful (though not great and exorbitant) fortunes? who have all the means of enjoying private happiness, and of educating their children in virtue, knowledge, and publick principles, and can make a modest provision for them after their death; and, by leaving them examples of frugality, and prudent oeconomy, enable them to abound in the true necessaries and conveniencies of life; which the other (like Tantalus) want in the midst of profusion?

Nature is easily contented, and with few things. The most luxurious palate may be gratified by what moderate circumstances can afford. Those who have the most magnificent palaces, choose to live in the least and meanest apartments of them; and such as have the richest and most expensive clothes, and other personal ornaments, wear the worst when by themselves; so that all the rest are only pride and ostentation, and often procure emulation and ill-will from neighbours and acquaintance, but seldom true and real respect. However,

since the mind of man, like every thing else in nature, is in constant progression, and in perpetual pursuit of one thing or other, I do not condemn the moderate pursuit of wealth, if we do not buy it too dear, and at the price of our health or integrity; for riches in a wise man's hands are certainly conducive to happiness, though they are more often the causes of misery to others.

Men, for the most part, are not so solicitous to acquire them for the real pleasure that they give, and to satiate personal appetites, as in compliance with the custom of the world. We seldom examine ourselves, but enquire of others, whether we are happy or not; and provided we can make those whom we do not value, and who do not value us, envy and admire our felicity, are contented to know that we have none. Such is the force of prejudice, flowing from foolish vanity, pride, or custom! True happiness resides alone in the mind; and whoever hunts after it elsewhere, will never find it. All the hurry and tumults of faction, most of the eager pursuits after vice under the name of pleasure, and the vain and noisy chases of ambition, are but so many disguises to cover internal uneasiness, and stratagems to fly from ourselves; but *haeret lateri lethalis arundo*: The deer is struck, and where-ever he flies, must carry his griefs about him.

Nothing can fill the mind of a truly great man, but the love of God, of virtue, and of his country. All other pleasures ought to be but amusements, and subservient to these, and very often turn to misfortunes; but here is an inexhaustible source of inward satisfaction, which is the only true happiness, which wicked men never feel; and consequently they are the most unhappy of all men.

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I am, &c.

No. 103. SATURDAY, November 17, 1722.

Of Eloquence, considered politically. [Trenchard] ↪

[III-313]

SIR,

In free states, where publick affairs are transacted in popular assemblies, eloquence is always of great use and esteem; and, next to money and an armed force, is the only way of being considerable in these assemblies. This talent therefore has been ever cultivated and admired in commonwealths, where men were dealt with by reason and persuasion, and at liberty to ratify or reject propositions offered, and measures taken, by their magistrates, to examine their conduct, and to distinguish them with honours or punishments as they deserved. But in single monarchies, where reason is turned into command, and remonstrances and debating into servile submission, eloquence is either lost, or perverted to sanctify publick violence, and to deify the authors of it.

In the free states of Greece and Rome this popular eloquence was of such force and consequence, that the best speakers generally governed them; and their greatest orators were often not only their chief magistrates, but their principal commanders. Rhetoric was the first and great study, because the first and great offices of the state were the sure price of rhetoric. By it Cicero came to be the first man in Rome, and Pericles the first man in Athens. Themistocles, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Alcibiades, could speak as well as they could fight: so could Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, Cato, Brutus, M. Antony, and many more; who were not only great orators, as well as great soldiers, but for the most part owed their military power to their powerful speaking. Not that eloquence is necessary to a soldier, no more than skill in war to a civil officer: But both were necessary parts, and indeed the principal parts of the Roman education; and the candidates for preferments were either good speakers, or supported by such. Pompey, though he principally derived his fame and credit from military glory, had been far from neglecting the other accomplishments of the gown and the bar. We have the testimony of Cicero, that he was a graceful and engaging speaker. His great employments, and many wars, had with-held him long from the exercise of declaiming, and his eminent authority in the state had made it for some time unnecessary: But he resumed it with great application in the latter years of his life; when Curio, a young tribune of vast spirit and eloquence, being gained by an immense sum of money, to the interest of Caesar, was by publick and perpetual harangues misleading the people into his party. Cicero continued this exercise till near his death; and Mark Antony and Augustus in the midst of their wars.

The chief power of the state being in the people, and all the great offices in their gifts, made eloquence a necessary qualification in every one who courted their favour, and sought their suffrages. And a candidate thus qualified, rarely missed gaining them; till money, more prevailing than eloquence, and every other accomplishment, corrupted their hearts, abolished their integrity, and finding their souls and their voices saleable, made them first the market, then the slaves, of ambition. But in the times of their purity, before their virtue was vanquished by irresistible gold, which has been ever an over-match for the probity of the sons of men, it must be owned, to their honour, that in almost all the questions and debates in the Roman state, the justest side was the strongest; and he who spoke best, that is, with most reason and truth, had the most voices. Such was the equity and good sense of the Roman people! Even in the days of their degeneracy they gave many proofs, that it was with shame and pain they had departed from their ancient integrity and publick spirit: They continued to prefer many worthy citizens, merely for their worth: They carried Cicero, particularly, through all the considerable offices of the state, only because he deserved them. Cato they

created their tribune, in spite of violence and opposition; and would have chosen him praetor, when he first stood for it, notwithstanding the influence and bribery of the faction of the first triumvirate, had they not been cheated and terrified by a religious lie of Pompey's, who by it broke up the assembly. Cato was however chosen next year; and, by the usual power of his eloquence and credit with the people, frustrated many of the pernicious designs of the triumvirate against his country, and consequently prevented, for a time, many public mischiefs, as he foretold them all.

The credit of eloquence among the Greeks was at least equally high, and its force as visible. However, in Greece itself it was differently esteemed and practised, according to the difference of the forms of government in the several Greek cities. In Sparta, where little riches were to be acquired, and the acting power of the state was chiefly in the Senate, the faculty of haranguing was less studied, in proportion to the smaller power of the people, who had only a negative vote, and the bare right of confirming or refuting the laws proposed to them, and none to debate about them, nor to explain them, much less to offer new laws. Their laws therefore, and their publick deliberations, being carried, as far as regarded the people, without popular speeches and cabals, that city was no proper scene for popular speakers; and, doubtless, it was the most perfect and best established state then in the world; but not being formed for conquest, nor indeed for trade, or increase of people, it was undone by an endeavour to enlarge it.

At Athens it was far otherwise: The multitude, the unrepresented multitude, being the legislature, governed all things, and were themselves governed by their orators; who therefore swarmed in that city, and filled all the great offices in it, as they always will do in such a state. They would never suffer any thing to remain fixed and quiet; but, to make themselves considerable, were for ever starting new projects, new treaties, and new wars; which, at last, ruined the state, as I shall shew in another letter. Aristotle finds just fault with their demagogues, who were making them continually drunk with torrents of inflammatory eloquence. There wanted a proper power to check and balance that of the people; the court of Areopagus being only a court of justice, and its credit and authority broken by Ephialtes and Pericles, two of the chief orators, who hated to see any authority in Athens but their own.

As eloquence itself is necessary, or checked, or quite discouraged, in different forms of government; so the manner of eloquence must vary, even where it is useful, according to the various classes of men to whom it is addressed. There is a considerable difference between the speeches spoken by Cicero in the Senate, and those which he spoke to the people. In an assembly of gentlemen, he who speaks with brevity and clearness, and strong sense, speaks best. The chief court is to be paid to the understanding; and silence is better than a rote of good words, that carry with them no conviction. I do not deny, but in the most polite assembly, the manner of speaking, the voice, and the choice of words, will considerably recommend the speech and the speaker: But it is equally true, that a theatrical action, and an ostentation of language, prejudice both, as they break in upon propriety; and, instead of adorning good sense, disguise it with shew and sound.

But in speeches to assemblies of the people, much greater latitude is allowed; and vehemence of tone and action, a hurry and pomp of words, strong figures, tours of fancy, ardent expression, and throwing fire into their imaginations, have always been reckoned proper ways to gain their assent and affections. I think Valerius Maximus says of Pericles, that whenever he spoke to the people, he always left a sting in their souls: And hence, *sine armis tyrannidem gessit*, he was a tyrant without an army. Demosthenes gave many proofs of the same dictatorial force of speaking, not only at Athens, but all over Greece; which, in spite of all King Philip's arts, and power, and ambassadors, and bribes, he worked up into a general insurrection and confederacy against him. The Thebans, particularly, though terrified by Philip's name and conquests, and dreading to risk again the calamities of war which they had

lately felt, no sooner heard Demosthenes, but they were subdued by the dint of his words; and, losing all terror of the Macedonians, ran headlong into the war. "He inflamed their minds," says the historian,

with a passion for glory and liberty, and covered all their wary considerations in the magical mist of his eloquence; so that, inspired by it, like men possessed, they took sudden, bold, and honourable resolutions.

The substance and reasoning part of this potent speech might have been comprised in a few plain and short propositions, more proper than a copious harangue for a cool council of wise men, taught by experience to weigh every step which they took, and to examine the soundness of the sense divested of deceitful words: But such a summary and dry representation of the orator's meaning would probably not have moved a fifth part of his auditory; or had the oration itself been read by a clerk, or uttered by one of our pleaders in Westminster-Hall, in an unassuming tone, and with an unanimated gesture, I doubt it would have had the same or no effect: But it was an oration, and an oration pronounced by an orator, with all the lightning of figures, and thunder of expression: He poured forth persuasion like a torrent; and in his voice, when he cried to war, they heard the sound of a trumpet.

By what I have said of our own pleaders, I mean no sort of reflections upon the gentlemen of the long robe, or upon their manner of speaking, which I think is the only proper manner for our bar; where the rules of proceeding being strict and ascertained, there is no room for haranguing. The judge is tied to the rigid letter of the law, and not to be moved from it by pity or resentment; and therefore an address to his passions would be ridiculous and offensive. In a speech to an assembly that acts by discretion, or to an absolute prince who has life and death in his hands, it is the business of the speaker, by flattering insinuations, to steal into the affections of his judges, and, by a hurricane of tropes and impetuous words, to animate their passions in his behalf: But a speech of this sort would be waste language in Westminster-Hall, and the author of it would be thought fit for Moorfields, where the imagination has more scope. At our bar many excellent pleaders have been very bad orators; and some good speakers, very bad pleaders. To know law, and to speak to the point, is the only rhetoric approved, or indeed allowed, there; and therefore the jokes which witty men have made upon the cold and plain manner of speaking there return upon the makers.

In the pulpit there is much more latitude for oratory, and the preacher has the affections and imaginations of his hearers much more in his power; and, by distracting them with terrors, or elevating them with joys, may awaken and enkindle their passions almost as much as he will. He has a vast field, and full scope for decorations, fine phrases, lively descriptions, and all the pompous array of language; and if he has a fine tuneable voice and his audience a good ear, I know no wonders which he may not work. But as the plainest sermons have generally the best sense and most piety in them, I am almost amazed that the very fine figurative ones do no more harm.

If we enquire into the use and purposes of eloquence, and into the good and evil which it has done, we must distinguish between eloquence and eloquence. That which consists of good sense, put into good words, is every-where useful and commendable: But as to that which consists of fine figures and beautiful sounds, artfully and warmly applied to the passions, and may disguise and banish sense, embellish falsehood as well as truth, and recommend virtue as well as vice; it has done some good, and infinite mischief. It is the art of flattering and deceiving, as one of the ancients calls it: It fills the mind with false ideas; and, by raising a tempest in the heart, misleads the judgment: It confounds good and evil, by throwing false colours over them; and deceives men with their own approbation: And it has in many instances unsettled all good order, and thrown flourishing states into pangs and

desolation. But though rhetoric in this sense be but a bad art, yet I do not think it possible to destroy it, without destroying with it most other good arts; for it almost always flourishes and decays with them: And where-ever politeness, liberty, and learning subsist, rhetoric will be cultivated as part of them. It is an evil growing out of much good; and nothing but the abolishing of all liberty and learning can absolutely cure it. In this cure the Turks have succeeded best; and they who would be like them in this, must be like them in all things. Besides, as the several states of Europe are now constituted, they do not seem to have much, or any thing to apprehend from the power of rhetoric, except that which comes from the popish ecclesiasticks, who in the midst of monarchies form a democracy every-where; and every village has one of many popular orators, who have but too successful a talent at turning the heads of the multitude, and inflaming their hearts; a misfortune which has cost many countries very dear: Insomuch that preaching monks have been reckoned publick plagues; as it would be, no doubt, a sort of a publick blessing, if they were all alike idle and dumb. Even the Lutheran monks at Hamburgh are every day preaching that free city into strife and confusion; and will at last, if they are not better controlled, preach it out of its liberty, as more than once they have well nigh done.

T

I am, &c.

No. 104. SATURDAY, November 24, 1722.

Of Eloquence, considered philosophically. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[III-322]

SIR,

If we now enquire how eloquence operates upon the minds of men, we must consider three things or causes: The sense, the sound, and the action. The first is addressed to the understanding; and the other two to the passions, and have consequently the greatest force.

Nothing is too hard for sound, which subdues every thing, and raises the highest and most opposite perturbations. One sound lulls men to sleep; another rouses them from it: one sort sets them a fighting, another to embracing; and a third sets them a weeping: It makes them groan or rage; it melts them into compassion, or animates them to resentment. And as to action, in which I also comprehend the motions of the countenance, and of the eyes, it is of such force, that Demosthenes being asked, which was the first excellency of an orator? answered, *Action*; that the second was *Action*; and the third was *Action*. Here is a testimony of a great and experienced judge.

Now the power of action seems to arise chiefly from hence: As it is a sign that the speaker is in earnest, and vehemently means what he speaks, it begets an opinion, that what he says is just, and reasonable, and important: And so his hearers adopt his passions and opinions, and are equally animated with him who animates them, and often more. Hence it is possible for a man, who thus carries his spirit in his gestures, and his meaning in his face, to look another into his sentiments and out of his senses, only by shewing, in the energy of his countenance, that he himself is strongly affected with that passion which he would convey to another, and that his external motions are but the result of his internal. Men have been converted into Quakerism at the silent-meetings of Quakers; and solemn looks, dumb shew, and ghostly groans, have had all the most prevailing effects of eloquence.

Nothing is so catching and communicative as the passions. The cast of an angry or a pleasant eye will beget anger, or pleasure: One man's anger, or sorrow, or joy, can make a whole assembly outrageous, or dejected, or merry; and the same men are provoked or pleased by the same words spoken in different tones; because they who hear them, take them just as he who speaks them seems to mean them. I have seen a preacher of mean sense and language set a whole congregation a howling, merely because he himself howled. By repeating the words *heaven* and *hell*, with distortion and clamour, he possessed their imaginations with all the joys of the blessed, and all the torments and terrors of the damned; and, by making them feel both by turns, raised their passions higher than the reading of our blessed Saviour's crucifixion, or his Sermon upon the Mount, could have raised them.

The fancy when once it is heated, quickly improves the first spark into a flame; which being an assemblage of strong and glowing images, is, while it lasts, the strongest motion, and consequently the greatest power, in a man; for all animal power is motion. And when a man has thus got a fire in his head, his reason, which is the gradual and deliberate weighing of things, and the cool comparing of one inward pulse with another, must shift its quarters till his brains grow cool again. I dare say, that many men, and still more women, who have without emotion heard the great Dr. Tillotson talk excellent sense and morality for half an hour, would have been powerfully edified, that is, violently transported, with the tuneful and humble reveries of John Bunyan, of Bishop Beveridge, or Daniel Burgess.

This aptness to be moved by sounds is natural, but improvable by education and the use of words. There are in the brain certain fibres, or strings, which naturally stretch and exert themselves as soon as certain sounds strike upon them; but without being able to annex to them any determinate idea, only, in general, that they feel pleasure or pain. It is like rubbing the hand of a man born deaf and blind with a file, or a flesh-brush: He feels the skin irritated, or soothed, but knows not with what. When these fibres are touched, they disperse the motion to the whole animal spirits, and create in them motions and agitations according to the force and quality of that sound which was the first mover. Hence people are said to be cured of the bite of the tarantula by musick; which, by quickening the motions of the animal spirits, raises in the blood such a ferment, as drives out the poison.

But when description is added to those sounds, when they convey particular and distinct images, when scenes of horror or of joy are represented in sounds proper to convey them; then the sense and the sound heightening vastly each other, their united power over the soul is infinite and uncontrollable. The word *hell*, for example, is, without doubt, capable of being pronounced in such a hideous tone and action, as to affect and affright even a Hottentot, who knows nothing of hell: But if, with the sound of *hell*, the description of hell be likewise conveyed; that it is a dark, immense, and baleful dungeon, guarded by frightful and implacable furies, armed with whips and torches; that it is filled with suffocating and burning sulphur, and unintermitting fire; that it is inhabited by the damned, whose incessant shrieks, hideous roarings, and dismal yells, are the chief entertainments there; and by devils, who by their endless insults add, if possible, to their intense tortures and horrible burning, which are never, never, to end. ...

— — — *Sights of woe,*
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd — — —

I say, this idea of hell, added to the sound of *hell*, would dreadfully aggravate the horror even in a Hottentot. He might likewise be charmed with a soft and melodious sound of *heaven*, well pronounced, without having any conception of heaven; but still much more charmed, if the idea of it accompanied the sound, and all the celestial scenery of delight, a blessed immortality, God, and glory, were set, as it were, before his eyes.

Such force has sound over the human soul, to animate and calm its passions; and when proper action is added to proper sound, which two parts constitute the mechanical power of eloquence, the effects of it are as certain as the effects of wine, and its strength as irresistible. In this respect men resemble musical instruments, and may be wound up, or let down, to any pitch, by touching skillfully the stops and chords of the animal spirits. An expert hand can make a violin rage as violently, weep as bitterly, beg as heartily, and complain as mournfully, as words can express those several passions; and more than words, without proper modulation, can express them. Timotheus the musician played before Alexander the Great an air so martial and animating, that he started from the table in a warlike fury, and called for his horse and his arms; and by another soft air so quelled the hostile tumult in his mind, that he sat down quietly to meat again. Thus was the conqueror of the world himself conquered by sound! Drums and trumpets make men bold: And the Marquis de Biron, one of the bravest men that ever lived, died like a coward for want of them.

In a day of battle, when the onset is animated by all the awakening military sounds of a camp, the eager neighing of the horses, and even the busy and hollow treading of their feet; a general and warlike murmur of every man preparing to fight; the clattering of arms, calling

into the imagination the sudden use that is to be made of them; the hasty thunder and vehement rattling of drums, inspiring an impatience for battle; the dead and sullen dubbing of the kettle-drums, creating a steady and obstinate bravery; and, above all, the loud and shrill clangor of the trumpet, rousing a cheerful and lively boldness: All these hostile sounds, each of them destructive of coldness and fear, must occupy and incense every spirit that a man has in him, set his soul in a flame, and make evencowards resolute and brave.

I have seen a beggar gain an alms by a heavy and affecting groan, when a speech of Cicero's composing, spoken without Cicero's art, would not have gained it. That groan struck the animal spirits sympathetically; and, being continued to the imagination, raised up there a thousand sudden conjectures and preoccupations in his favour, and a thousand circumstances of distress, which he who uttered it perhaps never felt, nor thought of. Looks and appearances have the like efficacy: Another beggar, shivering and naked in a cold wet day, with humble, pale, and hungry looks, or despairing ones, shall be as eloquent, without uttering a word, as the other by uttering a groan. The human sympathy in our souls raises a party for him within us, and our fancy immediately represents us to ourselves in the same doleful circumstances; and, for that time, we feel all that the beggar feels, probably much more; for he is used to it, and can bear it better. If to the above melancholy sound and miserable sight, we add the grievous symptoms of pain, sickness, and anguish (as one often meets with objects under all these terrible classes of misery), there is no pitch of human pity and horror, that such a group of human woes cannot raise.

Now, if single sound be thus bewitching, and gesture alone thus persuasive, and still greatly more when united; how vastly prevailing must be their force, when it comes arrayed and heightened by a swelling and irresistible tide of words, enlivened by the most forcible and rapid ideas, and bears down all before it? When the orator attracts your eyes, charms your ears, and forces your attention; brings heaven and earth into his cause, and seems but to represent them, to speak their sense, and to contend for their interest? When he carries your passions in his hands, suspends or controls all your faculties, and yet persuades you that your own faculties guide you? When he lessens great things, magnifies little things, and disguises all; his very gesture is animated, and every muscle persuades; his words lighten, and his breath is on fire; every word glows, and every image flames; he fills, delights, kindles, and astonishes, your imagination; raises a storm in your heart, and governs you in that storm; rouses all that is human in you, and makes your own heart conspire against you! In this magicaland outrageous tempest, you are at the entire mercy of him who raised it.

Caesar was resolved to punish Q. Ligarius; but Cicero had a mind to save him, and undertook his defence. Caesar admitted him to speak, only out of the gaiety of his heart, and for the mere pleasure of hearing him; for he was determined not to be shaken from his purpose. But he was deceived: Cicero in the very beginning of his speech wonderfully moved him, and proceeded in it with such a variety of pathos, and such an amazing grace, that Caesar often changed countenance; and it was plain that his soul was in a hurricane, and that all his passions were agitated. But the orator touching artfully upon the battle of Pharsalia, so transported him, that he trembled all over; the papers which he held dropped out of his hands; and, being quite overcome, he acquitted Ligarius.

What an amazing instance of the power of speaking! Behold the great and conquering Caesar, the absolute master of Rome, and of all the Roman world, provoked at a man who had borne arms against him, fixed upon his doom, and life and death in his hands! Behold this great and arbitrary man, this angry, awful, and prepossessed, judge, overpowered by the force of eloquence, disarmed of his wrath, his designs wrested from him, his inclinations, when he thought himself best fortified in them, entirely changed, and himself, from being terrible, brought to tremble! Caesar too was a great orator, and had often tried upon others, with success, the power of his own rhetoric; but was not then aware how much it could do

upon himself. It was Cicero, it was the orator, and not the cause, that triumphed here. The bare sense of that fine speech would not have suspended Caesar's displeasure for a moment: But the speaker was not to be resisted: All opposition fled, and every spark of resentment vanished, before him. The emperor was enchanted by the orator; and Caesar was, as it were, possessed of Cicero.

I am, &c.

P.S. I have in these two letters comprised all that I purposed to say upon eloquence: In my last I have considered it politically, in this philosophically; and in both I have shewn its force. I have likewise examined the several kinds of it, as far as it affects my present purpose; and shewn, how it affects government and human nature, and from what sources in both it proceeds. Those who would study it as an art, and know the many accomplishments necessary to excel in it, must read Cicero *de Oratore* and Quintilian.

G

No. 105. SATURDAY, December 1, 1722.

Of the Weakness of the human Mind; how easily it is misled. [Trenchard] ↩

[III-330]

SIR,

Things of the greatest seeming difficulty appear the easiest to us when found out. There was no wit necessary to set an egg on one end, when Columbus had shewn the way. Jugglers do many things by slight of hand, which to a gaping beholder appear to be witchcraft; and when he knows how they are done, he wonders at himself for wondering at them. A ship as big as a castle is sailed by a rudder and a puff of wind; and a weight, which a thousand men cannot move, may be easily managed by one, by the help of wheels and pullies. The same is true in the direction of mankind, who will be always caught by a skillful application to their passions and weaknesses, and be easily drawn into what they will be very difficultly driven. The fiercest horses are subdued by the right management of the bit; the most furious wild beasts tamed by gratifying their appetites, or working upon their fears; and the most savage tempers are made tractable by soothing their foibles, or knowing how to manage their panicks.

This is what is called the knowledge of mankind, which very few of them know any thing of. Pedants hope to govern them by distinctions and grave faces; tyrants by force and terror; philosophers by solemn lectures of morality and virtue. And all these have certainly a share in influencing their minds, and determining their actions; but, all together, not half so much as applying to their reigning appetites, appearing interests, and predominant foibles, and taking artful advantages of favourable opportunities, and catching at lucky conjectures, to effect at once what a long series of wise counsels, and the best concerted measures, cannot bring about.

Wise statesmen will understand this foible in human nature, and often take advantage from a plot discovered, or a rebellion quelled; from the transports of a restoration, or a victory obtained; or during the terrors of a pestilential distemper, or the rage of a prevailing faction, or the fears of a desponding one, to accomplish what neither threats nor armies could extort, nor bribes nor allurements persuade.

The same advantages have been as luckily taken by the leaders of popular parties, upon sudden discontents and unsuccessful acts of power, to obtain concessions and privileges which they durst not think of, much less hope for, at other times. My Lord Clarendon furnishes us with many instances of such concessions, which neither the crown would have granted, nor the people been prevailed upon to ask, nor perhaps accept, before, or possibly after.

Whereas a preposterous and ill-timed attempt, on either side, would have increased the power which they designed to lessen, or take away. The greatest secret in politicks is, to drive the nail that will go.

If a solemn soothsayer, a poet, or philosopher, talk of the dignity of human nature, man is lifted up to a resemblance with his great Creator: He is lord of the universe; all things are made for his use, even such as are of no use to him, but do him mischief. The sun is placed in the firmament to ripen his cabbage, and dry his linen; and infinite millions of stars are stuck there, many thousand times bigger than the earth, to supply the want of farthing candles, though vastly many of them are not to be seen but by glasses, and, without doubt, infinite others not to be seen with them. He is made wise, discerning, formed for virtue, mutual help

and assistance; and probably it was all true before the fall: But as he is now degenerated, I fear that the reverse of all this is true. It is plain that he is foolish, helpless, perfidious, impotent, easily misled and trepanned, and, for the most part, caught by as thin snares and little wiles as his fellow-creatures, which, we are told, are made for his use; and his boasted faculty of reason betrays him to some from which theothers are exempt.

True reason has little to do in his speculations or his actions. Enthusiasm or panick fear often supplies the place of religion in him: Obstinacy is called constancy; and indifference, moderation: His passions, which direct and govern all the motions of his mind, seem to me to be purely mechanical; which perhaps I may shew more at large hereafter: and whoever would govern him, and lead him, must apply to those passions; that is, pull the proper ropes, and turn the wheels which will put the machine in motion. When Chrysippus was introduced into the presence of Dionysius, and, according to the custom of the court, fell upon his face, and kissed the oppressor's feet; he was asked by Plato, how he, who was a Greek, a free man, and a philosopher, could fall prostrate before a tyrant, and adore him? He answered merrily, "That he had business with the tyrant; and if his ears were in his feet, he must speak to him where his ears lay."

Now most people's ears lie in the wrong place; and whoever will be heard, must apply accordingly: We rarely see a wise man, who does not carry a half-fool about him; one who, by soothing his vanities, flattering his passions, and taking advantages of his other weaknesses, can do more with him than all the world besides. Indeed most men are governed by those who have less wit than themselves, or by what ought least to influence them. Men, like other animals, are caught by springs, wires, or subtleties: Foxes are trepanned by traces, pheasants by a red rag, and other birds by a whistle; and the same is true of mankind.

A lucky thought, a jest, a fortunate accident, or a jovial debauch, shall bring about designs and revolutions in human affairs, which twenty legions in the field could not bring about. A filthy strumpet made Alexander, for a kiss, burn Persepolis, the august seat of the Persian empire; and I have heard, somewhere or other, of a great prince, who being prevailed upon to swear by his mistress's bum, that he would dissolve the States of his kingdom, religiously kept that oath against his interest, though he never valued all the rest that he took upon the evangelists. How often hath a merry story in our days turned a debate, when the most grave and solemn arguments, and the most obvious representations of publick advantage, could not prevail? And how many a fair and accomplished lady has been won by bribing her chambermaid, when perhaps all the solicitations of her parents and relations, and all the motives of self-interest, would have proved ineffectual?

The lucky adjusting of times and seasons, taking advantage of prevailing prejudices and panicks, and knowing how to humour and lay hold of the predominant enthusiasm of human nature, has given birth to most of the revolutions in religion and politicks which ever happened in the world. A juggler swallowing bibles and hour-glasses, shall do more with a modern mob than a philosopher; and a scarecrow prater, with distorted limbs and understanding, shall make thousands of them weep and wring their hands, when the oratory of Demosthenes, or the reasonings of Mr. Locke, would make them laugh or hoot. There is a certain assimilation of passions and faculties in men, which attract one another when they meet, and always strike together. As when two fiddles are tuned up to the same pitch, if you hit the one, the other sounds; so men are easiest operated upon by those of like understandings with their own, or those who the best know how to dally and play with their foibles, and can do the same thing with design as the others do naturally.

I doubt not but I shall be censured for making thus bold with the Lord of the Creation, by those who make much more bold with Him on other occasions, and who would have the monopoly of enjoying all the scandal to themselves. But, by the leave of those solemn

gentlemen, I shall take the liberty of considering man as he is, since it is out of our power to give a model to have him new made by.

Since then, by the sins of our first parents, we are fallen into this unhappy and forlorn condition, all wise and honest men are obliged, in prudence and duty, not only by lectures of philosophy, religion, and morals, to fashion this sovereign of the universe into his true interest, but to make use of his weaknesses to render him happy, as wicked men do to make him miserable; in which I shall be more particular hereafter.

T

I am, &c.

The End of the Third Volume.

Endnotes to Volume 3

[*] Claude Joly , Canon of Notre Dame, Paris, has published a treatise entitled Recueil de maximes véritables et importantes pour l'institution du roy. Contre la fausse [et pernicieuse] politique du cardinal Mazarin [Paris, 1652], wherein he shows that the power of kings is limited by that of their estates and parlements, and gives authentic proofs that such is the original constitution of the government of France. He died 1700.

[*] Herodotus says, that Helena, during all that long war purposely made for her recovery, was not in Troy, but in Egypt.

[*] Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland.

[*] Considerations upon the state of the nation, and of the civil list; written by Mr. Trenchard.



CATO'S LETTERS.

VOL. IV.

[December 8, 1722 to December 7, 1723]

No. 106. SATURDAY, December 8, 1722.

Of Plantations and Colonies. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-3]

SIR,

I intend, in this letter, to give my opinion about plantations; a subject which seems to me to be understood but by few, and little use is made of it where it is. It is most certain, that the riches of a nation consist in the number of its inhabitants, when those inhabitants are usually employed, and no more of them live upon the industry of others (like drones in a hive) than are necessary to preserve the oeconomy of the whole: For the rest, such as gamesters, cheats, thieves, sharpers, and abbey-lubbers, with some of their betters, waste and destroy the publick wealth, without adding any thing to it. Therefore, if any nation drive either by violence, or by ill usage and distress, any of its subjects out of their country, or send any of them out in foolish wars, or useless expeditions, or for any other causes, which do not return more advantage than bring loss, they so far enervate their state, and let out part of their best heart's blood.

Now, in many instances, men add more to the publick stock by being out of their country, than in it; as ambassadors, publick ministers, and their retinues, who transact the affairs of a nation; merchants and tradesmen, who carry on its traffick; soldiers, in necessary wars; and sometimes travellers, who teach us the customs, manners and policies, of distant countries, whereby we may regulate and improve our own. All, or most of these, return to us again with advantage. But, in other instances, a man leaves his country, never, or very rarely to return again; and then the state will suffer loss, if the person so leaving it be not employed abroad in such industry, in raising such commodities, or in performing such services, as will return more benefit to his native country, than they suffer prejudice by losing an useful member.

This is often done by planting colonies, which are of two sorts: One to keep conquered countries in subjection, and to prevent the necessity of constant standing armies: a policy which the Romans practised, till their conquests grew too numerous, the conquered countries too distant, and their empire too unwieldy to be managed by their native force only; and then they became the slaves of those whom they conquered. This policy for many ages, we ourselves used in Ireland, till the fashion of our neighbours, and the wisdom of modern ages, taught us the use of armies: And I wish that those who come after us may never learn all their uses. I must confess, that I am not wise enough to enter into all the policy made use of formerly in governing that country; and shall in proper time communicate my doubts, in hopes to receive better information. In the mean time, I cannot but persuade myself, that when our superiors are at leisure from greater affairs, it may be possible to offer them a

proposition more honourable to the crown, more advantageous to each kingdom, and to the particular members of them, and vastly more conducive to the power of the whole British empire, than the doubtful state which they are now in. But as this is not the purpose of my present letter, I shall proceed to consider the nature of the other sort of colonies.

The other sort of colonies are for trade, and intended to increase the wealth and power of the native kingdom; which they will abundantly do if managed prudently, and put and kept under a proper regulation. No nation has, or ever had, all the materials of commerce within itself: No climate produces all commodities; and yet it is the interest, pleasure, or convenience, of every people, to use or trade in most or all of them; and rather to raise them themselves, than to purchase them from others, unless in some instances, when they change their own commodities for them, and employ as many or more people at home in that exchange, such as would lose their employment by purchasing them from abroad. Now, colonies planted in proper climates, and kept to their proper business, undoubtedly do this; and particularly many of our own colonies in the West Indies employ ten times their own number in Old England, by sending them from hence provisions, manufactures, utensils for themselves and their slaves, by navigation, working up the commodities that they send us, by retaining and exporting them afterwards, and in returning again to us silver and gold, and materials for new manufactures; and our northern colonies do, or may if encouraged, supply us with timber, hemp, iron, and other metals, and indeed with most or all the materials of navigation, and our neighbours too, through our hands; and by that means settle a solid naval power in Great Britain, not precarious, and subject to disappointments, and the caprices of our neighbours; which management would make us soon masters of most of the trade of the world.

I would not suggest so distant a thought, as that any of our colonies, when they grow stronger, should ever attempt to wean themselves from us; however, I think too much care cannot be taken to prevent it, and to preserve their dependences upon their mother-country. It is not to be hoped, in the corrupt state of human nature, that any nation will be subject to another any longer than it finds its own account in it, and cannot help itself. Every man's first thought will be for himself, and his own interest; and he will not be long to seek for arguments to justify his being so, when he knows how to attain what he proposes. Men will think it hard to work, toil, and run hazards, for the advantage of others, any longer than they find their own interest in it, and especially for those who use them ill: All nature points out that course. No creatures suck the teats of their dams longer than they can draw milk from thence, or can provide themselves with better food: Nor will any country continue their subjection to another only because their great-grandmothers were acquainted.

This is the course of human affairs: and all wise states will always have it before their eyes. They will well consider therefore how to preserve the advantages arising from colonies, and avoid the evils. And I conceive, that there can be but two ways in nature to hinder them from throwing off their dependence; one to keep it out of their power, and the other out of their will. The first must be by force; and the latter by using them well, and keeping them employed in such productions, and making such manufactures, as will support themselves and families comfortably, and procure them wealth too, or at least not prejudice their mother-country.

Force can never be used effectually to answer the end, without destroying the colonies themselves. Liberty and encouragement are necessary to carry people thither, and to keep them together when they are there; and violence will hinder both. Any body of troops considerable enough to awe them, and keep them in subjection, under the direction too of a needy governor, often sent thither to make his fortune, and at such a distance from any application for redress, will soon put an end to all planting, and leave the country to the soldiers alone; and if it did not, would eat up all the profit of the colony. For this reason,

arbitrary countries have not been equally successful in planting colonies with free ones; and what they have done in that kind has, either been by force, at a vast expence, or by departing from the nature of their government, and giving such privileges to planters as were denied to their other subjects. And I dare say, that a few prudent laws, and a little prudent conduct, would soon give us far the greatest share of the riches of all America, perhaps drive many of other nations out of it, or into our colonies, for shelter.

If violence, or methods tending to violence, be not used to prevent it, our northern colonies must constantly increase in people, wealth, and power. Men living in healthy climates, paying easy or no taxes, not molested with wars, must vastly increase by natural generation; besides that vast numbers every day flow thither from our own dominions, and from other parts of Europe, because they have there ready employment, and lands given to them for tilling; insomuch that I am told they have doubled their inhabitants since the Revolution, and in less than a century must become powerful states; and the more powerful they grow still the more people will flock thither. And there are so many exigencies in all states, so many foreign wars, and domestick disturbances, that these colonies can never want opportunities, if they watch for them, to do what they shall find their interest to do; and therefore we ought to take all the precautions in our power, that it shall never be their interest to act against that of their native country; an evil which can no otherwise be averted than by keeping them fully employed in such trades as will increase their own, as well as our wealth; for it is much to be feared, if we do not find employment for them, they may find it for us.

No two nations, no two bodies of men, or scarce two single men, can long continue in friendship, without having some cement of their union; and where relation, acquaintance, or mutual pleasures are wanting, mutual interests alone can bind it: But when those interests separate, each side must assuredly pursue their own. The interest of colonies is often to gain independency; and is always so when they no longer want protection, and when they can employ themselves more advantageously than in supplying materials of traffick to others: And the interest of the mother-country is always to keep them dependent, and so employed; and it requires all their address to do it; and it is certainly more easily and effectually done by gentle and insensible methods than by power alone.

Men will always think that they have a right to air, earth, and water, a right to employ themselves for their own support, to live by their own labours, to apply the gifts of God to their own benefit; and, in order to it, to make the best of their soil, and to work up their own product: And when this cannot be done without detriment to their mother-country, there can be but one fair, honest, and indeed effectual way to prevent it; which is, to divert them upon other employments as advantageous to themselves, and more so to their employers; that is, in raising such growth, and making such manufactures, as will not prejudice their own, or at least in no degree equal to the advantage which they bring: And when such commodities are raised or made, they ought to be taken off their hands, and the people ought not to be forced to find out other markets by stealth, or to throw themselves upon new protectors. Whilst people have full employment, and can maintain themselves comfortably in a way which they have been used to, they will never seek after a new one, especially when they meet encouragement in one, and are discountenanced in the other.

As without this conduct colonies must be mischievous to their mother-country, for the reasons before given, so with it the greatest part of the wealth which they acquire centers there; for all their productions are so many augmentations of our power and riches, as they are returns of the peoples's labour, the rewards of merchants, or increase of navigation; without which all who are sent abroad are a dead loss to their country, and as useless as if really dead; and worse than so, if they become enemies: for we can send no commodities to them, unless they have others to exchange for them, and such as we find our interest in taking.

As to our southern plantations, we are in this respect upon a tolerable foot already; for the productions there are of so different a nature from our own, that they can never interfere with us; and the climates are so unhealthy, that no more people will go or continue there than are necessary to raise the commodities which we want; and consequently they can never be dangerous to us: But our northern colonies are healthy climates, and can raise all or most of the commodities, which our own country produces. They constantly increase in people, and will constantly increase; and, without the former precautions, must, by the natural course of human affairs, interfere with most branches of our trade, work up our best manufactures, and at last grow too powerful and unruly to be governed for our interest only: And therefore, since the way lies open to us to prevent so much mischief, to do so much good, and add so much wealth and power to Great Britain, by making those countries the magazines of our naval stores, I hope we shall not lose all these advantages, in compliment to the interests of a few private gentlemen, or even to a few countries.

We have had a specimen of this wise conduct in prohibiting the Irish cattle, which were formerly brought to England lean, in exchange for our commodities, and fatted here; but are now killed and sent abroad directly from Ireland: And so we lose the whole carriage and merchants' advantage, and the vent of the commodities sent to purchase them. And lately we have made such another prudent law, to prevent the importing their woollen manufacture; which has put them upon wearing none of ours, making all or most of their own cloth themselves; exporting great quantities of all sorts by stealth, and the greater part of their wool to rival nations; and, by such means it is that we are beholden to the plague in France, to their Mississippi Company, and their total loss of credit, that we have not lost a great part of that manufacture. It is true, we have made some notable provision to hedge in the cuckoo, and to make all the people of that kingdom execute a law, which it is every man's interest there not to execute; and it is executed accordingly.

I shall sometime hereafter consider that kingdom in relation to the interest of Great Britain; and shall say at present only, that it is too powerful to be treated only as a colony; and that if we design to continue them friends, the best way to do it is, to imitate the example of merchants and shopkeepers; that is, when their apprentices are acquainted with their trade and their customers, and are out of their time, to take them into partnership, rather than let them set up for themselves in their neighbourhood.

T

I am, &c.

No. 107. SATURDAY, December 15, 1722.

Of publick Credit and Stocks. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-12]

SIR,

I have in a former letter observed, that men ever have been, and I doubt ever will be, cheated by sounds, without having any just ideas annexed to them. When words have obtained anesteem, and sort of veneration, their meanings will be varied as often as those in possession of reverence and popular applause have occasion to make different uses of them. It seems to me, that no word has suffered more from this abuse than the word *credit*; nor in any instance has the publick suffered more mischief than by the abuse of it.

A merchant, or tradesman, is said to be in good credit, when his visible gains appear to be greater than his expences; when he is industrious, and takes care of his affairs; when he makes punctual payments, and the wares which he sells may be depended upon as to their goodness and value; and when those who deal with him can have a reasonable assurance that he will make a profit by his care from the commodities that they entrust him with; and, if it should happen otherwise, that he has a remaining substance sufficient at last to answer all demands. A private gentleman is said to have great credit who lives within his income, has regard to his character and his honour, is just to his word and his promises, and is known to have an unencumbered estate, or one superior to all his supposed engagements; from whence his creditors form a reasonable expectation that they shall be paid again without a law-suit, and a certainty that they can be paid with one: And therefore all these will be trusted for as much as they are worth, and sometimes more, at the lowest price for the goods which they buy, and at the lowest interest for the money which they borrow.

But if a merchant be observed to live in riot and profusion, to leave his estate to the direction of servants, who cheat him, or neglect his business; if he turn projector, do not pay his bills, and shuffle in his bargains, and sell faulty goods which are bought upon his word: Or, if a gentleman be known to spend more than his income, to mortgage his lands to take no care of his estate, or how his stewards or bailiffs manage it; if he run in debt to tradesmen and mechanicks, and be perpetually borrowing money, without any thoughts how to pay it: I say, under such management, no fair dealer will have any thing to do with them; and of course they fall into the hands of scriveners, knavish attorneys, and griping usurers; will be fed from hand to mouth, pay double and treble interest for what they receive, till their creditors watch their opportunity, and sweep all.

Credit is said to run high in a nation, when there are great numbers of wealthy subjects in the former circumstances, which will always be produced by an affluent trade; and when the commodities of a country, and the production of the people's labour, find a ready vent, and at a good price: for then they will see their account in punctuality of payment and fair dealing, and will not run the hazard of losing a regular sustenance for their families, or a constant profit arising from an open trade, for the present and occasional advantage which they may hope to receive from a knavish bargain, or a fraudulent circumvention: And those who do otherwise, are generally undone, and sell a constant and a yearly income to themselves, and possibly to their families after them, for a year or two's purchase, and often for much less.

But if any of these be above or without the reach of the laws, or by reason of their station and figure, it be difficult to get the benefit of the laws, their credit will proportionably abate, because a great part of the security which they can give fails, and they must consequently pay

greater interest and procuration for the money that they borrow, and a greater price for the goods that they buy: for, those who deal with them, will always propose to be gainers by the whole, upon computing their delays and hazards.

The credit of a state, or what we call publick credit, must be preserved by the same means as private men preserve theirs; namely, by doing strict justice to particulars; by being exact in their payments, not chicaning in their bargains, nor frightening and tricking people into them, or out of them; by letting them know what they buy, and not altering the nature or property of it, to serve after-purposes, and without the free-consent of the persons interested: And they are always to take especial care to sell nothing but what is valuable; to coin silver and gold, and not put the stamp of public authority upon base and counterfeit metals.

Indeed, states are much more concerned to keep up the opinion of their integrity than private men; because those that trust them have, in effect, only their honour and their interest to depend upon for payment; and therefore will well consider whether it be their interest to maintain their honour. I doubt private men would have little credit, and upon very ill terms too, if they could not be used, or could vacate their own securities; for, when it becomes more a man's interest not to pay, than to pay, his debts, and he can choose which he pleases, no one would care to have any part of his fortune depend upon those resolutions. It is certainly the interest of all men to keep up the reputation of their honesty as long as it can be kept, in order to be trusted for the future; but when they can be trusted no longer, nor are able to pay what they are already trusted with, and can decline paying it when they see apparent ruin in being honest, it is easy to guess what course will be taken.

What nation besides our own has explained publick honour, by any other maxims than those of publick interest? Or have kept their treaties or agreements with foreign states, or one another, any longer than it was their interest upon the whole to keep them? And indeed very few have kept them so long. I am sure that no wise state will depend upon the observance of leagues and national contracts any longer. What country has not made frequent acts of resumption, when the folly and knavery of their predecessors has embezzled the publick revenues, and rendered the state unable to defend itself? Whence private men have been deprived of estates to which they had undoubted titles by the laws of their country, estates which perhaps had passed many descents and many purchases; and yet the losers sometimes have no other reason to complain, than that they want the consolation of seeing their country undone with them; which must have been the case, if they had not been undone alone. Sweden did this in the last age; Spain lately; and another country, in our time, has not only in effect cancelled all its engagements, but by various stratagems drawn the wealth of the whole into its coffers, and seized it when it was there. Which puts me in mind of a story of a butcher, who thought himself happy in the possession of a sagacious, diligent, and seemingly faithful dog, to whom, by long experience of his service, he thought he might safely trust the custody of his shambles in his absence: But Hector one day observing, against a great festival, the shop to be much fuller of meat than usual, thought it was high time to set up for himself, and so very resolutely denied his master entrance; who had then no remedy left but to shoot him.

I have above endeavoured to shew what, and what alone, ought to be called credit. But there has lately risen up, in our age, a new-fangled and fantastical credulity, which has usurped the same name, and came in with the word *Bite*, which has been made free of a neighbouring court; whereby the poor, innocent, industrious, and unwary, people, have been delivered into the ravenous and polluted jaws of vultures and tigers; and thousands, I had almost said millions, have been sacrificed, to satiate the gluttony of a few. This has inverted the oeconomy and policy of nations; made a great kingdom turn all gamesters; and men have acquired the reputation of wisdom, from their skill in picking pockets: It has entered into the cabinets of courts; has guided the counsels of senates, and employed their whole wisdom;

may, most of their time has been employed in keeping up this wild and airy traffick; as if the business of government was not to protect people in their property, but to cheat them out of it.

This is eminently true in a neighbouring country; I wish I could say, that nothing like it had ever happened amongst us. But as no men now in power are answerable for this great mischief, so I hope and believe, that we shall have their hearty assistance to extricate us out of all these evils. And as I please myself with believing, that I speak the sense of my superiors, so I shall take the liberty to say, that neither publick nor private credit can consist in selling any thing for more than it is worth, or for any thing but what it is worth. It is certainly the interest of a country, that its commodities should sell at a good price, and find a ready vent; that private men should be able safely to trust one another; that lands should find ready purchasers, good securities, money at low interest; and that mortgages should be easily transferable. And the way to bring these good purposes to pass, is to ascertain titles; to give ready remedies to the injured; to procure general plenty by prudent laws, and by giving all encouragement to industry and honesty. But it will never be effected by authorizing or countenancing frauds; by enabling artful men to circumvent the unwary; by stamping the public seal upon counterfeit wares; or by constantly coining a new sort of property, of a precarious, uncertain, and transitory, value; and, by constant juggles and combinations, conspiring to make it more so: Which conduct, whenever practiced, must soon put an end to all publick and private credit.

In what country soever these practices meet with encouragement, all fair and honest dealing will be turned into juggling. There will quickly grow a sort of cabalistical learning: And there will be a secret and vulgar knowledge; one to be trusted only to the trusty adepts and managers; and the other to be divulged to the people, who will be told nothing but what is for the interest of their betters to communicate; and pretty advantages may be made by being in the secret. As for example: Just before any publick misfortune is to make its appearance, those who know of it may sell out; and in the height of the danger buy again; and when it is over, by taking another opportunity, they may sell a second time. And when these evils are averted, they may go to market once more; and so, *toties quoties*, till the greatest part of the property of a kingdom be got into the hands of but a few persons, who will then undoubtedly govern all the rest. Nor can these mischiefs be possibly prevented, but by wholly destroying this sort of traffick, or by appointing skillful pilots to set up occasional buoys and sea-marks, according to the shifting of the winds and the tides; that is, by ascertaining and publishing the real value of all publick securities, as often as there is an alteration made in them by new provisions, or by wholly preventing the abuses occasioned by the vile trade of stock-jobbing; which I conceive is not difficult to do, when stock-jobbers have no hand in directing the remedy.

Till something of this kind be done, it is foolish to think, and worse to pretend to think, that any effectual methods can be taken to discharge and pay off the national engagements: For, in whatever country it happens, that the publick funds become the markets and standing revenues of those who can best cure the evil; where great and sudden estates may be more easily raised by knavery and juggling, than small ones by virtue and merit; where plumbs may be got at once, and vast societies may be made the accomplices of power, in order to be indulged with separate advantages; it is not to be hoped that effectual methods will be taken to dam and choke up such inexhaustible sources of wealth and dominion: On the contrary, it is to be feared, that new projects will be yearly invented, new schemes coloured with popular pretences, to toss and tumble the publick securities, and to change them into as many shapes as Proteus knew. One year shall metamorphose the schemes of another; and the next shall undo both. The leaders of one faction shall unravel the projects of their predecessors; shall charge their designs with corruption and rapine, and be more rapacious themselves; and all in

their turns shall raise vast estates upon the publick ruins; and the last spirit shall be always the worst. Artful and conspiring men shall buy up desperate debts, and then use intrigues and corruption to load their country with them; and the business of nations shall stand still, or rather, it shall become their business to fish in these troubled streams, till, by long experience of the loss of their fellows, the fish will bite no longer; and then it is easy to guess what is next to be done. There is but one method which can be taken; and that will be taken.

I would gladly know what advantage ever has, or even can, accrue to the publick, by raising stocks to an imaginary value, beyond what they are really worth to an honest man, who purchases them for a regular support to himself and family, and designs not to sell them again, till he has occasion for the money that they will produce. It can most assuredly serve no honest purpose, and will promote a thousand knavish ones. Besides those before-mentioned, it turns most of the current coin of England out of the channels of trade, and the heads of all its merchants and traders off their proper business: It enriches the worst men, and ruins the innocent: It taints men's morals, and defaces all the principles of virtue and fair dealing, and introduces combination and fraud in all sorts of traffick. It has changed honest commerce into bubbling; our traders into projectors; industry into tricking; and applause is earned, when the pillory is deserved: It has created all the dissatisfaction so much complained of, and all the mischiefs attending it, which daily threaten us, and which furnish reasons for standing or occasional troops: It has caused all the confusion in our publick finances: It has set up monstrous members and societies in the body politick, which are grown, I had almost said, too big for the whole kingdom: It has multiplied offices and dependencies in the power of the court, which in time may fill the legislature, and alter the balance of government: It has overwhelmed the nation with debts and burdens, under which it is almost ready to sink; and has hindered those debts from being paid off. For if stocks fell for more, or much more upon the Exchange, than the prices at which they are redeemable; or more can be got by jobbing them than by discharging them, than all arts will be used to prevent a redemption. But as this is not at present our case, so it is every man's interest, concerned in our funds, to secure their principal, and to promote every means which will enable their country to pay them.

I doubt not but I shall incur the censure of many, by thus laying open our nakedness, and probing our wounds; and I cannot deny but I found some reluctance in doing it: But it must be done before they can be cured. The patient cannot now bear quacking; and if effectual remedies be not speedily taken, the case is desperate. The security and interest of the crown, the power and reputation of the kingdom, the credit and honour of the ministry, depend upon doing this great work: And I really believe that the latter have inclinations and resolutions to do it. It can never be done effectually without their assistance; and if they give it, and set themselves at the head of so publick a good, they will justly obtain a reputation far beyond any who have ever appeared before them, and will enjoy unenvied all the wealth and advantages which attend greatness and power. It is folly in any one, who is the least acquainted with the affairs of nations, to pretend not to see, that if we do not soon put our publick debts in a method of being paid, they can never be paid; and all will certainly do their utmost to prevent so fatal a mischief to their country; I mean, all who do not intend it. But if there be any such, which I hope and believe there are not, they will then undoubtedly take early care to save themselves out of the general wreck; which very few will be able to do, tho' all will intend it. Those in the secret will have the advantage; for when selling becomes the word, no one can sell, unless he sells for little or nothing. All will be waiting for a rise; and if that happen, all or most will endeavour to sell, and then all selling is at an end: The managers and brokers will engross the books, as they did lately, and command the first sale; and by the time that they are got out, no one else will be able to get out.

There is nothing therefore left to be done, but for all honest men to join heads, hearts, and hands, to find all means to discharge the publick burdens, and to add no more to them; to search every measure how we can lessen the national expences; to avoid all occasions of engaging in new ones; and to do all in our power to increase trade and the publick wealth, without sacrificing it to any jobs or private views. Which conduct alone will enable us honestly to pay off what we owe, and to become once more a free, rich, happy, and flourishing people.

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I am, &c.

[IV-24]

SIR,

Morality, or moral virtues, are certain rules of mutual convenience or indulgence, conducive or necessary to the well-being of society. Most of these are obvious; for every man knows what he desires himself; which is, to be free from oppression, and the insults of others, and to enjoy the fruits of his own acquisitions, arising from his labour or invention. And since he can have no reason to expect this indulgence to himself, unless he allow it to others, who have equal reason to expect it from him, it is the common interest of all, who unite together in the same society, to establish such rules and maxims for their mutual preservation, that no man can oppress or injure another, without suffering by it himself. As far as these rules are discoverable by the light of reason, or that portion of understanding, which most, or all men have, they are called morality: But when they are the productions of deeper thought, or the inventions only of men of greater sagacity, they are called political knowledge. But as men are often in such a situation in respect of one another, that the stronger can oppress the weaker, without any fear of having the injury returned; and most men will pursue their own personal advantage independently of all other men; therefore Almighty God, in compassion to mankind has annexed rewards and punishments to the observance or non-observance of these rules: The belief of which, and a practice pursuant to it, is called religion.

I have often read, with pleasure, pretty speculative discourses upon the intrinsick excellence of virtue, and of its having a real existence independent of human considerations, or worldly relations: But when I have been able to forget, or lay aside the dalliances and amusements of fancy, and the beautiful turns of expression, I could consider it philosophically, only as an empty sound, when detached and separated from natural, national, or religious politicks; unless in some few instances, where constitution, and innate tenderness, engage men to pity others in ease to themselves, which is called humanity.

All cardinal and private virtues are branches of these general politicks. Fortitude enables us to defend ourselves and others. Compassion is a fellow feeling of calamities which we may suffer ourselves; and it is evident that people feel them in proportion, as they are likely to suffer the same or the like calamities. Charity obliges us to give that relief to others, which we, our friends, or relations, may want for ourselves. And temperance and frugality are necessary to the preservation of our bodies and estates, and being useful members of society. I freely confess, that for my part I can find out no other motives in myself, or others, for these affections, or actions, except constitution, ostentation, or temporal or religious politicks, which are, in other words, our present or eternal interests; and I shall own myself beholden to any else who can find out any other; for there cannot be too many motives for a virtuous life.

How far the systematical gentlemen will agree with me in this speculative philosophy, I do not know, nor shall think myself much concerned to enquire; but it is certain that their practice, and many of the doctrines which they teach, confirm what I have said. I think that all mankind, except the Brahmins, and transmigrators of souls in the East, agree, that we may destroy other animals for food and convenience, and sometimes for pleasure, or to prevent but any trifling prejudice, to ourselves; though they have the same, or very near the same, organizations as we have, equal or greater sensations of pleasure and pain, and many of them sagacity and reasoning enough to over-reach and circumvent us; nor are they guilty of any

other crime, than that of acting according to their natures, and preserving their beings by such food as is necessary to their existence.

Indeed, as things stand at present, though we had not revelation for it, we may be very sure that God Almighty has given us dominion over other creatures, because he has actually given us the power, in a good measure, to destroy and preserve them, as far as they may be hurtful or useless to us; and therefore we think them not objects of moral duties, because we can hurt them and they cannot make reprisals, or equal reprisals, upon us; But if Almighty God had thought fit to have given to lions and tigers the use of speech, length of life to have gained more experience, and had formed their claws and hands to write and communicate that experience, and by such means had enabled them to have formed themselves into societies for mutual defence against mankind (whom they could quickly have destroyed, though only by confining and starving them in enclosures and fortifications) I say, in such a circumstance of affairs, will any man affirm, that it would not have been our interest and duty to have treated them with morality and social offices? I doubt, in such a case, they would have told us, and have made us feel too, that they were not made only for our use.

I will suppose, for once, a dialogue between his Holiness and a lion, since poets and some others have informed us, that beasts have spoken formerly; and I am sure that they were never more concerned to speak than upon the present occasion.

Pope. Thou art an ugly four-footed monster, and thou livest upon the destruction of thy fellow-animals.

Lion. I am as nature has made me, which has given me many faculties beyond yourself. I have more courage, more strength, more activity, and better senses of seeing, hearing, &c. than you have: Nor do I destroy the hundredth part of my fellow-animals in comparison with those that you destroy. I never destroy my own species, unless I am provoked; but you destroy yours for pride, vanity, luxury, envy, covetousness, and ambition.

Pope. But thou art a great gormandizer, and eatest up all our victuals, which was designed for the use of men only; and therefore thou oughtest to be exterminated.

Lion. Nature, which gave me life, designed me the means of living; and she has given me claws and teeth for that purpose, namely, to defend myself against some animals, and to kill and eat others for my sustenance; and, amongst the rest, your reverence, if I cannot get younger and better food. You men, indeed, may eat and live comfortably upon the fruits of trees, and the herbs and corn of the field; but we are so formed, as to receive support and nourishment only from the flesh of other animals.

Pope. Sirrah, thou hast no soul.

Lion. The greater is my misfortune. However, I have a mind and body, and have the more reason to take care of them, having nothing else to take care of; and you ought the less to deprive and rob me of the little advantages which nature has given me, you who enjoy so much greater yourself.

Pope. The earth was given to the saints; for (as St. Austin very judiciously observes) the wicked have right to nothing, and the godly to all things; and thou art certainly a very wicked animal, and no true believer.

Lion. I have heard indeed before, that such reasonings will pass amongst you men, who have faculties to reason yourselves out of reason; but we beasts know better things: For having nothing but our senses to trust to, and wanting the capacities to distinguish ourselves out of them, we cannot be persuaded to believe, that those who have no more honesty, and less understanding than their neighbours, have a right to their goods, and to starve them, by

pretending to believe what the others do not understand; therefore, worthy Doctor, you shall catch no gudgeons here: You may brew as you bake amongst one another, but you will find no such bubbles amongst us.

Pope. Thou art a sniveling saucy jackanapes, and a great rogue and murderer, and I wish thou hadst a soul that I might damn it, and send thee to the Devil.

Lion. Not half so great a rogue as yourself, good Doctor, nor so great a murderer. You do more mischief in a year than all the lions in the world did since the Creation. We kill only with our teeth and claws; you use a thousand instruments of death and destruction. We kill single animals; you kill by wholesale, and destroy hecatombs at once. We kill for food and necessity; you kill for sport and pastime, out of wantonness, and to do yourselves no good. In fine, you murder or oppress all other animals, and one another too.

Pope. Rascal, thou art made for my use, and I will make thee know it, and order thee to be immediately knocked on the head for thy skin, thou varlet, and beast for Satan.

Lion. I will try that presently.

Pope, (crossing himself.) Jesu! Maria! (*Exit in haste.*)

Lion. Farewell, thou lord of the Creation, and sovereign of the universe.

I believe I may venture to say, if lions could speak, that they would talk at this rate, and his Holiness but little better. But to return to my subject.

I have said, that all, or most of mankind, act upon the former principles, and, without the motives of religion, can find out no reason to hope that they should ever act otherwise; and I am sorry to say, that religion itself has yet wanted power enough to influence them (for the most part) to contrary sentiments or actions. What nation or society does not oppress another, when they can do it with security, without fear of retaliation, or of being affected by it in their own interests, and their correspondence with other states? It is plain that all social duties are here at an end; for what is called the law of nations, are only rules of mutual intercourse with one another, without which they could have no intercourse at all, but must be in constant course of war and depredation; and therefore whenever any state is in no condition to repel injuries, nor can have protection from any other, who are concerned to preserve them, constant experience shews us, that they become the prey of a greater, who think themselves obliged to keep no measures with them, nor want pretences from religion or their own interests to oppress them. Father Austin's distinction is always at hand when they can get no better; and for the most part (if not always) they find men of reverence to thank God for their roguery.

Since therefore men ever have, and, I doubt, ever will act upon these motives, they ought not to be amused by the play of words, and the sallies of imagination, whilst designing men pick their pockets; but ought to establish their happiness, by wise precautions, and upon solid maxims, and, by prudent and fixed laws, make it all men's interest to be honest; without which, I doubt, few men will be so.

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I am, &c.

[IV-31]

SIR,

We have been long confounded about the origin of good and evil, or, in other words, of virtue and vice. The opinion of some is, that virtue is a sort of real being, and subsists in its own nature. Others make it to consist in rules and cautions, given us by the Supreme Being for our conduct here on earth and either implanted in our natures, or conveyed to us by revelation. A late philosopher searches it from the will and commands of the civil magistrate. But, for my own part, I must conceive it only as a compound of the two last; namely, a relation of men's actions to one another, either dictated by reason, by the precepts of heaven, or the commands of the sovereign, acting according to his duty.

It is the misfortune of those publick-spirited and acute gentlemen, who have obliged the world with systems, that they always make common sense truckle to them; and when they are bewildered, and entangled amongst briars and thorns, never go back the way that they got in, but resolve to scramble through the brake, leap over hedge and ditch, to get into their old road, and so for the most part scratch themselves from head to foot, and sometimes break their necks into the bargain. They never look back, and examine whether their system be true or false, but set themselves to work to prove it at all adventures: They are determined to solve all contradictions, and grow very angry with all who are not so clear-sighted as themselves.

This seems to me to be the case in the present question. The common light of reason has told all mankind, that there cannot be an effect without a cause; and that every cause must be an effect of some superior cause; till they come to the last of all, which can be no otherwise than self-existent, that is, must have existed from all eternity. Some sects of philosophers have thought this first cause to be only pure matter, not being able to conceive that any thing can be made out of nothing, or can be annihilated again afterwards; and they suppose that matter has been in eternal motion, and has the seeds of animals, vegetables, and of every thing else within itself, and by its constant motion and revolutions gives them life, duration, and at last death; and throws them into the womb of nature again to rise up in new shapes.

But others, by far the greatest part of mankind, are not able by this dark system to account for the exquisite contrivance and consummate wisdom shewn in the formation of animals and vegetables, in the regular and stupendous structure and circulation of the heavenly bodies, and of the earth, no more than for the operations of our own minds. They therefore most reasonably judged, that when so much contrivance is necessary to bring about our own little designs; the great machine of heaven and earth, and the infinite and admirable systems in it, could not be the spontaneous or necessary productions of blind matter. Thence they determine, that the First Being must have suitable wisdom to contrive and execute these great and amazing works.

But these latter are not so well agreed amongst themselves about the manner of acting, or the operations of this being. For some think that he must act from the necessity of his own nature: For, since his being is necessary, they think that his will and attributes (which are parts of his being, essential to it, and inseparable from it) and consequently his actions, which are results of that will, and of those attributes, must be necessary too. They cannot conceive how a being, who has the principles and causes of all things within itself, could exist without having seen every thing intuitively from all eternity; a consideration which must exclude

from his actions all choice and preference, as these imply doubt and deliberation.

They cannot apprehend how reason and wisdom can be analagous in him to what are called by the same names in men: For judgment in them, as far as it regards their own voluntary operations, is only the balance of the conveniences or inconveniences which will result from their own or other's thoughts or actions, as they have relation to beings or events out of their power, and which depend upon other causes: But if a being can have no causes without itself, but produces every thing by its own energy and power, sees all things at once, and cannot err, as men may, nor consequently deliberate and debate with itself, they think that it must act singly, and in one way only; and where there is no choice, or, which is the same thing, but one choice, they conceive that there is always necessity.

But the contrary is much the more orthodox and religious opinion, and has been held by far the greatest and best part of mankind in all ages, before and without revelation: They have thought that this last opinion bordered too much upon the material system, as being able to see but little difference in the operations of a being acting necessarily, and the productions of blind matter constantly in action, and acting mechanically; since the effect is supposed to be the same, though wisdom and contrivance, or what we are forced to call by those names for want of another, be the first spring, or chief wheel of the machine, or one link of the chain of causes: And therefore men have condemned this opinion as impious and atheistical.

Indeed the other speculations have been only the wild and babbling notions of fairy philosophers, or of enthusiastick and visionary madmen; for all prudent and modest men pretend to know no more of this being, without revelation, than that he is wise, good, and powerful, and made all things; and do not presume farther to enquire into the *modus* of his existence and operations. However, their own interest and curiosity were so much concerned to guess at his designs and motives in placing them here, that it was impossible they could be otherwise than solicitous and inquisitive about it; and finding, or fancying themselves to be the most valuable part of the whole, it was very natural for them to believe, that all was made for their sakes; and that their happiness was the only or chief view of the Supreme Being.

With these thoughts about him, every man knowing what he had a mind to have himself, and what he believed would constitute his own happiness, and not being able to attain it without making the same allowance to other people; men agreed upon equal rules of mutual convenience and protection, and finding these rules dictated to them by impartial reason, they justly believed that they were implanted within them by the deity; and as they expected themselves returns of gratitude or applause for benefits conferred by them upon others, they thought the same were due to the original being who gave them life, and every thing else which they enjoyed: and this is called natural religion.

But as the motive which men had to enter into this equal agreement, was their own pleasure and security, which most or all men prefer before the advantage of others, so they often found themselves in a condition, by superior power, will, and abilities, to circumvent those who had less than themselves, and either by artful confederacies, impostures, or by downright force, to oppress them; and in order to it, have invented systems or partial schemes of separate advantage, and have annexed suitable promises or menace to them: All which they have pretended to receive from this divine being. They assumed to have communication with him, and to know his will, and denounced his anger against all who would not take their word, and let them do by his authority what they would never have been permitted to do by any other; and the herd not daring to oppose them, or not knowing how, have acquiesced to their tales, and come in time to believe them. From hence sprang all the follies and roguery of the heathen and Jewish priests, and all the false religions in the world; with all the persecutions, devastations, and massacres caused by them; which were all heterogeneous engraftments upon natural religion.

Almighty God thought it proper therefore at last to communicate himself again to man, and by immediate revelation to confirm what he at first implanted in all men's minds, and what was eradicated thence by delusion and imposture; but though he thought it not necessary to tell us more than we were concerned to know, namely, to do our duty to himself and to one another, yet we will still be prying into his secrets, and sifting into the causes of his original and external decrees, which are certainly just and reasonable, though we neither know his reasons, nor could judge of them, if we did.

From hence arises this dispute concerning the origin of good and evil, amongst a thousand others. For, our vanity inducing us to fancy ourselves the sole objects of his providence, and being sure that we receive our beings from him, and consequently our sensations, affections, and appetites, which are parts of them, and which evidently depend either mediately or immediately, upon causes without us, and seeing at the same time, that many things happen in the world seemingly against his revealed will, which he could prevent if he thought fit; we either recur to the intrigues of a contrary being, whose business is to thwart his designs, and disappoint his providence, or else account for it by a malignity in human nature, more prone to do evil than good, without considering from whence we had that nature; for if the malignity in it be greater than precepts, examples, or exhortations can remove, the heavier scale must weigh down.

How much more modest and reasonable would it be to argue, that moral good and evil in this world, are only relations of our actions to the Supreme Being, and to one another, and would be nothing here below, if there were no men? That no event can happen in the universe but what must have causes strong enough to produce it? That all causes must first or last center in the supreme cause; who, from the existence of his own nature, must always do what is best, and all his actions must be instantaneous emanations of himself? He sees all things at one view, and nothing can happen without his leave and permission, and without his giving power enough to have it effected: When therefore we see any thing which seems to contradict the images which we have presumed to form about his essence, or the attributes which we bestow upon him (which images and attributes are, for the most part, borrowed from what we think most valuable amongst ourselves), we ought to suspect our own ignorance, to know that we want appetites to fathom infinite wisdom, and to rest assured that all things conduce to the ends and designs of his providence, who always chooses the best means to bring them about.

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I am, &c.

No. 110. SATURDAY, January 5, 1723.

Of Liberty and Necessity. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-38]

SIR,

I have already said, that I could consider good and evil only as in relation to men's actions to one another, or to the Supreme Being; in which actions they can have for their end their own interest alone, in present or futurity. But when I consider these ideas in regard to God, I must consider them as objects of his will, which can alone constitute right or wrong, though they may sometimes not quadrature with the notions that we form of justice amongst one another, and which are only prudent rules for our own separate convenience, and take in no part of the creation but ourselves. We cannot enter into the rationale of God's punishing all mankind for the sin of their first parents, which they could not help; nor for his punishing all

Israel with a pestilence for the private sin of David, which, without doubt, many of them condemned; nor for his bringing plagues upon the Egyptians, because he had hardened Pharaoh's heart; no more than for his destroying all mankind at the Deluge, for crimes which he could have prevented; and multitudes of the like instances in Holy Writ besides, which we cannot account for by our weak reasonings (which have for their object only our own advantage). But we are very sure that these things were done, and rightly done; and all conduced to some superior, wise, and just end. Almighty God judges of the whole of things, and we only of them as they regard ourselves: The whole system of the universe is his care; and all other inferior beings must be subordinate to the interests of this great one, must all contribute, in their several stations and actions, to bring about at last the grand purposes of his providence. Infinite millions of animals are born with the morning sun, and probably see old age, and feel the pangs of death, before noon: Great numbers of them by their death preserve life, or give convenience to others who otherwise could not live at all, or must live upon very ill terms. Vegetables rise, grow, decay, die again, and get a new resurrection in other shapes. All nature is in perpetual rotation, and working through a thousand revolutions to its last period, and the consummation of all things, when its great author will know how to make all individuals recompence for the evils which they have suffered here, and perhaps give us faculties to know, admire, and glorify his conduct, in those instances which may seem most mysterious to our narrow capacities in this frail state.

But this general and comprehensive system of the universe, this honourable conception of the deity, acquiescence in, and submission to his will, will not square with the interests of particular societies of men, who think themselves concerned to find out a system for themselves alone; and therefore, to avoid those consequences (which I can see no purposes of religion served in avoiding) they compliment away his power, prescience and general providence, to do respect to the notions which they have pleased to conceive of his justice, which they have thought fit to measure by their own interests, or what they think best for themselves. They first determine what they desire to have; then call it just, and immediately interest heaven to bring it about; and finding that it contradicts the experience of mankind, and all the notions that they can conceive of the workings of providence, and the nature of things themselves (which always operate from cause to effect) they set themselves to work to form a new scheme at the expence of denying all that they see or can know.

In order to this, they have made man the *primum mobile*, and his mind the first principle or spring of all his actions, independent of the author of his being, and of all the second causes which evidently influence and concur to determine his resolutions and his actions. They say, that Almighty God (who has infinite justice and power) having given to mankind a rule to act by, and annexed rewards or menaces to the observance or non-observance of this rule, has given a free uncontrolled, and impartial liberty to him to determine, without being coerced or restrained by any other power to do, or not to do an action, or to choose good or evil to himself: His justice, they say, obliges him to this conduct, and his power enables him to execute and bring it to pass; and so by affecting to do right to one attribute of his, which they cannot understand, and which they may possibly mistake, by supposing it to be different from his will (which alone, as has been said, can constitute right or wrong) they take away and rob him of all or most of the rest.

His prescience or knowledge (from all eternity) of every event which does or can happen in the universe, is denied at once; for whatever is contingent in its own nature, and may or may not happen, cannot be foreseen: for when any being sees that a thing will be, it must be; for it is impossible to know that any event will come to pass, that may not come to pass; and it is equally impossible to foresee an effect, without knowing the causes which produce it. It is no irreverence to the Supreme Being, to say, that he cannot do impossibilities, and know things which cannot be known; and it is certain he must know all things that can be known,

because they depend upon his will.

It reflects upon his wisdom or power: Upon the first, as supposing that he desires or intends to bring any designs or purposes to pass, and yet that he has not chosen the proper methods to attain them; or upon the latter, that he cannot attain them if he would: It entrenches upon his providence and government of the universe, by giving part of his power out of his own hands, and by leaving it to the discretion of inferior and weak beings, to contradict himself, and disappoint his intentions: And even his justice itself, to which all the rest are so freely sacrificed, is attacked upon such reasons, in charging Almighty God with severity in punishing crimes committed through weakness, want, or predominant appetites, and which he could have prevented by giving others. I do not see what has been, or can be said to these objections more, than that we are not to reason upon the proceedings of providence, which acts upon motives and maxims far above us, and which are not to be scanned by our little rules and scanty capacities; and if these gentlemen could but be persuaded to reason thus at first, they would save themselves the trouble of solving perpetual contradictions.

For what can be more evident, than that the actions of man, which seem most spontaneous and free, depend upon his will to do them; and that that will is directed by his reasoning faculties, which depend again upon the good or ill organizations of his body, upon his complexion, the nature of his education, imbibed prejudices, state of health, predominant passions, manner of life, fortuitous reasonings with others, different kinds of diet, and upon the thousands of events, seeming accidents, and the perpetual objects which encompass him, and which every day vary and offer themselves differently to him; all or most of which causes, and many more which probably determine him, must be confessed to be out of his power? Constant experience shews us, that men differently constituted, or differently educated, will reason differently, and the same men in different circumstances. A man will have different sentiments about the same things, in youth, in middle age, and in dotage, in sickness and in health, in liquor and sobriety, in wealth and in poverty, in power and out of it; and the faculties of the mind are visibly altered by physick, exercise, or diet.

The same reason which is convincing to one man, appears ridiculous to another, and to the same man at different times; and consequently, his or their actions, which are results of those reasonings, will be different: And we not only all confess this, by endeavouring to work upon one another by these mediums, but heaven thinks fit to choose the same; for what else can be meant by offering rewards and denouncing punishments, but as causes to produce the effects designed, that is, to save those whom Almighty God in his deep wisdom has preordained to bliss, and to be influenced by those motives? We all confess, that no man can do his duty without the grace of God, and whoever has the grace of God will do his duty. It is undoubtedly to be obtained by prayer, but we must have grace to pray for it; and I am not insensible that Almighty God does any other way give his grace, but by offering to us, or by laying in our way sufficient inducements to obey his will: I am sure that I can find none else in myself, or discover them in others, whatever the enthusiastick and visionary gentlemen may do. I doubt much, that what they call grace, is what I call enthusiasm, or a strong conceit or persuasion of their own godliness and communication with the deity.

What sort of reasoning then is this, to say, that heaven gives every man sufficient power and motives to choose the best, which yet prove insufficient; that he has made every man free to act or not to act by a rule, and yet has placed him in such a situation as to find a thousand obstacles in his way to that freedom; and that he has given him a judgment capable to determine right, and opportunities rightly to exercise that judgment; yet by making use of that judgment and those opportunities, he often judges directly contrary: And all this is to make good a system, as yet owned but by a very small part of mankind, and for which I can find no foundation in reason and scripture?

I must beg leave to think it very audacious in a small number of men, to determine the workings of providence by their own narrow schemes, at the expence too of the opinions and reasonings of the greatest part of the world in all ages. All or most of the sects of philosophers in Greece and Rome, held fate or necessity, as the several sects among the Jews did, except the Essenes, a very small sect indeed, not exceeding some few thousands. The Mahometans, thro' the world, hold predestination: The Calvinists, and some other Protestant sects, hold it now; and I do not understand the articles of the Church of England, if it be not the orthodox opinion amongst us; and it certainly was held to be so, till a few doctors in King James' and Charles I's time advanced the contrary system, and who, in the addresses of Parliament, were always, in those reigns, ranked with the papists for doing so; and it is yet undoubtedly the opinion of the common people through the world. However, I do not condemn any one who may think that this is derogatory to the attributes of God, for offering in a modest manner, his reasons against any dogma ever so well established (which I think is the right of all mankind); yet I could wish that he would shew the same modesty, in giving other people their liberty of defending the contrary opinion with the same good intentions.

The most pregnant and usual objection against this doctrine is, that if men are predestinated to eternal bliss or misery, their own endeavours are useless, and they can have no motives to prefer good before evil; which I confess, will always be the reasonings of men who are predestinated to the latter (if it be possible to suppose that there can be any such); but those who are determined to the first, will always believe, that God takes proper means to attain his ends, and that he designs to save men by the medium of good works, and of obeying his will; and this conviction will be an adequate cause to produce such obedience in those who are destined to happiness. If the end be predestinated, the means must be predestinated too. If a man [is] to die in war, he must meet an enemy; if he [is] to be drowned, he must come within the reach of water; or if he [is] to be starved, he must not know how to come at any victuals, or have no mind to eat them, or stomach to digest them.

For my own part, I dare not believe, that the all-good, all-wise, and most merciful God, has determined any of his creatures to endless misery, by creating and forming them with such appetites and passions as naturally and necessarily produce it; though I think it to be fully consistent with his power, goodness, and justice, to give inclinations which may lead and entitle us to happiness. And, as I conceive that there is nothing in the holy scriptures which expressly decides this difficulty, as I may possibly shew hereafter; so I shall not presume to search too narrowly into the secret dispensations of providence, or to pronounce any thing dogmatically concerning his manner of governing the universe, more than that he cannot make his creatures miserable without just and adequate reasons. And therefore, since we find in fact, that many of them are so in this state, we must account for this, but mediums agreeable to his indisputed attributes, or own that we cannot account for it at all, though it be unquestionably just in itself. All means will probably conduce in the end to impartial and universal good; and whatever, or how many states soever of probation we may pass through, yet I hope, that the mercies of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ, will at last exceed and preponderate the frailties, mistakes, and temporary transgressions of weak and mortal men; all which I shall endeavour, in time, to shew from scripture and reason: The former of which, in my opinion, is too generally mistaken or perverted, to signify what it does not intend; by straining some passages beyond their literal and genuine signification, by explaining others too literally, and by not making due allowances to the manner of speaking used amongst the eastern nations, which was very often, if not most commonly, in hyperboles, and other figures and allegories. But more of this hereafter; when I dare promise to deserve the pardon of every candid person, whom I cannot convince.

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I am, &c.



No. 111. SATURDAY, January 12, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-47]

SIR,

As all the ideas or images of the brain must be caused originally by impressions of objects without us, so we can reason upon no other. A man born blind can have no image of light or colours; nor one who has been always deaf, of sounds; whatever descriptions are given him of them. There are many creatures in the world who want some organs of sense which we have, and probably there are others in the universe which have many that we want: and such beings, if there be any such, must know many things of which we have no conception; and must judge of other things, of which we have a more partial conception, in different lights from what we are capable of judging. It is not certain that any two men see colours in the same lights; and it is most certain, that the same men at different times, according to the good or evil disposition of their organs, see them in various ones, and consequently their ratiocinations upon them will be different; which experience shews us to be true in distempered, enthusiastick, or melancholy men.

Our senses are evidently adapted to take in only finite or limited beings; nor are we capable of conceiving their existence, otherwise than by mediums of extension and solidity. The mind finds that it sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels, which is its manner of first conceiving things, or in other words, is the modus in which objects affect it; and it can reason no farther upon them, than according to those impressions: So that it is conversant only about the film or outside of bodies, and knows nothing of their internal contexture, or how they perform their operations; and consequently can affirm or deny nothing about them; but according to the perceptions which it has. When it goes further, or attempts to go further, it rambles in the dark, wades out of its depth, and must rave about non-entities, or, which is the same thing to us, about what we do or can know nothing of, or nothing to the purpose; and yet these things, or these nothings, have employed the leisure, speculations, and pens of many very learned men, as if true wisdom consisted in knowing what we want faculties to know.

All that we can know of infinity, eternity, &c. is, that we can know little or nothing about them. We must understand what we mean by the terms, or else we could not use them, or must use them impertinently. We perfectly apprehend what we mean by duration, which is our conception of the continuance of things, and contains in it a *terminus a quo* to a *terminus ad quem*, that is, it has certain boundaries in our imaginations, and we can multiply this conception backwards and forwards, without ever being able to come to the end of it, and so may be sure that it is without end; and then the imagination is lost, and can go no further. We know that all extended bodies are divisible and can never be divided so often, but they may be divided farther; and therefore say justly, they are infinitely divisible; nor can any body be so large or long, as to come to the end of extension. And therefore we may safely affirm, that extension or space (which is our conception of the existence and immensity of bodies) is infinite. But then we know no other properties of infinity or eternity, but by the help of these conceptions, which being limited and finite, cannot measure what is infinite and eternal; that is, we cannot comprehend what is incomprehensible to any being which is not infinite and eternal too, and whose existence is not as unmeasurable by time and place as those images are.

All the disputes, seeming contradictions, and absurdities, which offer themselves when we think or talk of infinity or eternity, arise from our applying our thoughts, which are confined to finite beings, and our words, which are coined to convey finite conceptions, to subjects which are infinite, and of which we can have no adequate ideas that can be expressed by sounds. Nothing is more true in finite beings, than that the whole must consist of all its parts; but in infinity there is no whole, nor consequently parts. Where there is no beginning, nor any end, there can be no middle; and where there is no whole, there can be no half. Time or space in theory are not divisible, because nothing but time or space can divide them, and then they are not divided; yet we know that time or space, as they have relation to finite beings, and our existence of duration, may be divided, and are so; and therefore the riddles made about them are owing to the narrowness of our capacities, and to our endeavouring to apply such conceptions as we have, to objects of which we can have no conception; which is, in effect, to attempt to hear sights, and see sounds.

It is the same thing to pretend to define eternity, or comprehend infinity; which is, to put limits and ends to what has no limits and ends, and to comprehend what is incomprehensible; which conceptions contradict one another, and cannot stand together in a proposition. It is the same to talk of infinite number, for all number must be finite.

How vain therefore is it to form any propositions or reasonings beyond our images, or to make positive deductions from premises wholly negative! From hence I conceive proceed all the fairy disputes about the modus of God's existing; what are his attributes and manner of acting; whether space is a real being, or only the order of things amongst themselves; whether it is the sensorium of God; or what is the meaning of the word *sensorium*: Which controversies have taken up great part of the time of two very learned men, that has been spent, as I think, mostly in shewing that they know nothing of the matter, or next to nothing. I am sure that I have learned nothing from their elucidations, whatever others may have done.

All that God Almighty has thought fit to tell us about the modus of his existence, is, *I am that I am*. And this we should have known, if he had not told it to us; and I believe it is all that we ever shall know, till he gives us other faculties. We are very sure that God *is*; that some being must have existed before any limitation of time, and independent of every other being; and consequently must have existed necessarily, or what we call eternally. It is exceeding probable, and, I think, certain, that there cannot be two or more such beings as are necessary and self-existing; and if but one, then that must be the cause of all the rest; or, which is the same thing, must produce all the rest; which mediately or immediately must derive their existence, faculties, sensations, capacities, powers of action, and consequently their actions themselves, from him.

But by what energy or power he effects this, we are wholly ignorant; and though the wits of learned men have been employed in solving this intricate question for many thousand years, yet the world is now just as wise as when they are first set out; and therefore I humbly think it high time to give over, and to content ourselves with knowing all that we can know, that is, that we can know nothing about it; and, consequently, ought not to form propositions about God's essence, or his attributes, concerning his eternity, his infinity, the modus or the sensorium of his existence, or concerning his ways or motives for making or governing the universe: For I conceive that in these questions we must walk wholly in the dark; like travellers who are out of their way, the farther they go, the greater is their journey home again.

However, I think that we are left at liberty to reason about things which we do know; and therefore may with great assurance say, that God made all things, and that every thing depends immediately, or, by second causes, mediately, upon him; and that it is absolutely impossible that they can do otherwise.

I do not see how a greater absurdity can be put together in words, than that one being shall make another, create the matter of which it was made, give it all the faculties that it has, all its capacities of reasoning, powers of action, means of thinking, and present it with all its objects for thinking, yet leave it at liberty to act against them all; which I conceive is a downright impossibility. A pair of scales perfectly poised cannot ponderate on either side; and a man who has no motives to act, will not act at all. Every thing must be at rest which has no force to impel it: but as the last straw breaks the horse's back, or a single sand will turn the beam of scales which hold weights as heavy as the world; so, without doubt, as minute causes may determine the actions of men, which neither others nor they themselves are sensible of. But certainly something must determine them, or else they could not be determined; and it is nothing to the purpose to say, that their choice determines them, if something else must determine that choice: for, let it be what it will, the effect must be necessary. To say, that a man has a power to act, without any motives or impulse to act, seems to me to be a direct blunder. A man cannot have a will to act against his will; and if he has a will to do it, something must determine that will; and, whatever it is, must be his cause of action, and will produce the action; and that can only be the appearance of advantage arising from it; and those appearances must arise from the seeming relations of objects to one another, or to himself; which relations are not in his disposal, nor consequently are his actions, in the sense contended for.

If a man can do a voluntary action without a design to do it, and without any reason or motive for doing it, then matter without understanding has a self-moving power; which is atheism with a witness: though I will not, according to laudable custom, call the asserters of it atheists, because they may not see the consequence; for, take away understanding, and there can be nothing left but matter: And understanding is certainly taken away, when a being has no reason for acting; but when he has a reason, that reason is the cause, or co-cause of the action.

The question therefore is not, whether a man can do what he has a mind to do? but, whether he can do what he has no mind to do? That is, if his inclinations concur with his reasonings, his appearing interests, and his predominant passions, whether all together will not form his resolutions, and make him act pursuant to them, whilst those motives continue? One may as well say, that a man can avoid seeing, when an object strikes the eye, or hearing, when it hits the ear, as to believe that he can decline thinking, when the motion caused by the object reaches the brain, or where-ever else the seat of thinking is, unless some other more powerful object obstruct or divert it in its journey, or afterwards; and when he does think, he must think as he can, that is, according as objects from without are represented by their images to him within; or, in other words, as they act upon the animal spirits, or whatever else it is which sets the machine in motion. A man cannot avoid feeling pain or sickness, which are sensations of the mind, nor choose whether he will feel them or not; nor can he avoid desiring to get rid of them, unless some stronger motives determine him, which promise him greater advantages than he suffers inconveniences.

But here the metaphysical gentlemen distinguish between the motions of the body and those of the mind: They own that the pulse will beat, the nerves, arteries, muscles, and blood, will move, whether we will or not; and is it not as evident, that, according as they move or beat, the mind receives alteration, is enlarged or lessened, improved or impaired, and determined in many of its resolutions? A man sick, or in pain, will send for or go to a physician or surgeon, which draws after it a train of other resolutions or actions; and, according to the success which he meets with, may alter the whole scheme of his life, and of his after-thinking, and very often of his capacity of thinking. As our bodies are healthy or disordered, we are courageous, jealous, fearful, enthusiastick, or melancholy, and reason differently, and act differently: And is it not then choice philosophy, to say, that the

contexture and disposition of our bodies (which were not of our own making) often direct or influence the resolutions of our mind, and yet are not the causes of those resolutions; and to go on to suppose, that our minds act independently of them, as well as of all other causes? For it is ridiculous to say, that though the mind has a principle of self-motion, yet other causes co-operate to produce the action; for if any other cause make it do what it would not otherwise do, that is the cause, or co-cause of the action produced, to all the purposes of this argument; nor can I guess at any other argument (that can be made use of to shew, that second causes can produce part of the action, or co-operate in producing it) which can prove them incapable to produce the whole. The most that can be pretended is, that there is a possibility that it may be so; but I conceive that no reason can be assigned why it may not be otherwise. But whether it be so or not, I think I have shewn, that the mind of man can be only a secondary cause, must be acted upon by other causes; that God alone is the first cause or principle of all motion; and that the actions of all other beings are necessarily dependent upon him.

A very great and justly celebrated author, who supposes that a man has a self-moving power, and, I think, only supposes it, endeavours to determine the question, by reducing his opponents to account for what no man yet has accounted for, and yet every man sees to be true: He says, [*]

If the reasons and motives upon which a man acts be the immediate and efficient cause of the action, then either abstract notions (as all reasons and motives are) are in themselves substances, or else that which has no real subsistence can put a body in motion.

Now the force of this reasoning consists in putting his adversary upon shewing how the mind acts upon the body, or the body upon the mind: and he would have done kindly to have let us into that secret himself. When he is so obliging to inform the world, how the eye sees, the ear hears, or the palate tastes, I dare undertake to solve any other difficulty which he proposes. We find, by experience, that when an object strikes the eye, it causes that sensation which we call seeing; and a man cannot then avoid seeing, no more than in other circumstances he can avoid feeling pain and sickness, which are undoubtedly actions of the mind, or, if he choose another manner of expression, we will call them passions (and indeed they are both; *viz.* the latter as they are impelled by other causes; and the former, as they produce future events: And it seems very trifling to me, in so great a man, to spend so many pages about the propriety of a word, when the meaning intended to be conveyed by it was fully understood): but certainly they are species of thinking, or, if he pleases, abstract notions, which often put a body in motion, as all thinking undoubtedly does: But how these effects are produced, we are wholly in the dark.

We see and feel, that desires and fears, that abstract notions or images of the brain, alter the disposition of the whole fabrick, and often destroy the contexture of it. We see that the longings of women with child will stamp impressions upon the fetus, which longings are certainly abstract notions; and if these are not corporeal, then we must confess, that what is not so will affect what is: For as to his words *substance* and *subsistence*, I shall not pretend to understand them without a farther explanation, if he mean any thing by them besides body. Methinks this truly worthy and learned author should not call upon another to solve what no man is more capable of solving than himself. I freely own my ignorance; and, since, as I conceive, revelation is silent in the matter, am contented to continue in that ignorance.

The other argument is as follows:

If insensible matter, or any other being or substance continually acting upon a man, be the immediate and efficient cause of his actions, then the motion of that subtle matter or substance must be caused by some other substance, I would

choose to call it some other being, and the motion of that by some other, till at last we arrive at a free being.

Now, if, instead of the words *free being*, he had said a self-existent being, which I call God, his conclusion had been inevitable; nor do I oppose it in the words which he uses: But as we may possibly differ, and I doubt shall do, in the meaning of the words *free being*, so I neither assent to, nor dissent from, his proposition. I mean by a *free being*, one who has nothing, without itself, to determine or control its actions; which God has not, and I think man has. His conclusion therefore from such premises are nothing to me.

T

I am &c.

No. 112. SATURDAY, January 19, 1723.

Fondness for Posterity nothing else but Self-love. Such as are Friends to publick Liberty, are the only true Lovers of Posterity. [Trenchard] [↪](#)

[IV-58]

SIR,

Men, for the sake of their posterity, do many things, which, they tell us, they would not do for their own sakes. The wealth which they do not spend, they lay up for posterity; and their care for posterity is made a pretence, to justify all the acquisitions that they make of fortune and dominion. But this is false reasoning, though by it they often deceive themselves and others. They find that they have greater appetites to acquire wealth, than they have to enjoy it; and, not being able to deny, that wealth is only so far useful as it is enjoyed, and no farther, they cannot justify their conduct, but by furnishing themselves with a false excuse from their regard for posterity: As if the affections of men could be stronger for others, and for a future race, of whom they know nothing, or for such as perhaps may never exist, than for themselves. Doubtless, men are in no circumstances to be separated from themselves: They are ever the chief objects of their own tenderness and good wishes; and the love of posterity is only self-love continued beyond the grave. We see those who have no posterity, nor the prospect of any, engaged in the same passionate and greedy pursuits as those who have; and they often leave their estates, when they die, to those for whom, while they lived, they shewed no concern.

This ambition therefore amongst men, of leaving an illustrious posterity, is mere self-love; a passion to survive themselves, and to make a figure after they are dead. To gratify this passion, men in all stations often take wild and unaccountable courses: They employ great pains for that which they can never enjoy, and run many dangers for what they will never reap: They drudge, and laboriously contrive ways to wear themselves out, they deny themselves rest and ease, and the comforts of life, that some future men, whom they know not, may live in idleness and abundance, and perhaps despise these their careful and penurious ancestors, who painfully provided for them the means of luxury, and enabled them to be insolent, or debauched, or insignificant to society. They are indeed generally but even with one another: The descendent receives, without gratitude, an estate which his ancestor left him without affection. People would take it greatly amiss, if you supposed that they wanted honour for their ancestors, or regard to their posterity; and that they themselves were the only real objects of all this regard, and of that honour. But let them ask themselves, whether they would restore to their grandfather again the estate which he left them, were he to rise from the dead, and demand it? or, whether they are willing to part with it to their children before their own death? or, if they sometimes do, whether they have not other motives besides paternal affection? and, whether their own credit and vanity be not the strongest?

Thus men gratify their own tempers, and invent fine false reasons and specious names for what they do. A passion for posterity, is a passion for fame; and he who raises a family, considers his race as hereditary trustees for his name and grandeur, and as the proper means and channel for perpetuating himself. Nor does he carry about him an appetite more selfish and personal than this. So that all the wicked things which a man does to raise a posterity, are but so many infamous steps to acquire personal fame, which he will never arrive at; and does therefore but labour against the very end which he labours for. If his posterity prove good, it will be remembered to their praise, and his shame, what a vile ancestor they had: If they prove bad, it will not be forgot how much they resemble him; and he will become still more

odious in his odious descendents. Even the wisest men do a foolish thing, when they employ great assiduity and care to leave a great estate to a random heir, whom nature, or chance, or the law, gives them. How many immense estates, gathered in a long course of years and application, have we seen thrown away suddenly upon harlots and sharpers! The acquisitions of half a century have disappeared, as it were, in a moment; and the chief remaining monuments of the founder's name were jests made upon his memory.

But of all the foolish and wicked ways of raising families, none equals that of raising them upon the ruins of publick liberty. The general security is the only certain security of particulars; and though desperate men often find safety in publick destruction, yet they cannot ensure the same safety to their children, who must suffer with the rest in the misery of all. If great wicked men would consider this, the world would not be plagued with their ambition. Their posterity scarce ever miss to reap the bitter fruits of their actions; and the curse of their iniquities rarely fails to follow them to the third and fourth generation.

The instruments of public ruin have generally at once entailed misery upon their country and upon their own race. Those who were the instruments and ministers of Caesar and Augustus, and put the commonwealth under their feet, and them above the laws, did not consider, that they were not only forging chains for their country, but whetting swords against their own families, who were all cut off under succeeding tyrants: Nay, most of their children fell early and bloody sacrifices to the cruel and suspicious spirit of Tiberius. He began his reign with the murder of young Agrippa, whose father had, by his courage and conduct in war, established the tyranny in that house. What availed to Agrippa all his great riches, his sumptuous buildings, and even his near alliance with the prince, whose daughter he married, but to hasten and magnify the fall and destruction of his own house? There was not one Roman family wickedly enriched by their base subserviency to Augustus, but was slaughtered and confiscated under his successors, and most of them under his immediate successor: Nay, their riches and splendor were reasons for destroying them. The freed slaves of the emperors grew afterwards the first men in Rome, and had at their mercy the heads and estates of the patricians; nor could any of the great Roman lords come into any post or office in their own empire, but by the pleasure and permission of those slaves, and by servile court paid to them.

Would their illustrious ancestors, who were the friends and abettors of Caesar, have done as they did, had they foreseen this vile subserviency of their posterity to slaves and pathicks, and the daily and wanton sacrifices made of their boasted blood? And yet was not all this easily to be foreseen? While they were arming him with a power over their country, they stripped themselves of all title to their lives and estates. By laying up riches for their families, they did but lay snares for the ruin of their families. It grew a crime under these tyrants, to be conspicuous for any thing; and riches, virtue, eloquence, courage, reputation, nay, names and accidents, became crimes. Men, and even women, were put to death, for having had illustrious ancestors; and some, for bearing the fortuitous surnames of great men dead an hundred years before.

So that these men, who, from the bait of present wealth and place, helped to overthrow the constitution of that great state, were not only the parricides of their country, but the murderers of their own children and families, by putting a lawless dagger into the hands of these tyrants to execute these murders. They sold their own blood and posterity to these imperial butchers, whose chief employment it was to shed it. These mistaken men might flatter and blind themselves with a conceit, that they were laying up riches for ages, and entailing honours upon their latest race: For what is so blind as ambition and avarice? But to their unhappy descendents it proved a terrible inheritance of servitude, exile, tortures, and massacre. What they meant to perpetuate, their fortune and race, were the first things seized and extirpated. They had been real traitors to make their children great; and their children

were put to death for false treason, merely for being great. So nearly are punishments allied to crimes, and so naturally do they rise from them!

Thus rash and unadvised, even as to themselves and their own families, are those wicked men, who raise up an enormous power in their country, because they were its livery, and are for some time indulged by it in their own pride and oppressions! And so ungrateful is that power when it is raised, even to the props and instruments that raised it! They themselves are often crushed to death by it, and their posterity certainly are.

This may serve among other arguments, to prove, that men ought to be virtuous, just, and good, for their own sake, and that of their families; and especially great men, whose lasting security is best found in the general security. Pericles had long and arbitrarily lavished away the publick money to buy creatures, and perpetuate his power; and, dreading to give up his accounts, which the Athenians began to call for, thought that he had no other way to avoid doing this justice to his country, but by adding another great crime to his past crimes. He would venture the ruin of the commonwealth, rather than be accountable to it: He therefore threw all things into confusion, raised armies, and entered precipitately into a war with Lacedaemon; which, after much blood, misery, and desolation, ended in the captivity of his country. During that war, he died of the plague, which the war was thought to occasion; and to his pride and guilt alone were owing the plague, war, and the taking of Athens, with the desolation of the city and territory. Before he died he felt the loss of his whole family, and of all his friends and relations; and, doubtless foresaw the downfall of his country. What huge and complicated ruin! He would see the state sink, rather than lose his authority in it: But in the destruction of his country, his own was justly and naturally involved. Where was now the great, the politick, the eloquent, Pericles? Where was the proud state which he had long and haughtily swayed? Where was his family and race? Where were all his mighty future views? Why, the sword, the pestilence, and foreign conquest, had, by his own management, put an end to them all; and his wisdom and profound foresight proved miserable and ruinous folly.

T

I am, &c.

No. 113. SATURDAY, January 26, 1723.

Letter to Cato, concerning his many Adversaries and Answerers. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-65]

HORATIUS TO CATO

SIR,

I have had a long ambition to say something about you one way or other; but I doubted whether I had best write to you, or against you. That doubt is now decided; and lo! I who might have been your adversary, am become your correspondent and advocate. I send you your apology, and shew you the good that you do.

You have, sir, opened a new source of provision for the poor, by finding employment for all the wits mendicant about town: And though they ought to reverence your name, as that of another Sutton, by whose alms they are sustained, yet they vilely fly in your face, and pollute, by their matchless ingratitude, the very bread which you generously put into their mouths; like maggots, who prey upon the flesh that they are bred in, till they turn flies, which are vermin with wings. Thus reprobates serve heaven; they affront and blaspheme it, and receive their existence from it. You scarce had appeared in the world, but you recalled superannuated authors to life again; and, toothless as they were, set them a biting, biting at the hand that brought them back from oblivion. Obsolete and despairing authors once more violently grasped their pen: The lean and ill fed candidates for weekly work from the booksellers brightened up, and began to be clothed; and puny poets, and the humble composers of ditties, left their tags and ballads, to live upon Cato; even those who had got some reputation, thought that they had now a lucky opportunity to improve it, by breaking a lance with a champion who drew all eyes upon him, and was yet invincible: And Cato became at once the butt of the envious, the mark of the ambitious, and the stay and support of the needy.

It is the lot of grandeur: A great man must have his poor and impertinent dependents, as well as his useful and agreeable: They will serve to make up his train. A troop of beggars besetting his coach, or following it in the street, do, notwithstanding their rags, and ill-favoured looks, and dismal style, but add to the lustre of his figure. Jesters and buffoons, cynicks and declaimers, are likewise of the same use, to swell his pomp, and divert him, though they be often too free with him. Your retinue, sir, of this kind is infinite: From the Cockpit to Moorfields you maintain a wag, an orator, a critick, a poet, a journalist, in every street, and whole swarms in the alleys: Nor would I desire a surer patent for fame than such a shoal of calumniators. Their scolding is compliment; and while they aim blows at you, they only cudgel themselves on your behalf: *Offendent solido*; you know the fable of the viper biting the file.

Envy always praises those whom it rails at. It is indeed the only way that foul mouths can make your panegyric, or that of any man. Were they to extol you in earnest, it would be downright scandal and railing; a foul conspiracy against your reputation; like the fawning of a whelp, who, to express his fondness, pisses upon you. If therefore they meant their scurrilities and satirical nonsense in love, you would have ground for provocation: But to mean them as they do the contrary way, is their only genuine way of thanking you for their food. There are many sorts of folks whose calumnies I would be proud of for the same reason why I would be ashamed of their praise. A great man at Athens was followed from a publick assembly, all the way home, by a very competent reviler, with a world of panegyricall ill names and acceptable abuses. That great man took all these kind volleys of defamation for so

many huzzas; and calling to his servant, "Go," says he, "take a light, and conduct that worthy gentleman, who has honoured me with all those civil acclamations, home to his lodging."

Now, if this ill-tongued Athenian had not been in earnest, his courtesy would have been half lost. I hope that your numerous answerers and revilers mean what they say, else the obligation is but small; and the smaller, because these their panegyrics upon you are not at all encouraged. The town is still profoundly ignorant what a swarm of retailers, what loud and vehement flatterers, you have in it. They have filled, and do weekly fill, mighty reams of paper in extolling you, as great a secret as the world would make of it, to use the words of a witty author.

Love, they say, is blind; and perhaps from hence may be fetched a proof, that these your pretended adversaries are your real friends, since in their writings against you, that is, for you (for it is all one) they are guided by no other rule of right and wrong, than whether Cato affirms a thing, or denies it; and are always sure to take the contrary side: Nay, some of them contradict Cato, at the expence of their constant and favourite opinions. Does not this look like playing booty? By their works one would think that you had the licensing of your opponents, and, but for their hideous bulk, the overlooking of them: At least by your profound silence, and great meekness towards them, you seem well pleased with their labours. I dare say, you would not change them for any set of defamers that could be pick'd up for you.

A lady of my acquaintance is fond of dogs. She has at present two or three little curs, that are very noisy at every visitant who is taller than ordinary. The puny vermin have a spite at elevation. They once particularly, made an incessant and slanderous clamour at a noble lord, well known for his fine person, and graceful mien; nor could they be stilled. The lady was out of countenance: She told him that she would have them knocked on the head, or given away: "By no means, Madam," says his lordship, sagely enough, "I know you cannot be without dogs, and perhaps the next may bite me."

I think that I have read you impartially, and cannot say that I have found in you any knavish reasoning, any base or dishonest principles. You need not therefore be concerned who writes against you. However, as I would trust no body, in any circumstances, with any sort of absolute power, methinks I should not be displeas'd to see you checked and watch'd a little in that great authority which you have acquired over the minds of men. No body has shewn us better than yourself, that all discretionary power is liable to be abused, and ought not to be trusted, or cautiously trusted, to mortal and frail men. For this reason, though you be a monarch of the press, I would have you a limited monarch: As such it becomes you to bear with, and receive kindly, the admonitions and remonstrances of men of honour and sense, when such differ with you; and it is agreeable to your sense and character, to laugh at the profane contumelies of slaves. Your calumniators do your business. The viper carries within it a remedy for its own poison. You are secure, by the baseness of their fears, against the baseness of their malice; and their malice is harmless, by being obvious.

There is something diverting in the number and variety of your adversaries, and in their different views. Some are old stagers; and, being used to spill ink for pay in the quarrel of parties, made an offer of themselves to enter the lists again, and scold for wages at Cato. The finances were not in Cato's disposal: This was a good and conscientious reason to them for being against him. But these volunteers are not suitably encouraged. One of them has in two years writ near a dozen pamphlets against you; but with ill success every way. The town will not buy them; the other end of the town will not reward the author; nor will you take any notice of them. A melancholy case; that learned Oxonian is at present in the slough of despond.

Others, who had not been used to receive pay, and I doubt never will, thought themselves qualified to earn it: For, alas! what is so deceiving as self-love? So upon Cato they fell; and, by way of answer, cracked jests, and called him names. Fraught with this merit, away they footed sweating to the office; where, after many petitions, and much waiting, they were admitted to the audience of one of the clerks. They begged to be considered as humble auxiliaries, and to have an acknowledgment, the smallest acknowledgment. These gentlemen had better luck than the above ancient author: They were fully rewarded; that is to say, they were civilly thanked by the aforesaid clerk, and owned to be well-meaning persons. And yet they are ungrateful, and make heavy complaints, as if they had nothing. They still hope for more another time.

A bookseller of my acquaintance tells me, that he has refused within this year, five and fifty pamphlets written against you; and that the authors, one and all, offered to write for him by the year. They were all of opinion, that they could carry through a weekly paper with as much reputation and success as any yet written against you: Which he did not deny; and yet dismissed them. He told me, it was but this winter, that a man in a livery came to him, and asked him, what he would give for a sermon to be preached by his master the doctor on a publick occasion? He answered, "Nothing." "Oh, sir," says the valet, "my master's will sell like wild-fire. You cannot think, sir, how purely he claws off Cato: And you will see he'll soon be made a . . ." [*]

You may see, sir, that you are a useful man to many, and even considered as a scale to great preferment. This sermon is since out, and it has neither hurt you nor exalted the preacher, though he has there laboured the point very hard. The doctor wanted no good will, whatever else he wants. Unluckily for him, there is not an argument (I should have said assertion) used by him against writing, but what will bear fifty times as strongly against preaching. I will, however, acquit him from meaning this consequence, or any other but that which his man meant; and which seems a consequence at least extremely remote. The doctor is, indeed, admirable: While he thought himself haranging and scattering words against libelling, he was actually inveighing virulently against himself, and preaching an angry libel against preaching. May the press and liberty be ever blessed with such foes! The doctor does not want words; it is pity but he knew the use of them.

Says Mr. Bayes, in The Rehearsal,

I bring out my bull and my bear; and what do you think I make them do, Mr. Johnson?

Johnson. Do! why fight, I suppose.

Bayes. See how you are mistaken now! I would as soon make them dance: No, igad, sir, I make them do no earthly thing.

There is this difference between the doctor's bull and Mr. Bayes's bull: The doctor's bull bellows; besides this he does no earthly thing neither.

Pray, sir, be not so proud and lazy; read some of your adversaries, and their bulls will divert you.

Methinks, as great a man as the world takes you to be, and as you may think yourself, you treat your intended adversaries, but real friends, too superciliously, and, I conceive, with too much contempt. I am told by some of your intimate friends, that you have never read any of their works; and yet, to my knowledge, several of them please themselves with having mortified you, and do themselves no small credit amongst their acquaintance by bragging of it. Give your poor retainers this consolation, since they are like to have no other: Consider them as brats of your own begetting; and, since you have brought them into the world, that

you ought to support them. Your taking but the least notice of them, and their performances, will give them food and raiment: But I will beg leave to say, that it is very unnatural, when you have given birth to so many innocent and harmless creatures, to leave them afterwards to starve. You see that they want no industry and application; and it is not their fault if they want success. Take, generous Cato, a little notice of them; and I am sure they will gratefully acknowledge your indulgence. Read their labours, and condescend to throw away a few leisure hours in contemplating the imbecility of human nature. It becomes the greatest men to know the weak sides of it as well as the strong; at least you will learn this lesson by it, that

Man differs more from man, than man from beast.

Give me leave to conclude with a story: Once upon a time, I saw a large brave bull, of great comeliness and dignity, brought out upon a green near a country village to be baited. Among the bull-dogs fetched to bait him, were seen several dirty, deformed curs, called house dogs, that vented their choler in filthy noise. They barked aloud and bitterly, and disturbed every body but the bull, who, at all their snapping, snivelling, and snarling, never turned his head, nor moved a foot or horn. At last the squire of the place, who presided at the entertainment, shewed himself a man of taste and equity. "Take away," says he, with a voice of authority, "take away these yelping mongrels: We do not use to bait bulls with turnspits."

G

I am, SIR,

Your humble servant,

HORATIUS.

No. 114. SATURDAY, February 2, 1723.

The necessary Decay of Popish States shewn from the Nature of the Popish Religion.
[Trenchard] ↩

[IV-73]

SIR,

As I do not pretend to be inspired myself, nor have received any personal revelation concerning the Whore of Babylon, nor to have skill enough in the Apocalypse to discover the exact time of the fall of Antichrist; so I shall leave that charge to the profound persons who are learned in prophetick knowledge; but would humbly advise them to use a little of their own endeavours to demolish the harlot, and not to expect the whole from providence. And to encourage them in this undertaking, I shall attempt to shew in this paper, what is told in the *Homilies*, that she is old and withered, and would have long since fallen to pieces, if she had not been patched with searchcloths, and kept alive by cordials, administered by the charity of those who were, or ought to have been, her enemies; and that as soon as they leave off their complaisance, give her no more physick, nor adopt her trumpery, her end will be certain: And this I shall attempt to prove from natural causes, leaving the supernatural ones to those who understand them better.

It has been more than once said in these letters, that population, labour, riches, and power, mutually procure one another, and always go together; that where there are but few people, and those few are not employed, there will be little wealth, and as little power; and consequently, those governments, which provide least for the increase of their people, and for the employment of those that they have, are less capable of annoying their enemies, or of preserving themselves. Now, if we try the power of Protestant and popish states by this test, it will appear absolutely impossible that the latter can long subsist, if the former do not lose their natural advantages by political blunders.

In the popish states of Europe, there are a million or more of male ecclesiasticks, and almost as many of the other sex, who by their religion are hindered from marriage, and consequently from procreation, unless by stealth, spurious births, which rarely produce living children; and all, or most of these, subsist upon the plunder of the people, without contributing any thing to the publick wealth, either by their labour, or out of their immense revenues, which are usually exempted from taxes, as are their persons from wars; on the contrary, they have no other business, but to fascinate and turn the brains of weak and enthusiastick people, to make them loiter after masses and useless harangues, and to fill their heads with senseless speculations and wild chimeras, which make them either useless or dangerous to their governors, and the ready tools and instruments of turbulent and seditious pedants; which evil is, or should be, better provided against in all Protestant states.

In popish countries, one third part of the year, or more is spent in most religiously worshipping dead men and women under the name of saints; in all which time the people dare not work to support their families, but must contribute, out of the little which remains, to pay their oppressors for preaching them out of their wits; and, by consequence, the publick loses all that the people would earn in those days; whereas, in Protestant states, all, or most of this trumpery is laid aside, and they most reasonably judge, that Almighty God is not worshipped by his creatures starving themselves, and weakening their country.

In popish countries the power of the ecclesiasticks is so great, and their revenues so large, that the civil authority is often not able to protect its subjects. The priests, by the Inquisition and various cruelties, seize their estates, drive away their merchants and people, or starve them at home, and frighten others from coming in their room; so that their princes are forced to keep measures with them, connive at, submit to, and support their tyranny, in order to be protected in their own power; and, by so doing, their unhappy and undone subjects are reduced to the condition of their great Master, to be crucified between two thieves. On the contrary, in Protestant states the ecclesiasticks are equally subject with the rest of the people to the civil power; are not so numerous, nor have so large revenues, and those revenues are taxable; nor have they so much power and influence to mislead their hearers, and consequently cannot do so much mischief, and if kept to their proper business, may do much good by their pious examples, and by their godly precepts.

In popish countries a great part of the year is spent in keeping Lent, and in fasting-days, when the people, by their poverty, are reduced to live upon stinking or unwholesome food, whence many of them perish, and the rest are weakened and enervated, and rendered unfit either for labour or procreation; and then succeeds a riotous carnival, during which they are idle and debauched; and both these extremes, in their turns, produce diseases, poverty, and misery; whereas in Protestant countries the people live in regular plenty, according to their condition, keep themselves in constant labour and exercise, and by such means preserve their bodies in health, and their minds within their bodies, without sending them abroad a vision hunting.

In popish countries great quantities of gold, silver, and jewels, which ought to circulate, and be used in commerce, are buried as uselessly as when in the mine; are applied to adorn images and churches, or are locked up in caverns, and rendered unserviceable to mankind. This, forsooth, is called devotion, and giving to God what he before gave to men for their use; and their way of obeying him, is to make no use of it, and to lodge it only where there can be an ill use made of it. But, I thank God, this superstition is pretty well over in Protestant countries, where the people (a few old women and dotards excepted) think that their riches are better employed to maintain their families, relations, and friends, than to support idlers and cynicks.

In popish countries, their ecclesiasticks, living in idleness and riot, must be more lascivious than if otherwise employed; and by the means of confessions, and other secret communications with women, have better and frequenter opportunities to debauch them themselves, and to carry on intrigues for others, whereby they break in upon the peace of families, and interrupt the harmony which ought to accompany a married estate. To prevent in a good measure which mischiefs (since they are forbid to marry), their states are necessitated to tolerate established courtezans under a regulation; an institution which hinders many others from marrying, debauches their minds, ruins their estates, and enervates their bodies, and yet gives few children to the commonwealth: Which mischief is well provided against in Protestant countries; for there no man is obliged to trust his wife with a priest, and, for the most part, the clergy find it convenient to marry themselves; and a blessing visibly attends their endeavours, no rank of people being more observed to multiply their species.

In popish countries many foreign wars are raised and stirred up by the pride and ambition of the ecclesiasticks to increase their power; and many domestick ones fomented for the same reason, about the power of the Pope, the investiture of princes, the immunities of the clergy; and endless contentions arise with the states which they live under, about their peculiar privileges, as well as constant persecutions against all who oppose their pretences: All which wars and quarrels exhaust the people, perplex the publick affairs, and either divide them into factions, or, which is much worse, make them all of their own. But in Protestant countries

these evils are less enormous: The people begin to see with their own eyes, and will not undo one another to gratify the ambition of any who would oppress them all; nor force or drive out of their country useful inhabitants, for dry chimeras and useless notions, and for the shape of their thoughts and imaginations; and many of their clergy do not desire it.

In popish countries, great numbers of idle and useless members of society are employed to support the luxury of the ecclesiasticks, or to contribute to their superstition; as organists, fiddlers, singers, scholars, as they are called, numerous officers of various kinds, and many lazy beggars, who feed upon their scraps, or are supported by their means out of the charity of others, who are persuaded that they serve God in keeping them idle and necessitous, and without labouring for a subsistence: All these are a dead weight upon society, live like drones in a hive, and eat honey without making any. This grievance is not so great in Protestant countries, the clergy amongst them not being used to throw away their money without having something for it.

In popish countries there is an asylum and sanctuary in every parish, where robbers, murderers, and all sorts of criminals, are defended against their sovereigns and their laws; by which means banditti and assassins are become a sort of establishment, and are the Swiss and guards of the papacy, depend upon the priests for protection, and are always at hand to execute their bloody designs, and to partake of the spoil, as well as to be hired by others; by which means there are numerous and nightly murders in those countries, and the people there dare not go about their necessary affairs; and therefore cannot have the same security and encouragement as in Protestant countries, where this enormous wickedness is not allowed and practised, and where the priests cannot protect assassins; and the worst that can be said of any of them is, that they will not find fault with them afterwards, but are ready to absolve them at the gallows, if they have been doing their work: And in one instance, in a certain jurisdiction [*]

where a certain high-priest, or those who act under him, compound with delinquents by the great for crimes which they have committed, or are to commit for the year ensuing; *à la mode* of his Holiness at Rome.

These, and other infinite evils, are produced by the popish religion, which depopulates nations, destroys industry, overturns law and justice, the cements of society, discourages trade, drives out merchants, enervates states, and renders the race of mankind feeble, lazy, and miserable. Nor can I see a bare possibility how these wretched people can extricate themselves out of their doleful condition, which must still go on from bad to worse, till they become so weak as to be the prey of foreign enemies, or to expire by an internal consumption; for the power of the ecclesiasticks is so great, and depends so much upon keeping the laity poor, ignorant, idle, and helpless, that they cannot have the will or power to recover themselves.

This wicked policy has turned the Campania of Rome, and all the populous and fertile provinces of Italy, into bogs, morasses, and deserts, and would have long since extinguished popery, if some of the Protestant states had not forgot the principles upon which they had reformed, and others had submitted to domestick slavery, but little worse than ecclesiastical, as both flowing from the same root, and producing the same evils, though not in the same degree; however, I think that the catastrophe of popery is but a little farther removed, for the few states amongst the Protestants, with prudent laws, and a wise conduct alone, may be in a condition, if they can keep their liberty, without striking a stroke but in their own defence, to demolish and overturn this monstrous Babel, or make or suffer it to destroy itself.

T

I am, &c.



No. 115. SATURDAY, February 9, 1723.

The encroaching Nature of Power, ever to be watched and checked. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-81]

SIR,

Only the checks put upon magistrates make nations free; and only the want of such checks makes them slaves. They are free, where their magistrates are confined within certain bounds set them by the people, and act by rules prescribed them by the people: And they are slaves, where their magistrates choose their own rules, and follow their lust and humours; than which a more dreadful curse can befall no people; nor did ever any magistrate do what he pleased, but the people were undone by his pleasure; and therefore most nations in the world are undone, and those nations only who bridle their governors do not wear chains.

Unlimited power is so wild and monstrous a thing, that however natural it be to desire it, it is as natural to oppose it; nor ought it to be trusted with any mortal man, be his intentions ever so upright: For, besides that he will never care to part with it, he will rarely dare. In spite of himself he will make many enemies, against whom he will be protected only by his power, or at least think himself best protected by it. The frequent and unforeseen necessities of his affairs, and frequent difficulties and opposition, will force him for his own preservation, or for the preservation of his power, to try expedients, to tempt dangers, and to do things which he did not foresee, nor intend, and perhaps, in the beginning, abhorred.

We know, by infinite examples and experience, that men possessed of power, rather than part with it, will do any thing, even the worst and the blackest, to keep it; and scarce ever any man upon earth went out of it as long as he could carry every thing his own way in it; and when he could not, he resigned. I doubt that there is not one exception in the world to this rule; and that Dioclesian, Charles V, and even Sulla, laid down their power out of pique and discontent, and from opposition and disappointment. This seems certain, that the good of the world, or of their people, was not one of their motives either for continuing in power, or for quitting it.

It is the nature of power to be ever encroaching, and converting every extraordinary power, granted at particular times, and upon particular occasions, into an ordinary power, to be used at all times, and when there is no occasion; nor does it ever part willingly with any advantage. From this spirit it is, that occasional commissions have grown sometimes perpetual; that three years have been improved into seven, and one into twenty; and that when the people have done with their magistrates, their magistrates will not have done with the people.

The Romans, who knew this evil, having suffered by it, provided wise remedies against it; and when one ordinary power grew too great, checked it with another. Thus the office and power of the tribunes was set up to balance that of the consuls, and to protect the populace against the insolence, pride, and intrenchments of the nobility: And when the authority of the tribunes grew too formidable, a good expedient was found out to restrain it; for in any turbulent or factious design of the tribunes, the protest or dissent of any one of them made void the purposes and proceedings of all the rest. And both the consuls and tribunes were chosen only for a year.

Thus the Romans preserved their liberty by limiting the time and power of their magistrates, and by making them answerable afterwards for their behaviour in it: And besides all this, there lay from the magistrates an appeal to the people; a power which, however great,

they generally used with eminent modesty and mercy; and, like the people of other nations, sinned much seldomer than their governors. Indeed, in any publick disorder, or misfortune, the people are scarce ever in the fault; but far on the other side, suffer often, with a criminal patience, the sore evils brought wantonly or foolishly upon them by others, whom they pay dear to prevent them.

This sacred right of appealing to the people, was secured to them by a very good and very severe law, which is found in Livy in these words:

Aliam deinde consularem legem de provocatione, unicum praesidium libertatis, decemvirali potestate eversam, non restituunt modo, sed etiam muniunt, sanciendo novam legem, ne quis ullum magistratum sine provocatione crearet: Qui creasset, eum jus fasque esset occidi: Neve caedes capitalis noxae haberetur.

The former consular law for appealing to the people (the first and only great support of liberty), having been overturned by the usurpation of the Decemviri, was now not only restored, but fortified by a new law, which forbade the creating of any magistrate without appeal, and made it lawful to kill any man that did so, without subjecting the killer to a capital penalty.

The Romans had but too good reason for these laws; for the Decemviri, from whom there was no appeal, had enslaved them.

And because the being frequently chosen into power, might have effects as bad as the long continuance in it, Cicero, in his book *De Legibus*, tells us, that there was an express law, *Eundem magistratum, ni interfuerint decem anni, ne quis capito*; "That no man should bear the same magistracy which he had borne before, but after an interval of ten years." This law was afterwards strengthened with severe penalties. Hence Rutilius Censorius blamed the people in a publick speech for creating him twice censor: And Fabius Maximus would have hindered them from choosing his son consul, though possessed of every virtue proper for one, because the chief magistracies had been too long and too often in the Fabian family. And there are many instances in the Roman history, of magistrates, chief magistrates, being degraded for their pride, avarice, and maladministration; and those who were thus degraded, were by law disabled, like our late directors, from ever enjoying again any post or power. Nor were the Romans less careful to oblige their magistrates as soon as they came out of their offices and governments, to make up their accounts, and to give a strict account of their good behaviour; and for an ill one they were often condemned, and their estates confiscated. Besides all which, to be a Senator, or a magistrate, a certain qualification in point of fortune was required; and those who had run through their fortunes were degraded from the dignity of Senators. A reasonable precaution, that they who were entrusted with the interest of their country, should have some interest of their own in it.

In this manner did the Roman people check power, and those who had it; and when any power was grown quite ungovernable, they abolished it. Thus they expelled Tarquin, and the kingly government, having first suffered much by it; and they prospered as eminently without it. That government too had been extremely limited: The first Roman kings were little more than generals for life: They had no negative vote in the Senate, and could neither make war nor peace; and even in the execution of justice, an appeal lay from them to the people, as is manifest in the case of the surviving Horatius, who slew his sister. Servius Tullius made laws, says Tacitus, which even the kings were to obey. By confining the power of the crown within proper bounds, he gained power without bounds in the affections of the people. But the insolent Tarquin broke through all bounds, and acted so openly against law, and the people of Rome, that they had no remedy left but to expel him and his race; which they did with glorious success.

The dictatorial power was afterwards given occasionally, and found of great use; but still it was limited to so many months; and there are instances where even the dictator could not do what he pleased, but was over-ruled by the judgment of the people. Besides, when the Romans came to have great and distant territories, and great armies, they thought the dictatorial power too great and too dangerous to be trusted with any subject, and laid it quite aside; nor was it ever afterwards used, till it was violently usurped, first by Sulla, afterwards by Caesar, and then Rome lost its liberty.

T

I am, &c.

No. 116. SATURDAY, February 16, 1723.

That whatever moves and acts, does so mechanically and necessarily. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-86]

SIR,

It is justly observed by Mr. Locke, and by Mr. Hobbes and others before him, that we have no innate ideas, nor can reflect upon them before we have them; that is, we cannot think before we have something to think upon. All objects and materials for thinking must be let in upon the mind through the organs of sense; and when they are there, we reflect or reason upon them; or, to speak philosophically, when the action of exterior bodies strikes upon us, it must cause a second action or motion, and continue it *in infinitum*, unless it meets obstruction. This first action causes sensation, and the second reflection; and the first seems to me as necessarily to produce the latter, as wind sails a ship, or the winding up of a clock sets it in motion.

Every system of matter has peculiar organizations, and can perform only peculiar functions. A cow cannot perform the offices of a horse, nor a man of a monkey; nor indeed, in many instances, can one man perform those of another. As some machines or systems of matter consist of vastly finer and more numerous parts than others, so they are capable of more operations. A watch which points to minutes or seconds, has more wheels, than one which only shews hours; and a striking or repeating watch has more than both, though all are wound up by the same key. Animals who consist of infinite tubes, veins, arteries, muscles, and juices, which also consist of infinite globular, and other figured particles of matter, must have suitable and very surprizing operations, though all their actions must be confined within the circle of their machine; but they will be multiplied in equal or greater degree than the chances upon dies. Two dies have six times as many chances as one, and three as two, and so on *in infinitum*; and therefore there seems to be no difficulty in accounting for the great variety of actions in animals, more than in inferior machines: And as mankind never have, nor, I presume, ever will discover all the powers of mechanical experiments; so with greater reason one may venture to assert, that no animal ever yet has exerted all the faculties which it was endued with: A thousand dies may turn up all sixes; but I believe this has never happened, nor I believe ever will.

Vegetables seem to me to be analogous in many respects to animals: Their generation appears to be much alike: They both rise from seeds, or eggs, and continue their kinds by the same: Their life is continued alike, and their nourishment conveyed through veins or other tubes; and when that nourishment ceases, they die; and as the action of the sun, and other bodies, set the former in motion, and causes that sort of sensation which we call vegetation, so the same power, or some other like it, seems to rouse animal life, and sets it in like motion; and all motion must be progressive in the same system till it be destroyed, or that system become another, or part of another; which shall be more fully shewn hereafter.

This action is called by different names, as it affects the different parts of the machine. When it affects the eye, it is called seeing; the ear, hearing; the palate, tasting; the nose, smelling; which indeed are but different sorts of feeling: But when the motion is continued further, and gets to the brain, or other internal parts of the system, it causes that effect which we call thinking; which again operates within the animal, and drives it to farther action, which is always analogous to the disposition of the fabrick, and regular, or irregular, according to the present formation of the machine, and of the powers which impel it. And here we cannot enough admire the exquisite skill of the Supreme Architect, who has formed

such stupendous and amazing works of his omnipotence; and in many instances, I conceive we should judge right if we only admired them, and not vainly attempted to find out what we can never know. We want faculties to search the causes of most things in nature, and know nothing of their internal contexture, and but little of the *modus* of their operations. We see only some sensible effects of the actions of bodies upon one another; but how they produce these effects, we are utterly ignorant, and I believe ever shall be whilst we are in this state: We cannot tell why the fire burns, the grass grows, the eye sees, the ear hears, or the mind thinks, only we find in fact, that they do so; and here is our *ne plus ultra*.

It is exceedingly imprudent therefore for men to pretend to determine the powers of matter and motion, when they know not what matter is, of what parts it consists, or indeed any thing about it, but by a few outward effects; nor can we form any notions of it but from those effects, which yet probably do not exhaust the millionth part of its powers: And it is still more ridiculous to use the word *spirit* (of which we have no sort of idea), to account for other things, of which we have very little or no idea neither; and in many instances, deny what we see, to pretend to believe what we do not understand. Words are only the signs of images, as figures are of numbers; and what use is there of a sound, or scrawl, which signifies nothing, or, which is the same thing, which stands for what we know nothing of?

Now if a man should ask a modern philosopher, what he meant by the word *spirit*? he possibly will answer, that it is something which wants extension and solidity. If it be asked again what conception he has of any thing which has neither extension or solidity? and he answer, that he has none at all; but that there may be beings in nature of which he neither has, nor can have any idea: If then he be asked, why he uses a word which has no conception annexed to it, to explain another thing about which he is wholly in the dark? his reply, I presume will be, that he cannot account for some operations of that being by the images which he had before conceived of it, and the definitions about it which he had been used to; and therefore he was forced to recur to negative ideas. If he be asked again, how he knows that his definitions are right, and take in all the powers of that being? he must acknowledge that he knows not the thousandth part of its powers; but yet perhaps will say, that he is very sure that it has not powers inconsistent with the nature of body. It will be asked of him, how he, who knows little or nothing of the nature of body, can know what is against the nature of body? which difficulty I shall leave to wiser men to unriddle.

Now it appears to me, that there are many mechanical operations of the minds and bodies of animals, which result only from their peculiar systems of matter; or, in other words, compounded bodies, peculiarly systematized, attain new qualities and powers which they had not before, and which influence their own actions, and the actions of other bodies, as necessarily as the loadstone draws iron, or the root and fibres of a tree or plant attract the juices of the earth, and convey them on till they are transmuted into wood, leaves, and fruit. A chick or a young pheasant, hatched in an oven, as soon as it is out of the shell, will eat bread, or emmet eggs, and soon after shew signs of love or fear, and shrink from danger (like the sensitive plant from the touch) before it has gained any experience, has any sense of injuries, or can know how it can be hurt. Birds hatched in a cage will not only generate together, but will build their nest in the same manner, and of the same materials with those of the same kind, if they can come at them, without having seen any of the same sort before. Infant animals immediately seek after the teats of their dams, without being taught to do so; and all animals and vegetables seek or attract the peculiar nourishment that is proper to their species, without any direction but from nature; and have the same affections and passions, with but little variation: which I think plainly shews, that their particular organizations, or systems of matter, by a natural sort of gravitation or attraction direct their operations; and though every particular of the same species differ in some respects from another, and consequently their actions will vary, yet they are confined within the limits prescribed to the

whole species. And this observation runs through all nature.

Now I conceive that this must be accounted for as above, or we must recur to constant miracle, or else suppose that God Almighty has given to every species of animals peculiar minds different from all other kinds, and to every particular a mind different from all the rest of the same kind; which mind guides and directs all our actions; and makes all the specifick as well as identical differences that we see: For which supposition I can find no foundation in reason, or from observation; nor can I perceive what use can be made of such a concession; for whether the actions of animals are directed by the disposition of the materials which form them, or they were originally constituted with such appetites, they must act the same way; and this farther raises our admiration of the power and providence of God, who has formed all his creatures in such a manner as to answer his intentions in creating them; and has so disposed the mechanism and juices of every living species, as well as of every individual, as will best conduce to its preservation, and to perform the function intended.

But here a notable distinction arises between the operations of the mind, and those in the body, or, in other words, between sensations and reflections, between appetites and reasonings; which I must beg leave to think in this regard, has no foundation in nature, and only exists in metaphysical brains. There can be no sensations, inclinations, or appetites, without the cooperation of that faculty, capacity, energy, or whatever else it is that we call the mind. Dead men can no more hear, see, feel, &c. than a lump of earth, because their organization is destroyed, or the animal spirits which set them in motion can no longer continue that motion, or the separate principle, called the mind, can no longer keep its habitation; but whatever it be, or by what name soever called, it is certainly the *causa sine qua non* of the actions of the animal, and is one link of the chain of causes which direct and govern his voluntary motions.

It is the mind which sees, hears, tastes, smells, feels, desires, or fears; and herein consists the difference between animals and vegetables: They have both life, and both have organizations proper to preserve and continue that life, by suitable nourishment conveyed through veins and tubes: Both have surprising operations, unsearchable by our capacities; and both must have a long train of causes from nature to enable them to produce those operations: but besides many other possible causes linked together in those chains, and many of them existing within animals themselves which we do not know, there is one which we do, namely, the will or desire to do a thing; and this certainly, in a thousand instances, depends upon causes without us, and which are undoubtedly out of our power; which causes without set the other causes within us at work, and produce the will, and consequently the action.

A chick, or a young pheasant, would no more peck, or a lamb suck, than if it was dead, if it did not intend to do it: It feels uneasiness by hunger, and strives to help itself: It certainly shews thought and choice, in preferring one sort of food before another, and in shrinking or running away from danger: And these are all actions of the mind. It is true, as it grows older, and its contexture stronger, its experience increases, and its capacity grows with it; but the faculty is the same, and, for any thing which appears to the contrary, results from the formation of the system; nor can I conceive how all birds, beasts, and fishes of the same species should have the same, or very near the same sensations, desires, and fears, and chuse the same kinds of food and means of preservation, and always use the same, or very near the same address, cunning, or artifice, unless their contexture, the disposition of materials and juices, of which they are compounded by a natural mechanism, produced these effects, either by constituting or acting upon that energy, called their minds, and then directing and coercing those minds to exert the faculty, called the will, which produces the action, if it may be lawful to distinguish an operation of the same power from its self.

I am not aware of any other objection to this reasoning, but that we can have no conception how matter can produce an act or operation of the mind in brute animals; and therefore other systems have been invented, equally unconceivable, to avoid this, and which apparently contradict fact. It is plain, that their minds are affected, altered, and receive addition and diminution by diet, physick, and exercise, and partake, in many respects, of the fate of their material system; and their faculties are greater or less, according to the disposition of that system, as shall be more fully shewn in future papers. And since the whole must consist of the several parts, what reasons can be assigned to prove, that material causes may create or produce the parts, and not the whole, I mean of their minds; for as to the soul of man, I shall consider it separately hereafter. For my own part, I have had always so unfortunate a turn of thinking, that I could never subscribe to opinions, because others held them before me; nor will I send into the clouds for solutions, which lie under my nose, or refuse the benefit of my eyes to amuse my understanding; neither shall I regard the calumnies and uncharitable censures of those who dare not peep out of their dark dungeons, and would measure all truth by imbibed prejudices: but shall ever think, that I shall do more honour to Almighty God, in believing that he has so formed at once the whole fabrick of heaven and earth, as to produce all the events which he intended, than to suppose that he has often found cause to mend and alter his first resolutions; though I confess that it may consist with his wisdom, and conduce to the ends of his providence, to suffer matters, in some respects, and at some times, to appear to us in other lights.

He certainly is a more skilful artificer, who can make a watch which will go for a thousand years, and then break to pieces at a stated time, than another who makes one which must be wound up every day, and mended every month.

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I am, &c.

No. 117. SATURDAY, February 23, 1723.

Of the Abuse of Words, applied more particularly to the covetous Man and the Bigot.
[Gordon] ↩

[IV-96]

SIR,

I have often thought, that most of the mischiefs under which mankind suffers, and almost all their polemick disputes are owing to the abuse of words. If men would define what they mean by the sounds which they make use of to express their thoughts, and then keep to those definitions, that is, annex always the same ideas to the same sounds, most of the disputes in the world would be at an end: But this would not answer the purposes of those who derive power and wealth from imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of others. And therefore, till the world can agree to be honest, and to buy and sell by the same measure (which they do not seem in haste to do), I doubt this evil is likely to go on.

There are no words in language which seem to me to be more misapplied than the word *self-interest*, by divines, orators, philosophers, or poets: All have exerted themselves with great efforts of exhortation, reason, eloquence, and wit, against this reigning vice; but I conceive, that they have all missed the mark. Indeed, in the larger sense of the word, I think it impossible for any man to act upon any other motive than his own interest: For every pursuit that we make must have for its end the gratification of some appetite, or the avoiding of some evil which we fear; and, in truth, when we say that any man is self-interested, we mean only, that he is not enough in his own interest.

A good-humoured man, when he pities another, gratifies a natural passion, in having a fellow-feeling of the calamities of others, and a desire to see all men out of pain or trouble. A generous man pleases his vanity, ostentation, or temper, in doing good to others; or by it intends to gain friends or dependents. An indulgent parent takes pleasure to see that his children (whom he esteems parts of himself) live happy, contented, and make a figure in the world; and derives credit and reputation to himself from their doing so. A beneficent patron, or a man in love, reaps great personal satisfaction in obliging the objects of his kindness, and by making them more devoted to himself. And all these pity or contemn one who wants these agreeable appetites, and most reasonably judge, that he wants many pleasures which they themselves enjoy; as well knowing, that, next to the preservation of their beings by wholesome food, and warm raiment, and the enjoying the common necessaries and usual diversions of life, all that can be added to their happiness is, to obtain respect, love, and esteem, from others.

Even all the worst passions flow from the same source. For, what is hatred, malice, and revenge, but gratifying vicious appetites? And fear and cowardice are only struggles in nature to avoid evils to ourselves. Of all men, the covetous man is the most unhappy: For, as every pleasure is the gratification of some appetite or desire, the man who has least desires and appetites, must have the least pleasures, and he must lose many agreeable sensations which other men enjoy. I laugh at the foolish philosophy of some sects in old Greece, who placed the *summum bonum*, or chief happiness, in the absence of all passions or desires; which can be only a state of death, or perfect stupidity, whilst we are alive. Men exceed vegetables no otherwise than as they think; and when they cease to think (if that can be) they are in a temporary state of death; and the objects of all thinking must be something which we desire to attain, or fear to lose: And as thought itself is only a motion of the mind, so one motion must produce another, as every thought must do, and be perpetually progressive, till death

puts an end to all thoughts. Here covetousness therefore can only proceed from a poorness and dejection of soul, which always fears want and misery, and must ever be bereft of all lively and sparkling imaginations, be in a constant state of diffidence and despondency, and lose all the gay, cheerful and generous sensations, which flow from a free, active, happy, and beneficent mind.

I must take the liberty therefore to think, that *self-interest*, in the ill sense of the word, ought to be new-defined, and made applicable only to those who prefer a small interest to a great one, or to such who take a wrong way to attain that great one: And in this latter sense the bigot is the most self-interested person in the world: His whole thoughts are so wound up in himself, and his own personal views, that he is wholly regardless of what becomes of the rest of the world, unless he can find his own benefit in it. Indeed he will give some loose pence to beggars or vagabonds, and perhaps sums to maintain idlers and cynicks, not out of humanity and generous principles, but in order to put it out to large interest: I do not mean for five or six per cent but for more than sixty times sixty thousand; though, if a nation [is] to be saved, or a great people protected from slavery, he is wholly unconcerned about the event, as esteeming the little affairs of this world much below his notice and consideration.

He is the same in respect of the other world, as the covetous man is in respect of this; and both their good qualities proceed from the same principles and appetites in nature. He is covetous for the good things in the kingdom of heaven, as the other is for them here; and both take much the same way to get them. They both contemn wise men, because wise men contemn them; their despising the vanities of the world, saves money; their condemning the modest pleasures of life, gratifies their sour and censorious temper; their living cloistered and retired lives, feeds natural melancholy; and the former hopes to carry heaven (which the other does not trouble himself about) by singing songs upon earth, by being perfectly useless to society, and good for no one thing in the world.

This sort of creature is the tool for knaves to work with, and made use of to serve their interests, whilst he intends only to pursue his own. He is made to believe that kingdoms, infinitely preferable to those of this world, are to be gained by the manner of cutting his corns, or by forms, fashions, habits, postures, cringes and grimaces; by using a rote of words, or by useless speculations, and dancing after idle harangues, and always by being an implacable enemy and a furious adversary to all who have generous and beneficent affections towards their own species. He values opinions like rotten cheese, in proportion as they are old: and is more concerned for people's believing right, than for their doing right. He thinks that the way to shew our gratitude to God, is to refuse his gifts; and believes truth the more sacred, the less it is understood; and nothing worthy to be called faith, but what is absurd to reason, and contradicts all the principles of science. He is a fast friend to every thing that looks like a mystery; thinks common sense too common, and sublime nonsense to be always a proof of inspiration. He measures virtue and vice, right and wrong not by the interests of mankind, but by scanty and partial rules, invented by pedants and hypocrites, and calculated chiefly for their own benefit. He is a friend to no man, and all his thoughts and speculations are above humanity and social pleasures, and all the frail things of this world; and so he keeps all his money to himself, and, at last, perhaps, starves his friends and family, to leave it to such wretches as he is, not out of kindness to them, but to receive ample payment again where he is going.

I have often wondered how this stupid animal could ever be in repute; how the most insignificant and worst being in the universe could be thought the most acceptable to the best; and how any one can be supposed to merit heaven, by being useless upon earth. Castruccio Castracani said well, that he would never believe that Friar Hieronymo had more interest above than he himself had. Surely he judged right; yet the world ever has run, and, I doubt, ever will run, madding after hermits, cynicks, dreamers of dreams, venders of prophecy, and

after recluse and sequestered persons, who are supposed to know heavenly things in proportion as they know nothing here. They call their solemn folly, divine wisdom; their spleen and melancholy, godly contemplation; their envious, sullen, and morose tempers, strict and rigid virtue, and detestation of vice: Covetousness in frugality, and the contempt of things below. Whereas a truly virtuous and godly man is the most candid, amiable, and best natured creature upon earth: He spends his life in doing all the good that he can, and to all the men that he can: He takes pleasure in seeing all men happy, and will endeavour to make them all happy: He has large and comprehensive notions of the deity; and as he finds in himself kind and beneficent affections towards the whole creation, believes that the Supreme Being has the same; and, consequently, will not make our happiness or misery to depend upon what is out of our power, or upon such speculations or actions as can produce no moral good, but often destroy it, and promote evil.

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God wants nothing; and if we have any gifts to bestow, his creatures are our only proper objects: But those who crave in his name largesses and endowments, which they apply to their own use and luxury, and call their own luxury and pomp the serving of him, make the Almighty as greedy as they are, and the giver of all things to want almost every thing; and confining all their bounty and charity to their own dear persons, think that he does so too, and that they are as dear to him as they are to themselves; and so hate and despise, distress and destroy, in the name of God, all whom they hate for their own sakes: So that, excepting a very few men (the most ridiculous and the worst of the whole) all the human species are esteemed by them as outcasts, whom the wise Creator and Governor of the World has sent into it only to abhor and to damn them; and though his favours are infinite, yet they think that he bestows them all upon a little island, or a poor desert, or on a small and contemptible corner of the earth, purely because the inhabitants wear blue, or black, or broad bonnets, quaint doublets, or long petticoats; and eat, or refuse to eat fish or flesh, and other food given for the general use of all men; or make selfish and partial speeches to him, and use crazy distinctions about him, which he commands not, which wise men understand not, and which the weakest men alone are governed by.

With bigots almost every thing that is truth is blasphemy. With them a sour face, and a bitter and implacable heart, are qualifications so acceptable to the wise, merciful, and forgiving God, that he hates all who want these qualifications: So that, in great detestation of blasphemy, they blasphemously make the God and father of mercies, and of man, a party-man too; or, at best, the head of the most senseless, useless, inhuman, and mischievous party in the universe, the party of bigots; who, being blindly and obstinately addicted to their own incurable follies, are furiously bent against all the wise and sober men in the world: they improve the world by defacing it; and their way of building up, is to destroy and pull down. This they call edification.

But religion is another and a contrary thing; and whoever would entertain a just idea of the divine being, must conceive of him in direct opposition to the bigot's conceptions; namely, that the God of Truth is not the author of contradictions; that when he speaks to men, he speaks not above the capacities of men, but to their capacities, which is the end of speaking; that he who makes the hearts of men, is the best and only judge of men's hearts, who cannot see into one another's, that being the only province and privilege of omniscience; that his perfect goodness cannot punish men, whom he has created naturally subject to errors, for involuntary errors; that having not made man perfect, he cannot be offended with him for natural and inevitable imperfections.

That we cannot provoke him, when we intend to adore him; that the best way to serve him, is to be serviceable to one another; he himself, who is omnipotent, wanting none of our impotent assistance and benefits, which must come from him, but cannot go from us to him; that to hurt men, or betray them, for his sake, is to mock him, and impiously to father upon the God of Wisdom and Peace our own rage and folly; that to him neither sounds, nor gestures, nor actions, are good or bad, pleasing or displeasing, but as the intentions from whence they spring are sincere or insincere, of which he alone can be judge.

That he who made the world has not restrained his gifts, favours, and mercies, to a nook of it; nor picks out from among men, who are all his, a few particular minions and favourites, or gives these authority to domineer over the rest, and to oppress them in the name of that God who is not the god of a nation, or of a sect, but of all nations, tongues, and persuasions, and is heard of all that call upon him and fear him: That the only way to please and resemble him, is to do, as he does, good to all impartially, and to restrain men from hurting or persecuting one another: And, in fine, that anger, revenge, and ambition, are not religion; nor the author and object of it an angry, partial, whimsical, and cruel being; but that religion is as different from bigotry, and as far above it, as the wise, great, and good God is above weak, little, ill, and angry men.

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I am, &c.

Free states vindicated from the common Imputation of Ingratitude. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-104]

SIR,

It is a common objection against free states, that they are ungrateful: But I think that I shall be able to shew the contrary, that they are much more grateful than arbitrary princes; and are rarely ungrateful but to those who use them ungratefully, and forfeit by it any obligation which they had laid upon them.

It is the chief and first ambition of free states, to preserve themselves; and such as contribute most to that end amongst them, are generally placed by them in the first stations of figure and power. But as men generally over-rate their own merit, publick rewards, however great, are rarely so great as are the expectations and pretensions of men to these rewards. So that such as are preferred for serving, or for a capacity of serving, the publick, are seldom preferred so high as they think they deserve; and, being neither pleased with the measure nor duration of their power, where it is not boundless and perpetual, are apt to be struggling to make it so, though to the ruin of those who gave it for their own preservation, and to the overthrowing of every purpose for which it was given. When this is the aim, as it too often is, the people grow presently very ungrateful, because they will not become slaves to their own servants. And here is the source of most of the contentions in the world between the governors and governed. The people provoke their rulers by a very heinous and ill-bred crime, that of distinguishing between protection and oppression: For this they are ungrateful. They are ready enough almost everywhere to give their governors too much; but that will not do. Nero, after he put off the hypocrite, never conferred any office upon any man, but he always gave him these short instructions: "You know what I have occasion for: let it be your care and mine that nobody else have any thing." Nor was Nero the last that made a power to protect property a warrant for seizing it.

Gratitude is, doubtless, due from the obliged to those who oblige them as long as they do not pretend to measure or force their own reward, nor to use the others ill, upon the pure merit of having used them well. There is such a thing as the cancelling an obligation in publick as well as in private life; as when it is turned into an injury, by being made the means of oppression, or a pretence for contempt or calumny. I would rather not be obliged, than ill used for having been obliged; and believe most men are of my mind.

A state may sometimes over-pay a benefactor; but scarce any subject can do more for the state than he owes it. We owe all things to our country, because in our country is contained every thing that is dear to us, our relations, our fortunes, and ourselves: And our labours, our studies, and our lives, are all due, upon occasion, to our country, which protects us in them all. But when we have dedicated all these to the state, it is far from being true, that the state ought to sacrifice itself, or venture any part of its security, to make us recompence. To save it from others, in order to seize it ourselves, is so far from entitling us to any reward but that of resentment and death, that, as it is adding the base crimes of treachery and ingratitude to the cruel crime of usurpation, no foreign foe can be half so wicked and detestable as such an intestine traitor, who calls himself a friend.

Spurius Melius thought himself an unquestionable benefactor to the Roman people, for having bestowed on them *gratis* a large quantity of corn in a time of dearth; by which false bounty he gained the hearts of the many, who saw not into his design of bribing and feeding

them, in order to enslave them: but Servilius Ahala, who killed him, was a much greater and real benefactor; because in Melius he slew their most dangerous enemy. T. Manlius defended the Capitol bravely and generously; but when, not content with the many honours that were done him for a worthy action, he would have unworthily oppressed Rome itself for having saved part of it, he was justly thrown headlong from that very Capitol.

Caesar and Marius were the most ungrateful monsters that ever lived: They had done brave things not for the state, as the event shewed, but for themselves; and the state covered them with honours, adorned them with magistracies and triumphs, loaded them with benefits, and pursued them, even to profusion, with all publick and splendid marks of respect. But all this could not satisfy these shameless great men, unless they had a power granted them perpetual and enormous, a power destructive of all liberty, and of the state that gave it. And so they barbarously oppressed the state that exalted them.

On what side, in this instance, did the ingratitude lie? Is there a pretence for charging that generous people with this base vice, or for acquitting these parricides from the blackest? If the Prince of Orange, having at the head of the Dutch troops driven the invading French out of the Seven Provinces, had enslaved the States with their own forces, because, perhaps, they had refused to deliver up their government to his will and pleasure, and to give him a power to oppress them, as a reward for having defended them; who would have been ungrateful in this case, the prince or the States? They for refusing to be slaves, or he for making them slaves?

The people lose much more by their generosity to their benefactors, than the benefactors lose by the ingratitude or stinginess of the people, whose fault is almost always on the other side. By giving them too much, they often tempt and enable them to take all; as in the cases of Marius, Sulla, Caesar, Pisistratus, Agathocles, Oliver Cromwell, the late kings of Denmark and Sweden, and many more. But suppose it had happened sometimes (which has rarely happened) that a worthy man should not meet a proper reward from his countrymen, for publick services done them; it is still better that he has too little, or even none, than too much; and a worthy man will never seek revenge upon his country, for a mistake in his merit; a mistake which may be easily committed, and is at worst pardonable. But a man who has served his country, and then turns it upside down, because that it has not, or he thinks that it has not, given him reward enough, shews that he deserved none.

Sometimes a man's ill deeds balance his good, and then he pays himself; or overbalance them, and then he is entitled more to punishment than reward; and both rewards and punishments ought to be faithfully paid: though there is generally more crime and insecurity in not punishing well, than in not paying well; a fault too frequent in free states, who, dazzled with great benefits, are often blind to greater offences, or overlook them, and reward before they enquire.

The dearest and most valuable things are most apt to create jealousies and fears about them; and the dearest of all being liberty, as that which produces and secures all the rest, the people's zeal to preserve it has been ever called ingratitude by such as had designs against it; and others, ignorant of its value, and indifferent about it, have promoted and continued the false charge. Shakespear, in the tragedy of *Timon of Athens*, makes Alcibiades, who was banished by the state, cry out with indignation, "Oh the ungrateful spirit of a commonwealth!" And I have seen a loud and vehement clap raised upon it by those who were angry at the word *commonwealth*, though they lived under a free government: For every free state is, in a large sense, a commonwealth; and I think our own the freest in the world. In my opinion Alcibiades, though a brave man, was justly exiled as an ambitious and dangerous man, who behaved himself turbulently in that city, was perpetually creating or inflaming factions in it, and against it; and shewed too plainly, that he aimed at overturning it for the

sake of that uncontrollable power, which he could not have while its government subsisted. The citizens of Athens treated him with great distinction, and gave him great authority and eminent commands; and only banished him, out of fear of him, for which they had too much ground.

States have been often destroyed by being too generous and too grateful; and where they are really ungrateful, they are only so through error; to which, however, they are not so subject as absolute princes, who generally destroy their greatest men, and prefer the vilest, and in their courts pimps often ruin patriots. I think that those who most dislike free governments, do not pretend to shew above four or five instances of ingratitude in the Roman people, from the beginning of their commonwealth to the end of it, for several hundred years; and Coriolanus and Camillus are two of those instances.

As to Coriolanus, he was justly banished, as a declared enemy to the equality of the government, and engaged in an open design to oppress the people; which design he executed with all fierceness and contempt, and even outrage, surrounded like a monarch with guards of the young hot-headed nobility: And though the people did him no injustice, yet, to be revenged upon them, he invaded his country at the head of a foreign enemy.

Camillus was guilty of the same partiality, though not in the same degree, towards the nobles, and had broke his word with the people; for both which he was banished: But by saving his country afterwards, he gloriously cancelled all past faults, and was gratefully styled the second founder of Rome, and highly honoured, and even adored, to the end of his life, by that grateful people, in every instance where they could shew it. And indeed all the ingratitude that can be charged upon them, was, their opposing, in their own defence, the encroachments of the nobility; and the excellent laws produced by that opposition shewed its reasonableness and necessity.

Scipio Africanus is likewise mentioned as another great instance of ingratitude of the Romans. He was a great and glorious commander: He had forced Hannibal, the most dangerous foreign foe that the Romans ever had, out of Italy, which he had ravaged successfully many years; he had conquered the same Hannibal in battle, subdued Carthage and Africa, and assisted his brother Asiaticus in conquering the great King Antiochus. For which extraordinary services and merit he was the darling of the people; who were so far from being ungrateful to him, that they violated the laws of Rome, and of their own security, to do him honour;

and not only made a youth their chief magistrate, but renewed the dignity so often, that the precedent proved pernicious to them. The extraordinary steps taken by him and them, and by them for his sake, were of dangerous example and consequence; and, without his intending it, shook the foundations of Rome, and made way for the violent proceedings and usurpations of Marius, and afterwards of Caesar.

Scipio did likewise another thing, which ought by no means to have been suffered in a free state. When he was cited to answer before the people to the crimes with which he was charged, he refused to answer. "Upon this very day, my countrymen," says he, "I vanquished Hannibal"; and tearing the papers that contained the charge, walked haughtily out of the assembly. This was disowning or contemning the supreme authority of Rome; yet the people were so personally fond of the man, that they would decree nothing severe against him. He retired to his own country-house, where he lived peaceably all the rest of his honourable life.

G

I am, &c.



No. 119. SATURDAY, March 9, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-112]

SIR,

No people upon earth were more grateful to their good citizens than the Greeks and Romans were, or encouraged virtue more, or rewarded it better: Nor did they scarce ever banish any man till he became terrible to them; and then it was time. Nor is there one great absolute monarchy in the world, or ever was from the beginning of it, but destroyed more innocent men in amonth, than the commonwealth of Rome did in a hundred years; besides, that a free state produces more great men in fifty years, than an absolute monarchy does in a thousand.

Those who had done any signal service to the state of Athens, were endowed with eminent privileges, and distinguished with all publick marks of honour: They had the first seats at publick entertainments and assemblies; they had publick statues erected to them; they had crowns conferred upon them; they were exempted from duties, taxes, and contributions, they were maintained at the publick charge, and sometimes their families after them: The publick resented the injuries done them; buried them magnificently; made publick orations in their praise; portioned out their daughters; and paid lasting honours to their name. And all this at a time when publick honours were only the rewards of merit, and parsimoniously distributed.

The Athenians had a particular law against ingratitude: And as to the ostracism, which may seem to contradict it, and by which they banished for ten years such great men as they judged formidable to their state, though they had formerly served it; it ought to be considered in its behalf, that the Athenians, like other free states, had suffered so much from their first-rate citizens, who suppressed their liberty under colour of advancing it, that they had great reason to be jealous of such. Whoever would live in a free state, must live upon a foot of equality; which great officers, accustomed to command, care not to do; and if they do not, they are justly removed. It is better that one man, however innocent, should suffer, than a whole people be ruined, or even hurt, if not by him, yet by his example: Nor ought they to shew, in one instance that cannot harm them, an indulgence, which in other and future instances may be their overthrow. Besides, the ostracism took nothing from any man, but a power of hurting every man: It affected not their goods, nor their persons, nor even their good name; and left them their full possessions, and their full liberty, every where but at Athens; whither, after ten years, they had a right to return, and were often recalled much sooner. It was likewise made use of sometimes only to pacify the fury of the envious, and to protect the innocent from it; and when base fellows came at last to be banished by it, it was laid aside.

The first purpose of the ostracism was, to keep publick benefactors from turning publick parricides, great men from being too great, subjects from growing too powerful for the state; a reasonable precaution, and practised some way or other by every state in the world: nor can any state subsist where it is not practised. Even in England, the hanging of two or three great men among the many guilty, once in a reign or two, would have prevented much evil, and many dangers and oppressions, and saved this nation many millions.

If we now consider absolute monarchy, we shall find it grafted upon ingratitude, which is blended with the root of it. Arbitrary princes cannot, dare not, be grateful to elevated merit, which by the tenour of their power they are obliged to dread. They only consider their single selves, and their separate interest; and must cut off, for their own security, every man whose true glory may eclipse their false, and who draws away, in any degree, the thoughts and eyes of the people. If they have no magnanimity of their own, they hate or fear such as have; or if they are brave themselves, they will be jealous of those who are more so, or as much. The same may be said of every other virtue. They may heap wealth upon buffoons, and confer dignities upon parasites; but celebrated virtue, conspicuous abilities, and signal services, are their eye-sores and certain aversion. If they be hated, they will not bear that any one should be esteemed; and if they be valued themselves, they will hate rivals.

Under most of the Roman emperors, popular virtue was certain death; *ob virtutes certissimum exitium*; and those who served them most, were surest of destruction; *nec minus periculum ex magna fama quam ex mala*. Germanicus, who saved the empire of Tiberius, his uncle and father by adoption, by reconciling to him the mutinous and revolted legions, was the first great sacrifice to his jealousy, being poisoned in Asia, whither he was sent under pretence of commanding it. Thus Nero too rewarded Corbulo; and thus Domitian rewarded Agricola; both the greatest officers of their time, and the greatest benefactors to these ungrateful tyrants, who aimed at cutting up virtue by the roots: Nor did Vespasian, the first Roman emperor that changed for the better, prove much more grateful to Antonius Primus, who had signally served him, and paved his way to the imperial diadem.

It were endless to mention other absolute monarchies. They are all animated by the same ungrateful, cruel, and suspicious spirit, and make havock of every thing that is good, destroying fastest those who serve them most. If they be ever grateful, they are only so to the vilest instruments of their tyranny; but for such as serve them against their foreign foes with just and popular glory, they are generally sacrificed to their endless jealousy of every thing that is noble. Belisarius is an affecting instance of this; an illustrious general, who, in the decline of the Roman empire, did, as it were, new conquer the world for his royal master; and for a reward, was stripped of all that he had, and turned off to beg his bread with his eyes put out.

It is a fine observation of Tacitus; *Neque nobilem, neque ingenuum, neque libertinum quidem praeponere armis, regia utilitas est*;

It is the business and special interest of an arbitrary prince, that his forces be commanded neither by a nobleman, nor by a freeman, nor, indeed, by any man who is two degrees removed from a slave.

Or, if such princes be obliged by the necessity of their affairs to employ an illustrious person in an important command, they always employ him with fear; and when their turn is served, and he has made them safe, dismiss him into obscurity with contempt, if he escape so well; for all their suspicions generally end in blood. Machiavel, who knew this well, says, that a great and successful general, under an arbitrary prince, has but two ways to escape the certain ruin which his glory, services, and renown, will else bring upon him: He must either quit the army, and, retiring from all power, live like a private man; or depose his master, and set up himself: Which last is generally the safer course.

It is well known how the Ottoman monarchs reward their bravest bashaws. The successful and unfortunate have the same fate: As the latter are sacrificed to rage, the other are to jealousy: Even their own sons have been recompensed with death, for deserving esteem. Nor is that cruel ingratitude peculiar to one race or family of princes, but eternally attached to that sort of power where-ever it is found.

But far different is the spirit of the people: They are prone to gratitude, and lavish in their affections and returns for benefits received. Nothing is too much or too high for the benefactor, or for one whom they think so. They are apt to continue blind to his faults, even when he has forfeited their favour; and to remain constant in their zeal to his name and posterity, in instances where they ought to detest both. This is abundantly exemplified and confirmed by the lasting respect and reverence paid by the Romans to those plagues of Rome, and of the earth, the family of the Caesars; by the French, to the stupid and sanguinary posterity of Charlemain; by the Turks, to the bloody family of Ottoman; by the Egyptians, to their luxurious and contemptible Ptolemies; by the Jews, to the cruel race of the Asmonaeans, or Maccabees; by the Parthians, to the barbarous line of the Arsacides; and by almost every instance of every people in the world. I could mention instances here at home, but they will occur fast enough to every reader who knows any thing of our history. The people are indeed grateful and constant, even to superstition, to persons and names to which they conceive themselves once obliged: Nor do they ever act ungratefully, but where they are first deceived by those whom they trust. The people of Athens, deceived by some of their demagogues, put once to death some of their sea officers, who did not deserve it; but they soon grew apprized of their error, and were severely revenged upon the traitorous calumniators who caused it.

Several instances may, no doubt, be found of the people's ingratitude to their friends, and of the contrary quality in some absolute monarchs. But exceptions do not weaken a rule.

G

I am,&c.

No. 120. SATURDAY, March 16, 1723.

Of the proper Use of Words. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-118]

SIR,

As I have in former papers treated of the abuse of words; so I shall, in this, discourse about the use of them. They are the signs of ideas, as figures are of numbers; and are intended to convey the conceptions of men to one another: They have no more meaning in themselves than inarticulate sounds, till men have agreed to put a meaning upon them, which meaning is wholly arbitrary; and therefore unless they mean the same things by the same words, that is annex the same conceptions to the same sounds, they cannot understand one another, or discourse together. If one man annex more or less ideas to the same words than another does whom he reasons with, it is impossible that they should agree in conclusions; when their premises are different, their reasonings will be a game at blindman's-buff: And therefore it is absolutely necessary, in all disputes, to settle the meanings of the terms made use of, before any thing can be affirmed or denied on either side.

A word not standing for any idea, is only a bare sound; and it is no more, to one who knows not what idea it stands for. The agreeing therefore in sounds, and not agreeing in the meaning of them, is no agreement at all; and though this may be a good test of orthodoxy amongst some sets of ecclesiasticks, yet I will presume to say, that it is none in common sense. It appears to me, that most of the polemick quarrels in the world have flowed from this inobservance. Men use the same sounds to express different conceptions, either in whole or in part; that is, one man comprehends more or less ideas in the terms which he makes use of than another, and then makes use of other words equally uncertain to explain that meaning; and so in a few propositions quite loses his argument, and the combatants quarrel about what they have been talking of. But though this manner of scuffling in the dark be a great obstruction, and almost an insurmountable bar to all sorts of useful knowledge, yet it highly conduces to the power and credit of those who derive riches and authority from the ignorance and credulity of others.

It gives them the reputation of learning, for talking unintelligibly: It enables them to discourse upon all subjects alike, and to fetch every thing out of every thing; for by not explaining their words, they make them signify what they please, and vary them as often as they have occasion: so that in the course of a debate they have failed in all the points of the compass. The abuse is yet more observable and mischievous in translations from one language to another; for, as few or no men understand a dead language, in many respects, in the sense which it was spoken in (and indeed few men in the same country, and the same language, speak many words in the same sense that their ancestors spoke them, the meaning of words, like all other things, being in perpetual rotation) and as few words in any language, such as comprehend complex ideas, are exactly answered by correspondent words in any other, that is, do not contain just the same number of ideas; so it is very difficult, if not impossible, in many instances, to make an exact translation; and, consequently, very easy to make a false one: And therefore it is very ridiculous (to call it by no worse a name) in controverted points, to build an hypothesis upon the signification of single words in a dead language (which, perhaps, was translated from another language) when we neither know their manner of speaking, the philosophy and speculations which they were conversant with, nor the customs to which they alluded, and are very sure that they were different from our own, and, in many instances, had not the same common conceptions or images.

But it is not enough that we must have what are often called ideas to our words, but they must be adequate ones; for all inadequate ideas are no ideas; that is, they must be adequate as far as they are ideas: What stands for no conception, stands for nothing; and the word used can only stand for the conception, such as it is, and as far as it goes; and when the conception goes no farther, no word can stand for that which is not. It is certain, that there is no one thing in the universe of which we can have an adequate conception in the strict sense of those words; but we convey by words only such conceptions as we have, which possibly do not exhaust the millionth part of their properties; but then we are in the dark as to all the rest, and neither can affirm nor deny any thing about them: And if one man take any more or less ideas in the term he makes use of than another, he does not talk with him to the same point.

One man has no conception of gold but by the colour, and he will call prince's-metal gold; another knows it by its weight, fineness, and touch; and if a new metal should be discovered, which answers all these marks, and should yet want some medicinal qualities, or, perhaps, the same solubility which gold has, yet he will still call it gold, according to the properties which his imagination has annexed to the word *gold*; and all these three will be called by the same name, and yet different metals will be meant; and every one of these conceptions, as far as they go, are adequate, though neither of them are so to the subject, which has undoubtedly many properties which no one knows any thing of: but then we do not reason upon those properties, nor do the sounds which we use stand for them.

From what has been said appears the absurdity of being told, that we must believe things which we do not understand; or of believing things above reason, though not contrary to reason. We must have ideas, or images, of all objects of belief, or else we believe in nothing, but that we hear a sound; and it is the same thing to us whether it signify any thing or not, if we do not know what it signifies. If a man make a proposition to me in the Chinese language, and tell me that I must believe it, nothing here can be the object of my faith, but that the man does not tell me a lie, which has nothing to do with the proposition itself; and it would have been the same thing to me, if he had told me that I must believe in his thought, without telling me what that thought was; and there can be no difference, if he use words in a language which I am acquainted with, if I do not understand the meaning in which he uses those words.

From hence appears the ridicule of a late sect in Holland, and of many other visionary madmen at home, who think that the scripture is to be for the most part understood metaphorically, and find meanings in it which the words do not naturally import; which is making the Almighty speak in riddles to his creatures, and obliging them to pay largely out of their substance to those who make them yet greater riddles. What can be more absurd and wicked, than to suppose, that the great and good God should speak to mankind with a design not to be understood? should give them a rule to act by, yet express that rule in words which few can pretend to apprehend, and those few differ about? Certainly, as has been said, words are of no use but to convey ideas; and if they be not used in their common acceptation, to signify those conceptions which custom has annexed to them, or such as men shall agree to put upon them, then they must be perfectly useless, will convey no ideas at all, can give us no rule, nor can communicate any knowledge.

It is certain, as has been said, that no man's perceptions can exhaust the properties of any one thing in the world: All that we know of them is from a few obvious qualities which affect our senses; but without doubt they have thousands of others, of which we know nothing; much less can we know any thing of their *substratum*, or internal essence, or contexture: but then neither can we believe any thing of those hidden essences, or qualities, nor do we mean any thing about them when we talk of any being or substance. As in the instance before given; if a man carry to a goldsmith a solid substance, and ask him what he thinks it to be, and the goldsmith look upon the colour, touch it, weigh it, melt it, and then tell him that he

believes it to be gold; it is certain that the goldsmith neither believes nor affirms any thing about it, further than of its colour, its touch, its weight, and its solubility, which are his ideas of gold: But gold has, without question, many other properties which he has never heard of; but then he does not take in those properties in this perception of gold; and he neither does nor can believe any thing about them, till he has formed some idea of those hidden qualities.

This leads me to consider what men mean, when they say that they believe in a mystery. We must understand the meaning of the words connected, and of the verb which connects them, and makes them a proposition, or else we believe in nothing; that is, we must have a perception of all those ideas which the words stand for in our imaginations; and so far it is no mystery. But then we may be told, that the beings, to which we have annexed those ideas, and by which we distinguish them from other beings, may, and undoubtedly have, many other qualities, or properties, that we know nothing of: An assertion which must be granted to be true of every thing in nature. And in this sense every thing is a mystery, and every man will readily believe such a mystery. But then if we be told, that we must believe in the properties, or qualities, of which we know nothing, or have any idea; I think that the mystery will then consist in the nonsense of the proposition; and it is the same thing to tell us, that we must believe in *fe-fa-fum*: For, a man cannot believe without believing something; and he must know what that something is, that is, he must know what he believes, or else his belief is only an abstract word, without any subject to believe in, or any thing of.

Thus when we say, that we believe there are three persons in the Trinity, and but one God, we must have distinct ideas to the words *person*, *Trinity*, and *God*. For if men have no meaning to these words, they mean nothing by the proposition; and if they annex different perceptions to them, then they have a different creed: though they fancy that they subscribe the same. No one can know whether another be orthodox in his sense, till the terms be defined, and stand for the same ideas in both their minds: To say, that they believe in three persons, without telling what they mean by the word *person*, is the same as to say, that they believe in three somethings, or in the word *three*; which indeed is a very mysterious belief, and a pretty center of unity: for no man can believe any thing else, till he has fixed a meaning to the word *person*; and if another do not agree with him in that meaning, they will differ in religion, though they agree in sounds, and perhaps in falling foul upon every one who desires them to explain themselves; which behaviour, amongst too many people, is the main test of orthodoxy.

They must agree also in what they mean by the word *God*. I do not mean, that they must define his essence, have any adequate notion of his infinity, eternity, or of the *sensorium* of his existence; for of these things we neither know, nor can know, any thing: But we must know what we mean by the sound which we make use of; that is, we must have a perception of those images annexed to the word *God* in our minds, and a perception adequate to itself, though in no-wise adequate and correspondent to the subject; which images in different men, I doubt, are very various; and when they are so, these men plainly differ in the object of their worship, and are of a different religion, though they may think themselves to be of the same. This shall be the subject of some other paper hereafter; in which I shall shew, how absurd as well as impious it is, for men to fall together by the ears upon the account of their difference in trifles, when they scarce agree in any one thing in the world, if they explain themselves, not even in the attributes annexed to the object of all worship, though they can know nothing of him but from his attributes.

T

I am, &c.

No. 121. SATURDAY, March 23, 1723.

Of Good Breeding. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-126]

SIR,

Good breeding is the art of shewing men, by external signs, the internal regard which we have for them. It arises from good sense, improved by conversing with good company. A well-bred fool is impertinent; and an ill-bred wise man, like a good instrument out of tune, is awkward, harsh, and disagreeable. A courteous blockhead is, however, a more acceptable guest, almost every-where, than a rude sage. Men are naturally so fond of themselves, that they will rather misspend their time with a complaisant ape, than improve it with a surly and thwarting philosopher. Every bow, or good word, whencesoever it comes, is taken by us as a sign of our importance, and a confession of our merit; and the neglect of that complaisance, as a token that we are thought of none: A reproach which, however silent, few care to bear.

Good breeding is never to be learned by study; and therefore they who study it are coxcombs, and formalists and stiff pedants. The best-bred men, as they come to be so by use and observation only, practice it without affectation. You see good breeding in all that they do, without seeing the art of it. It is a habit; and, like all others, acquired by practice. A weak and ignorant man, who has lived in good company, shall enter a room with a better grace, and say common things much more agreeably, than a profound wise man, who lives by himself, or with only such as himself, and is above the forms of the world, and too important to talk of indifferent things, and to be like other people. A footman employed in *How d'ye's* shall address himself to a person of figure with more decorum, and make a speech with more ease, than a learned serjeant, who lives wholly over briefs; or the deep head of a college, occupied only in a momentous science. I have known a man, who, with the learning of a whole university, had the manners of a clown, and the surliness of a porter; not from the want of sense, though that want be very consistent with a world of learning, but from living long in a college, and dictating to boys and pupils, or with old Fellows, who had no more breeding than himself, and, like himself, were spoiled by living rarely upon the square with any other sort of people.

Good breeding therefore is never to be learned in a college, where the sphere of conversation is so narrow, where the distance between men is so great, and where the old have none to teach the young. Hence you generally see young men come from the universities with a conceited air, and a quaint manner, which often turns them into fops: They are generally either pert or prim: The tone of their voice, and the position of their muscles, shew their accomplishments, before they have spoke two words: Their step, and the manner of using their legs and arms, do the same; and every joint about them, and every action they do, declares the place and way of their education. As to the senior fellows, and heads of houses, they are such starched pedants, such solemn mamamouches, and such kingly old fops, that from their mien you may know their characters, and read their titles and preferments in their hats. They carry the college about them where-ever they go, and talk at a table as they do at a lecture; or, if sometimes they break into gaiety, it is either imperious or insipid, disrespectful or awkward, and always ungraceful: They want a good manner, less conceit, and the appearance, at least, of more humility; all which are only to be acquired by living abroad in the world, and by conversing with all sorts of men. This accustoms one to treat all men as they expect to be treated; and such general good treatment given to all is called good breeding.

Hence the breeding of courts is always the easiest and most refined. Courtiers have the constant advantage of living daily with the best-bred men: Besides, having occasion for all sorts of people, they accustom themselves to use all sorts of people civilly. By conversing with all sorts, they can fall readily into all sorts of styles, and please every body by talking to him in his own way. They find too, by daily experience, and promiscuous conversation, that the difference between men and men is not so great, as an unacquaintedness with men would generally make it: They are therefore under no awe, nor shyness, in speaking to the greatest; nor have any general contempt for the meanest: a contempt which too often rises from a wrong judgment, grounded upon pride, and continued by inexperience. They consider, that as the greatest can do them good, so the meanest can hurt them: They are therefore respectful without awe to those above them, and complaisant without disdain to those below them. Courts therefore are the best schools for good breeding; and to be well-bred we must live not only with the best sorts of men, but must be acquainted with all sorts.

The want of this general conversation may be one reason why the country clergy are so often accused of want of breeding. They come from the university full of an opinion, that all that is to be learned is to be learned there; and believing themselves to have already every accomplishment, often remain without any. In their parishes they can learn nothing but an additional pride, from seeing or fancying themselves the biggest men there. If there be a squire in the place, he rarely mends them. If he have a delicate taste, he will not converse with them: But it frequently happens, that his taste is as crude as theirs, and consists in eating much, and drinking more, and talking loud. From this conceited education, and narrow conversation, arises their impatience of contradiction, and their readiness to contradict. I own that I am always cautious of reasoning with the vicar: His first argument is generally an assertion; and his next, an affront.

An engaging manner and a genteel address may be out of their power; but it is in their power to be condescending and affable. When people are obliging, they are said to be well-bred. The heart and intention are chiefly considered: When these are found friendly and sincere, the manner of shewing it, however awkward, will be kindly overlooked. Good breeding is artificial good nature; and complaisance is understood to be a copy of the invisible heart. When people are satisfied of one another's good-will and sincerity, the forms they shew them are generally laid aside. Between intimate friends there is little ceremony, and less between man and wife. Some, however, is still necessary, because by signs and actions the affections are shewn. But a courteous behavior, which is known to mean nothing, goes for nothing, and is not necessary when the meaning is known to be good. Expressions of kindness, when they are not thought the marks and effects of kindness, are empty sounds: And yet these unmeaning expressions are necessary in life. We are not to declare to every man whom we dislike, how much we dislike him, nor to shew it by dumb signs. When a man says, that he is my humble servant, he obliges me; not by the words, which in common speech signify scarce any thing, but because by these words he shews that he thinks me worth notice. Good breeding therefore is then just, when the actions which it produces are thought sincere: This is its end and success: It must seem produced by kindness for the person for whom it is shewn.

Good breeding is of so great importance in the world, that an accomplishment this way goes often further than much greater accomplishments without it can do. I have known gentlemen, who with moderate parts and much good breeding have been thought great men; and have actually come to be so. Great abilities alone make no man's person amiable; some have been unpopular with the greatest, and some even ridiculous. But the gay, the easy, the complaisant man, whose chief abilities are in his behaviour, pleases and obliges all, and is amiable to as many as he obliges. To learn this behaviour, people must begin early. One who sets out into the world at twenty, shall make twice as much progress in life, as one who with

twice his sense sets out at forty; because he is then less susceptible of the arts of life. Habits are not to be got in a day; and after a certain age, never. Forced complaisance is foppery; and affected easiness is a monster. I have seen a world of tradesmen, and almost as many gentlemen, take such pains to be well-bred, that I have been in pain for them: Native plainness is a thousand times better.

Complaisance is ingenious flattery: It makes those to whom it is paid flatter themselves, while they take every act of complaisance in others as the declaration of merit in themselves: And beyond a certain degree it is not innocent. Courtiers know its efficacy so well, that to it alone no small part of their power is owing. Hence so many people have always been deceived by civil words and kind looks. To know speculatively the delusions of this art, is not sufficient to put you upon your guard against it. A fair and plausible behaviour, with a ready rote of kind expressions, and all the appearances of sincerity, will be apt to mislead you in spite of your foreknowledge. They will catch your senses, and beat you off your theory in politicks. You must find their insincerity some time before you will come to distrust it. Their art and your own self-love will conspire against you, drive away your incredulity, and beget faith, as it is often begot, against evidence and reason. You will still flatter yourself, that you are an exception to the rule, though there were never another exception. The credulity of some is perfectly incurable; many have continued steady believers, in spite of daily proofs and fatal experience for twenty years together. They were always persuaded, that every promise was at least intended to be kept, and always forgave the breaking of it. The great man smiled graciously, bowed courteously, excused himself earnestly; and vowed to God, that you should have the next thing. You miscarried; and then, with a concerned face, he vowed to God, that he could not help it, promised again with the same solemn vow, was again believed and always believed. This wretched credulity is the fruit of self-love, of an opinion that we are as considerable in the eyes of others as we are in our own. Mankind are governed by their weaknesses; and all that statesmen have to do to keep expecting crowds about them, and attached to them, is to promise violently, to seem violently in earnest, and never be so: That is, they must be extremely well-bred.

Good breeding is indeed an amiable and persuasive thing: It beautifies the actions, and even the looks of men. But equally odious is the grimace of good breeding. In comparison with this, bluntness is an accomplishment. The ape of a well-bred man is just as offensive as the well-bred man is agreeable: He is a nuisance to his acquaintance. I am frightened at the affected smile, and the apish shrug. When these foul copies of courtiers throw their civil grin in one's face, it is as much as one can do to avoid spitting in theirs. A starched rogue forcing smiles, is a more hideous sight than a mummy. He is a fugitive from nature; and it is notable impudence in such a creature to pretend to be courteous.

As to ill-breeding, or rudeness, there is something still worse in it than its deformity. It is immoral; it is using others as you would not be used.

G

I am,&c.

No. 122. SATURDAY, March 30, 1723.

Inquiry concerning the Operations of the Mind of Man, and those of other Animals.
[Trenchard] ↩

[IV-133]

SIR,

The world has always run riot after one whimsey or another. Astrology was the madness of the last age: Pretended prophets, fortune-tellers, conjurers, witches, apparitions, and such-like superstitious fooleries, have been in request in all ages. Dreamers of dreams led, misled, and governed mankind, for more than two thousand years together; and they are far from being out of fashion yet: And it is no small comfort, that this sort of divination, and instruction is left to us: for I do not find, that any society of men pretend to any jurisdiction over sleeping dreams, or to have the sole conduct, regulation, or interpretations of them; but every man, when he is asleep, is left at liberty to dream as he can, and to interpret his dreams as he thinks fit; which indulgence is not allowed to our waking dreams. I shall therefore take the advantage of this present toleration of dreaming, to dream too; and though I will not vouch or be answerable for the truth of my dreams, yet I dare compare them with those of the ancient and some modern philosophers.

I conceive, that the divines of all religions have ever agreed, that the soul of man is a being separate from the body, and in its own nature capable of subsisting independent of it. I also conceive, that all Christian divines hold, or ought to hold, that it is a distinct being from what we call the mind, and superadded to it by the divine goodness, to distinguish mankind from the brute creation, to continue his being after the dissolution of the body, and to make him an object of future rewards and punishments. For it is certain, that other animals have minds too; that they reason and resolve, though in an inferior degree to ourselves; and I think also, that it is almost universally agreed, that those minds take the fate of their bodies, and die with them.

The philosophers of all ages have set themselves to work, and employed their wits, to trace the minds of brutes to their first sources or principles, and so to account for their operations; but have differed as widely as they do in other matters about which they know nothing. Some have supposed them to be modifications of matter and motion, and operations resulting from the organization and mechanism of the body, like the striking of a clock, or watch, or musick made by blowing into or striking upon an instrument; for as the percussion of one body against another makes sound, so the instruments or vehicles upon which or through which it hits or passes, modify and determine the species of it.

These endeavour to illustrate the power of voluntary motion (namely, how a sudden impulse of the will can set a great machine in action) by what they think is analogous to it in mechanical observations: As for instance, a little agitation of the air will turn a windmill, or sail a great ship; and it is demonstrable in mechanicks, that a hair of a man's head, or a puff of his breath, by the help of proper springs, wheels, and pulleys, may have force enough to move a body as big and heavy as the world. Then they reason, that if the little contrivance and trifling experiments which we can make of the powers of matter and motion can convince us of its capacity to produce such surprizing effects and operations, a machine organized by the excellent skill and most wise contrivance of the Supreme Architect, consisting too of such subtle animal spirits, and of such infinite springs, wheels, and tubes, must have suitable operations, some of them such as are not perceivable by our senses, or penetrable by our capacities. They conceive, that there is something in vegetation analogous

to animal life; and that the difference of the appearing sensations between the highest vegetable and the lowest animal (as for example, between the sensitive plant and worm or snail) is so very little, that they can account for them both by the same system of reasoning; or rather, they are both equally unaccountable by our reason: And therefore, since the former is undoubtedly only a modus or operation of matter and motion they think that we cannot know but the other may be so too.

Many pretenders to philosophy have thought the mind of a brute animal to be part of the body, originally formed with it, and differing only from the other parts, as it has a finer contexture, and consists of more subtle and volatile particles of matter, that cannot keep together without their case or shell, and consequently cannot exist together in a separate state from the body; but when the organization and mechanism of its inclosure is dissolved or broken to pieces, it must dissipate into the mass of matter again.

But the greater number have thought, that there is an *anima mundi*, or universal spirit, that permeates and actuates all matter, and is the source of vegetable and animal life; which spirit receiving its modification from, and assimilating itself to, the nature and structure of the body through which it passes, or in which it acts, constitutes all the specific effects and operations which we daily see, feel, and admire; as in the instances before given, the same wind, blown into different instruments, makes different kinds of musick.

Many of this latter sort have fancied, that all nature is full of organized bodies, with each a particular and sufficient portion of this universal and vital spirit annexed to or inherent in them; which bodies being in constant motion, fall gradually into peculiar matrixes or wombs, which are necessary to bring them to perfection. They think that the first seeds of all vegetables and animals (which are indeed the vegetables and animals themselves) must have been formed at the creation of the world; that the seeds of the former must make their progression through the veins and tubes of the vegetables of the same kind, to prepare them to become fruit, and to produce that grosser sort of seed which more easily, and by another motion, grows into the same kind of plant or tree again; and that those of the latter must pass through the body of the male to awaken the first life of those who are sent to be nursed in the eggs of the female for increase and expansion; and they conceive, that experience confirms this opinion; for that an egg will not produce an animal, till the male has thrown one into it; but afterwards, by the assistance of that vital warmth which it receives from a living body (or that heat which is equivalent to it, and is necessary to preserve the tender fibres and juices of infant animals) it continues life, nourishes and increases it, till it swell and break out of its first inclosure, and be strong enough to receive grosser nourishment.

It seems to me, that the generation or production of vegetables is analogous to, if not the same with, that of animals, and that they both receive their first nourishment and increase in eggs; and what are vulgarly called the seeds of the former, are eggs, that inclose the minute specks of entity, which are its original seeds or principles, or rather the whole plants or trees in miniature, nourish them for some time, and defend them against the injuries of exterior bodies, when they first expand themselves, and swell out of their native beds, and their tender parts become susceptible of outward violence. It is evident, that if we break up new or maiden ground, many sorts of vegetables will spontaneously arise, which have undoubtedly their proper seeds in the earth, and as undoubtedly none of those gross seeds which produce the same plant again; and it is plain, that the latter are subject to be destroyed by exterior accidents, and to decay and die; which the others are not, but very probably have had an unmolested existence from the beginning of time, and would have continued in their first state, if they had not received a fermentation, and found a proper matrix, by the opening the fibres and bowels of the earth; which matrix must be different from what multiplies the same species afterwards.

There have been other sects of philosophers (if folly may be called by that name) who have distinguished themselves by supposing the mind and soul to be the same being, and consequently enjoyed in common by other animals, as well as men; and they have supposed this being not only to be different too from the body, and capable in its own nature, not only of subsisting independent of it, but believed that it received prejudice, and was restrained from the free use of many of its faculties, by its imprisonment and union with the body; and yet, when it was discharged from its gaol, was at liberty, capable or obliged to enter into some other organized body, to animate it, and to perform the functions of it. This was the opinion of the transmigrators of souls formerly, but is justly rejected by very many Christians; is contrary to revelation, and would put brute animals upon a level with mankind: for it cannot be denied that other living creatures have minds, and as certainly no souls; nor are they capable of just or unjust actions, or of receiving future rewards and punishments due to those actions.

It is certain that they have minds, and consequently thought; reflection upon past actions, or memory; sensations of pleasure and pain; and in many instances they judge well of their own interests, and choose proper means to attain them: And mankind have not only the above qualities in common with them, but possess them in a greater degree; and over and above enjoy, by the bounty of heaven, immortal souls, capable of continuing their duration to all eternity; of which some traces are discoverable in our nature, and the rest are ascertained to us by revelation, which man alone is capable of receiving: But how this superadded being operates upon and controls the actions of the mind and body, we seem to be wholly in the dark; but it is certain that in some respects they are all blended together, co-operate, and act as one being; and therefore are answerable for their joint actions, and are to take the same fate at last, when they come to be united again. However, in this discourse it may be proper to consider them separately, and not to impute the mechanical operations of matter and motion immediately to our immortal part; especially in such instances as are the same, or analogous to the actions of brutes, who are wholly mortal.

Therefore, if we consider this energy, or principle, called *mind*, as separate from an human soul, we shall find, that it mingles with, animates, and informs the bodies of men, and of all animals; and whether it be only a modification of matter and motion, whether subtle, volatile, and elastick particles of matter, called animal spirits; whether it be elementary fire, or what the ancients called *anima mundi*, or *divinae particula aerae*, that is, a particle of the soul of the universe, or a spark or impulse of the divinity; or whatever else it be unknown to us; it is most certain, that its power and action over some sorts of organized bodies is very surprizing, and not to be accounted for by any other system of matter and motion which falls within our comprehensions; nor can I conceive it possible that it ever should be: For how should any being trace its own principles, and the causes which gave it being, know what it was before it was, or be able to think how it came to think, unless by resolving all thinking into the power of its creator? To know the modus of creation is the next step to creation, and to a creature's creating itself, or another being like itself, and rendering the *opus operatum*, or the work performed, equally or near as valuable as the artificer.

The powers of this principle are very stupendous. We seem to owe to this most, if not all our sensations, appetites, affections, and passions, which obviously receive constant alteration by the addition of new and adventitious particles of matter, which must more or less be penetrated and inspired with this spirit, which unites to what is called the mind, as the grosser parts do to the body; for neither can grow but by addition, or be lessened but by subtraction, though their actions may be, and are often clogged by internal and external impediments. Our desires and fears, which appear to direct, and indeed comprehend, all the actions of the mind, are only passions, or perturbations of it, made by the impressions of external and internal causes; and what we call judgment seems to me to be no more than a

struggle of those passions, or, in other words, the balance of the conveniences or inconveniences which will result from what we desire or fear, and the heavier scale must weigh down.

When a proper proportion of this active force is duly diffused through the whole machine, it will equally receive or resist the impressions of objects; the passions will be alike balanced, and consequently our thoughts and actions will be regular, and what we call prudent: But if there be too little to animate the mass, or if it meet such obstructions as hinder its energy, it becomes stupidity or folly; but if it abound, and overinform its tenement, or if it be unequally dispersed, or put or kept out of its proper place by natural or accidental obstructions, it causes indiscretion, extravagance, and, in a greater degree, madness. Of which several manners of thinking there are as many kinds and degrees as there are irregularities in man's conduct; and I doubt there are few men so equally tempered, but they have, at different times, more or less of all these qualities by the unequal supplies of this vital spirit, or by the occasional obstructions which it meets with. When we denominate a man mad, or a fool, we mean only that he is more so than most others of his species; for all men at times have a mixture of both, and no men's actions will always bear the test of just reasonings, and if we could enter and look into their private thoughts, I doubt they would much less do so. All sudden passion is temporary madness, as continued passion is continued madness; and all want of apprehension is folly.

Madness too is undoubtedly to be learned and acquired by habit and exercise, as well as covetousness, pride, ambition, love, desire of revenge, and other qualities: All which, carried beyond a certain degree, become madness; as every thing else is, when men's desires or fears, or the means chosen to attain the one, or avoid the other, are extravagant, and above human power or prudence. Nor does madness (as has been said) depend only upon wrong organizations at first, or upon the original ill temperament of the juices, by an undue mixture or superabundance of this active spirit; but often upon the fortuitous alterations which both receive afterwards by diet, physick, action, or accidents: for when those volatile particles have been long diverted, and used to run in wrong and indirect channels, the proper ones will be closed up, and they will have no others but the wrong ones to go in; which unequal distribution must overload some, and starve the rest, and make their operations as heterogeneous and irregular as their causes are; and daily experience shews, that men who have been long used to think or act only in one way, are very difficultly, if ever, put into another.

But of all the several species or kinds of madness in the world, none is so flagrant, catching, and mischievous, as the madness of enthusiasm; which is still the worse, as it adopts and puts on the mask and appearance of zeal, and often passes for sobriety and inspiration; and consequently is incapable of a cure, because it will not seek or accept a remedy. This shall be the subject of my next two papers; and then my dream will be out.

T

I am, &c.

No. 123. SATURDAY, April 6, 1723.

Inquiry concerning Madness, especially religious Madness, called Enthusiasm.
[Gordon]↔

[IV-144]

SIR,

I have supposed, in my last, that our desires and fears are passions or impressions made upon us by the actions of other beings; and that a due balance of those passions, or equal impressions made upon the several parts of the machine, duly impregnated with vital spirit, makes it act regularly, and constitutes what we call prudence: but when it is over-informed, or irregularly informed, or when those impressions are too strong for the machine to grapple with, it becomes madness and distraction; for the truth of which we need only appeal to experience. Men of warm constitutions are easily animated into madness by fiery liquors and high food, or by occasional strokes of good or bad fortune; whereas those who have not a sufficient share of vital spirit, are only elevated and raised to a proper pitch by high living, or wholly depressed by afflictions, as wanting vigour to resist their power, whilst nature, in the former, by an unequal struggle and contention with it, over-exerts itself, and disorders and shakes the whole machine.

This hypothesis receives further confirmation from the methods usually taken to cure madness; namely by fasting, bleeding, or purging; which methods can operate only by removing, carrying off, or suffering to exhale or perspire, the superabundant particles of spirituous matter, which overcharge and disorder the fabrick, till it receive a fresh fermentation from the addition of new ones, when the distemper again returns. Since therefore it is evident, that some of our thinking faculties receive addition and diminution from the action of other bodies, and from many internal and external causes, it must be equally evident, that they must be mortal, or perishable in their own nature; for what is mortality but a being changing its form, shape, or state? And what is immortality, but its continuing always the same? And every alteration makes it a different being in some respects from what it was before.

It seems therefore to me, that all the operations of our minds do not flow from our immortal souls; but that many of them have much lower sources: For what can be more absurd, than to suppose that what is immortal, and consequently not perishable, can be bled, purged, or starved away, in whole or in part? or that a being independent of matter, that pervades and permeates all matter, and yet (as it is said) has no extension, nor takes up or fills any place, can be acted upon by matter, which we cannot conceive to act otherwise than by contact or impulse, and consequently cannot affect what it cannot touch mediately or immediately; that is to say, either by instant action upon an adjoining body, or by striking or gravitating upon distant ones, by the communication of most or of all which are intermediate. I do not pretend to describe the *modus* of gravitation, or to explain how material substances attract one another, whether by Lucretius's system of hooked atoms, or by an elastick principle that God has given every particle of matter, which keeps it in constant motion, and by impelling all contiguous parts; which motion must force the more dense bodies together, the more subtle and thin ones not being able to resist their power, and interrupt their union.

It is highly probable, if not certain, that every part of matter is affected more or less by all parts of matter; and therefore the greater the quantity is that is united together, the more it must impel some bodies, and resist others; and when any part of matter is kept from having its full influence and operation upon a dense and aggregate substance by the interposition of

another, acted upon by the motion of bodies encompassing it, then it seems evident that those two substances must meet together, unless some other power hinders their junction; for all circumambient bodies having their full force upon them, except in those parts which look towards one another, and they still preserving their own force and intrinsic motion, must necessarily gravitate, and more where they meet with the least opposition. But whether this be the true cause of gravitation, or whether we shall ever know the cause of it whilst we are in these frail bodies still I conceive that we are under no necessity to recur immediately to the first cause, when we cannot dive into his manner of governing the universe; nor, since we want faculties to conceive how he has united the soul to the body, are we to determine it to be done in a manner which apparently contradicts the nature of both; but we ought to leave and submit those searches to the secret decrees of providence, and to the time of the last resurrection, when our minds and bodies will be as immortal as our souls, and when possibly all these matters may be revealed to us.

I think therefore it is pretty evident, by what I have said in this paper and the last, as well as from constant observation, that madness is a super-abundance of vital spirits; which must burst their vessel, if they do not overflow, or be let out by tapping; but which way soever they find their evacuation, they generally ferment first, and make a terrible combustion within. This is the devil which haunts us, and often carries away part of an empty house, or blows it up. If he ascend to our garrets, or upper regions, he disorders the brain, and shews visions, airy and romantick images and appearances, carries the hero out of himself, and then sends him armed *cap-a-pee* in wild expeditions, to encounter windmills, and giants of his own making; till at last he return home (if ever he return home) transported with his victory, and in his own opinion a most consummate knight-errant.

Whenever the mind cannot be confined within its inclosure, but flies like Phaeton into the great abyss, and gives the full reins to imagination, it will quickly be carried out of its knowledge, and ramble about wherever fancy, desire, or vision, leads it. It will quickly rise above humanity, become proper conversation for the celestial beings; and, when once it can persuade itself into such angelical company, will certainly despise all other; and the man who is animated by it will think that he has a right to govern all. If the excess of any passion be madness, the excess of them altogether is exorbitant and outrageous madness; and whoever can get it into his head, that he has secret communications with the deity, must have all his passions at work together. The awe of a divine presence must strike him strongly with fear and reverence: The fancied indulgence and condescension shewn him, must raise the highest love, adoration, and transports of joy: So visible a partiality of the deity to him beyond other men, must create pride, and contempt towards others: Such a support and assistance must inspire the highest courage and resolution to overcome all opposition: Hatred, and revenge, to all who do not believe him, will bring up the rear. At last the jumble of all these passions, with many more, will make an accomplished reformer of mankind.

Religious enthusiasm, therefore, is a flaming conceit that we have great personal interest with the deity, and that the deity is eminently employed about us, or in us; that he warms and solaces our hearts, guides our understandings and our steps, determines our will, and sets us far above those who have less pride and more sense than our selves. The enthusiast heats his own head by extravagant imaginations, then makes the all-wise spirit of God to be the author of his hot head; and having worked up his brains into the clouds, despises and hates all that are below, and if he can, kills them, unless they submit to be as mad as himself; for, because he takes his own frenzy for inspiration, you must be guided by his frenzy; and if you are not, you are a rebel to God, and 'tis ten to one but he has a call to put you to death.

I have but a bad opinion of that devotion which is raised by a crazed head, and can be improved by a dram, and a hot sun, or the assistance of wine, or can be lessened by cold weather, or by letting of blood. It is great madness, mixed with presumption, to pretend to

have the spirit of God, unless we can shew it by doing works which only God's spirit can do; that spirit which can do all things, but foolish things. Enthusiasm is doubtless a fever in the head, and, like other fevers, is spreading and infectious; and all the zeal of the enthusiast is only an ambition to propagate his fever.

You never knew a madman of any sort, who was not wiser than all mankind, and did not despise his whole race, who were not blessed with the same obliquity of head. Those in Bedlam think, that they are all mad who are out of it; and the madmen out of Bedlam, pity the madmen in it. The virtuoso, or dealer in butterflies, who lays himself out in the science of blue and brown beetles, thinks all science but his own to be useless or trifling. The collectors of old books are of opinion, that learning, which is intended to improve and enlighten the understanding, is inseparable from dust, and dirt, and obscurity, or contemptible without them. The pedant loads his heavy head with old words, and scorns all those who are not accomplished with the same lumber.

Now all these madmen, and many more who might be added, are harmless enthusiasts; and their pride being part of their madness, is only a jest. But your holy enthusiast is often a mischievous madman, who out of pure zeal for God, destroys his creatures, and plagues, and harasses, and kills them for their good. The Saracens, a barbarous, poor, and desert nation, half-naked, without arts, unskilled in war, and but half-armed, animated by a mad prophet, and a new religion, which made them all mad; overrun and conquered almost all Asia, most part of Africa, and a part of Europe. Such courage, fierceness, and mischief, did their enthusiasm inspire. It is amazing how much they suffered, and what great things they did, without any capacity of doing them, but a religion which was strong in proportion as it wanted charity, probability, and common sense.

They saw rapturous visions in the air, of beautiful damsels richly attired, holding forth their arms, and calling to them for their embraces; and being animated by such powerful deities, no enterprize was too hard for them. They scarce ever departed from any siege, however inferior to it in military arts or numbers. Their constant rule was to fight till they had subdued their enemies, either to their religion, or to pay tribute. They had God and his great apostle on their side, and were obstinately determined to die, or to conquer; and therefore they always did conquer. And their success confirmed their delusion; for finding that they performed greater actions than any other race of mankind ever did, or could do, they believed themselves assisted by heaven; and so esteemed their madness to be inspiration. And then it was very natural to believe, that they were the sole favourites of the Almighty, who interposed thus miraculously in their behalf; that they were employed to do his work; that all the good things of this world were but just rewards of their obedience; and consequently that it was their duty to plunder, distress, kill, and destroy all who resisted the will of God, and denied to give to them their undoubted right.

Now what was able to withstand these inspired savages; who if they lived and conquered, had this world, or, which was better, if they were killed, had the next? They were sure either of empire or paradise; a paradise too, which gratified their carnal appetites. There is no dealing with an armed enthusiast: If you oppose real reason to his wild revelations, you are cursed; if you resist him, you are killed. It signifies nothing to tell him, that you cannot submit to the impulses of a spirit which you have not, and do not believe; and that when you have the same spirit, you will be of the same mind: No, perhaps, that very spirit has told him, that he must kill you for not having it, though you could no more have it, than you could be what you were not.

Don Quixote was a more reasonable madman: He never beat, nor famished, nor tortured the unbelieving Sancho, for having a cooler head than his own, and for not seeing the extraordinary miracles and visions which he himself saw. If a man see battles in the air, or

armies rising out of the sea, am I to be persecuted or ill used because I cannot see them too, when they are not to be seen! Or ought not rather their distracted seer to be shut up in a dark room, where no doubt he will have the same sights, and be equally happy in his own imaginations? As there is no reasoning with an enthusiast, there is no way to be secure against him, but by keeping him from all power, with which he will be sure to play the Devil in God's name. I would not hurt him for his ravings; but I would keep him from hurting me for not raving too.

All men who can get it into their own heads, that they are to subdue others to their opinions, reasonings and speculations, are enthusiasts or impostors, madmen or knaves. Almighty God has given no other light to men to distinguish truth from falsehood, or imposture from revelation, but their reason; and in all the addresses which he himself makes to them, appeals to that reason. He has formed us in such a manner, as to be capable of no other kind of conviction; and consequently can expect no other from us: It must therefore be the last degree of impudence, folly, and madness, in impotent, fallible and faithless men, to assume greater power over one another, than the Almighty exercises over us all.

The appointing judges in controversy, is like setting people at law about what they are both in possession of. A man can have no more than all that he is contending for; and therefore I can compare the quarrelling of two men about their religion, to nothing else in nature, but to the battle between Prince Volscius and Prince Prettyman in *The Rehearsal*, because they were not both in love with the same mistress.

G

I am,&c.

[IV-152]

SIR,

Besides the flaming enthusiasm mentioned in our last, which is there supposed to be inspired by a super-abundance of spirits, labouring for evacuation; and shaking, disordering, and sometimes bursting its tenement to get ready vent (like gun-powder in a granado or mine, or subterraneous fire enclosed in the bowels of the earth); there seems to me to be another sort of religious enthusiasm, not at all mischievous, but rather beneficial to the world; and this has shewn itself in several ages, and under several denominations. There is much to be read of it in the mystick writers in all times. Hermits seem to be inspired with it, and several sects have built their innocent superstitions upon it; as the Alumbrati in Spain, the Quietists in Italy, the French Prophets lately amongst us; and I doubt, a very great part in Europe, called Quakers, owe their rise and increase to it. Having mentioned this last sect, I think myself obliged to declare that I esteem them to be a great, industrious, modest, intelligent, and virtuous people; and to be animated with the most beneficent principles of any sect which ever yet appeared in the world. They have a comprehensive charity to the whole race of mankind, and deny the mercies of God to none. They publickly own, that an universal liberty is due to all; are against impositions of every kind, yet patiently submit to many themselves, and perhaps are the only party amongst men, whose practices, as a body, correspond with their principles.

I am not ashamed to own, that I have with great pleasure read over Mr. Barclay's *Apology for Quakerism*; and do really think it to be the most masterly, charitable, and reasonable system that I have ever seen. It solves the numerous difficulties raised by other sects, and by turns thrown at one another, shews all parts of scripture to be uniform and consistent; and as Sir Isaac Newton, by allowing him gravitation, has accounted for all the phenomena of nature, so if we allow Mr. Barclay those operations of the spirit, which the Quakers pretend to feel, and which he says every man in the world has and may feel, if he watch its motions, and do not suppress them; I think that all the jangling vain questions, numerous superstitions, and various oppressions, which have plagued the world from the beginning, would cease and be at an end.

But this postulatam will not be granted, and I fear will never be proved; though such a discovery be much to be wished, and the opinion of it alone must render those very happy, who can persuade themselves that they have attained to it. Mr. Asgil wrote and published a book, to prove that all true believers (that is all who had attained a spirit like this) shall be translated without passing through death; and, as I doubt not but he believed his own dream himself, so if he had published it before any man had actually died, I cannot see how it could have been answered, or how it can be answered now, but by opposing fact to it, and by making the words *eternal death* signify eternal life in torments, which liberty no language will bear in other disputes; and yet his doctrine cannot be assented to, without supposing that no man ever had faith but Elias and Enoch; which is a very wild supposition.

For the same reason, I cannot concur with Mr. Barclay, in believing that all men who cannot find this spirit in themselves, do or have suppressed it; for I believe that there are many thousands in all respects equally virtuous with himself, who have actually tried all experiments of watching, internal prayer, outward and inward resignation, separation from worldly thoughts and actions, acquiescence of mind, and submission to the operations of the

deity, yet have found themselves, after all, just where they set out; nor could recollect any thing that happened to them in those intervals, but absence of thought; and therefore, till I can feel something in my self, or discover some traces in others, which I cannot account for from lower motives, I shall take the liberty to call the pretenders to it, enthusiasts: though I must confess that all or most religious parties have laid claim to this spirit upon certain occasions, and have bestowed it upon their founders, or particular men amongst them; and the Quakers only say, that all men have it, and may exert it, or rather permit it to exert itself if they please.

It is supposed that the power so claimed is Jesus Christ operating within us; and as it is allowed by all that the least drop of his natural blood was enough to atone for the sins of the whole world; so one might imagine that the least portion of his godhead, working within us, might be too hard for and overcome the depravity transmitted to us by our first parents, or at least be able to engage our attention or acquiescence, which is all that is supposed requisite to the farther progress and effusion of his deity. It is very hard to conceive, that we can serve God by sequestering for a time all the faculties which he has given us; by sending our wits out of doors, to make room for grace, and by believing that the spirit of God will never exert it self but in an empty head; and therefore I shall presume to believe, till I am better informed, that as the Almighty shews and exhibits to us the visible world by the medium of the outward senses, which he had before given us, so he dispenses all that we do know or can know of the invisible one, through the vehicles of our reasoning faculties.

We have not yet been able thoroughly to discover any vacuum in nature, but as soon as any body gets out of a place, another leaps in; if therefore a man can once drive his wits out of house and home, some other being of a different kind will certainly get into their room, and wind is always at hand crowding for preferment; which, in various shapes, has a great share in human transactions, and always has contributed much to the great revolutions in empire and superstition, such as have often overturned the world. But to return to my dream.

A clock, or other machine, made by a skilful artist, will have certain and regular motions, whilst it continues in that state; but if it gather filth, meet with obstructions, or its springs and wheels decay and wear out by time, or be hurt by accidents, it moves irregularly, or not at all. Experience proves the same in the mechanism of animals, who have infinitely finer contextures, as consisting of thousands of tubes, veins, arteries, nerves, and muscles, every one of which, in a certain degree, contributes to the operations of the living engine; and as all these are more tender and delicate, and consequently more susceptible of injuries, than the parts which constitute and give motion to other organized bodies, so they are much more easily put out of order: and we find in fact, that a cold which stops perspiration, and hinders the evacuation of the super-abundant particles of matter, disorders the whole fabrick, clogs and interrupts its action; and that those effluvia which cannot find their proper vent through the pores, over-shadow and oppress the brain, and render the mind unactive, and incapable to perform its functions, till they are let out by larger passages, as by bleeding, or vomiting, or forced out by sweating, or other violent action, or by fasting, and taking in no new supplies, there is time given to them leisurely to expire; but if they require quicker vent than these conduits can give, then fevers, or other violent distempers ensue, when the brains of men are so oppressed, that they see visions, appearances of angels, demons, and dead men, talk incoherently, and sometimes surprisingly, and have obviously different sensations, affections, and reasonings, from what they have at other times.

The same is true of madmen, who through wrong organizations at first, or through the indisposition of the organs afterwards, persuade themselves that they are princes, prophets, or messengers from heaven; and certainly often utter flights, and sallies of imagination, which are amazing, and that never fall from them in their lucid intervals, and which are often passed upon the whole world for inspiration; insomuch, that in several ages, and in several countries in our age, they have been and are thought to be divinely inspired. Now madness shews itself

in a thousand shapes; and as has been said in my former paper, there is scarce a man living but at times has more or less of it, though we denominate it from a train of irregular actions; and many kinds of it certainly do not fall within common observation, or scarce within any observation.

When we see men in the main of their conduct seemingly act with prudence in such things as we understand, we are apt to take their words in such things as we do not understand; especially if we see them do such actions, shew such emotions of spirit, and utter such discourses as we cannot otherwise account for, though we perceive the same done by men in known distempers, and in sleep, and often feel it in our selves: For it is incredible to those who have not seen or observed it, what energy and strength men shew in convulsive distempers, when too they often vent surprising discourses, without knowing what they say; and there are few men, who do not sometimes strike out sudden and extemporary thoughts and expressions, without being able to observe by what traces they came into their minds; and fanciful and conceited men easily persuade themselves, or are persuaded by others, to believe that at those times they are inspired from above.

But if we compare things which we do not know, with those which we do, I think we may account for them both by the same principles in nature. Men, as has been said, in sleep see visions, hold discourses, and sometimes very good ones, with phantoms of their own imaginations, and can walk about, climb over houses and precipices, which no man who is awake durst venture to do. Men in distempers see spirits, talk and reason with them, and often fancy themselves to be what they are not. Melancholy men have believed that they were glass bottles, pitchers, bundles of hay, prophets, and sometimes that they are dead; and yet, in all other actions of life, have behaved themselves with discretion; and as these things happened often, few or none are surprised at them, and therefore treat them only as subjects of jest or merriment; but if they had happened but once, or seldom, we should either have not believed them, or have recurred to miracle and witchcraft for the solution. No man wonders at the sun's rising every day, and yet all are amazed and frightened by seeing a blazing star once in their life-time, though that is certainly the less wonder of the two.

Now what stretch will it be upon our imagination, to believe that once in an age, or more, a catching distemper of the mind should actuate a man or two, and communicate itself afterwards to others of the same complexion, of the same temperament of juices, and consequently of the same dispositions of mind; all which certainly are as infectious as those of the body, though not so observable? We assimilate to the passions, habits, and opinions of those whom we converse with; and their tempers are catching. This indeed is not true in all instances; neither does a plague infect every body, but only those who have proper juices, and suitable dispositions of body to receive it. We see often, that the yawning of one man, will make a whole company yawn; and that the sight of men in convulsive distempers will throw others into the same; as many people were agitated with the same motions and spirit of prating with the French Prophets, though they went to see the Prophets fall into their trances, with a design only to divert themselves; which trances undoubtedly were an unusual kind of epileptick fits, which often actuate the organs of speech without the patient's knowing it, and have often been mistaken for divine trances, and his incoherent rhapsodies been esteemed revelations.

If we may believe Mr. Barclay, and Mr. George Keith, in his *Magick of Quakerism* (who was once of that sect, and afterwards took orders in the Church of England), the same thing has happened to many others who went to insult the Quakers and were caught by their shakings, groanings, and the solemnity of their silent meetings, and became afterwards steady converts. I think it is Thucydides, who tells us, that at Abdera, a city in Greece, upon a hot day, all the spectators who were present in the theatre to see *Andromache* acted, were suddenly seized with a madness, which made them pronounce iambicks; and the whole town

was infected with the distemper, which lasted as long as that weather continued. And he tells us too of another sort of madness, which seized the young women of Athens, many of whom killed themselves; and the magistrates could not stop the contagion, till they made a decree, that those who did so should be exposed, and hung up naked. There seems to be no difficulty, in conceiving that the effluvioms, which steam from the body of an enthusiast, should infect others suitably qualified, with the same distemper; as experience shews us, that the minute particles, which are conveyed by the bite of a mad dog, cause madness, and will make the person infected bark like the dog who bit him. And such particles in other instances may be conveyed through the pores, and in a common instance undoubtedly are so; for many people will swoon if a cat be in the room, though they do not see her. And all infectious distempers must be communicated by those passages.

Some distempers or dispositions of body, make men rave; others make them melancholy: Some give them courage, impetuosity, prodigious energy of mind, and rapturous thoughts and expressions; others sink and depress their spirits, give them panick fears, dismal apprehensions, melancholy images, and secret frights; and they will all account for such sensations from their former imbibed prejudices by early education, and by long use become familiar to them. One of these distempers will make a flaming false prophet, and the other a despairing penitent, in spite of the mercies of God; and afterwards physick or abstinence shall cure the first, and a bottle of wine, now and then moderately and cheerfully taken, in agreeable company, shall make the other a man of this world again.

Opium in different constitutions will work both these extremes, and other drugs will give temporary madness. The oracular priests of old well understood this secret of nature. The high priestess of Delphos sucked inspiration from the fumes of an intoxicating well, which disordered her brain, made her rave and utter incoherent speeches, out of which something was found out to answer the devout querist, and tell the meaning of the god: And in the temple, as I remember, of Amphiaraus, where oracles were conveyed in dreams, the humble and submissive votary was let down into a deep hole, that had several fantastical apartments, where he saw sights and apparitions, which his mind was prepared to receive before by physick, suitable diet, and sometimes by fasting; and then he was wrapped up in the skins of victims, rubbed and impregnated with intoxicating drugs, which made him dream most reverently; and when he related his visions, it was very hard luck if the priests could find nothing in them for their purpose: but if that happened to be the case, the same operation was tried over again; and if they had no better fortune then, the god was angry with the impious seeker for his sins, and so was become sullen, and the poor miscreant was sent away as an excommunicate person (if he had the good luck to escape so), and perhaps hanged himself in his way home.

We see and feel, by constant experience, that our thoughts in dreams are lascivious, frightful or pleasing, according to the temperament of our bodies, the food which we eat, or as our spirits are oppressed or cherished by it. We see too that drunken or distempered men are overcome by liquor or diseases, and made to talk, reason, and act differently from what they do in sobriety and in health; and we all confess such discourses and actions to be the indispositions of their organs, and the operations of external or internal material causes, and will yet not account for other sensations equally extravagant from like mediums, though we cannot shew any difference between them: However, as it is not to be denied but Almighty God has sometimes communicated himself to particular persons by secret impressions upon their senses and understandings, so I dare not affirm, that he may not, and does not do so still; nor will I dogmatically assert, that any one who pretends to feel his divine spirit is a liar or enthusiast; but I think I may safely affirm, that no one is concerned in his visions or revelations but himself, unless the other feels them too, or he can prove the truth of them by miracles.

Almighty God, as has been said, has given us reason to distinguish truth from falsehood, imposture from revelation, delusion from inspiration; and when we quit that light we must wander through endless mazes and dark labyrinths, and ramble where-ever fancy, imagination, or fraud leads us. If Mr. Barclay had meant only, by the testimony of the spirit, that natural faculty, or principle which the deity has inspired into all men to regulate their actions, and to acknowledge his divine bounty (which principle I call reason), and could have reconciled the workings of his light to the only one which I can find in myself, I could readily have subscribed to a very great part of his system; for I must confess that it is most beneficent to the world, in my opinion, most agreeable to the scriptures, and makes them, or rather shews them, to be most consistent with themselves, and comprehends every thing which has been since said by the best of writers for liberty of conscience, and against all sorts of religious impositions. And this he has done with as much wit, happy turn, and mastery of expression, as is consistent with the plainness and simplicity affected by those of his sect, and for the most part used in the holy writings.

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I am, &c.

No. 125. SATURDAY, April 20, 1723.

The Spirit of the Conspirators, Accomplices with Dr. Atterbury, in 1723, considered and exposed. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-163]

SIR,

I intend to consider in this paper, the behaviour and spirit of the conspirators; and to shew what enemies they are, even to such as are favourable to them. But, before I proceed to enquire into the avowed causes of all this outrageous disaffection, I will freely own, that many things have been done which cannot be justified; some, perhaps ignorantly, many ambitiously, and others, it is to be feared, traitorously, to help the conspirators, by provoking the people, and by rendering the administration odious. Sure I am, that there are many pregnant appearances that look sadly this way; and can be construed no other way; and that these measures gave much sorrow and indignation to the best friends of the government, as I doubt not but they did pleasure and hopes to the disaffected, who saw how fast, by such steps, their views were advanced. Treason is most successfully carried on by unsuspected traitors, as friends are easiest betrayed and undone by friends. The cry therefore of the conspirators against unpopular proceedings, was all hypocrisy, and false fire: They saw their mischievous influence, and rejoiced in it: They thought that they were saved the danger and trouble of plotting; and that all that they had to do was to hold the match ready, while other people were laying the train; and to put their sickle into a harvest not of their own sowing. How near they were to reaping this harvest, is now apparent.

Every good man will condemn unjust measures, let them come from what quarter they will: But the conspirators could not with a good grace condemn the worst, even supposing the resentment sincere. The wildest and wickedest things done by their own party, have been constantly and zealously defended and promoted by them: And they have steadily acted for or against a party, from passion or faction: Nor has the love of their country, and the good of the whole, separated from party, ever swayed them in one publick action, that I remember. Neither is it any defence of them, that others, who professed larger, and more humane and publick principles, have fallen too often into the same partiality and been too often governed by the same narrow, selfish, and passionate spirit. Who have ever sworn more blindly to a steady faith in their demagogues, than the conspirators? Who have ever more notoriously shewn, that they knew no other measures of right and wrong, of religion and impiety, than the measures espoused or opposed by their own leaders! What job has been so vile, that they have not blindly approved? Or what scheme so just, that they have not fiercely condemned? Just as this scheme, or that job has taken its rise from this or that quarter.

Nor was the spirit of faction ever more manifest than in the present conspiracy: What did the conspirators want, but plunder and places? But what advantages was their country to reap from the violent change, which they were bringing upon it? Before they could have accomplished it, the nation and every thing in it must have been thrown into convulsions, and a chaos. What order could they bring out of this confusion? What amends could they make for unsettled or plundered property, a trade stagnated or lost, harvests destroyed, contending armies, bloodshed, slaughter and battles, general desolation, universal terror, every man's sword against his neighbour, the foreign sword against all, and dyed with the blood of Britons, his Majesty deposed, and perhaps butchered? For it could not be possible, even for them to suppose, that his Majesty and his family, possessed of so much power in his native dominions, supported by such numbers, such wealth and dependences in Great Britain, and by so many powerful allies abroad, could be effectually expelled by their bigotted idol, and

his champions, but after a long and fatal civil war, fought within our bowels: A war in which most of the contending powers of Europe would have been parties, and which must have ended in the utter loss of our liberties, which ever side had prevailed.

In answer to this black catalogue of woes will they urge, that England and English liberty, and the Protestant religion, would have been indeed destroyed; but that they, the conspirators, would have had places? And yet what else can they urge? For this is the sum of their reasoning, whatever disguises they would put upon it. Such was their spirit; and I wish it were as new as it is shocking and horrible. But alas! it is as old as men: and every country upon earth, that has been undone, has been undone to satiate the ambition of one, or a few, who aimed at seizing or extending power.

The complaints of miscarriages, of wrong steps, and abuse of power, came awkwardly and absurdly from their mouths, whatever grounds there may have been for such complaints. What security could the conspirators give us, that, contrary to the nature of man, and of power, and to their own nature and conduct, they themselves would be humble in grandeur, and modest in exaltation, and occupy power with moderation, self-denial, and clean hands? They who would overturn the constitution, and the foundations of the earth, and fill the land with violence, war and blood, to come at that power! Can we conceive it impossible that any regard to the publick good, and to publick property, would have the least influence over those men, who would sacrifice the publick, and annihilate all property, for the gratification of personal ambition and rage? Or how should the love of liberty and peace bind these men, whom neither the laws of humanity, and of their country, nor the religion of an oath, nor the awful gospel of Jesus Christ, can in the least bind?

They exclaim against armies and taxes, and are the cause of both, and rail at grievances of their own creating. Who make armies necessary, but they, who would invade, and enslave, or destroy us by armies, foreign popish armies? Who make taxes necessary, but they, who by daily conspiring against our peace and our property, and against that establishment which secures both, force us to give part to save all? And who, but they, can give a handle and pretence to such as delight in taxes and armies, and prosper by them, to continue and increase them? They are not only the authors of those great grievances, but of all the evils and subsequent grievances which proceed from them. Had the conspirators succeeded, can we think, or will they have the face to say, that they would have ruled without armies? The yoke of usurpation and servitude is never to be kept on without the sword. They who make armies necessary now, would have found them necessary then: Nor would they have ridiculously and madly trusted to their merit and popular conduct, when in this very instance they shew that no means were too black, no pitch of iniquity and cruelty too horrid, for the accomplishment of their treason; and general plunder and devastation, conflagrations and murder, were the concerted specimens of their spirit, and to be the hopeful beginnings of their reign. Did King James, whose misfortunes they caused and lament, did he, or could he, pretend to support his religion, and his arbitrary administration, without the violence of the sword, without a great and popish army? Is the Pretender of a different religion, or more moderate in the same religion? Or does he disavow his father's government, and propose a better and milder of his own? Does he pretend to come or to stay here without armies? And are not governments continued, and must be, by the same means by which they were founded? A government begun by armies, and the violation of property, must be continued by armies, oppression and violence.

What is here said of taxes and armies, may be said of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. They complain of suspension as a heavy evil; and by their incessant plots and rebellions, make long and frequent suspensions inevitable. By their eternal designs and attacks upon us, they force us upon the next means of self-preservation; and then complain of oppression, because we will not suffer them to oppress and destroy us. It is therefore owing

to them, that the subject is taken from under the protection of the common law, and left to the discretion of the court. Who says that this is desirable? But who makes it necessary, or gives a pretence for it?

We were all justly filled with the apprehension of losing Gibraltar, and thought that no doom was too bad for the traitor that had agreed to give it up (if there ever were such a traitor in his Majesty's service); and the conspirators exclaimed as loudly as any. But behold their baseness and insincerity in this, as in other complaints, and their extensive enmity to their country in every instance! By the conspiracy it appears, that they laboured with foreign powers to have Gibraltar taken from Great Britain, on purpose to engage the nation to part with their government and their religion, in resentment for the loss of that single though important fortress.

The late management of the South-Sea was another topick of resentment and complaint, and a just one, whatever unjust uses the conspirators made of it. It is reasonable to believe that in their hearts they rejoiced in it, since from the universal displeasure, confusion, and losses, occasioned by it, and from the bitterness caused by those losses, they drew hopes and a good omen to their conspiracy, which else must have been impotent and languishing. The tender and slow prosecution of the execrable managers, the gentle punishment inflicted upon them, and the obvious difficulties thrown in the way of any punishment at all, were fresh provocations to a plundered and abused nation, and fresh stimulations to the conspirators. They saw, that great numbers, who had always hated them and their Pretender, were now, under heavy misfortunes, and in the present agonies of their soul, brought to think not unkindly of him and his cause, or to be entirely indifferent about it. They said they were undone, and could not be worse undone; and that nothing in human shape, or in any shape, could use them so ill as the directors had; the execrable, rich, and unchanged directors!

But of all men it least concerns the conspirators to be noisy about the hellish management of the South-Sea scheme; since one of the first and most certain consequences of the conspiracy would have been the utter ruin of the whole South-Sea stock, and of all the many thousands who have their property in it. The Bank, and all other publick funds, would have had the same fate; nay, one of the first steps would have been the plundering of the Bank, and the seizure of all the books of the great companies.

This was so much the design of the conspirators, that one reason given by themselves for delaying the execution of the plot, was, that a principal conspirator, who had a great deal of stock, might have time to sell out. So that they who did so virtuously and disinterestedly exclaim against the abuse of publick credit, would have sunk and destroyed for ever not only the publick funds, but the foundation of all publick credit and publick happiness, publick and private property.

The conspirators likewise profess a loud zeal and concern for the Church; and papists, nonjurors and perjured traitors, were to deliver a Protestant church from a Protestant government, which protected her, to be better protected by a popish bigot, and his popish monks, who all think her damned. A zeal therefore for the Church was to justify the most hideous impieties, a general perjury, foreign invasions, and the final overthrow of all liberty, virtue, and religion: The reformed Church of England was, for a protecting father, to be surrendered to a nursling of the Pope's, who by his religion is, and must be, a determined enemy to the whole Reformation in general, and to the Church of England in particular; and is under the menaces and horrors of damnation, if he do not exert his whole policy and power to extirpate the Protestant name, and introduce a religion which is worse than none; as it professedly tolerates no other, and persecutes conscience, which is the source and seat of religion, the only source that any religion can have. While there are men, and societies of men, there will be religion; and where dread and tyranny are taken away, different religions:

And yet no religion is preferable to a cruel religion; a religion that curses and oppresses toleration, which is a principle inseparable from Christianity; a religion which buries the Bible, or burns it, and all that read it, and damns all meekness and mercy; a religion that defaces the Creation, cheats, impoverishes, oppresses, and exhausts the human race, and arms its apostles with jails, tortures, gibbets, impostures, and a bloody knife.

Every other complaint of the conspirators might with the same facility and truth be turned upon them. But this paper is already too long. I will therefore conclude with observing, that the conspirators have, by the assistance of malicious calumnies, blind prejudices, gross ignorance, and constant misrepresentations, misled and abused their party, and governed them by abusing them: That they have wickedly taught them to hate a government, which, with all the faults, true or false, that their worst malice can charge it with, does just as far excel that which they would introduce, as the blessings and beauties of liberty transcend the horrid deformities of slavery, and the implacable and destroying spirit of popish tyranny: That they have wickedly taught them to be weary of their present free condition; which, with all its disadvantages, debts, and taxes, is easy and happy, greatly and conspicuously happy, in comparison of any condition of any people under any popish prince now upon earth: That they have, by perpetual delusion and lies, worked them to a readiness, nay, a passion, to venture and sacrifice their whole property, rather than pay a part to secure the whole; and to wish for a revolution, a popish revolution, which will neither leave them their property, their conscience, nor their Bible!

G

I am, &c.

No. 126. SATURDAY, April 27, 1723.

Address to those of the Clergy who are fond of the Pretender and his Cause. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-173]

SIR,

I have in my last, considered the spirit of the conspirators in general; I will in this address myself to those of the clergy, who have joined with them, or are well affected to them. That there are some such, no body doubts; and our enemies boast, I hope, unjustly, of a great majority: But let them be many or few, none can be affected by what is hereafter said, but those to whom it is applicable.

I shall not here urge the sacred ties which you are under; ties, sufficient to bind any conscience, which is not past all tenderness and sense of feeling; ties, awful and solemn enough to restrain minds that any religion can restrain; and ties, from which no lawless breach of the Coronation Oath, nor any act of tyranny, has disengaged you; though, according to your own doctrines, your peculiar and favourite doctrine, so often thundered in the ears of Englishmen, *No act nor acts of tyranny can dissolve the bonds of allegiance*. But I would reason with you upon the point of more weight and moment with you, your secular state and interest.

Pray what violence has been offered to your dignities and immunities? What breach made upon your livings, and revenues? What good has been done to religion at your expence? What arbitrary indulgences have been granted to dissenters, or legal ones, besides that of worshipping God? Is it a sin against you, to suffer them to exercise religion in a way different from you; when every man who worships God, must worship him his own way, in the way which he thinks God will accept, else he cannot worship him at all? What other worship will God accept, but that which conscience dictates? Every other worship is hypocrisy; which is worse than a false religion proceeding from a good conscience. He who complies with a religion which he condemns or despises, worships not God, but the pride of priests; and is therefore their friend and favourite: while the upright man, who adores his God in spite of them, and will not dissemble in so nice and sacred a point, is reckoned a capital foe. The religion of one's country, to any man who dislikes it, is cant, and no more than the religion of Lapland. Besides, would your own pride suffer any of you to comply with the religion of Scotland, or Geneva, if you were there? On the contrary, do you not constantly encourage there, what you constantly exclaim against as schism here, a separation from the established communion?

The state which makes you what you are, and gives you what you have, may by the same right and power confer what favours, privileges, and bounties it pleases, upon any other different bodies of men; nor could you in modesty, or common sense, complain, that a legislature disposed of its gifts and graces according to its own wisdom and discretion; and yet you have not even had this nonprovocation. What dissenter, what Presbyterian, has been preferred to the preferments of the Church, or any other, unless all who are faithful to the government and to their oaths, be dissenters? And will you pay dissenters this compliment? None but churchmen are preferred in the Church, or in the state. No preferments are continued vacant; the church revenues are not lessened, nor impaired, but every day increased. All the usual and legal advantages of the Church are secured to churchmen, and none but churchmen possess them. All their honours, all their emoluments, are in their hands, and they are protected in them; nor are any hardships done them, or suffered to be done them, but that of restraining them from putting hardships, distresses and shackles upon others; and

that of confining a bishop, and some of his lower brethren, for treason against their God and their oaths, their religion and their King. And the outrageous and brutal resentments which they have shewn for this necessary, this legal proceeding, shew what friends you are to that establishment, which maintains and supports you in such ease, honours, and plenty; and which he, and such as he, would have destroyed: You indeed make it more and more manifest, that your greatest quarrel to the government is, that it will not put swords into your hands to destroy it. Will you after this complain, that the government will not particularly distinguish you, you only, and your deluded party with honour, trust, and esteem, for this your declared infidelity and enmity to the government?

But the Convocation, you cry, does not sit. This you think a crying evil: But before we agree with you in this thought, you ought to shew us what good their present sitting would do. And if you would shew too what good their sittings ever did, or ever can do, you would inform many who are in utter ignorance as to this great affair. Do convocations always, or at any time promote peace and indulgence, and the tender charity of Christianity? Have their furious contentions for ecclesiastical union ever increased Christian union? Has their fierceness for garments and sounds, and the religion of the body and the breath, had any good effect upon humanity, sincerity, conscience, and the religion of the soul! Have not some of them, and some not very late ones, gone to open war with moderation and common sense; and with such as only offended by reconciling religion with moderation and common sense, and by proving that our Saviour lied not when he declared that his kingdom is not of this world? How did the late Convocation particularly, and their champions, agree with their Head and Saviour, the great Bishop of souls, upon this article? Will such as you say, that for the interest of this government the convocation ought to sit? And ought it to sit for any other interest? Be so good to lay before us the services done, and the instances of zeal shewn by the late Convocations, to this Protestant establishment.

Another of your common-place cries is, that the clergy are contemned. What clergy, gentlemen? Are any contemned but the profane, the forsworn, the rebellious, the lewd, the turbulent, the insatiable, the proud, and the persecuting; such as will be unavoidably contemned, and ought to be contemned, by all who have conscience, virtue, loyalty, and common honesty? And will you say that the clergy, or the body of the clergy feel, or ought to feel, this contempt? Why should the just doom of the traitors to their order affect the credit of the clergy, or fill with apprehensions such as are not traitors? If they have their crimes, what credit or respect is due to the criminal? And if any of them respect the crime, what respect is due to them from those who abhor traitors and treason, which all good men abhor?

Your little regard to conscience, and your wanton contempt of oaths, are sad proofs how small power the Christian religion, or any religion, has over you. What can bind the man whom oaths cannot bind? Can society have any stronger hold of him? And are not they enemies to society, and to mankind; they who violate all the bonds by which societies subsist, and by which mankind are distinguished from wild beasts? You boast of your succession from the apostles: Do you do as the apostles did? Or would they have deserved that venerable name, or found credit amongst men, or made one convert from heathenism, if they had been the ambitious disturbers of government; and, by profanely trampling upon oaths, had published to the world by their practice, an atheistical contempt of all conscience and religious restraints? The apostles, rather than disown their faith and opinion, and dissemble a lying regard for the Gentile deities, for a moment, were miserable in their lives, and martyrs in their death; nor could racks, wheels, fire, and all the engines of torture and cruelty, extort from them one hypocritical declaration, one profession that their souls contradicted. Neither they, nor their pious followers, needed to have been martyrs, had they been guided by a spirit that taught religion and conscience to stoop to worldly interest and luxury.

You say, I have heard some of you say, that you are forced to swear. How were you forced? Can conscience be forced? You may as well say, that men may be forced to like a religion which they hate. Can any excuse be an excuse for perjury? Were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego forced to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? Were the first reformers forced to adore a wafer for a god? Was St. Paul to be forced to offer incense, and worship idols? Or, if he had, would his preaching have been of any effect, or ought to have been? Either the gospel condemns the prostitution of conscience and religion to ease and interest; or such prostitution, if the gospel allowed it, would condemn the gospel. You must therefore either renounce the gospel, which in practice you do; or condemn yourselves, which I do not hear you do: And in honour to the Christian religion, the peaceable, the sincere, the conscientious and disinterested Christian religion, all men who are sincere Christians, or only honest moralists, must condemn you, and abhor your practices.

But how were you forced? Either you must swear fidelity to a government which protects you, and takes nothing from you; or you must quit the advantages, and not eat the bread of the government (for, that the government gives you all that you have, I am ready to prove whenever you please). Now if you have really tender consciences, you would not swear: But if your tithes and rents be dearer to you than your consciences, then it is plain that your consciences are not tender. It is a very hardened conscience that is not dearer to a man than his belly. Your perjury therefore is pure wantonness, and an utter absence of all honesty, conscience, and shame. Are these qualifications proper to direct the lives and consciences of others; and to promote in the minds and practices of others, the scrupulous and upright religion of our blessed Saviour?

Cease, for God's sake, to use that holy name, or use it better. Can you bring people to him, by shewing yourselves daily apostates from him? Cease mentioning the holy martyrs, you who are a disgrace to martyrdom, and act directly contrary to the spirit of the martyrs; nay, would make a martyr of that religion for which they died. For shame rail not at atheism, speak not of atheists, you who give essential proofs of the blackest atheism. What is atheism but an utter disbelief, or, which is really worse, an utter contempt of the deity? And what is a stronger demonstration of that contempt, than a daring, a practical contempt of conscience, his deputy within us, and a wanton and solemn invocation of his awful name to hypocrisy, deceit, and determined falsehood? This is making the godhead a party to infidelity, and to treason against himself: It is mocking God, and abusing men, and making religion the means of damnation. What can equal this horrible crime, the root and womb of all crimes? Or what words can describe it? This, gentlemen, is your advantage: No language suffices to paint out your wickedness: You are secure that your picture can never be fully drawn, or the world see it in half its blackness and deformity.

Will you after this scold at the morals and impiety of the age? You, who lay the broadest foundation for all immorality and wickedness, by letting loose the minds of men from all the strongest bonds of virtue and of human society, the inviolable engagements of conscience, and the awe of the Supreme Being! After you have thus proclaimed, in the most effectual manner, that you have no religion, or that religion has no power over you, will you continue to fill the world and weak heads with canting conjectures and barren speculations, as if religion consisted in whims, dreams, and non-entities? And when you have, as far as your authority and example go, deprived Almighty God of the essential worship arising from social virtue, peace, charity, and good conscience towards God and man, will you be still adding further indignities to the deity, be representing him chiefly pleased with unmanly grimaces, words without meaning, the nonsense of metaphysics, the jargon of logick, and the cant of mystery?

But this subject is too long for one paper: I shall therefore continue it in my next. In some following letters I shall shew my poor deluded countrymen, by what wretched guides in church and state they are conducted, and whose jobs they are doing, to their own undoing.

G

I am, &c.

No. 127. SATURDAY, May 4, 1723.

The same Address continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-181]

SIR,

I proceed in my address to the disaffected part of the clergy.

Are not you the men who professed such blind, such unconditional submission to princes, the most oppressive and tyrannical princes; and damned all who would not go your mad, your impious, and your impracticable lengths? And are not you the first to bring home your own damnation to your own doors, by shewing that no obligation, human or divine, can withhold you from rebelling against the most legal government, and mildest prince? To assert that the government is not a lawful government, is to assert your own perjury; and by disowning the government, you disown all honesty and conscience. The government is founded upon reason, upon laws, and consent, the only foundation of any government; and it is administered with equity, and without the blemish of violence, or of dispensing arbitrarily with laws: And yet this government is to be resisted, betrayed, and overturned; while a government founded upon the chance of blood, upon the hereditary sufficiency of men, and successive chastity of women, and which acts by discretion, cruelty, or folly, is of divine appointment, and irresistible. What can be more monstrous! And what capricious and hard-hearted folly would you fix upon the good and all-wise God! By which you only shew, that your hallowed nonsense, if you be in earnest, is as signal as your wickedness.

As to the Pretender's right, I know not what it is; unless it be, that because his supposed father violated his Coronation Oath and the laws, usurped a tyrannical power, and oppressed and enslaved these nations five and thirty years ago, therefore his supposed son has a lawful right to enslave them now. And I defy you, with all your distinctions, and men of distinctions, to produce a better argument upon this head of right. Besides, how can the Pretender think that you have any the least regard to his right, when you have so often and so solemnly sworn that he had none? Dispossess yourselves, if you can, of the spirit of faction, and of groundless displeasure and revenge; and then try if you can find any divine, any unalterable right in the Pretender. He has in truth no right, but what your own unruly and restless passions give him. We all know what would cure you of your opinion of his title, of your fondness for his person. The constitution will not stoop to you; the government will not be governed by you; you have not the power; you have not the revenues of the ancient ecclesiastics before Henry VIII's days; nor would you, if the Pretender were here: And if you had not, in three months you would be fierce for sending him abroad again, as you did his supposed father; or using him worse. Of this I am certain, that if he ruled as his present Majesty does, you would treat him, and obey him, and honour him, just as you do his present Majesty. Plead no longer your consciences, which you have so long, and so often, and so vilely prostituted, and still prostitute! No body will receive the plea.

Before you can pretend to make your notions and authority pass with others, you must shew that you yourselves are guided by any notions of right or wrong. If you would clear yourselves from the guilt, the horrid guilt of constant and repeated perjury; shew how faithfully, how religiously you have kept your oaths. If you would not be thought disaffected, shew by some particular instances your faith and attachment to the government, from the Revolution to this day. What have you done to prevent or repress plots, assassinations, and rebellions; to render them odious in the hearts of your people, or to satisfy the world that they were odious in your own? And is not this the duty of Christians and preachers, and your

sworn duty? In a stupid dispute about grimace and forms, or about paltry distinctions and empty words, you are all in flame and uproar, and fill your pulpits, and your people, and the nation, with your important nonsense, and the danger of sense: But when church and state were just going to be swallowed up by popery and tyranny, what alarms have you rung? What resentment, what attachment to the establishment and your oaths, have you shewn? What honest testimony have you borne?

And what have you done, Gentlemen, since the discovery of this horrid conspiracy? You that from your lofty rostrums have scattered poison and epidemical distempers over the land, as if out of Pandora's box; what antidotes have you applied to the venom which you have dispersed? What satisfaction have you made for all the mischiefs which you have done, and which stare you in the face? What sermons have you preached? What discourses have you printed? What detestation have you shewn against this monstrous design; levelled at the life of the prince who protects you; against the religion which you ought to support, and which supports you; and against the liberties and estates of your countrymen, from whose mistaken confidence you derive all your power and wealth?

What has been done by the governors of the universities to promote loyalty either in tutors or pupils, and to support the principles upon which the Revolution stands? What charges have been given by archdeacons (to say nothing of their betters), to enforce obedience to this government upon the foot of liberty? How many seditious priests have met with punishment or discountenance from their superiors? though we all know what resentment they would have found, if any one had dared to have opened his mouth against the power and pride of his order?

What care has been taken in the licensing or approving of school-masters, who are almost all Jacobites! What a bitter and disaffected spirit is there in the charity-schools, and all schools! Is there a contest any where between two candidates, but the most disaffected has the vote and interest of the country clergy? And is not the same partiality practised in most of the colleges of the universities?

Reconcile, if you can, your wild conduct to any semblance of religion, or of common sense and common honesty. If a Protestant dissenter [is] to be let into a place by the good pleasure and indulgence of the law; what books, scolding, and fury! But when the Pretender and popery are to be let into England, to the utter subversion of religion and property, and against law and oaths; what resignation! what silence! Though you are sworn to oppose them, strongly and solemnly sworn, and have no provocation not to oppose them, but that the happiness and estates of the laity, and the tenderness shewn to dissenters (by which our people and our riches are increased, and our Christian spirit is shewn) disturb the pride of the narrow persecuting ecclesiasticks, always insatiable and discontented, always plotting and railing while the wealth and dominion of mankind are not entirely theirs.

It would be endless to enter into all the late and publick instances of your perjury, your disaffection, and furious spirit. I shall mention but one, but one that is a disgrace to our nation; an instance of a mean priest, destitute of name and parts tried and condemned for sedition, yet almost deified for his insolence and crimes. Ignorant of the laws, and despising his own oaths, he publicly attacked the constitution, and libelled it. He asserted the irresistibility of all governments good or bad, though our own was founded upon resistance. For this daring offence he was impeached and tried; tried by one part of the legislature before the other, and condemned by all three: So that the business of the nation, and of Europe, stood still for many weeks, till this groveling offender had a hearing, and his sentence; a sentence, which would have come more properly for him from the chairman of a petty-sessions, than from the mouth of a Lord High Chancellor of England!

What reverence might not have been expected to such a trial as this, what acquiescence in the issue of it, especially from those who contended, daily and vehemently contended, from the pulpit and the press, for submission, unlimited submission, to governors, though tyrants and oppressors! But instead of this, as if they intended to publish to the world, that the meanest of the order, how vile and insolent soever, is not to be touched for the most enormous crimes, even in the most legal, open, and honourable manner, even by the whole legislature, the most solemn and august judicature upon earth; there was such a hideous stir made; such a horrible outcry and spirit were raised; such insolences, tumults and insurrections ensued; such contempt was shewn of power and magistracy; such lies and libels published against those who possessed them; such lying encomiums were bestowed upon the sentenced criminal; such profane compliments were made him; such profound and insolent respect was paid him; as if there had been neither religion nor order in the land, but both had been banished out of it by many of the avowed and hired advocates for religion and order; who, all the while they were thus reviling and resisting authority, had still the front to press and preach absolute non-resistance to authority, and to reward what they themselves were doing with damnation: unless it were safe and laudable to resist the most lawful power, but sinful and damnable to resist that which is lawless. For, after so many oaths to the government, and so many abjurations of the Pretender, they durst not say that the government was unlawful. But the rage and uproar which they were in, even before the sentence, were as great as if the priesthood it self, nay, all nature was to have been overturned by the apprehended whipping of a profligate priest.

A sufficient lesson is this to all governments, how this sort of men are to be trusted with power, who dare thus act in spite of all power! and a strong proof to all men how little regard is due to the opinions and doctrines of these men, who do not regard their own doctrines! who teach what no man ought to practise, and themselves will not! who are perpetually contradicting themselves, and one another, and yet are never in the wrong! and who would not suffer the meanest, or worst of their order, to be subject to the united and original power of one of the greatest states in the world!

Sure this cannot be forgot whilst there is a king, or liberty, in Israel!

G

I am, &c.

No. 128. SATURDAY, May 11, 1723.

Address to such of the Laity as are Followers of the disaffected Clergy, and of their Accomplices. [Trenchard] ↪

[IV-188]

SIR,

I have already addressed two of these letters to the disaffected clergy; and will in this apply myself to the disaffected laity, their followers.

I cannot help saying, Gentlemen, that it argues your great lowness of sense, and depravity of manners, to be thus blindly inflamed by such forsworn apostates, such lying and disaffected monks, men of such vile morals: You see their unruly spirit, their unhallowed conduct, their daring and impious perjuries; and yet will you be led by them into wickedness as great, if possible, as their own; the wickedness of unprovoked rebellion; of overthrowing a government, which, in spite of their malice and lies, does really protect you in your religion and property; and of sacrificing a Protestant Church, that you think yourselves fond of, to a popish Pretender, who is bound by his religion to destroy it?

And what is all this noise about? For whose sakes, think you, Gentlemen, that all this combustion is made? Do you believe that they are serving your interests, or their own? Have they in any instance, or any age, shewn any regard, any concern for your persons, your religion, or your interests? If they pretend to have done so, they speak as falsely as they swear. Remember all the reigns since Queen Elizabeth's time to the Revolution; those reigns that oppressed you, and that Revolution that saved you. Did they not make it the whole business of their zeal, of their addresses and their preachments, to give up your persons, your consciences, and your fortunes, to the pleasure and lust of the prince; and damned you if you defended either? Did they not impiously make our Saviour the author of their inhuman nonsense, and Christianity a warrant of indemnity for oppressing, robbing, chaining, and killing you? And did they not fill the kingdom with atheistical volumes of sermons, books, and addresses, full of profane compliments and curses upon this vile head? And have they ever since publicly and expressly renounced these destroying principles? When their own interest is concerned, no principles can bind them, as we all see and know; but as to the power of princes over laymen, over you, Gentlemen, have they not always asserted it to be boundless and discretionary, and always left you at the mere mercy of royal lust and madness? It is true, they will not now suffer you to bear a prince whom laws can bind; nor would they formerly suffer you to preserve yourselves from tyrants, which neither God, nor man, nor the good of mankind, could bind.

As soon as the great Queen Elizabeth was dead, who was resolved to be truly what she was called, Head of the Church; and in order to be so, kept her priests in a just and becoming subordination, and would not suffer them to meddle with or prate about her government (for which to this day you have never heard them spare to her memory one good word); and when a weak prince succeeded her, many of the leading clergy advanced all the vilest tenets of popery: They declared, that the Church of Rome, contrary to the express words of the *Homilies*, was a true church (which they might as justly have said of the Church of Hell) at the same time that they denounced damnation against all foreign and domestick Protestants for being no churches at all. So much did they prefer their own notional power of ordination before the precepts of our Saviour, and the essentials of religion! They persuaded the King to appoint three bishops to re-ordain the Scotch presbyters; which imposition put that kingdom in a flame, as being in effect told, that they were in a state of damnation before, and that their

ministers had no lawful call to serve God without episcopal dubbing. And thus he had like to have lost one of his kingdoms, to gratify the pride of a few crack-brained ecclesiasticks.

Then it was that professed papists and popish principles grew in request: Liberty of conscience was once given to them by proclamation, and always connived at and indulged; whilst Protestant dissenters, and the best churchmen too, under the odious name of Puritans, were every where reviled and persecuted. Then it was that your parents first heard, in this Protestant church, of the power of the keys, the indelible character, the uninterrupted succession, the real presence, the giving the Holy Ghost, the divine right of kings and bishops; all tending to aggrandize the clergy, and to enslave the laity. Then was invented that nonsensical apothegm, *no bishop, no king*; which his Majesty echoing several times upon oath at the conference at Hampton-Court, the Archbishop declared, that doubtless his Majesty was inspired, and spoke by the special assistance of God's spirit. Then the bishops thought it was their time, with the Archbishop at their head, to present a memorial to the King, demanding an exemption of their courts from the civil jurisdiction; and the ecclesiastical power was every day swelling, nay carried to such a pitch in the High-Commission Court, as to draw the Parliament upon them. And to induce his Majesty to support them in their nonsense and roguery, they made him a present of all your persons, lands, and liberties. It became the current doctrine amongst the prerogative clergy, and books were published by some of them, approved and applauded by all, to maintain, that the King was exempt from the restraint of laws; that he need not call Parliaments, but might make laws without them; and, that it was a favour to admit the consent of his people in giving subsidies.

This weak prince left one as weak behind him; one who having, as is said, been once destined to the priesthood, and being a bigot by nature as well as education, the ecclesiasticks found in his reign a proper season and a proper soil to sow their tares in, with a fair prospect of a plentiful harvest. Popery came into the kingdom like a torrent; arbitrary power appeared undisguised, and in the most glaring colours. The King, by positive order to the chancellor, forbade the laws against papists to be put in execution; and, notwithstanding the constant protestations of Parliaments, protected Romish priests against legal prosecutions. Popish books were licensed by Laud; and Protestant ones, which defended the Articles and the opinions of the Established Church, were forbidden, suppressed, and published in the Star Chamber. Montague, who was impeached by Parliament, for his attempts to introduce popery, was not only protected, but made Bishop of Chichester. Laud issued injunctions, by his own authority, for reforming the Church, and bringing it nearer to popery: He had the sauciness to declare publickly, that he hoped to see the time when no jack gentleman should dare to keep on his hat before the meanest curate. The bishops disclaimed all jurisdiction from the crown in Bastwick's trial; and the independence of the Church upon the state was openly asserted. Then came in the altar, and the unbloody sacrifice upon it, with the antick and foppish consecration of churches and church-yards, and many other monkish fooleries, to draw us to a nearer conformity with Rome.

And as priestcraft and tyranny are ever inseparable, and go hand-in-hand, infinite other oppressions were brought upon the poor people, and proved by the priests to be *jure divino*; as, unlawful imprisonments, various monopolies, extorted loans, numerous taxes; all levied without authority of Parliament. Sibthorp and Manwaring, two of Laud's creatures, were set on to preach, that the King was not bound by the laws of the land; that the King's royal will, in imposing loans and taxes, did oblige the subject's conscience, on pain of damnation. His Majesty sent a special mandate to Archbishop Abbot, to license those sermons; and his Grace was suspended for not doing it. It seems that it was lawful then to suspend the greatest clergyman, and first subject of England, for doing his duty, and preserving the laws: And now it is a sacrilegious usurpation of the divine rights of the clergy, to deprive a bishop for the

most traitorous conspiracy against his king, his country, and the religion which he himself professes. To make good all these invasions upon publick liberty, a German army was contracted for; and some time after an Irish and popish one was actually raised by Strafford in Ireland.

During these reigns, all the high clergy were the professed trumpets, the setting dogs and spiritual janizaries, of a government which used you like cattle, and starved you, or slew you for profit and sport. They made you conspire against yourselves, by alarming your consciences, and filling them with blind and unnatural resignation to all the excesses of cruelty, plunder, oppression, killing, servitude, and every species of human barbarity: But now that you are protected and secure in standing laws, which the administration has never pretended to dispense with; when you have the full enjoyment of your consciences, which the government in no instance restrains; when you are secure in your estates and property, which the government does not touch, nor pretends any right to touch; when you have as much liberty as mankind can under any government possess, a liberty which goes to the very borders of licentiousness: I say, under all these blessings, blessings unknown almost to all men, but Englishmen; will these implacable and steady impostors let you alone? Are not their spiritual goads continually in your sides, stimulating you to renounce your understanding, your freedom, your safety, your religion, your honesty, your conscience; and to destroy the source of all your own happiness and enjoyments, religious and secular; to exchange a free government, and every thing that is valuable upon earth, for the cruelty, madness, chains, misery, and deformity of popery and of popish tyranny?

Look back, Gentlemen, once more, to later reigns: What testimony did they bear against the barefaced encouragement of popery, and the persecution of Protestants, in Charles II's reign; against his fatal treaties and leagues with France, his unjust wars with the United Provinces, and his treacherous seizure of their Smyrna fleet, to destroy the only state in the world that could be then called the bulwark of liberty and the Protestant religion? What did they say against the terrible excesses, the arbitrary imprisonments, the legal murders, and violation of property, during his reign? Did they not encourage and sanctify all the invasions and encroachments of the court, and cursed all who opposed them, or complained of them? Can they have the forehead to complain of armies, of taxes, or any sort of oppression (however just such complaint may be in others), they who have never shewn themselves for any government, but what subsisted by armies and oppression? They have been always mortal foes to popular liberty, which thwarts and frustrates all their aspiring and insatiable views; and in every favourite reign preached it as impiously down, as they preached up every growing and heavy oppression.

Nor did they ever quarrel with King James, but consecrated all his usurpations, his armies, and dispensing power, till he gave liberty of conscience to dissenters, and till some of their own ill-contrived oppressions were brought home to their own doors. They then cursed their king, and helped to send him a begging. They resisted him, and upon their principles were rebels to him, and animated others to be so; yet have been damning you and the nation for that resistance ever since: Which is a full confession, that when a popish tyrant plunders and oppresses you, you neither can nor ought to have any remedy; but if he touch but a tithe-pig or surplice of theirs, their heel is ready to be lifted up against him, and their hands to throw the crown from his head, and to put it upon another, with fresh oaths of allegiance and obedience; and to pull it off again in spite of those oaths, or without any forfeiture, or any just provocation. Is not this infamous conduct of theirs manifest to sight? Does it not stare you and every Briton in the face? And yet will you be implicitly led by such traitors to God, to truth, and to you?

How did they behave towards King William, whom they themselves invited over? As soon as he gave liberty of conscience to Protestant dissenters; let them see that he would not be a blind tool to a priestly faction, but would equally protect all his subjects who were faithful to him; had set himself at the head of the Protestant interest, and every year hazarded his person in dangerous battles and sieges for the liberty of England and of Europe, against the most dreadful scourge and oppressor of mankind that ever plagued the earth; they were perpetually preaching and haranguing seditiously, always calumniating him, reviling him, distressing him, and plotting against him; always endeavouring to render his measures, all his generous attempts for their own security, abortive and ineffectual. Nor did they use the late Queen, their own favourite Queen, or even those of their own party who served her faithfully, one jot better, till she fell into the hands of a few desperate traitors to herself and them; who gave away all the advantage of a long, expensive, and successful war; put France into a condition again to enslave Europe, and to place a popish traitor, an attainted fugitive, upon the throne of these kingdoms(which he had undoubtedly done, if unforeseen accidents had not prevented it): And then what encomiums, what panegyrics, what fulsome and blasphemous flattery, did they bestow upon her person and actions, and have bestowed ever since?

Is not this, Gentlemen, using you like slaves, and worse than spaniels; making you the tame vassals of tyrants, and restless rebels to lawful governors? Is not this using you like insensible instruments, void of reason and of conscience, of prudence, and of property? Is this teaching! this the price of their revenues and ease! this the function of ministers! Or can human invention, animated and aided by human malice, draw the character of more unlimited, merciless, and outrageous enemies?

T

I am, &c.

No. 129. SATURDAY, May 18, 1723.

The same Address continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-197]

GENTLEMEN,

You are abused: You are blindly governed by certain chiefs, who can have no view but to dispose of you; to make sale of you for their own proper advantage. By prating pedants, and disaffected monks, and by party cries, and party revelling, and hogsheads of October, you are brought to adore this duke, that lord, and the other knight or squire; and to think the publick undone, unless it be under the sole management of these your idols, who would effectually undo it. They once had places: Had you then more money, more trade, more land and liberty, by any wise or virtuous conduct of theirs, than you have now? And did they not take that opportunity of your generous confidence in them, to betray you basely to France and the Pretender? And have they not ever since been labouring, by plots and rebellion, to accomplish that which, from the shortness of their reign, and the sudden change, they could not then accomplish by power?

Power and places are still their only aim: And to come at them, you see, they would make war upon heaven and earth, and involve you in blood and popery. But you cannot all have places, Gentlemen: Your only ambition ought to be the security of your property, and to live like freemen. And are you not free? Is not your property secure? or can these men accomplish their designs and conspiracies, but at the expence of your estates and your freedom? They seek their own grandeur, and all their advantages, from your ruin and servitude. You must pay the whole and long reckoning at last. You must fill the empty coffers of new shoals of *banditti* who must be rewarded out of your pockets for their villainous merit and pretended sufferings. You will have a whole and black flight of harpies to glut, who with ravenous and unhallowed claws will devour your substance, and your children's bread. All foreign debts, all the demands of Spain and Rome, will be brought upon you for payment; and all that you have will be too little to satiate needy traitors, whom you madly want to save your all; which is not touched, nor can be hurt, but by them, and is but too little to defend you from them.

Think you to be then without armies? No: Instead of occasional troops, which their wicked plots and devices, and your own disaffection, have brought upon you, you will see your country and your houses filled with popish armies, perhaps foreign popish armies. You will be told, that Protestant and English ones, which already betrayed the father, will betray the son, and cannot be trusted: That your frequent rebellions render you unfit to be relied on; and that if you turned out a Protestant prince, whom you yourselves called in, you will be apt, upon the least disgust or caprice, to turn out your hereditary King, as you did his father.

Think you that your present debts will be cancelled, and your taxes made easy? No; your taxes and your funds will be continued: But, instead of being applied, as they are, to pay off lawful debts contracted for your security, they will be seized by this new government, and called lawful prize. It will be said, That they were given to keep out your lawful king, and ought to be made use of to keep him in: That if you were so prodigal of your wealth for the support of rebellion and faction, can you refuse these revenues, which are now no longer your own, but in possession of the enemies of the establishment, who chiefly gained them at first by stock-jobbing and extortion, and now keep them as the prizes of disloyalty and treason; can you refuse these revenues (so ill got, and as ill applied) to secure your lineal government, founded upon a long succession of your natural princes? These revenues

therefore, which are now your property, and the property of your neighbours and relations, will then be united to the crown, fix an absolute power there, and entail lasting and irretrievable slavery upon yourselves and your posterity, and destroy at one blow the whole property and trade of three great kingdoms. At present, if prudent methods be taken (which surely necessity must at last make us take) these great debts may be paid honestly off, and we again see ourselves a happy and disengaged people. But upon such a dreadful turn as the conspirators intended, they will be thrown into a free gift, and your taxes will be made perpetual, to perpetuate your slavery.

Do you expect any redress of any kind from such a Parliament as can then be chosen, if any be chosen? No; hope it not. All that would serve you faithfully in it, will be called enemies and traitors to the new, and friends to the late rebellious establishment. Such therefore will not dare to offer themselves to your choice; and, if they did, would be mobbed, or imprisoned. You must choose only such as are recommended to you, the ragged and famished tribe that are brought over; men of desperate fortunes, the beggarly plotters against your present happiness, fiery and implacable bigots, half papists, engaged malcontents, or rapacious vultures; all gaping for prey, all determined to every measure of oppression, and to sacrifice you and your country to their ambition and want. You will then find time for repentance, when it is too late, when all the grievances which you now so wantonly complain of will fall upon you in earnest, and an hundred fold, without hope of remedy or end.

Nor can this blessed condition be brought upon you, but after the horrid prelude of a long and cruel civil war. You will first see your country in blood, your cities burnt, your houses plundered, your cattle taken from you, your stocks consumed by dragoons, and your sons, your neighbours, and relations, murdered before your faces. Flatter not yourselves, that his Majesty will easily quit the many thousands of his subjects, who will certainly and resolutely stand by him; or that he will want the assistance of all the foreign powers who are interested in his establishment, or even in making this great kingdom wretched, impotent, and poor. No, Gentlemen, you will have armies of Germans and of Dutch poured in upon you on one side, Spaniards and Russians on the other, and perhaps French on both sides. Irish papists will come over in shoals; Hosts of Highlanders will fall like snow from the north; and all the necessitous, the debauched, the ambitious, the rapacious, the extravagant, and the revengeful, amongst yourselves, will think these your calamities their harvest: They will banquet in your plunder; and for a share of you, will greedily join to devour you. Is this a condition like that which you now enjoy?

How would you like to see your churches dressed up like toyshops; to see vermin of various fashions, shapes, and colours, crawling about in them, antickly dressed up in an hundred fantastical garments; to see the same vermin, at other times, filling and polluting your streets, haunting your houses, debauching and corrupting your wives, perverting your children, devouring your substance, and lording it over you? You will hardly know, thus transmogrified, the old faces which you have been used to, the faces of those impious wretches, who would bring all these frightful mischiefs upon you. That they are ready and prepared for this ungodly change, is evident from their maintaining and asserting all the vilest and most formidable tenets of popery; and by their uniting in all the traitorous intrigues, in all the basest and bloodiest councils of papists. But that the papists would protect or prefer them afterwards, is more than doubtful: It is not likely, that they will trust those whom by experience they know no trust can bind. They know that those who have betrayed you, and a King who has protected and preferred them, will betray also even papists. They know, that neither religion, nor conscience, not honesty, nor hardship, has any share in their present disaffection, which has its whole root in pride and avarice, and the lust of rapine and power; and that they will in a moment turn upon them as soon as the first preferments go by them, or they cannot all catch the preferments and wealth which they so immoderately thirst

after.

Your present deceivers, therefore, will not then be trusted. All ecclesiastical prizes will be the prizes of foreign ecclesiasticks, or of those who have been ever staunch Catholics at home. The others will be left to certain contempt, beggary, and if possible to shame. It will not be forgot what servile adoration they paid, what hollow compliments they made, to the late King James; adoration that bordered upon blasphemy! Compliments that interfered with the incommunicable attributes of God! And how faithlessly, how readily, afterwards they betrayed him, when all his favours did not fall in their lap, and as soon as they found that for them alone his tyranny was not exerted. It will be remembered how cheerfully, or rather how revengefully, they ran into the Revolution; and when they could not engross the whole advantages of it, and could not make King William their instrument and bully, how they were continually libelling King William and the Revolution, continually prating, preaching, and plotting against both, notwithstanding their constant oaths, their constant abjurations and imprecations.

For God's sake, Gentlemen, think what you are doing: Your lives, your estates, your religion, your conscience, your trade, your country, your honour, are all at stake, and you are wantonly throwing them all away; you are pursuing a false and miserable shadow; and it would be happy for you, were it only a shadow: In reality, you are going to catch in your embraces, superstition, beggary, and servitude. I approve your love and pursuit of liberty, which ever was, and ever will be, a grateful and charming sound in my ears; and I will be always ready to lead you, or to follow you, in that virtuous and noble pursuit. This is wisdom! This is honour! But honour is to be acquired by honourable means, and not by rapine, perjury, and murder.

I thank God, we have yet the means left within our constitution to save ourselves. We have, in spite of malice and contumelies, an excellent, meek, and benevolent prince, who has in no one instance of his reign attempted to strain his prerogative above the laws; which we defy his bitterest enemies to say of the best of their favourite kings, his predecessors. He has every disposition to make a people great and happy, and will be always ready to gratify them in every thing that they can reasonably ask for their security. But if we would make ourselves secure, we must make him secure. It cannot be denied, but there have been some excesses of power, and that we have suffered under many publick calamities: None of them are, however, imputable to him; but to the corruption and intrigues of those who betrayed him and us, and to the constant conspiracies of traitors, which deterred honest men from a severe animadversion upon their crimes, when they saw them pursued by those who rejoiced in those crimes, with no design to rectify abuses, but to inflame discontents.

To whom, Gentlemen, do we owe all our present debts and misfortunes? Even to those who opposed all the measures for raising effectual supplies in the first war, and ended the second by a scandalous peace, which left us in insecurity and danger, and made more taxes and more debts necessary to our security. To whom, as I have observed in a former paper, do we owe standing armies, such frequent suspensions of the *habeas corpus* bill, and so many consuming pensions? Even to those, who, by their constant plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, have given occasions, or pretences, for these great evils and excesses. And now that they have brought all these mischiefs, and many more, upon us, and forced the government upon measures which perhaps would not have been thought of, certainly would not have been complied with, they would impudently throw upon his Majesty the burdens and imputations, which they alone ought to bear, and impiously dethrone him, and undo their country, for their own crimes.

You are born, Gentlemen, to liberty; and from it you derive all the blessings which you possess. Pray, what affection have these your leaders ever shewn to the cause of liberty? It is plain that they have never taken the sacred sound into their mouths, but to profane it; nor pretended to cherish it, but in order to destroy it, and make it an unnatural ladder to tyranny. As often as dominion has been in their own hands, liberty became a crime, and a sign of sedition; and as often as they wanted to destroy power, that is, as often as they were out of it, they prostituted the spirit of liberty to the service of treason. Hence their late cries for liberty, to animate you against a government that protected it; and under the pretence of affecting liberty, to introduce a tyranny that would destroy the soul, body and property. They could, however, have made no dangerous progress in this mischief and hypocrisy, if those who have always professed, and whose interest it would have been always to have supported and practised, free and beneficent principles, had not deserted those principles, and armed by that desertion the enemies to all that is good and virtuous, with an opportunity of turning liberty upon herself. Let the real friends to the government support the maxims upon which it stands, and upon which only it can stand, and they have nothing to fear from the well or ill-grounded popularity of its enemies.

Such, Gentlemen, are your leaders, and such are the grievances which they cause, and complain of: To cure them, they would introduce the compleatest and most comprehensive of all, a total overthrow of church and state. They have reduced us to unhappy circumstances; but let us not make them infinitely worse, and destroy ourselves for relief; let us not, like silly and peevish children, throw away what we are in possession of, to attain what is out of our power, and which attained would undo us: Let us put on resolutions suitable to our present condition. Let all honest men join with the greatest unanimity in all measures to preserve his Majesty and our establishment; and then we may rest assured, that his Majesty will do every thing to preserve us. We may then ask with confidence, and he will give with pleasure. When the kingdom is in this desirable calm and security, we shall not need so many troops, nor will his Majesty desire them. We may lessen the publick expences, pay off gradually the publick debts, increase the trade, wealth, and power of the nation, and be again a rich, easy, and flourishing people.

I cannot help persuading myself, that the gentlemen at present in the administration, who have observed and condemned so justly the fatal and unsuccessful measures taken by some of their predecessors, the terrible consequences that have flowed from them, and the dreadful advantages that they gave to the common enemies of his Majesty, of themselves, and of us all, are already convinced, that there is no possibility of preserving our happy establishment long, but by gaining and caressing the people, by making them easy and happy, by letting them find their account in his Majesty's reign; and by giving no handles for just reproach, or pretences for contumely, to those who would make no other use of them but to destroy us all.

G

I am, &c.

[IV-207]

SIR,

I have in my last and former papers given you some faint images of hypocrisy, pride, tyranny, perjury, atheism, and restless ambition, of the Jacobite and disaffected clergy, who constantly mislead you, and constantly abuse you. I shall in this inform you what are their views, what the butt and mark to which they direct all their actions; what the idols to which they sacrifice their honour, their conscience, their religion, and their God. It is even to their ambition and pride. It is to get you into their power; to have the disposal of your persons, your opinions, and your estates; to make you ignorant, poor, miserable, and slavish, whilst they riot upon your fortunes, prey upon your industry. They look abroad with envious, with wishing eyes, at the revenues, grandeur, and power of the Romish clergy; they remember with regret, how they lost all those fine things at the Reformation, and have never lost sight of them since; but been constantly involving you in factions, in misery, often in blood, to recover them again.

Popery is the most dreadful machine, the utmost stretch of human politicks, that ever was invented amongst men, to aggrandize and enrich the clergy, to oppress and enslave the laity. All its doctrines, all its views, all its artifices, are calculated for the sole advantage of the priests, and the destruction of the people, at the expence of virtue, good government, common sense, and the gospel. It is an open conspiracy of the ecclesiasticks against all the rest of mankind, to rob them of their estates, of their consciences, and their senses; and to make them the dupes and tame vassals of saucy and ambitious pedants. Look into their doctrines and their practices, and see whether you can find the least appearance of honour, morality, common honesty, or religion, in them; or any thing but pride, hypocrisy, fraud, tyranny, and domination. What do they mean by the power of the keys, binding and loosing, of excommunication, of their being mediators and intercessors between God and you; what do they mean by their pardoning sins, and having the sole power of giving the sacraments, which they tell you are necessary to salvation; what, by their doctrines about purgatory; but to persuade you, if you are foolish enough to believe them, that your future happiness and misery depend upon them? and then they well know that you will give the most that you have in this world, to be secure in the next.

What do they intend by telling you that bishops are of divine institution; by the power of ordination; and that they can alone make one another? What, by the indelible character; by uninterrupted succession from the apostles; by their being able to give the Holy Ghost, and having it themselves; but to create reverence to their persons, submission to their authority, and to render themselves independent of the civil government? And then they know that the civil government will be dependent on them. What purpose does it serve, to make you believe that tithes (which they hold by laws of your making) are of divine institution; that it is sacrilege to resume lands or donations, once given to the clergy, and that they can never afterwards be alienated; but constantly to increase their riches, and consequently their power and dependence, till by the natural course of things they come to be possessed of all? What do they mean by their holy water, their extreme unction, their exorcisms, their consecration of churches and church-yards, and their absurd notion of transubstantiation, but to gain adoration to the priestly character, as if he was able by a few canting words to change the nature of things, bless dead earth and walls, and make a god out of a meal? Why so many monasteries and nunneries, so many religious orders of men and women, so many

fraternities, colleges, and societies of different kinds, but to engage great numbers of young people and potent families in their interest? Why so many antick garbs, so many rich vestments, so many gaudy shrines, so many decked images, used in their worship, and so much pompous devotion? Why organs and so much musick, so many singing-men, and singing-boys, but to attract the eyes and ears, and to amuse the understandings of the gaping herd, to make them forget their senses, and the plain natural religion of the gospel, and to engage men and ladies of pleasure in the interests of so agreeable a devotion.

How comes it to be a part of religion, not to confess our sins to God, but to the priest? It lets him into all the secrets of families, the power of imposing what severe penances he pleases upon superstitious penitents, and of commuting for those penances; acquaints him with all designs to the disadvantages of his order; gives him opportunities of debauching women himself, and procuring them for others; and holds them devoted to his will by the knowledge of their most important concerns. And lastly, what do they mean by the terrible engine of the Inquisition, and by their hellish doctrine of persecution for opinions; but to keep all men in awe of them, and to terrify those whom they cannot deceive? These are the favourite doctrines of popery! These the doctrines which they are concerned for! If you be rich or powerful, you may be as wicked as you please, and no body shall molest you; nay, the priests shall be ready to assist you, to pimp for you, and to pardon you. The same is true of the speculative opinions held by that church, that do not affect their power and pride: They suffer their several orders to differ about them, and do not trouble themselves what the people believe concerning them; nor are any of the people at all concerned in them. The absurd notions and ridiculous worship of the papists are only foolish things; but the power of popery is a terrible thing. If a man adore rotten bones, and use antick gestures towards them, he makes a fool of himself, but hurts not me; but if he would rob me, torture me, or burn me, for not playing the fool too, it is time to keep him at a distance, or to hold his hand. It is the power of popery, the cruel, the insatiable, the killing spirit of popery, that is to be dreaded. This, Gentlemen, is the power, this the terrible condition, that many of your Protestant instructors would bring you under, and which you are to guard against.

These wicked doctrines, these absurd opinions, were all abolished, all renounced, by the first reformers, but kept alive by the corrupt part of the clergy, and have been growing upon you ever since: They have been connived at by some, openly asserted by others, and I wish I could say, as openly discountenanced by the rest. It would fill a volume, instead of a paper, to enumerate all the clergymen, in the highest repute amongst their own order, who have abetted most, if not all of these monstrous opinions; and I have heard as yet of none of them who have been censured by any publick act of their body. I confess, that many of the corrupt amongst them have renounced the Pope's authority, as believing that they might find fairer quarter from a King whom they educated and hoped to govern, than from a foreign prelate, and his needy priests, who would plunder them, oppress them, and give away their revenues to his creatures, and to lazy monks and friars. They hoped too, that some favourable opportunities might happen to get away the regale from the crown; and we never had a prince whom they could entirely govern, or who would not be governed at all by them, but they have laid claim to it, and attempted it. But what stood always in their way, and made all their designs impracticable, was the power of Parliament, and the liberties of the people, who preserved the prerogative of the crown to preserve themselves: They therefore levelled all their batteries against publick liberty, and laboured to make the prince absolute; as finding it much easier to flatter, mislead, or bargain with one man (and often a weak one) than to deceive a whole people, and make them conspire against themselves: and if persuasion, bigotry, and fear, would not make him practicable to their designs, they knew that poison and the dagger were at hand.

But now two hundred years' experience has convinced them, that the people will not suffer the crown to part with the regale, nor would they themselves part with their liberty; and till they do so, there is no possibility of settling a pompous hierarchy, and gaining the domination which they aspire to: They therefore are reduced to accept barefaced popery, and throw themselves under the protection of the Holy Father: And that is the game which they are now playing. What else can they propose by a popish revolution, but to share in the power and tyranny that attend it? They have not sufficient stipends for the daily mischiefs which they do: They want greater revenues, and an ecclesiastical inquisition. Now, at whose expence, think you, must this accumulation of wealth which they thirst for be acquired? How must this Babel of authority which they pant after be raised? Not at the expence of the Pretender, by whose assistance they must gain them: No, Gentlemen; from your coffers these riches must be drained: Over you this tyranny must be exercised: The utter extinction of our liberties must constitute their grandeur: The single seizure of your lands and properties must support their domination: You must be the poor harassed slaves of a monstrous two-headed tyranny: be constantly and inhumanly crushed between the upper and the nether millstone of the regale and pontificate; and, in any dispute betwixt them, be given to Satan on one side, and to the executioner on both.

Many of you are in possession of impropriations and of abbey-lands, and are protected by the constitution in those possessions, which these reverend cheats would rob you of; and only want an arbitrary and a popish government to enable them to commit that robbery, to strip you to the skin, and to reduce the English laity to be once more humble cottagers and vassals to the monks, friars, and other ecclesiastical gluttons, to whom the whole riches of a great nation will be no more than sufficient wages for cheating and oppressing it. I bring you, Gentlemen, no false charge against the Jacobite clergy: Do they not claim your estates publickly from the press and the pulpit; and from the pulpit and the press charge you with sacrilege, and damn you for keeping them? Yes, Gentlemen, these reverend and self-denying teachers damn you for keeping your own legal possessions, and for eating your own bread. Now I would leave you to reason upon this conduct of theirs, to consider how nearly it affects you, whither it tends, and what sort of Protestants these doctors are. If the publick take nothing from them which they occupied since the Reformation, why should they destroy the government, but in hopes of destroying the Reformation, to get possession of popish lands, and popish power; which, while the Reformation and the government subsist, they can never possess?

That this, Gentlemen, is what they aim at, it is impossible to doubt. Lesley, long their favourite and director, who knew their inclinations, knew their views, and the best way to apply them and to gain them, in his *Letter to the Clergy* (as I think it was) which was to usher in the rebellion at the beginning of his Majesty's reign, promises them an independence upon the crown, and that they should choose their own bishops. It is dominion, it is power, which they court; it is themselves whom they adore: When have they ever considered you or your interests, when they thought they could make a bargain for themselves? When King James applied to the bishops, upon his fear of an invasion from your great deliverer, and desired them to propose the nation's grievances, what grievances did they represent but their own trifling complaints? They said nothing of standing armies, how much soever they complain of them now. Who are their favourites? Even papists and nonjurors, known rebels, or men of rebellious principles, the most ambitious and wicked amongst the clergy, the most debauched and stupid among the laity. What sermons have they preached, what books have they wrote, against popery, though their flocks be every day decreasing? What exhortations against popish principles, which are constantly growing upon us? Whom do they treat as their avowed enemies, but friends to the Revolution, the most steady friends to the Establishment which they have sworn to, the Protestant dissenters, and such of their own body as regard their oaths, and the principles of the Reformation? What have you gained by all the favours

lately shewn to them? Which of them have been obliged by these concessions? You have given them the first-fruits: You have in effect repealed the statute of mortmain; You have given them a shorter method to recover their tithes: You have increased their number and riches by building more churches: You have sat still, whilst they have been destroying the moduses through England, buying up your advowsons, extorting upon their tenants, and making those estates more precarious, which were always before esteemed as certain interests as any in Great-Britain: Has all this obliged them? Has it taught them moderation? On the contrary, it increases their demands upon you. Be assured, that they will never be satisfied, never think that they have enough, whilst you have a penny left; and when they have got all your lands, they must ride and enslave your persons.

Will you bear, Gentlemen, such constant and impudent insults? Will you still be governed by such abandoned deceivers? Are you men, free-men, rational men; and will you beat this wild and priestly war against human nature, against freedom, and against reason? Will you indeed believe them, when they pretend any regard to you and your interest? And is it upon your score that they practise perjury and rebellion themselves, and promote it in others?

T

I am, &c.

No. 131. SATURDAY, June 1, 1723.

Of Reverence true and false. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-216]

SIR,

The word *reverence* has had the fate of many, indeed of almost all, good words, and done much mischief: It signifies a solemn regard paid the persons of men of gravity, of religion, and of authority. By these qualifications men are entitled to it. But when the pride and craft of men who have no real gravity, no real religion, or a foolish one, and only a pretended or an absurd authority, would annex reverence only to grave or grotesque names, it becomes as ridiculous to men of good sense, as it seems awful to such as have none. Reverence belongs only to reverend qualities and reverend actions. As to names and habits, the more grave they are, the more ludicrous they become, when worn by persons who live loosely, and act ludicrously.

Garments signify nothing themselves. They grow first solemn, by being worn by men of character and solemnity: But the most solemn garment becomes contemptible and diverting upon the back of a droll, a buffoon, or upon a cheat or mountebank of any kind. The gravest man alive drest up in the cap and coat of a harlequin, would look like a harlequin; and the gravest speech that he could make, would be laughed at: Yet a coat of many colours was a coat of value in the East, in Jacob's time, and his favourite son Joseph wore one. Nor do our own ladies lose any respect by wearing all the colours of the peacock and the rainbow. On the other side, the gravest clothes put upon burlesque animals, will look burlesque. A monkey in a deep coat, and a broad beaver, would be still more a monkey, and his grimace would be still more diverting grimace; and a hog in a pair of jack-boots, and a coat of mail, would make no formidable figure, notwithstanding his warlike equipment.

These two last instances of the monkey and the hog may be farther improved, to shew the spirit of false reverence. A monkey in a red coat, and a hog in armour, would give no offence to a soldier, because his character consists in actions which these creatures cannot perform nor mimic; and consequently these animals, though accoutered like a soldier, cannot ridicule a soldier. But if you put a popish mitre, and the rest of that sort of gear, upon a hog, the useless and stupid solemnity of the animal gives you instantly the idea of a popish bishop, and if you are not a papist, will divert you: Or, if you dress up a baboon in the fantastical habit of a Romish priest, that animal which can chatter much and unintelligibly, and can really do most of the tricks which the priest himself can do, does genuinely represent the original; and therefore creates true mirth, and fully shews, that there cannot be much reverence in that which a baboon can perform as well, for aught I know better, as he is naturally a creature of grimace and humour. And the said bishop and priest could not with any temper bear the sight, their rage and impatience would be still farther proofs, that the monkey did them justice, that the trial was successful, and the mirth occasioned by it just. Such sport would indeed be tragical in popish countries; which is but another confirmation that false reverence cannot bear ridicule, and that the true is not affected by it.

Many of the ancient Greek philosophers took great pride, and found mighty reverence, in the length and gravity of their beards. Now an old goat, who had as much gravity and beard as any of them, had he been placed in any of their chairs, would, doubtless, have provoked the philosopher, and diverted the assembly. Pomp and beard were therefore ridiculous, since they could be ridiculed: But nothing that constitutes a philosopher, neither genius, nor virtue, nor useful learning, nor any thing that is good for something, can be ridiculed, at least justly

ridiculed. The odd dance of judges and bishops in *The Rehearsal*, does neither ridicule bishops nor judges, because they never practice such odd dances: But if these grave men met and gambolled together as they do there, the ridicule would be strong upon them.

It is a jest to expect from all men great reverence to that which every man may do, whether it consist in reading, or repeating, or wearing, or acting. Where is the difficulty or merit of saying certain words, or of making bows, or of spreading the arms, or crossing them, or of wearing a long coat, or a short cravat? It is impudence and imposture to demand singular and vast respect to small and common things. Superior virtue and capacity, publick actions and services done to mankind; a generous and benevolent heart, and greatness of mind, are the true objects and sources of reverence. But to claim reverence to prating, to cuts, and colours, and postures, is stupid, ridiculous and saucy. The *a-b-c* of a tinker is as good as a Pope's *a-b-c*; and it is open cheating and conjuring to pretend, that the same words have not the same force out of the mouth of a cobbler as out of a cardinal's mouth. When any one of these mighty claimers (I had almost said clamourers) of reverence from their visionary empire of words and tricks, can by the magick of their art remove a mountain or a mole-hill, or raise a house, or a dead insect, or kill a heretick, or a grasshopper by a charm, I am ready to bow down before them: But while I see any of them living like other men, or worse, and doing nothing but what so many chimney-sweepers (who can read) may do as well; I can consider such who do so only as solemn liars, and seducers; and as much worse than fortune-tellers, as they cheat people out of much more money, and fill their minds with worse terrors.

The Roman augurs made no such base use of their power, and of their ghostly trade, which was instituted, at least practised, for the ends of good policy; and, as far as I can find, they had no revenues: I would therefore have respected them, as they were great officers of the Roman state. But had an augur, as an augur, demanded reverence of me for his long staff, his tricks, and divinations, I should have done what Cato the elder wondered they themselves did not do as often as they met, laughed in his face, as I would in the face of any man who pretended to be my superior and director, because his coat was longer than mine, or of a different colour; or because he uttered words which I could utter as well, or played pranks which a posture-master could play better.

I will reverence a man for the good which he does, or is inclined to do; and for no other reason ought I. But if under the pretence of doing me good, which I neither see nor feel, he pick my pocket, and do me sensible harm, or would do it; how can I help hating and despising him? If he turn religion into selfishness, and a plain trade, or by it destroy morality; if he set himself up in God's stead, and by pretending boldly to his power, abuse his holy name, and oppress his creatures; if he exclaim against covetousness, and be governed by it; and practice every vice which he condemns; if he preach against the world, and yet have never enough of it; and against the flesh, and yet be visibly governed by all its worst passions and appetites; if he take immense wages for promoting the welfare of society, and yet disturb, impoverish, and enslave it; how can I reverence him, if I would? And is he not lost to all modesty if he desire it?

If men would preserve themselves from superstition, and servitude, and folly, they must beware of reverencing names and accidents. A wise man does not reverence rulers for their insignia and great titles: As there is no use of rulers, but to do service to mankind, he reverences them for that service done: If they do none, he despises them: If they do mischief, he hates them. What are men revered for, but for the good talents which they possess, or for the useful offices which they bear. Now if a man have never a good quality, or having such, abuse them; or if he do no good with the office which he bears, but harm (which he must do, if he do no good), every omission by which many are hurt, being a crime against many; how am I to reverence him, for taking away by his conduct the only cause of reverence? If he give me cause to hate him, am I for all that to love him? Either there is no

such passion as hatred, which none but a madman will say, or it must be raised by the causes, that raise it; and what are those causes, but mischief done, when good is due, and expected; or the disappointment of a great good; which is a great mischief.

But when people are taught to reverence butchers, robbers, and tyrants, under the reverend name of rulers, to adore the names and persons of men, though their actions be the actions of devils: Then here is a confirmed and accomplished servitude, the servitude of the body, secured by the servitude of the mind, oppression fortified by delusion. This is the height of human slavery. By this, the Turk and the Pope reign. They hold their horrid and sanguinary authority by false reverence, as much as by the sword. The Sultan is of the family of Ottoman, and the Pope St. Peter's successor; they are therefore revered, while they destroy human race. The Christians hate the Turk, and call him a tyrant: Protestants dread the Pope, and call him an impostor. Yet I could name Christians who have tyrants of their own, as bad as the Sultan; I could name Protestants who have had impostors of their own as cruel as the Pope, had their power been as great, and their hands as loose. Men see the follies and slavery of others; but their own nonsense is all sacred, their own popes and sultans are all of heavenly descent, and their authority just and inviolable. But truth and falsehood, wisdom and folly, do not vary with the conceptions and prepossessions of men. Affliction and misery, oppression and imposture, are as bad in Christendom as in Turkey, in Holland as in Rome. Protestant rulers have no more right than the Sultan to oppress Protestants; and the Pope has as good a title as a Protestant parson to deceive Protestants. God forbid that all religions should be alike; but all who make the same ill use of every religion, are certainly alike; as are all governors, Turkish, popish, or Protestant, who make the same ill use of power.

If therefore all governors whatsoever, of what conduct soever, [are] to be revered, why not the Turk and old Muly of Morocco, who are both great governors, and have as much a divine authority to be tyrants as any governor of any name or religion ever had? And if all clergy whatsoever [are] to be revered, why not the Druids, and the priests of Baal, and the priests of Mecca and of Rome? But if only the good of both sorts [are] to be revered, why have we been told so much of the mighty respect due in the lump to priests and rulers? Is there any other way in common sense to gain respect, but to deserve it? Could the Romans reverence their governor Nero for robbing them of their lives and estates, for burning the city, and for wantonly making himself sport with human miseries: could the first Christians reverence him for dressing them up in the skins of wild beasts, and setting on other wild beasts to devour them: or for larding them all over with pitch and tallow, and lighting them up like lamps to illuminate the city?

If we reverence men for their power alone, why do we not reverence the Devil, who has so much more power than men? But if reverence be due only to virtuous qualities and useful actions, it is as ridiculous and superstitious to adore great mischievous men, or unholy men with holy names, as it is to worship a false god, or Satan in the stead of God. Are we to be told, that though we [are] to worship no god but the good and true God, yet we are to pay reverence, which is human worship, to wicked men, provided they be great men, and to honour the false servants of the true God, whom they dishonour? Or, that any sort of men can be his servants or deputies in any sense, but a good and sanctified sense? And if they be not, are we for the sake of God, to reverence those who belie him, and are our enemies? Or, am I to reverence the men, though I detest their actions and qualities which constitute the characters of men? Can I love or hate men, but for what they are, and for what they do? We ought to reverence that which is good, and the men that are good: Are we therefore to reverence wickedness and folly, and those who commit them? Or, because they have good names and offices, which are to be honoured, are they to be honoured for abusing those good things, and for turning good into evil?

We must deserve reverence before we claim it. If a man occupy an honourable office, civil or sacred, and act ridiculously or knavishly in it, do I dishonour that office by contemning or exposing the man who dishonours it? Or ought I not to scorn him, as much as I reverence his office, which he does all he can to bring into scorn? I have all possible esteem for quality; but if a man of quality act like an ape, or a clown, or a pick-pocket, or a profligate, I shall heartily hate or despise his lordship, notwithstanding my great reverence for lords. I honour episcopacy; but if a bishop be an hypocrite, a time-server, a traitor, a stock-jobber, or an hunter after power, I shall take leave to scorn the prelate, for all my regard for prelacy.

It is not a name, however awful, nor an office, however important, that ought to bring, or can bring, reverence to the man who possesses them, if he act below them, or unworthily of them. Folly and villainy ought to have no asylum; nor can titles sanctify crimes, however they may sometimes protect criminals. A right honourable or a right reverend rogue, is the most dangerous rogue, and consequently the most detestable.

*Omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se
Crimen habet, quanto major qui peccat habetur.*

Juvenal

G

I am, &c.

[IV-225]

SIR,

We have had a world of talk both in our pulpits and our addresses, about hereditary right, and I think that no one has yet fully explained what it means; I will therefore try whether I can unfold or cut asunder the Gordian knot. It is a divine, unalterable, indefeasible right to sovereignty, dictated or modified by the positive laws, and human constitutions or national governments. In France, Turkey, and the large eastern monarchies, it descends wholly upon the males. In the kingdom, or rather queendom of Achem, it falls only upon females. In Russia formerly it descended upon all the males jointly, and it would not operate upon the females at all. In Poland the nobility have an human right to confer part of this divine right, but not all of it, upon whom they please; and in old Rome the soldiery often made bold to confer it: But in England and other countries, all of it falls upon the male who chances to be born first; and so on to the next, according to priority of birth; and for want of males to the eldest female, contrary to other inheritances, which descend upon females equally. However, though this same right be absolute and unalterable, yet it is often limited and circumscribed by human laws, which ought not to be transgressed, yet may be transgressed with impunity, unless it interfere with another divine right, which is the divine right of the high clergy. In all other cases, it is boundless and unconditioned, though given and accepted upon conditions.

There is one circumstance particularly remarkable in the exercise of this divine right; namely, that it may make as bold as it thinks fit with other divine right (except as before excepted), of which we have a late and very pregnant instance, approved by very good churchmen, and all our able divines, who thanked God, publickly for thus exercising it; that is, when the Queen made that honourable peace which executed itself. Then the unalterable divine right of the dauphin to the kingdom of Spain was given to his younger son, and the indefeasible divine right of the present King of Spain, to the monarchy of France, was assigned over to a younger branch of the house of Bourbon; and sometime before, the divine right of the last Emperor to the Spanish dominions, was given to the present Emperor. Nay, it seems that this alienable, unalienable, indivisible right, is divisible too. The divine right to Sardinia, is given to the Duke of Savoy; that of Naples, Sicily, and Flanders, to the Emperor; and that of Gibraltar and Port Mahon to us, as long as we can keep it; which I hope we are now in a fair way to do. All the rest of this divine right, besides what is thus disposed of, remains where it was before, and where it should be.

But there are certain human ingredients, experiments, and operations, which are necessary to attain to this divine right. In most countries, and particularly in our own, the priests must have a finger in modelling the same; nor will it come down from above, and settle here below upon any prince whatsoever, unless they say certain words over the married couple, which they alone have the right to say: But in Turkey, India; and other Mahometan and pagan countries (*heu Pudor!*), this same divine right is to be got without the benefit of their clergy, and will make its conveyance through the channel of a strumpet; yet in most nations all is not well, unless the clergy say grace over it; but then it is of no consequence who it is that gets the divine babe, so he be but born in wedlock; and in a late instance it appeared no ways necessary whether he were born in wedlock or not, or of whom he was born, so he were but born at all. Now, sir, you must know, that this is a mystery, and like some other mysteries, wholly inexplicable, yet may be explained by the Jacobite clergy; but then you are not to understand the explication, but are to take their words for it; and we all

know that they are men of probity, and will not deceive you. From this divine right all other rights are derived, except their own, which comes down from above too; and if the possessors of these two divine rights can agree together, all is as it should be; otherwise, you are to take notice, that God is to be obeyed before man, and the regale is to bow down, like the sheaves in Joseph's dream, before the pontificate.

But this is not all: There are some circumstances very particular and whimsical in this divine right. Though, as has been said, it may be conveyed away, yet nothing passes by the conveyance in many cases: Part of it may be granted and conceded to its subjects, and yet they have no right to keep what is so given, always excepting the high clergy, who may take it without being given. I had almost forgot another conveyance of this right, which is conquest, or, in other words, the divine right of plunder, rapine, massacre: But the right is never the worse for the wickedness of men; for howsoever they get possession of sovereign power, the right is that moment annexed to the possession, unless in special cases, still preserving a right to the Jacobite clergy, to give a right to whomsoever they else please. This same right is of so odd and bizarre a nature, that it receives no addition or diminution from the consent of men, or the want of that consent. It is lawful to swear to it, when there is an interest in doing so; yet it is no ways necessary to believe what you swear, or to keep your oath. It is not to be resisted; yet in particular cases it may be opposed. It is limited, and yet unlimitable. You may make laws to bind it, yet it is treason and damnation to defend those laws, unless you have the *verbum sacerdotis* on your side.

What contradictions, absurdities, and wickedness, are men capable of! We have a set of abandoned wretches amongst ourselves, who seem to have a design to destroy [the] human race, as they would human reason! Every doctrine, every opinion, which they advance, is levelled against the happiness of all mankind. Nothing conduces to virtue, to true religion, to the present or future interests of men, but is represented as destructive to piety. We are to be the vassals of tyrants, the dupes of impostors, the zanies of mountebanks, or else are in a state of damnation. Men, for whose sakes government was instituted, have no right to be protected by government. Religion which was given by Almighty God to make men virtuous here, and happy hereafter; has been made use of to destroy their happiness both here, and hereafter. Scarce any thing is discovered to be true in nature and philosophy, but is proved to be false in orthodoxy: What is found to be beneficial to mankind in their present state is represented hurtful to their future; nay, some are risen up amongst us, who are such implacable enemies to their species, that they make it sin to take proper precautions against the danger of the small-pox, even when they are advised by the most able physicians, and when these physicians are most disinterested.

What can be more cruel, wicked and detrimental to human society, or greater blasphemy against the good God; than to make government, which was designed by him to render men numerous, industrious, and useful to one another, designed to improve arts, sciences, learning, virtue, magnanimity and true religion, an unnatural engine to destroy the greatest part of the world? to make the rest poor, ignorant, superstitious and wicked; to subject them like cattle, to be the property of their oppressors; to be the tame slaves of haughty and domineering masters, and the low homagers of gloomy pedants; to work for, to fight for, and to adore those who are neither better nor wiser than themselves; and to be wretched by millions, to make one or a few proud and insolent? And yet we are told, that this is the condition which God has placed us in, and that it is damnation to strive to make it better.

All these mischiefs, and many more, are the inseparable consequences of an indefeasible hereditary right in any man, or family whatsoever; if it can never be alienated or forfeited: For if this be true, then the property of all mankind may be taken away, their religion overturned, and their persons butchered by thousands, and no remedy attempted: They must not mutter and complain; for complaints are sedition, and tend to rebellion: They must not

stand upon their defence, for that is resisting the Lord's anointed: They must not revile the ministers and instruments of his power; for woe be to the man who speaketh ill of him whom the king honoureth. And all this has been told us by those who have never shewn any regard to authority, either human or divine, when it interfered with their own interests. What shall I say; what words use to express this monstrous wickedness, this utter absence of all virtue, religion, or tenderness to the human species: What colours can paint it, what pen can describe it!

Certainly, if government was designed by God for the good, happiness, and protection of men, men have a right to be protected by government; and every man must have a right to defend what no man has a right to take away. There is not now a government subsisting in the world, but took its rise from the institution of men; and we know from history when, and how it was instituted: It was either owing to the express or tacit consent of the people, or of the soldiers, who first erected it; it could have no more power than what they gave it; and what persons soever were invested with that power, must have accepted it upon the conditions upon which it was given; and when they renounced those conditions, they renounced their government. In some countries it was hereditary; in others elective; in some discretionary; in others limited: But in all, the government must have derived their authority from the consent of men, and could exercise it no farther than that consent gave them leave. Where positive conditions were annexed to their power, they were certainly bound by those conditions; and one condition must be annexed to all governments, even the most absolute, that they act for the good of the people; for whose sake alone there is any government in the world. In this regard there can be no difference between hereditary and elective monarchies; for the heir cannot inherit more than his ancestor enjoyed, or had a right to enjoy, any more than a successor can succeed to it.

Then the wise question will arise, what if any man, who has no natural right, nor any right over his fellow creatures, accept great powers, immense honours and revenues, and other personal advantages to himself and his posterity, upon conditions either express, as in all limited constitutions, or implied, as in all constitutions whatsoever; and yet either by deliberate declarations, or deliberate actions, publickly proclaim, that he will no longer be bound by these conditions, that he will no longer abide by his legal title, but will assume another that was never given him, and to which he can have no right at all; that he will govern his people by despotick authority; that instead of protecting them, he will destroy them; and he will overturn their religion to introduce one of his own; and instead of being a terror to evil works, will be a terror to good: I ask, in such a case, whether his subjects will be bound by the conditions, which he has renounced? Do the obligations subsist on their part, when he has destroyed them on his? And are they not at liberty to save themselves, and to look out for protection elsewhere, when it is denied where they have a right to expect and demand it, and to get it as they can, though at the expence of him and his family, when no other method or recourse is left?

And now, O ye gloomy impostors! O ye merciless advocates for superstition and tyranny! Produce all your texts, all your knotty distinctions! Here exert all your quaint eloquence, your quiddities, your *aliquo modo sit, aliquo modo non*; appear in solemn dump, with your reverential robes, and your horizontal hats, with whole legions of phantoms and chimeras, and cart-loads of theology, broken oaths, and seditious harangues, and try whether you can maintain the battle, and defend the field against one single adversary, who undertakes to put all your numerous and fairy battalions to flight.

Let us hear what you can say for your abdicated idol. Distinguish, if you can, his case from that which I have represented: Shew that Almighty God gave him a divine right to play the Devil; or, if he had no such right, that his subjects had none to hinder him: Prove that kings are not instituted for the good of the people, but for their own and the clergy's pride and

luxury: But if they be instituted for the good of the people, then shew that they are left at liberty to act for their destruction, and that their subjects must submit to inevitable ruin, yet kiss the iron rod whenever his Majesty pleases: Shew that it was possible for the kingdom to trust themselves again to the faith and oaths of a popish prince, who, during his whole reign, did nothing else but break his faith and his oaths, and whose religion obliged him to do so; or that it was possible for them to place his son upon the throne which he had abdicated (if they had believed him to be his son), when he was in possession of the most implacable enemy of their country, or of Europe, or of the Protestant religion; and that it would not have been direct madness to have sent for him afterwards from France or Rome, enraged by his expulsion, educated, animated, and armed with French and popish principles; and shew too, that the poor oppressed people had any recourse, but to throw themselves under the protection of their great deliverer, who was next heir to their crown.

If you cannot do this, there is nothing left for you to do, but to shew, that the late King James did not violate and break the fundamental laws and statutes of this realm, which were the original contract between him and his people; and that he did not make their allegiance to him incompatible with their own safety, for the preservation of which he was entitled to their allegiance: Shew that he did not claim and exercise a power to dispense with their laws; that he did not levy the customs without the authority of Parliament; or that he called Parliaments according to the constitution which he had sworn to; and that when he intended to call one, he did not resolve to pack it, and closeted many of the gentlemen of England, and with promises and menaces endeavoured to make them practicable to his designs: Shew that he did not disarm Protestants, and arm papists; set up exorbitant and unlawful courts; cause excessive bail to be required, excessive fines to be imposed, and excessive punishments to be inflicted; that he did not prosecute members in the King's-Bench for what they did in Parliament; and discharge others committed by Parliament; that he did not grant fines and forfeitures of persons to be tried, before their conviction; that he did not erect an ecclesiastical commission directly against an act of Parliament, and suspended, by virtue of it, clergymen, for not reading in their churches a proclamation, which he issued by his own authority, to give liberty of conscience to papists and Protestant dissenters: Shew that he did not imprison and try seven bishops for their humble petition against it, which petition they were empowered by law to make; that he did not combine with France and Rome to overthrow the Established Church, which he was bound to defend, and to introduce another in the room of it, which was worse than none; that, in order to it, he brought not professed papists into offices, both civil and military; sent not, nor received ambassadors to and from Rome, who were guilty of high treason by the laws of the land, and brought not from thence swarms of locusts, to devour and pollute every thing that it produced; turned not out the masters and fellows of Magdalen-College against law, for not doing what they were sworn not to do, nor substituted in their room, those who were not qualified by law to be there: And to make good all these breaches upon our liberties, that he did not raise a popish army in Ireland, and another in England, which had many papists in it, without authority of Parliament.

Shew, if you can, that he ever discovered the least inclination to reform these abuses; but on the contrary, when he could continue them no longer, that he did not desert his people: That he dared to trust himself to a free Parliament, after he had called it, and dissolved it not again, and did not foolishly throw his great seal into the Thames, that no other might be called; and when he resolved to leave his people, that he would suffer his pretended son to remain amongst us. Shew that you yourselves did not help to expel him; that you have not taken oaths, repeated oaths to this government, and abjurations of every other; and that you have adhered to either one or the other. When you have done this, I will allow you to be honest men, good Englishmen, and true Protestants.

[IV-236]

SIR,

I know well, that any one must run a great deal of hazard, who shall advance any opinions against what is vulgarly called charity, though it be ever so much mistaken or miscalled, as for the most part it is, and ever has been. The giving loose money in the streets to canting and lazy beggars, has obtained the name of charity, though it is generally a mischievous liberality to encourage present idleness, or to reward past extravagancy, and is forbid by severe laws. The founding of monasteries, nunneries, and other miscalled religious houses, has passed too upon the world in late ages for charity, though they have ever proved seminaries of superstition and of papal tyranny, discouragements of matrimony, the sources of depopulation, and have made multitudes of people useless to the world and themselves. The giving lands and revenues to saucy, aspiring, and lazy ecclesiasticks, has been reputed a meritorious action; yet such actions have ever destroyed religion, increased the pride and dominion of the clergy, and depressed, impoverished, and enslaved the laity, for whose sakes alone there ought to be any ecclesiasticks at all. The founding and endowing of universities, colleges, and free-schools, carries an appearance of promoting sciences, learning, and true religion; yet they have been made use of to promote the kingdom of Antichrist, to debauch the principles of the nobility and gentry; to deprave their understandings; advance learned ignorance; load their heads with airy chimeras and fairy distinctions; fill states with desperate beggars and divines of fortune, who must force trade for a subsistence, and become the cudgels and tools of power or factions. A learned author justly compares these establishments to the Trojan horse, which carried hosts of armed men within its bowels, to send them out afterwards to destroy kingdoms.

But there is another new-fangled charity risen up amongst us, called *charity-schools*, which, I think, threatens the publick more than all which I have mentioned. I would not be understood to condemn every thing of that nature; for, under a proper regulation, something like it may be commendable: But, as they are now employed and managed, I see no good that can accrue to the publick from them, but apprehend a great deal of mischief. These establishments were first begun and encouraged by pious men, many of them dissenters; and then our high clergy every where exclaimed against them as dangerous innovations, and attempts to subvert the Church, and the national religion. But now they have got them under their own management, and they really prove what they foretold they would prove, they continually make harangues and panegyrical elogiums upon them, and upon the persons who promote them. It is become part of their duty (and much better executed than all the rest), to prate people out of their money; to decoy superstitious and factious men out of their shops and their business, and old doting women out of their infirmaries, to hear too often seditious harangues upon the power of the clergy, and of the reverence due to them, and upon the merit of nursing up beggars to be the blind tools of ambitious pedants; and lectures and instructions are there given them, inconsistent with our present establishment of church and state; and we have scarce a news-paper but gives notice of sermons to be preached upon this occasion.

It is certain that there was almost every where a general detestation of popery, and popish principles, and a noble spirit for liberty, at or just before the Revolution; and the clergy seemed then as zealous as the foremost. But when the corrupt part of them found themselves freed from the dangers which they complained of, and could not find their separate and sole advantage in the Revolution, they have been continually attacking and undermining it; and

since they saw that it was impossible to persuade those who were witnesses and sufferers under the oppressions of the former governments, wantonly, and with their eyes open, to throw away their deliverance, they went a surer and more artful way to work, though more tedious and dilatory; and therefore have, by insensible degrees, corrupted all the youth whose education has been trusted to them, and who could be corrupted; so that at the end of near forty years, the Revolution is worse established than when it began. New generations are risen up, which knew nothing of the sufferings of their fathers, and are taught to believe there were never any such. The dread of popery is almost lost amongst us; the vilest tenets of it are openly asserted and maintained; men are taught to play with oaths; and it is become fashionable to revile authority more for its commendable actions, than for its excesses. The principles of our nobility and gentry are debauched in our universities, and those of our common people in our charity-schools, who are taught, as soon as they can speak, to blabber out *High Church* and *Ormond*; and so are bred up to be traitors, before they know what treason signifies.

This has been long seen, and as long complained of; yet no remedy has been applied, though often promised. Those whose duty and business it ought to have been, have had their time and thoughts so wholly engaged in modelling factions, and enriching themselves, that this great evil has been suffered to go on, and still goes on; it has been continually increasing, and yet increases; but I hope, at last, that those in authority will take the alarm, will think their own safety, and the safety of his Majesty and his people, are highly concerned to remove a mischief which is levelled at all their and our happiness; and that they will not, like their predecessors, disoblige all their friends to gratify their enemies, whom yet they cannot gratify. If this be not done, any one, without much skill in politicks, may safely affirm, that our present establishment cannot long subsist. A free government must subsist upon the affections of the people; and if those affections be perpetually debauched; if the education of youth be altogether inconsistent with the nature of it; and if it must depend only upon converts, pensions, or armies, its duration cannot be long, without a constant succession of miracles: Armies will soon find their own strength, and will play their own game: Foreign armies will neither be thought on nor borne; and it is to be feared, that our domestick ones, upon every disgust, or prospect of advantage, may fall into the intrigues and resentments of their countrymen, when they grow to be general, and consequently will be of least use, when most wanted. We cannot sure, so soon forget what the Parliament army did formerly, and King James's lately, and what was expected from our own in the late conspiracy; and without such expectations, it had been direct madness to have formed or engaged in such an attempt, and the criminals had been more properly sent to Bedlam than to Tyburn, though they deserved both.

But to apply myself more directly to the charity-schools, I shall endeavour to show, that under the false pretence and affectation of charity, they destroy real charity, take away the usual support and provision from the children of lesser tradesmen, and often from those of decayed and unfortunate merchants and gentlemen, and pervert the benevolence, which would be otherwise bestowed upon helpless widows, and poor housekeepers, who cannot by reason of their poverty, maintain their families.

Every country can maintain but a certain number of shop-keepers, or retailers of commodities, which are raised or manufactured by others; and the fewer they are, the better; because they add nothing to the publick wealth; but only disperse and accommodate it to the convenience of artificers, manufacturers and husbandmen, or such who live upon their estates and professions; and serve the publick only by directing and governing the rest; but as there must be many retailers of other men's industry, and the greatest part of them will be but just able to support themselves, and with great pains, frugality, and difficulty, breed up their families, and be able to spare small sums out of their little substance to teach their children to

write and cast account, and to put them out apprentices to those of their own degree; so those employments ought to fall to the share of such only; but now are mostly anticipated, and engrossed by the managers of the charity-schools; who, out of other people's pockets, give greater sums than the other can afford, only to take the lowest dregs of the people from the plough and labour, to make them tradesmen, and by consequence drive the children of tradesmen to the plough to beg, to rob, or to starve.

The same may be said of servants, who are generally the children of the lesser shop-keepers, though sometimes of decayed merchants and gentlemen, who have given them an education above the lower rank of people, which has qualified them to earn a comfortable subsistence this way, without much labour, to which they have never been used. Now, I have often heard, that one advantage proposed by these charity-schools, is to breed up children to reading and writing, and a sober behaviour; that they may be qualified to be servants: A sort of idle and rioting vermin, by which the kingdom is already almost devoured, who are become every where a publick nuisance, and multitudes of them daily, for want of employment, betake themselves to the highway and house-breaking, others to robbing and sharpening, or to the stews; and must do so, if we study new methods to increase their numbers.

I have mentioned another mischief which has flowed from this pretended charity; for it has, in effect, destroyed all other charities, which were before given to the aged, sick and impotent. I am told that there is more collected at the church-doors in a day, to make these poor boys and girls appear in caps and livery-coats, than for all other poor in a year; and there is reason to presume, that less still is given to private charities, where the givers are almost the only witnesses of their own actions: So that this benevolence is a commutation or composition for what was formerly given to widows, orphans, and to broken and unfortunate house-keepers. And how should it be otherwise, when the clergymen in highest repute, stroll about from church to church, nay print publick advertisements of charity sermons to be preached, recommending the merit of this sort of liberality, the service which it does to God and the Church; and but faintly, or perhaps not at all, exhorting to any other: insomuch, that the collections made every winter, by virtue of the King's Letter, for the many miserable in this great town, visibly decrease, though these collections be made from house to house, though the names of the givers, and sums given, be entered down, and though all ministers be directed by his Majesty and the Bishop of London, in their sermons, to press this charity upon their congregations; which is notwithstanding seldom done, unless in a faint manner, perhaps at the end of a sermon; whereas, on the other occasion, the ears of the auditors are deafened with the cry of the preacher, and their passions are all inflamed to a profuse liberality; and those who do not give, and give largely too, must incur reproach and contumely.

Oh! but say some pious, and many more impious and hypocritical people, what would you hinder poor boys and girls from being well clothed, from serving God, and being bred scholars? I answer, that there are few instances in which the publick has suffered more, than in breeding up beggars to be what are called scholars, from the grave pedant and the solemn doctor, down to the humble writer and caster of accounts; to attain which characters, does not require the pains and acuteness that are necessary to make a good cobbler: yet they immediately fancy themselves to be another rank of mankind, think that they are to be maintained in idleness, and out of the substance of others, for their fancied accomplishments; are above day-labour, and by an idle education, require a listlessness to it; and when they cannot find the sort of subsistence which they aspire to, are always perplexing the world, and disturbing other people. So that no education ought to be more discountenanced by a state, than putting chimeras and airy notions into the heads of those who ought to have pickaxes in their hands; than teaching people to read, write, and cast account, who, if they were employed as they ought to be, can have no occasion to make use of these acquirements,

unless it be now and then to read the Bible, which they seldom or never do: Besides, they are told by their spiritual guides, that they must not understand it.

What benefit can accrue to the publick by taking the dregs of the people out of the kennels, and throwing their betters into them? By lessening the numbers of day-labourers, by whose industry alone, nations are supported, and the publick wealth increased? By multiplying the number of such who add nothing to it, but must live out of the property of the rest? By taking boys and girls from the low and necessary employments of life, making them impatient of the condition which they were born to, and in which they would have thought themselves happy, to be seamstresses, footmen, and servant maids, and to teach them to read ballads? How much more useful a charity would it be, to give the same sums to their parents to help them to raise their families, and breed up their children to spinning or hard-labour; to help them to maintain themselves, and to depend for the future upon their own hands for subsistence? Whereas, this sort of charity is of no use, benefit, or ease to their parents, who must find them meat, drink, washing, and some clothes, during the whole time which they spend at school, and lose, at the same time, the little that they can otherwise earn, or what they would earn themselves, whilst they employed their children in going on errands, and doing little offices, which they can do as well: And all this for the pleasure of seeing them a little better clothed, hearing them sing psalms, and repeating by rote a catechism made for that purpose.

The pretence that this sort of education will render them more useful members of society, and will make them more virtuous and religious, is a mere chimera. How many are hanged at Tyburn that can write and read; or rather how few that cannot? And generally they all die for high church, and for the right line! Who are greater rogues than scholars, as they are called; And what set of people have supplied the town with more whores than our spiritual fathers, who all have the practice of piety by them? Nothing keeps the herd of mankind so honest, as breeding them up to industry, and keeping them always employed in hard-labour, and letting them have no time or inducements from necessity to rob or cheat, or superfluities to debauch with. Who are the persons who have the conduct, and are at the head of these charity-schools? Are they men of the most exemplary piety and morals? No, I am told quite the contrary: They are, for the most part, staunch Jacobites, or, in other words, furious high-church-men; often men of debauched lives and principles; and the masters of these schools are generally enemies to the establishment. And what use do they make of their power? Why! they supply the children with what they want out of their own shops; get credit and interest amongst their neighbours, for their charitable disposition; make use of that credit to promote disaffection to the government; engage the parents and friends of the children in the interest of a popish Pretender, and breed up the children themselves to fight his battles in due time.

I have been very much diverted to see, now and then, one of these poor creatures skip over a kennel as nimble as a greyhound, to get to the other side of the way, that it might be ready to make a low bow to a parson as he passed by; which order of men they are taught almost to adore; and I have been often told (though I do not affirm, and can scarce believe it to be true), that their duty to the clergy is inserted in a catechism that is or has been taught them; but whether such a catechism be committed to print or writing, or not, it is certain that their duty to God is not half so much, I will not say, inculcated into them, but observed by them, as the reverence and respect which they are made to believe is due to these holy men. And what use will be made of this blind adoration to such persons and their power, we may easily judge by what use ever has been made of it; which I think is well worth the time and thoughts of publick authority, as of all men who wish well to their King, their country, and themselves, seriously to reflect upon, and to provide against, before it be too late, and the mischief be accomplished.

T

What small and foolish Causes often misguide and animate the Multitude. [Gordon] ↪

[IV-247]

SIR,

It is surprizing what minute and contemptible causes create discontents, disorders, violence, and revolutions amongst men; what a small spring can actuate a mighty and many-headed multitude; and what mighty numbers one man is capable of drawing into his disgusts and designs. It is the weakness of the many; when they have taken a fancy to a man, or to the name of a man, they take a fancy even to his failings, adopt his interest right or wrong, and resent every mark of disfavour shewn him, however just and necessary it be. Nor are the resentments and fondness the less violent for being ill-grounded. If a man make them drunk once or twice a year, this injury is a kindness which they never forget; and he is sure of their hearts and their hands for having so generously robbed them of their time, their innocence, and their senses. They are grateful for the mischief done them; and in return, are ready to do any for him. He who restrains them from drunkenness, or even punishes them for it, is a greater and a real benefactor; but such a benefactor as they will never forgive, and he is sure to lose their good will, probably to purchase their hatred.

This shews how much their senses are stronger, than their understandings. They are governed not by judgment, but by sensations; and, one guinea in drink obliges them more than two in clothes; or in any other dry way. Liquor warms their hearts, and fills them with the man who is the author of so much joy. So that to instruct them, feed them, and employ them, are not such sure ways to win them, as to mislead and inflame them, and to waste their time. For this reason, the sober and the sensible clergyman is never so popular, as the loud, the factious, and the hot-headed. Rational and sober instruction is a cold thing, and goes no farther than the understanding: But noise and raving awaken and intoxicate the animal spirits, and set the blood on fire, and have all the effects of wine.

So that in raising parties and factions, inflaming goes a thousand times farther than reasoning and teaching. A foolish speech, supported with vehemence and brandy, will conquer the best sense, and the best cause in the world, without anger or liquor. Sobriety and capacity are not talents that recommend to the crowd, who are always taken with shallow pomp and sound, and with men of little restraints. The debauched and the superstitious have great hold of them: Men who will sin with them, or men who can give them amulets against the vengeance due to sinning. But men who will neither corrupt them, nor deceive them, are to them distasteful Stoicks, or frightful infidels, and sometimes used as such. One may at any time gain an interest in a mob with a barrel of beer, or without it, by means of a few odd sounds, that mean nothing, or something very wild or wicked. Let any superstition, though ever so wild or foolish, be advanced by one who has credit enough to deceive them; let any favourite party watch-word be invented, and pronounced in such a tone and such a posture, it soon becomes sacred, and in the highest esteem; and woe be to him that speaks against a mystery: Every argument shall be an affront and a sign of unbelief; which is a crime always highest, and most hated, when it is best grounded. The managers of the charm, on the contrary, are men of vast reverence, moment, and popularity: and a zeal for the charm, creates guards and revenues to the charmers. If you go about to expose the imposture, and unfold the cheat, you are a foe to all religion, and will believe nothing without evidence. The superstition grows in established repute, and 'tis dangerous to oppose it, till some other, often more absurd, and consequently more prevailing, undermines and exterminates it: For there is that propensity in most men to delusion and grimace, that they seldom recur to the plain and

amiable precepts taught in the scripture, and to a religion without shew, pageantry, and ceremonies; but superstition almost always subsists in some shape or other, and grows strong and revered in proportion to its weakness, nonsense, and absurdity: As it is admired in proportion as it is foolish or wonderful, it is believed in proportion as it is incredible. So that the credulity of the people for the most part follows the wise improvement of nonsense:

Cupidine ingenii humani libentius obscura credi. Tacit.

Considering the weakness of man's nature, prone to imaginary fears, to lean upon imaginary props, and to seek imaginary cures, limited deluders are often to be borne; but the worst is, that they will not be limited, but extend their guile to instances where it is not wanted; and from managing his whims, assume a right to direct his property, his eating and drinking, and every part of his behaviour; and turn canting and telling dreams, into authority and ruling.

The Egyptians have been always a most superstitious nation, always under the dominion of their priests, and consequently prone to tumults and insurrections. Their priests were at one time arrived to that monstrous pitch of power and tyranny, that they used to dispatch their kings by a message. If they did but signify their pious pleasure, that his Majesty was to cut his throat he durst not refuse, but must humbly take the knife, and be his own executioner. But the power of the priests was weakened, and the danger of frequent rebellions prevented, by the following stratagem of one of the princes. He considered the madness of the multitude after their gods, and their priests; and that their unity in religious frenzy and nonsense, disposed them to unanimity in their civil rage. He therefore divided Egypt into several districts, and endowed every district with its peculiar and separate deities. He knew, that if they differed about their gods, or divine cattle, and vegetables of worship, and about the rites paid them, they would agree about nothing else, and consequently never to conspire against him. One division had for its deity a monkey, another had a cat, another a crocodile, another a kite; and some adored leeks and garlick, savoury gods of their own planting.

O sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis Numia

This dividend of deities had the desired effect. The several districts abhorred all the neighbouring celestial gentry as intensely and madly as they doted on their own; and were ready to spill their blood, either offensively, or defensively, for the honour and interest of these their different divinities. Hence the religious and bloody war between two neighbouring towns, finely described by Juvenal with his usual force and indignation. *Inter finitimos vetus atque antiqua simultas,*

*Immortale odium & nunquam sanabile vulnus
Ardet adhuc, Ombas & Tentyra. Summus utrinque
Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum
Odit uterque locus; cum solos credit habendos
Esse deos quos ipse colit.*

Juv. Sat. 15

When people are once divided in their affections, every thing, however innocent and indifferent, if it be peculiar to the one, becomes a mark of iniquity, and an object of hatred to the other. A different hat or coat becomes the source of resentment, when perhaps a cloak or a ruff creates friendship and esteem. A judgment is made of the hearts of men by their habit, and particular good or bad qualities are annexed to cloth and colours. There are instances of monarchs deposed and murdered by their people for wearing a foreign dress, or for speaking a foreign language: And there are instances of nations persecuted, wasted, and laid in blood

by their princes, for using, or not using, particular gestures and sounds, which their Highnesses had taken a liking to; and of princes used the same way by their people for the same reason.

If they take an affection to the word *abracadabra*, though they join to it no certain idea, they think themselves justified in oppressing, and sometimes in butchering, all who do not profess the same vehement affection to the same senseless sound. But the man who is loud and mutinous for *abracadabra* is their darling: They grow fond of him for being fond of their word: His fondness is a compliment to them; and they will venture life and limb for a cheat, or a blockhead, who opens his mouth just as they do theirs. Their zeal is the fiercer, because it is blind. If they fall religiously in love with an ape, or an ox, or with those that tend him, as the Egyptians did, he is presently a blasphemer, who does not debase his understanding or forfeit his sincerity, by sacrificing shamefully and devoutly to these brute creatures, and by reverencing and pampering the solemn Merry Andrews that look after them.

The great island of Madagascar is divided into two great parts and parties, who are at fierce strife and everlasting war about a sanctified elephant's tooth, which both own to have come down from heaven, and both pretend to have it; and I am not sure whether it has not worked miracles on both sides: but as neither side will allow the other to have it, they hate one another as much as they love and hate the said tooth. *Great is the elephant of Madagascar, and the tusk which fell down from Jupiter!*

The Turks and the Persians are equally the devout, the blind, and bigotted followers of Mahomet, and differ in no point of doctrine. This doctrinal unanimity, one would think, must be a powerful bond of union, at least of religious union between the two empires. But no such matter. They treat one another as execrable hereticks and infidels, and do not hate the Christians more, though their only or principal difference in opinion is, that the Turks hold Omar for the true successor of Mahomet, and the Persians maintain that Ali was. They tie their religion, at least the efficacy of it, to the succession; and deny that there can be any salvation in any church where the uninterrupted succession is not kept up: So that each side is damned in the opinion of each. This hatred and division is increased by another momentous difference, the difference of the colours and caps which they wear. The Turks wear white turbans, and the Persians wear red bonnets. These are such abominable marks of heresy and schism, as deserve to be expiated with blood: And therefore that heresy has always been assigned as a principal cause of their many mutual invasions, merciless wars, and devastations.

I wish I could not say, that the wise and grave English nation have had also their holy and outrageous quarrels about words and motions, crape and cloth, bonnets and colours, and about the eastern and western situation of joint-stools. Thank God it is not quite so bad at present, no thanks to our education.

I would, for a conclusion to this letter, only desire it to be considered, what infamy and contempt it reflects upon the human understanding, and indeed upon the human species, to be thus apt to run into discord and animosities upon such wretched and unmannerly motives; and what monsters and impostors they must be, who begin, or manage, or heighten these absurd and impious contentions amongst any part of the race of men, already too unhappy by the lot of nature.

G

I am,&c.

Inquiry into the indelible Character claimed by some of the Clergy. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-254]

SIR,

I have lately given you the genuine meaning of two very nonsensical words, as they are vulgarly understood, those of *hereditary right*. In this I shall a little animadvert upon two other words in as much use, even the *indelible character*. This I choose to do, because no small number of ecclesiasticks, and some, as I have heard, of the highest character, dare to assert, that though the late Bishop of Rochester be deprived of his bishoprick, and expelled the kingdom, yet *He remains a bishop of the Universal Church*, which are some more nonsensical words. Indeed, there is scarce a theological system in the world (legal establishments excepted), but contains almost as many falsehoods as words, and as much nonsense as matter. Give the corrupt priests but some odd, unintelligible, and ill-favoured words, suppose *hic haec hoc, trim tram, bow wow, fee fa fum*, or any other sound that is utterly void of any rational meanings, they shall instantly find profound mystery in it, and fetch substantial advantages out of it: Nay, when they are got in full possession of the said word, you are damned if you deny it to be sense, and damned if you endeavour to make sense of it.

The *indelible character*, is one of their beloved phrases, from which they derive great importance and authority; yet it is a palpable contradiction to all common sense. By it they mean a certain invisible faculty, which is peculiar to themselves, of doing certain duties, which they could have done as well before they had it. It is a divine commission, or power, to do that every where, which human powers can hinder them from doing any where. It neither conveys virtue, holiness, nor understanding, and has no visible operation; but authorizes those who are possessed of it to use certain words, and perform certain actions and ceremonies, and act certain motions, all which most other men could pronounce, perform, and act as well as they can, but, they tell us, not with equal effect: But then this effect is no ways visible, nor comprehensible, but through faith, and is far above all human conception.

How then, and by what marks, shall we know that any one has attained to this indelible character? Not from scripture, which is wholly silent about the matter. Not by succession from the apostles, who claimed no such power; as is unanswerably proved in the *Independent Whig*, nos. 6 and 7. Not from reason, the impossibility of it being there fully shewn in nos. 15. And the wickedness of pretending to it being as fully shewn in nos. 47 and 48. Not from the laws of England, which oblige all clergymen to own, that they receive all jurisdiction and authority whatsoever from the crown, as is demonstratively proved in nos. 13 and 14 and in nos. 49 and 50. It is as undeniably proved there by numerous texts, as well as by the whole bent of scripture, that no one Christian has more power than another, to perform all the offices of Christianity; that the Holy Ghost fell upon all believers alike, and that they had all the power of doing miracles, after they had received it: And I think it is as evident, that none of them have now the power of doing miracles, as this would be with a witness, if a few words pronounced, and few motions performed, should give to any one new qualities and faculties which he had not before. I am sure, if this be a miracle, it is an invisible one, much like that of the popish transubstantiation, where, though we are told, that the bread and wine are changed into flesh and blood, yet to human eyes they appear to be bread and wine still. We are so far from being told in holy writ, that elders, pastors, and teachers (for all priesthood is plainly abolished by our Saviour in any other sense than as all Christians are priests), are always to choose one another; that even an apostle in the first of the *Acts* is

chosen by the congregation, and by the casting of lots.

But these gentlemen are sometimes so modest, as to confess, that holy orders do really convey neither piety, morals, learning, nor increase the natural faculties in any respect: I desire therefore to know of them, what they are good for, unless to declare, that such a man has undertaken to execute an office, and that he has natural or acquired qualifications sufficient to perform it? And this trust is for the most part committed to clergymen, who are presumed best to understand their own trade; and the ceremony which they use to signify that declaration, is laying on of hands, and a form of words prescribed by act of Parliament; which ceremony has obtained the name of consecration and ordination. Now suppose that the law had appointed another form to be executed only by laymen, as by flourishing a sword over his head, and by putting a cap and long gown upon him; would not the same man with the same qualifications, be just as good a pastor? Or suppose that the bishop, who ordained him, through some mistake, had not himself gone through all the operation, would the person ordained have been ever the worse? There is no appearance that our modern operators have any discernment of spirits; if they had, I presume that we should not have had so many Jacobites in holy orders; and 'tis evident in fact, that whenever the parishes choose their own parsons, they prove at least as good ones as those who are recommended to us by our spiritual fathers. 'Tis certain that our laws know nothing of this gibberish, but declare laymen capable of all sorts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction; and when the bishops consecrate one another, or ordain priests, they do it ministerially from the crown, and formerly took out a commission from the crown to ordain presbyters. Nay, the King now constitutes bishops in Ireland by commission; and they will be valid bishops, and able to perform all episcopal offices, though they were never consecrated. In Scotland, before the Revolution, they were created by patent, and held their sees only during the good pleasure of the crown.

Now let us consider what is the meaning of the word *bishop*, and wherein his office consists. It is a power or jurisdiction given to do certain actions within a certain district, which district is limited by human laws; and he must not execute his power in any other bishop's district, under the penalty of schism, and human punishment. Now what is this jurisdiction? It is a power to name a lay-chancellor if he pleases, who is to enquire after and punish certain carnal crimes, without consulting or taking any notice of the bishop himself, who constituted him; and excommunication is the legal process which he is to use, and the punishment which he is to inflict. The bishop has, moreover, a power to examine into the qualifications of those who desire to be admitted into orders, and to admit them, or reject them, as he finds them capable, or incapable; and after they are admitted, to inspect into their behaviour, in some respects, and to punish them according to stated laws. Now what is this priestly office? It is to read prayers, appointed by act of Parliament, publickly to the congregation; to read aloud certain chapters out of the Bible, appointed by publick authority to be read on particular days; to pick out a text or two every Sunday, and harangue upon it to the people; to administer the sacraments by a form of words prescribed by law, to visit the sick, exhort and rebuke, and to take the tithes. The bishop besides is to be a lord of Parliament, to have one or more thousands *per annum*, and to bless people when they are upon their knees.

Now what part of all this may not be as well executed, by what ceremony soever the person officiating be appointed, or if he be appointed without any ceremony at all? May not a bishop constitute a lay-chancellor to hear smutty causes, and to excommunicate the guilty, till they buy themselves out of purgatory again for a sum of money? Cannot this layman equally enquire into the capacities of those who were candidates for the priesthood, as they call it, and deprive or otherwise punish them as the law directs? Might not he equally sit in the House of Lords, and vote for the just prerogatives of the crown, and the good of the Church; make the most of his revenues (only for the sake of his successor), and say "God bless you"

to any one who will ask it upon his knees? Might not a private man, though a bishop's hand had never touched his periwig, read aloud the publick prayers and the chapters for the day, when he can read at all, without any new inspiration; talk half an hour or more about the meaning of a plain text; exhort his parishioners to be good churchmen; rail at and revile dissenters; read the legal form of baptism, and sprinkle an infant; carry about the bread and wine to the communicants; repeat the words appointed in the Common Prayer Book to be said on that occasion; gather in tithes very carefully, and put any one into the spiritual court that does not pay them?

Now, what is deprivation, but by publick authority to hinder them from doing these things; that is to take away the power that it has given them? I think it is agreed by them all, that some of these powers might be taken away, namely, that of the bishops being members of the upper house, with their baronies and revenues, their lordships, their dignities, their spiritual courts, their legal jurisdiction within their former districts; but still, it seems they remain good bishops of the Universal Church; which character is indelible, and can never be taken away. But what they mean by the Universal Church, I cannot guess, unless they mean all Christian countries, or all countries where there are Christians: And then it seems that bishops may ordain presbyters, and bishops and presbyters both may preach and pray, give the sacraments, and excommunicate, wherever there are any Christians; and if the words *Universal Church* will extend to those who are no Christians, then they may do these things through the whole world. But how will this agree with another orthodox opinion, holden I think by them all, that no bishop can execute his office in another's diocese, and no priest in another's parish, against consent, without being guilty of schism? And here almost all Christendom is cut off from their ecclesiastical jurisdiction at once, and a good part of Turkey too, the Christians there having all bishops (such as they are): So that they are reduced to execute this universal power only *in partibus infidelium*; and methinks, since sovereign authority is every where the same, Mahometan or pagan princes should have as much power to hinder any one from conferring offices in his dominions, as Christian princes have to confine him to a small limit, and to hinder him every where else; for no more power is necessary to one than to the other.

But to shew that I am in charity with these gentlemen, and willing to agree with them as far as I can admit, that no government, either Christian, Mahometan, or pagan, has any authority to hinder a good man from doing his duty to God; from saying his prayers, and reading the scriptures publickly; from exhorting his brethren, from giving or receiving the sacraments, or from avoiding ill company; which last is all that is meant in scripture, by what we call excommunication: All which offices, or rather duties, every Christian is empowered by the gospel to execute. And as the clergy have been called upon oftener than once already to shew from scripture, or reason, that these duties, or any of them, are appointed by God, to be performed by any set or order of men whatsoever, independent of other Christians; so I call upon them again to shew it, and I expect that they will introduce plain and direct texts, or, at least, as much evidence as they would pay five shillings upon any other occasion. And if they cannot do this, as I shall presume they cannot, till the contrary appears; then all this artificial cant must pass for juggling, hypocrisy, and priestcraft.

If we will take some of their words for it, there are many things very strange and extraordinary in this divine trust. It may be given here below, but cannot be taken away again; for then it would not be indelible. It is a power to execute ecclesiastical jurisdiction or duty through the whole earth, yet may be confined to dioceses, or parishes. No human authority can hinder those who are possessed of it from executing it; yet their persons may be imprisoned, or put to death, and so be wholly disabled from executing it. They may be rendered incapable of performing it by diseases, by drunkenness, gluttony, and laziness; but not by murder, robbery, treason, blasphemy, or atheism. Non-execution, or wrong execution,

is no forfeiture. It is the most tender and important of all trusts; yet no crimes, how heinous or black soever, will disqualify a man from holding and executing it. Whoever has once got it, can never part with it, but carries it with him to the block and the gallows; but whether it there leaves him, authors are silent, or uncertain.

It can be given by one of them to another only by the motion of the hand, but not by act of Parliament, and the consent of the States of a great kingdom, though the head of the church be one of them; yet it must be given according to the command of that one, and by a form of words enacted by all three. Whoever has it, must have a call from the Holy Ghost, yet must be examined whether he have common natural qualifications. When he has heard this call, and his qualifications are found sufficient, he need not execute what he is called to, but may hire another to do it for him; which other must not execute it neither, unless he has an human diocese, or an human parish, or is employed by those who have.

Is not this pretty jargon, worthy to be made an article of faith? Though it has had the ill luck not to get in amongst the rest; and, what is worse, some of the rest directly contradict it.

The same invisible faculty makes him, who is possessed of it, neither wiser nor better; yet he is to be much more respected, and his authority to be much more regarded, provided he be zealous for the notions which are orthodox for the time being; otherwise you may abuse him as much as you please, whether he be Most Reverend, Right Reverend, or only plain Reverend; and you need not then have any reverence at all for him, though the indelible character stick just where it did before. You must know that this indelible character came down by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles; but then it being wholly invisible, and making no alteration in the outward or inward man, there is some difficulty, and we are often at a loss to know who has it. The most common, outward and visible signs are a broad-brimmed hat, a long black gown, and a band; though others hold a cloak, with a cape to it, to be a better criterion. But what will become of us, if some heretick should have formerly usurped these holy garments, without having passed through all the precedent ceremony and operation? What if he should have happened to have consecrated and ordained a great many others, such as have continued the succession? Then, alas! the whole chain of succession may have been broken, never to be pieced again by human skill; and we can never know who amongst us are regular Christians, or in a regular way of salvation. Some are so wicked as to say, that this was the case of many of our Protestant bishops at the Reformation. Which God forbid!

Nay, what is worse, the orthodox differ amongst themselves about what requisites are necessary to continue this line of succession. Many have affirmed, that the Holy Ghost would not inhabit a heretick, a schismatick, a simoniack, or an atheist: And some have went so far, as to assert, that a Christian bishop ought to be a Christian. Now it is certain, that there have been many bishops and popes too, who did not believe one word about Jesus Christ; and if this be a disqualification, then the Lord have mercy upon those who have pretended to receive orders from them, or under them, and upon those who received the sacraments only by succession from such.

Others have ventured to affirm, that no greater power was necessary to take away orders than to give them. If so, the Pope and Church of Rome have taken away all our orders from us, and excommunicated us all to a man. Then too a question will arise, whether any one, who is wholly turned out of the Church, can be a bishop of the Church! If not, all our bench of bishops are gone at once: for we all know that the Church of Rome is a true church; and if the clergy have any authority from scripture, all the ecclesiastical authority in the world was against the first reformers, and they were all excommunicated together. They had certainly no power to separate themselves from the Church of Rome, but what every man in the world ever had, has now, and ever will have, to separate from any church which he thinks to be

erroneous, and to disown all ecclesiastical authority, which does not take its force from the laws of the country which he lives under; and then it is only civil authority. I desire of the gentlemen, who have always shewn themselves very happy at distinctions, to clear up those matters to us, that we may know whether we be Christians or not, and in the ordinary way of salvation.

G

I am, &c.

The Popish Hierarchy deduced in a great Measure from that of the Pagans. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-265]

SIR,

In my last I endeavoured to give you a true anatomy of the *indelible character*, and of the *uninterrupted succession*, from whence are derived most of the absurdities of the Romish Church, with all the spiritual equipages of their popes, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, parish-priests, &c. as well as all the powers claimed by them in the Church. In this I shall give you their genealogy; as also the genealogy of their cathedrals, their altars, their lighted candles upon them at noonday, their worshipping God towards the east; and a great deal more of their religious trumpery. I cannot, after the most diligent enquiry, find out the least countenance for most, if any, of these fine things, in the Christian religion, and the Jewish is long since abolished. Our Saviour plainly intended to reduce men to natural religion, which was corrupted and defaced by the numerous superstitions of the Jews, and by the absurd idolatries of the Gentiles. The doctrine which he taught, consisted only in worshipping one god, and in doing good to men; and therefore he instituted a religion without priests, sacrifices, and ceremonies; a religion which was to reside in the heart, to consist in spirit, and in truth; and to shew itself outwardly in virtuous actions: But such a religion would not gratify the ambition and pride of those who desired to domineer over their brethren, and to acquire from their ignorance and fears, riches and authority.

As therefore the Jewish priests had, by their traditions, and their fabulous legends, corrupted the law of Moses; so the Christian clergy did by degrees blend the gospel, and the plain and easy precepts of Christianity, with the most absurd parts of the Jewish traditions, and with the ridiculous foppery of the religion of the Gentiles; insomuch, that at the Reformation there was not left in the world any thing that looked like Christianity. The Pope and his priests had picked out from all other superstitions their most absurd, cruel, and wicked parts and principles; and having incorporated the same with peculiar absurdities of their own, made out of all such a wild jumble of nonsense and impieties, as has driven virtue, good government, and humanity, almost out of the world; given rise to Mahometanism; and both together have almost extinguished the human race; since there is not in those countries, where these religions entirely prevail, the tenth part of the people that they could boast in the times of the old Romans, nor in proportion to the numbers which China and Holland can now boast; where the priests have no power, and but little influence.

It would be endless to trace all the numerous absurdities of the Romish Church, and to search the sources from whence they are all taken and stolen. I shall content myself here, to shew that their whole machinery is copied from the religion of Zoroaster and the Persian Magi; and shall quote no other authority than the excellent and learned Dr. Prideaux, but give an account of that impostor and his Magi, altogether in the doctor's own words.

He tells us, that Zoroaster flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes (though others say, very long before, as he says, the Magi did, who, without doubt, held many of the same opinions, he having only revived their sect with some alterations), and he taught, that there was one Supreme Being, independent and self-existent from all eternity: That under him there were two angels; one the Angel of Light, and the author and director of all good; the other the Angel of Darkness, the author and director of all evil; that this struggle shall continue to the end of the world, and then there should be a general resurrection, and a Day of Judgment, wherein just retribution should be rendered to all, according to their works; and

the Angel of Darkness and his disciples should go into a world of their own, where they should suffer in everlasting darkness the punishment of their ill deeds; and the Angel of Light and his disciples should go into a world of their own, and receive in everlasting light, the rewards due to their good deeds.

This impostor pretended to have been taken up to heaven, and there to have heard God speak to him out of the midst of the fire; and therefore he ordered fire-temples to be built, and erected altars in them, upon which sacred fires were kept and preserved, without being suffered to go out; and all the parts of their publick worship were performed before these publick sacred fires, as all their private devotions were before private fires in their own houses: Not that they worshipped the fire, but God in the fire; for God having spoken out of the fire, he said, that it was the surest *Shechinah* of the Divine Presence; that the sun being the perfectest fire that God had made, there was the throne of his glory, and the evidence of his Divine Presence, in a more especial manner than any where else; for which reason he ordered them to direct all their worship towards the sun, and next towards their sacred fires; and therefore, they always approached them from the west-side; that having their faces towards them, and also towards the rising sun at the same time, they might direct their worship towards both; for the *kebla* of the Magians being the rising sun, they always worshipped with their faces towards the east.

To gain the greater reputation to his pretensions, he retired to a cave, and there lived a recluse, pretending to be abstracted from all worldly considerations, and to be wholly given up to prayer and divine meditations. Whilst he was in his retirement, he composed the book wherein his pretended revelations are contained; which consisted of twelve volumes. The first contains the liturgy of the Magi, and the rest treat of the other parts of their religion. In this book he commands the same observances about beasts; clean and unclean, which Moses commands; gives the same law of paying tithes to the sacerdotal order; enjoins the same care of avoiding all external and internal pollutions; the same way of cleansing and purifying themselves by frequent washings; the same keeping the priesthood always within one tribe; and several other institutions are also therein contained, of the same Jewish extraction. The rest of its contents are an historical account of the life, actions, and prophecies of its author; the several branches and particulars of his new-reformed superstition; and rules and exhortations to holy living; in which he is very pressing, and sufficiently exact, saving only in one particular, which is about incest, which (the Doctor supposes) is allowed by him out of flattery to the Persian kings, who were exceedingly given to incestuous marriages. This book he pretends to have received from heaven; and according as the actions of his sect agree or disagree with it, they are esteemed either good or evil.

His priests, as is said, are to be all of one tribe, and none but the son of a priest was capable of being a priest; and his priesthood he divided into three tribes. The lowest were the inferior clergy, who served in all the common offices of their divine worship. Next above these were the superintendents, who in their several districts governed the inferior clergy, as the bishops do amongst us; and above all was the Archimagus, or arch-priest, who was the same as the high-priest amongst the Jews, or the Pope now amongst the Romanists, and is the head of the whole religion: And, according to the number of their orders, the temples and churches in which they officiated, were of three sorts. The lowest sort, were their parochial churches, or oratories, which were served by their inferior clergy, as the parochial churches are now with us; and the duties which they there performed, were to read the daily offices out of their liturgy, and at stated and solemn times to read some part of their sacred writings to the people. In these churches there were no fire-altars; but the sacred fire before which they worshipped, was maintained only with a lamp. Next above these were the fire-temples, in which fire was continually kept burning on a sacred altar; and these were in the same manner as cathedrals with us, the churches or temples, where the superintendent resided. In every one

of these were also several of the inferior clergy entertained, who, in the same manner as the choral vicars with us, performed all the divine offices under the superintendent, and also took care of the sacred fire, &c.

The highest church above all, was the fire-temple where the Archimagus resided, which was had in the same veneration with them, as the temple of Mecca among the Mahometans, to which every one of that sect thought themselves obliged to make a pilgrimage once in their lives. Zoroaster settled at Balch, and he and the Archimagus his successors had their residence there; but afterwards it was removed to Herman. This temple of the Archimagus, as also their other fire-temples, were endowed with large revenues in lands; but the parochial clergy depended only upon the tithes and offerings of the people. The Doctor observes afterwards, that this impostor having wonderful success in causing this imposture to be received by the King, the great men, and the generality of the whole kingdom, he returned to Balch; where, according to his institution, he was obliged to have his residence, as Archimagus, or head of the sect; and there he reigned with the same authority in spirituals over the whole empire, as the King did in temporals.

The Doctor observes, and perhaps with truth, that Zoroaster borrowed a great part of his new religion from the Jews, especially if he lived so late as he supposes him to have done, with some appearance of reason. But if the impostor took his doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishments from them too (which he also supposes), it must have been from the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, not exceeding four thousand: For I cannot find any mention made of that doctrine in the books of Moses, which contain their laws, and promise only temporal blessings and punishments: And the Doctor himself, in another place, tells us, that the Sadducees, who were the gentlemen, and men of learning amongst them, did wholly disbelieve the resurrection, future rewards and punishments, angels and spirits, and rejected all the scriptures but the law; and that the Pharisees, though they believed the resurrection, yet only thought it a Pythagorean resurrection, or transmigration of the same soul into another body: And I think it is plain from the New Testament, that the full revealing of this truth was reserved to our blessed Saviour, who brought life and immortality to light: Though it is undoubtedly true, that some of the Jews held it as a philosophical opinion, probably taken from the nations whom they conversed with: But it does not appear to me, that Moses established it as a sanction to the religion which he revealed, or that it was any part of the Jewish religion to believe it.

But admitting that Zoroaster took the best parts of his religion from the Jews, I think it is much plainer that the Romanists have taken the worst parts of theirs from him; or else they have very luckily or unluckily jumped in the same thoughts. Their Archimagus, high-priest or pope, they can have no where else, unless they borrowed him from the Jews, which would be extremely impudent, since the Christian religion is built upon the ruins of theirs. Their superintendents, whom they call archbishops and bishops, and their parochial priests, whom they do not borrow from the Jews, and who, they say, are not derived from human institution, cannot be derived, in my opinion, from any other source than that of Zoroaster. Where else do they find the division of their priests into several orders, which exactly resemble his, namely, the lower order in parochial temples, to read offices out of their liturgies, or mass-books, and portions of their sacred writings at appointed times? for the Jews had not that oeconomy, nor indeed any synagogue-worship, till long after Zoroaster's time. Where else do they find cathedrals with altars in them, and lighted candles upon these altars, in imitation of the sacred fire of the Magi; and these altars standing to the east, and the worship in them performed with the face towards it? Where else the many inferior priests officiating in such temples, subordinate to the superintendent, and in ease to him? And where else the endowing these temples with lands, and revenues?

Where do they find their *uninterrupted succession &c.* and in consequence their *indelible character*, but in the succession of Zoroaster's priests in one tribe only, who without doubt were all holy, had all a divine right, were particularly favourites of the Divine Being, and clothed with peculiar powers and dispensations? Where had they the absurd and blasphemous opinion of God's being more immediately at the altar, or in the east, than in any other place; unless from the notion and dreams of the Magi, that the Divine Presence was in an especial manner in the sun, or in the fire? Where do they find that the deity is pleased with men's retiring into caves, corners, and monasteries; with their neglecting the affairs of the world, and of their families; with their being useless to society; and with their indulging meditation and the spleen; but in the example and authority of Zoroaster? Where do they find any command for wild jaunts in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and for idle and enthusiastick devotions to shrines, altars, and chappels, unless in the injunctions of this impostor to all his votaries to visit the temple of Balch? And where else did they adopt the absurd, monstrous, and wicked hypothesis, of the Church's having a different head from the state, and of the independence of the priests upon the civil power?

Most of these opinions and practices are parts of the religion of the ancient Magi; and from thence it is reasonable to presume that the Romish priests have copied them, unless they can shew where else they had them. They cannot, with the appearance of common sense, be deduced from the New Testament; and the Jewish religion has been long since abolished. They have therefore the honour of having restored the old superstition of the Magi, with this material difference, that the latter had more learning, and much more integrity; that they did not do, by the hundredth part, so much mischief; and treated with more humanity those who differed from them.

T

I am, &c.

Of the different and absurd Notions which Men entertain of God. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-274]

SIR,

In my paper, which treats about the use of words, I have promised to shew how absurd and impious it is for men to fall together by the ears, on account of their difference in trifles, when they scarce agree in any one thing in the world, not even in the attributes annexed to the object of all worship, though they know nothing of him but from his attributes. I will now perform that promise.

There is no proposition about which mankind have agreed and disagreed so much, as about the meaning of the word *god*. I think, very few instances excepted, they have all agreed that there is such a being; and yet I apprehend, that no two nations, two sects, or scarce two men of the same sect, have essentially agreed in all the ideas which they have annexed to the sound. All have asserted, that he has existed from all eternity, and must for ever exist; and that he has made or produced every thing else: And thus far heathens and Jews, Mahometans and Christians, Protestants and papists, deists and free-thinkers, materialists and immaterialists, Stoicks, peripateticks and Epicureans, are all orthodox; for the last could not have doubted but some being must have existed before the fortuitous concourse of atoms; and in this sense there are very few, if there be one atheist, in the world. But when they go farther, and explain what they mean by the sound, I doubt most, or many of them, are atheists to one another, as not believing in the being which the one and the other call God.

All the differences amongst mankind, as to their belief of the deity, are owing to their different conceptions of him; as they disagree in his attributes, in the modes of his operations, and worship him under various images and representations. As to his substance, essence, the manner or *sensorium* of his existence, we neither know nor can know any thing, nor can have any conception about it, and consequently can believe nothing concerning it; and therefore all that we can believe (besides what I above said every man agrees in) is concerning his attributes, and the *modus* wherein he has communicated or represented himself to us: That is, we can only believe in the ideas which we have annexed in our minds to the word *god*; and if we annex different images to the word, we are of a different religion, or rather are atheists to one another, though we call the object of all our worship by the same name. For since, as I have said, we can only worship our own conceptions or images of the deity, or (by new placing the words) the deity under our conceptions and images, if those images be false, we worship only an idol of our own imaginations, and pay divine homage to nothing. For, what is the difference to us in saying, that another man believes in nothing, or believes in what we know to be nothing, which equally is atheism. From hence I think it appears, that no man has a right to call another atheist, in any other sense, than as I shall make appear, that most men have a right to call those who differ from themselves, in their conception of the deity, atheists.

Now, to begin with the heathens, who worshipped Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, &c. which were only bare sounds and non-entities: Their paying divine honours to nothing, was worshipping nothing: and believing in nothing, is the same thing in substance as having no belief. And therefore they were certainly atheists, though they did not know themselves to be so. For what is atheism, but not believing in a god? And can any man be said to believe in a god, whose whole belief is in an imaginary being that is not God; though I confess such a fancied belief may influence his actions, and answer many of the purposes of society? It was

the same thing when they believed in real beings, as images, stocks, stones, monkeys, garlick, &c. For they worshipped them for powers which they supposed were in them, but which were not in them; and so worshipped those supposed powers, and consequently worshipped nothing, and believed in nothing which was God; and consequently were atheists in fact, though devout religionists in shew, and in their own opinion too.

But without annihilating the heathen deities, the Stoicks and Epicureans (who differed much in the same manner as some of the deists and orthodox do amongst us), were atheists to one another, as not believing in the attributes that each annexed to their different divinities. The Stoicks annexed the attributes of wisdom, mercy, and justice, to the being of the deity; who was supposed by them to dispense those attributes occasionally to the actions and necessities of men. The Epicureans thought the deity to be sufficient in his own felicity; and that he did not concern himself with our affairs here below; but that all things depended upon fate, and an eternal cause, which controlled and was superior to even Jupiter himself; which fate must have been their eternal god, which produced all things at first.

They had no notion of what was meant by *wise*, *merciful*, and *just*, when applied to the deity; and thought that these could not be analogous to what was meant by the same qualities in men: For they said, that wisdom in men, was only balancing the motives of doing or not doing an action, and choosing which was best; which wisdom was a knowledge acquired by habit and experience, and by observing the relations of things to one another, and conveyed to them through the organs of sense: But they said, that the deity had no organs, but saw all things intuitively from all eternity, and could not err. So they said, that mercy in men was a passion caused by the feeling or apprehension of the sufferings of others: But they believed that the divinity could have no passions, because no agent could operate upon him, he himself being eternal, and before all things, and producing all things; nor could suffer temporary anguish and uneasiness, always produced by compassion. In like manner, they said, that justice was an adherence to certain rules, dictated by superior powers, or agreed upon by men for their mutual convenience; but no rules could be set to the divinity, who the Stoicks confessed had made every thing, and had a right to do what he pleased with his own creatures. He that made the relation of all things, might alter that relation, and dispense with his own laws, when and how he thought fit.

They therefore said, that when those attributes were applied to the deity, nothing could be meant by them, but to express our reverence for him, our admiration of his power, and to sacrifice to him our best conceptions; not that we pretend to define his essence, nor the *modus* of his actions, which are wholly incomprehensible to us. They concluded that he that had done all things could do all things; but did not pretend to know how he did them; but thought themselves very sure that he did not do them as we do, by weighing the difficulties on each side the question, because nothing could be difficult to him; nor could he deliberate, because deliberation would imply doubt; and the deity could not doubt, being necessitated by the excellency of his nature always to do the best.

They thought, that a being that could never have any cause before it, nor without it, or after it, but what it produced, nor any objects to work upon it, must have been always uniform and entire; that is, its attributes, its will, and its actions must have been one with its essence. It must have been constantly moving, or acting or, as late divines very elegantly express themselves, eternally proceeding. For there could be no beginning of action, without being at rest before; and then they said that it must have been from all eternity at rest, as finding it difficult to conceive, that a being that had self-motion should never have exerted that principle till a particular period of time, and in a particular portion of space, when eternity and infinity (its inseparable attributes) can have no periods and limits; nor can any intervals of time and space measure such a being.

Hence philosophers have called eternity a *nunc sans*, or an instant, or punctum, which cannot be divided even in imagination; and though they could not convey any distinct images by that way of speaking, yet they found themselves reduced to it, from the difficulties which would arise in dividing the operations of a being in all respects indivisible. Now, can any one say that these sects believe in God? Certainly the object of the belief of one of them was not God, but only an idol of their own brains, and consequently that sect believed in nothing, and were atheists.

The same observations run through the different sects of religionists in the world, and great numbers of particular men in every sect of religion. Some represent the deity as a capricious, angry, revengeful being, fond of commendation and flattery, prescribing and dictating partial rules to his creatures, laying useless burdens upon them, and making their future happiness to depend upon the actions of others, and upon such performances, or believing such speculations, as are out of their power. Others think that the deity has satiety of happiness within itself, and must be incapable of any passions to interrupt that happiness; and therefore, as we cannot do good or harm to him, the only way to recommend ourselves to him, is to do good to one another. These cannot apprehend, that any man's future felicity lies in another's power; or, that useless speculations or actions, as bows, cringes, forms, grimaces, rotes of words, or any thing but a good conscience, and a virtuous life, can make us acceptable to the deity. Now 'tis certain that there are great numbers of men in the world of both these opinions, and they undoubtedly do not believe in the same being; but some of them believe in a non-entity, and consequently are atheists.

If this argument were to be traced through all its subdivisions, it would fill a volume instead of a single paper; and therefore I shall tire you no farther upon the subject; my design in entering upon it being to warn my countrymen how cautious they ought to be in calling odious names, which may with equal justice be retorted upon themselves. Let us therefore leave such appellations to those who scold for hire; and rest fully assured, that as most certainly there is a God, so he is the best being in the universe, that he expects no more from us than he has given us means to perform; that when we have done all in our power to please him, we shall please him, however, or how much soever, we mistake his being or attributes; and then it will be of very little consequence whom else we displease.

T

I am, &c.

No. 138. SATURDAY, July 27, 1723.

Cato's Farewell. (Trenchard and Gordon) ↩

[IV-281]

SIR,

As I have with a success which no man has yet met with (if I regard the number of my readers, and the sale of these papers) carried on a weekly performance, under this and another title, [*]

for near four years; in doing which, it was impossible that I could have any other view but the good of my country and of mankind; by shewing them the advantage and the beauty of civil and ecclesiastical liberty, and the odious deformity of priestcraft and tyranny: As I have vindicated Almighty God, and the religion which he has taught us, from the superstition, follies, and wickedness of men, who would prostitute it to ambition and avarice, and build a visionary empire upon the plain and simple precepts of Christianity; and have endeavoured to remove all the rubbish, grimace, and pageantry, with which it has been long stifled and oppressed, by shewing to the world, and I think proving, that true piety consists only in honouring the deity, and in doing good to men, and not in postures, cringes, and canting terms, and in barren and useless speculations: As I think I have unanswerably shewn that civil governments were instituted by men, and for the sake of men, and not for the pride and lust of governors; and consequently that men have a right to expect from them protection and liberty, and to oppose rapine and tyranny wherever they are exercised; and have thereby vindicated our present establishment, which can pretend to no other title.

As I have done all this openly, and in the face of the world, and have defied and called upon all the merciless and detestable advocates for superstition and slavery, to shew that I have transgressed the rules of morality or religion, or the peace and happiness of society in any respect; and no one has yet dared to enter the lists against me; from whence I may reasonably hope that I have removed many of the prejudices imbibed by education and custom, and set many of my countrymen free from the wild, wicked, and servile notions, strongly infused and planted in their minds by craft and delusion: I shall now with cheerfulness lay down this paper, which I am well informed will be continued by an able hand, under another name, and upon various subjects; and it is probable that I may so far join in the undertaking, as to give my assistance now and then, when proper occasions require it; at least, I am not determined not to do so.

There are some papers, especially those signed Diogenes, which have given an undesigned offence to some, whose persons I honour, and whose opinions I reverence. For I have no regard to the persons, and narrow notions of bigots, who will renounce any opinion as soon as it appears to be rational, and would rather make nonsense of it, than not make it a mystery. It is a principle become constitutional to me, that God gave us our understandings to use them, and that we cannot offend him in carrying them as far as they will carry us. However, as the principal question handled in those papers is a matter of mere speculation, understood but by few, and to be understood but by few, the belief or disbelief of it can no way affect human society; and whether it be true or not, the actions of men will be the same, and men will be alike actuated by the motives that operate upon them, and equally pursue what they take to be their advantage upon the whole, at the time, and in the circumstances which they are then in, whether they be obliged to do so, or choose to do so without being necessitated to that choice.

What led me into this thought, is the observation which runs almost through the world, that the bulk of mankind in all ages, and in all countries, are violently attached to the opinions, customs, and even habits, which they have been used to; that sounds, shews, prejudices, vain and idle terrors, phantoms, delusions, and sometimes diet and physick, are more prevalent with them, and operate more upon them than true and strong reasons; and that all animals of the same species act in the same manner, and have the same passions, sensations and affections, with very little alterations: All which I could not account for, but by supposing those operations to be mechanical, and the results of their several constitutions, as they were altered and modified by habit, and by different occasions or motives of making use of them, such as acted upon them.

For the rest, I saw, with a sensible concern, the many mischiefs, which the leaders and deceivers of parties and factions in religion did to the world, by throwing God's judgments at one another, and impiously confining his providence and mercies to themselves; and by applying the common phenomena and events of nature to their own advantage, and interpreting the same as denunciations of his wrath against their enemies; by which unhallowed presumption they have raised up and inflamed implacable hatred, animosities and uncharitableness amongst men of the same nation, who are all brethren. I have therefore shewn, that the Almighty dispenses his favours to all his creatures; that his sun shines upon the just and the unjust; and that it is the highest and most daring boldness in any sort of men to search into, and to pretend to unriddle the secret dispensations of his providence; to know his mind before he unfolds it; to throw about such balls of contention and wrath; and to make the condition of men, already too miserable by the lot of nature, still more miserable.

I saw the many evils and barbarous consequences arising from the idle and foolish stories of witches, spirits, and apparitions, first infused into our tender minds by nurses, chambermaids, and old women, and afterwards continued and improved by tutors and priests; which impressions and stories the wisest and bravest men often carry about them to their graves, and which make them always uneasy till they go thither; insomuch, that numbers of people dare not be alone, nor go about their necessary affairs, in the night-time; but are kept in constant dread of phantoms and non-entities; and multitudes of innocents have been murdered under the appearance of justice upon Satan's confederates. I have therefore shewn, that there is no foundation in nature, in reason or in religion, for these fairy tales; that they are inconsistent with the mercies, and even with the being, of the great and good God; and that the telling or believing these tales, is endeavouring to give an empire to the Devil at the expence of the Almighty.

It is certain, that the capacities of men would carry them much farther than they are suffered to go, if they were not cramped by custom and narrow education, and by narrow principles taken from those who design and derive advantages from this their ignorance. I have therefore lamented to see men of large and extensive genius, such as seemed designed by nature to carry human knowledge many degrees further than it has yet gone, seemed designed to manumit their country and mankind from the servile and wicked notions infused into them by prating pedants, and babbling impostors; I say, I have lamented to see such extensive capacities employed and conversant only about whims, idle speculations, empty notions, fairy-dreams, and party-distinctions, all tending to contract and imbitter the mind, to stifle and oppress the faculties, and to render men dupes and machines to the ambition, pride, and avarice of selfish and haughty ecclesiasticks, or of corrupt statesmen. Nor can I see how this great evil can ever be cured, till we change the education of our youth; and let gentlemen be bred by gentlemen, and not by monks and pedants; whom yet I would suffer to dream on with their bellies full of college-ale, and their heads full of college-distinctions; but think that they ought not to be trusted with the education of our nobility and gentry, till they have some themselves.

And now I beg leave again to repeat, that it was impossible I could engage in this undertaking so troublesome to myself, and I hope of some benefit to my countrymen, with any view to my own personal advantage. I hope that no one will think so meanly of my understanding, to believe that I intended to make my court to any of the powers of this world, by attacking vice, corruption and folly wheresoever and in whomsoever they were found. I knew that I was to walk over burning plough-shares; that I must provoke numerous and powerful societies and parties; that I must disturb nests of hornets, and sometimes venture too near the lion's den, and perhaps within the reach of Jove's thunder; that men in possession of reverence would not bear being told, that they did not deserve it; that those who rioted in power, and upon the publick misfortune, would very unwillingly hear that they were trusted with that power for the publick advantage, and not for their own; that they were obliged by all the motives of honour, virtue, and religion, to serve and protect the people out of whose industry and wealth they were so highly rewarded; and that they deserved the severest punishment if they did otherwise. I had all this before my eyes: But armed with innocence, and animated by love to God and mankind, I resolved to brave the danger, in defiance of the worst that could happen to myself, in the service of my country; and I have braved it. I have now the pleasure to see great numbers of my fellow-subjects approve my endeavours, and embrace my opinions. I therefore here lay down this paper, and with it the most virtuous and noble subject that can employ the human soul; the subject of religion and government.

I am, &c.

T and G

CATO

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER ↪

After Mr. Trenchard and I had agreed to conclude Cato's Letters, we likewise agreed to publish occasional papers upon such subjects of moment as occurred to us. But as he was not long after seized with the distemper that soon bereft the publick of his valuable life, the pursuit of that design was left altogether to me; and I continued to publish from time to time several papers upon religious subjects, and a few upon political subjects. The latter, six in number, are therefore subjoined to this edition of Cato's Letters, as naturally belonging to that collection. The former, which are a much greater number, upon the subject of religion and controversy, I intend to throw together as a third volume of The Independ Whig, since they treat of the like matters.

T. Gordon

AN APPENDIX Containing additional letters by Cato [↩](#)

No. 1. SATURDAY, August 24, 1723.

That ambitious Princes rule and conquer only for their own Sakes; illustrated in a Dialogue between Alexander the Great and a Persian. [Gordon] [↪](#)

[IV-291]

SIR,

Man is more selfish than all other creatures; as habit, or imagination, has made more things necessary to his pleasure and convenience, than other animals want for theirs. Lust and hunger are their only appetites; further than these prompt them, they commit no ravages, and they have the plea of necessity for the evils which they do. None of them invade countries for the vanity of a title; nor enslave, plunder, and burn, out of pride. They have no avarice; they do not starve millions to surfeit one, or a few. They have no ambition; they do not destroy for glory. To the disgrace of humanity, and the misfortune of the world, all these mischiefs and abominations come from the impulse of human passions, from a ravenousness and ferocity, worthy only of wild beasts, but practised by men with much more extensive and successful cruelty. The false refinements of reason have taught them to make the earth a wilderness, or a shambles; and to commit oppressions and butcheries, which true reason abhors.

Men are so conceited, that they think they deserve every thing they want, and may do every thing to procure it; and nothing but fear restrains man from dealing with man as nations deal with nations, that is, from devouring one another. There is not a city or country in the world, but, were it let alone, would swallow up all the rest; and cities and countries are compounded of men, and governed by them. And, as every nation is in its own conceit better than another, almost every man in every nation is in his own opinion better than all the rest. Some may ask, whether a poor labourer in a ditch fancies himself as good a man as the lord of the soil? I answer, try him: Offer him the manor, and then see whether, from a mean opinion of his merit, he rejects the offer. Who is it that refuses or resigns greatness, from the inaptness of his talents to sustain it? Titles and honours are only due to merit; but who denies them from a sense of the want of it? On the contrary, are not the weakest and most worthless men the easiest puffed up with the vanity of a gay name; which is so far from giving them any intrinsick advantages, that it really exposes their defects? And do they not make one acquisition, which they merited not, a ground and reason for expecting and demanding, perhaps for extorting, others, which they merit as little? Great men are sometimes supplanted and undone by their creatures; and princes have had the crown taken from their head, and with it their life, by such as they had raised from the dust.

Leave men to take the full reward of their fancied merit, and the world will be thought too little for almost every individual, as Alexander thought it for him. He had the fortune to ravage the world, and from thence believed he had a right to it. *Omnia vult, qui omnia potest.* Men thus let loose, do no more mischief than they can, nor less. The world is therefore a foot-ball; a great scene of contention, revolutions, and misery: It is full of Alexanders.

For the better illustration of this subject, I will here subjoin a dialogue between Alexander the Great and a Persian.

Alex. I find you a man of understanding; and you shall say with security what you please: But sure you must acknowledge that I have acquired everlasting glory in conquering this great empire.

Pers. You have done many horrible things for this glory; made havock of mankind, all Asia a scene of blood, and the world a theatre of sorrow and violence, to gain it.

Alex. Is not glory thus gained?

Pers. More is the shame and the pity, that so wicked a thing should have so fine a name. If you had saved us from all the evil, that you have done us, I should have called it glory.

Alex. Great actions are glorious, let the consequences be good or bad.

Pers. Then I perceive there is no difference between good and bad actions; at least great mischief is as good and as glorious for your purpose as great good.

Alex. For the mischiefs that you have suffered, your king must answer: He drew the war upon you.

Pers. How so?

Alex. Xerxes, one of his predecessors, invaded Greece.

Pers. If he did it wantonly, he did wrong, and sacrificed many lives to his pride: But I thought all this had been glory, because you seek glory the same way.

Alex. No, I revenge Greece upon Persia.

Pers. So he did Persia upon Greece, though with less advantage to him, and less detriment to the Grecians. Besides, he is dead, and it is unjust to punish those who hurt you not, for those who hurt your ancestors a great while ago.

Alex. Greece and Persia still subsist.

Pers. They are still called Persia and Greece; but the men of whom you complain no longer subsist.

Alex. Darius, your present Emperor, whom I have so often beaten, still lives, and he oppressed the Greek cities in Asia.

Pers. So he did the Persian cities, and his whole empire; or his governors did it for him. Now if you had come and relieved us, and gone back again, I should not differ with you about the notions of glory: But to invade us, and make us the plunder of armies for another man's crimes, which we condemn, and could not help, is no glory to us.

Alex. I meant his subjects no harm.

Pers. But you have done it as effectually as if you had.

Alex. I could not come at him, without killing his soldiers, and subduing his people.

Pers. Then you should have let him alone, at least till he had molested you.

Alex. He did; he enthralled my brethren the Asiatick Greeks; which I could not brook.

Pers. Give me leave to say, you have enthralled Greece itself, and Asia, and the world. How comes thralldom from Alexander to be better than thralldom from Darius? or why should it be better brooked?

Alex. I see you are no politician: You do not consider, that when I was about to invade Asia, it would have been madness to have left Greece unsubdued behind me.

Pers. The great Mithra shining yonder over our heads, and witnessing our actions, preserve all sober men from madness; and, for the peace of mankind, restore all madmen to their senses! And so, to revenge Greece upon Asia, which a hundred years before would have

subdued Greece, you subdued Greece yourself, in order to subdue us harmless Asiaticks, who never saw any of your faces, till you came sword in hand to kill and oppress us for glory. You have arrived at that glory: And now I hope you will leave us, and return home.

Alex. No: Your King Darius still lives.

Pers. What! would you kill him?

Alex. No.

Pers. Then why do you pursue him?

Alex. To have him in my power.

Pers. And make him a captive and a slave; which is worse than killing him. But when you have him in your power, do you propose to set him up again, or in his room another royal Persian, who has not offended you?

Alex. No: Whom can I set up so worthy as Alexander, over the conquests of Alexander?

Pers. Doubtless none so brave to maintain them. But what right do you claim to the crown of Persia?

Alex. My sword; that sword which has conquered it.

Pers. While that right is in such hands, few will care to dispute it. But were I, who am no conqueror, to drive away my neighbour's flocks and herds, and make them my own, I doubt you would call it robbery, and impale me alive.

Alex. Doubtless: I conquered the Persian empire; but I will protect the Persians in their lives and property: It is suitable to my generosity and justice.

Pers. In conquering us you have destroyed many lives, and much property, against all justice; and reserve the rest for your own use, whenever and as often as you think fit to take them.

Alex. It is the right of war.

Pers. War is then an unrighteous and inhuman thing, and entitles the next invader (if his sword be longer than yours, and his fortune superior) to drive you out, as you have done Darius.

Alex. Who shall dare to brave Alexander? Who contend with the son of a god?

Pers. Methinks you come not very honourably by that divine pedigree, and carnal divinity; which reflects some disgrace too upon your mother, and her husband Philip, and is not much to the reputation of this god of the desert. But who told you that he was your father?

Alex. His priests.

Pers. They would have told me as much, had I been there at the head of an army in quest of a celestial descent. It is no great credit to be akin to the figure of a ram: It is at least as much honour to be akin to the next palm-tree, or to the next marble-quarry, the elements of such inanimate deities.

Alex. Blaspheme not the gods, if thou wouldest avoid their vengeance: They will punish thee, though I forbear.

Pers. If the son forgive me, I will venture the displeasure of the father. I honour that only god, whose bright image I behold in the skies; nor fear the indignation of a piece of a trunk, or of a rock, however fashioned; unworthy kindred of the great Alexander, the most exalted of men, but subject to pain, misfortunes, and grief, and all the symptoms of mortality: The conqueror of Asia, the avenger of Greece, must die. But first, how is Greece avenged?

Alex. By conquering Persia.

Pers. You have ruined both: But of the two you have rather revenged Persia upon Greece. The lesser follows the greater. You are already monarch of Asia; and Greece, which you have enslaved, will be but a province of Persia: You do the very thing which you were so incensed against our former princes for intending. If your sovereignty continue, Persians will in time be sent governors of Greece; nay, you yourself, who are a Greek, wear already a Persian habit.

Alex. I have made the world my own, and will do with it as I list.

Pers. You do so; but it is more than you would suffer others to do, who thought they had a better right. If you be innocent, how were the Persian monarchs faulty?

Alex. I am Alexander, the son of Jupiter, and conqueror of the world.

Pers. Nay, they had sublime titles too, and heavenly alliances. They were lords of the world, and brothers of the sun; a more illustrious and visible deity than Jupiter the ram.

Alex. Their gods could not protect them; and mine have given me their empire. Once more, I am Alexander; the world is mine, and I will keep it.

Pers. Now this is open and fair dealing, worthy the great spirit of Alexander. You had a mind to the world, and you took it; nor think it enough for you. If you had made this frank declaration at first, I should not have troubled you with so much contradiction. If the great and bold mind of Alexander can stoop to dissemble, we are never to expect that men will own the true motives of their conduct. Their reason is just what their passion pleases. All their plausible and framed pretences are resolvable into some selfish appetite, which, like their conceit, is generally unmeasurable.

G

I am, &c.

No. 2. SATURDAY, September 14, 1723.

Considerations upon the Condition of an absolute Prince. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-299]

SIR,

There is no human condition but what carries uneasinesses with it; and I believe it will be difficult to know what condition makes men most happy, or happy at all. There is no judging of it by outward appearances. We often envy others for what they find misfortunes; and pity them for things, which are blessings, and either make them happy, or hinder them from being miserable. Nothing can be happiness in this world but gratifying our desires and inclinations; and yet we can seldom gratify them to any degree, but by turning them into misfortunes; yet we must gratify them in some degree, or else we can have no happiness at all.

To have no desires (if that be possible) is a perfect state of stupidity; and our desires must be always to attain what we do not then enjoy, and often what we cannot compass. This produces uneasiness, or in other words, renders us unhappy in some degree. The man therefore who has fewest desires, or desires the least difficult to be accomplished, has the least unhappiness; but wants many agreeable sensations, which men of more lively and active spirits enjoy. So that, upon the whole, if we balance the account, men have little reason to envy or pity one another: But if there be any difference between them, the condition of absolute princes and great men is by far the most miserable. They have little relish of the enjoyments, which they possess; they are always pursuing things difficult to be obtained, and are in as constant fear and danger of losing what they have, as of gaining what they have not; and if they do gain it they are seldom the better, but often plunged into new difficulties by their success.

Great fortune comes attended with great cares, and much greatness has many incumbrances. This is the condition of a despotick prince, who, having much more business than himself can do, be his diligence ever so great, must share the great weight and multiplicity of his affairs amongst many; who will be but too apt, in the administration of their several parts, to attend more to their own greatness and advantages, than to their master's reputation and security, to justify their ill actions by his authority, and to acquire grandeur and riches to themselves, while they heap obloquy upon him.

This is often the true reason why a good prince is not always popular. People will judge of him by what is done, and not by what he causes to be done; and therefore the publick dislike rarely stops at his servants, who perhaps alone deserve it; but have often the art of involving him in the ill consequences of their own conduct, and of making their crimes complete, by engaging him to support them in their crimes, by persuading him that all their views and actions were for his service, and by frightening him with this false and mischievous maxim, That *a prince must never give up his servants*: A maxim fatal to many princes, and big with nonsense and with ruin to the people, as it makes all ministers, even the weakest and the worst, perfectly unaccountable!

This is an unnatural maxim: Nor have the most absolute monarchs, though their power be erected upon the violent abasement of human nature, and upon the ruins of all goodness, happiness, and virtue, been ever able to practise it, however they may want it, and in speculation pretend to it. The Great Turk is often forced to give up his servants, who must die for his crimes, as well as for their own; so far is he from sacrificing himself for theirs, as this maxim would direct. Nor is there an arbitrary prince in the world but must give up the best

minister that he has, if his army demand it; and where the people have any share of power, no well-advised prince will employ a servant whom they justly hate and suspect.

Princes are set in a high place; which, though the most coveted of all, has the least happiness of any other. Those, who have no equals, can hardly have any friends; and a particular friendship and confidence between an arbitrary prince and any of his own subjects, is seldom sincere on either side, especially on theirs; and often fatal to him, sometimes to them. Such princes are most successfully betrayed by their greatest favourites, who are likewise frequently undone for being favourites. Nor can princes, with all their power, raise to the highest place those who are highest in their favour. Interest, or ambition, and sometimes fear, determines their choice; and their first minister is often the man whom they hate most, or dread most, which is the beginning of hatred. Nero hated Seneca and Burrhus; and Lewis XIII hated Cardinal Richelieu; as did King James I towards his latter end, the Duke of Buckingham. Even the crafty, implacable, and diffident Tiberius was forced to continue the traitor Sejanus in his power, places and trust, a good while after he had full proof that he sought his life and empire.

The greatest princes therefore are generally destitute of friends. To purchase friends, they must give them power; and power cancels all friendships. It is the most selfish thing in the world. Those who have it are too frequently faithless to the giver; and when it is taken away, always ungrateful. And this is the reason why they may dislike their ministers, and yet be loth to change them: They know, that to dismiss their servants, is to multiply their enemies. So they are forced to accept faint or false services, to prevent open opposition; which they who have been in their service, and know their affairs and designs, are the best qualified to make.

The opening of one's heart to a friend, is one of the greatest pleasures and reliefs arising from friendship; and private men can practise it, because where the reputation of keeping a secret is greater than the temptation to reveal it, it will be kept: But to whom can a prince lay open his heart in any great and tender point, when by doing it he puts his safety and reputation in the power of another, who must be paid dear for being faithful; and perhaps at last is not so, because he never thinks himself sufficiently paid!

Hence princes and great men are naturally close and reserved, and keep themselves as far as possible within their own power: They know that the fidelity of men is then only greater than their treachery, when the price is greater. Secrecy is indeed so absolutely necessary in great affairs, that he who wants it is utterly unfit for them; and I have known very little men, who, with this qualification alone, have been thought great men. Sometimes men are dark and cautious from the littleness of their talents; and employments and trust generally make men so.

As to the publick friendships of princes, that is, of princes with princes, it is generally grimace; and there can scarce be any such thing. They are all rivals for power and credit; and all envy, or are envied by, one another. Nor do treaties and alliances allay their jealousies and heart-burnings, but often increase them: They are generally made out of fear, and always imply distrust. Men of power, at least men of equal power, princes or subjects, never agree but from the necessity of their affairs; and they too often seem to be friends, on purpose to execute their malice with the greater certainty. Every particular wants to be master, and to give laws to all the rest; and they often push their mutual diffidence even to ridicule, and fall into violence and quarrels about the ceremonial; which, like some other ceremonies, signifies not a straw to the rest of the world, and yet must be owned to be of considerable consequence to those that deal in it.

Nor are princes more happy in their families. They are unhappy if they have no children, because by it conspiracies are encouraged, as one life is easier destroyed than several. Julius Caesar had no child; and the tyrannicides hoped in him to have destroyed his family. The same consideration was doubtless one motive to the many plots against Queen Elizabeth and King William: If they have children, they are often as unhappy; and there is seldom a good understanding between the incumbent and the next heir; who sometimes takes the throne before it is vacant, and sometimes makes a vacancy: *Imperium habere quam expectare mallet*. And sometimes the father destroys the son, for fear of being destroyed by him; as did Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and Philip II of Spain. And thus the excellent Germanicus owed his murder to the cruel politicks of Tiberius, his uncle, and his father by adoption. Nor do the children of princes hate one another less, than the eldest or the most ambitious generally does his father. The Great Mogul almost always sees his sons, and his daughters with them, engaged in wars and blood for their father's empire; and he is their prisoner by turns, as their several parties prevail, and perhaps ends his life in a dungeon. One of David's sons lay with his sister, and was killed by another son, who defiled his father's bed, and endeavoured to dethrone him; and Solomon, as soon as his father was dead, put his eldest brother to death.

Princes are likewise subject to higher dangers, and have more and greater enemies, than other men; and their lives and reputations are more exposed. They have no small enemies, but either neighbouring princes and states as powerful or politick as themselves; or great domestick conspirators, often more terrible; or little assassins, the most formidable enemies of all, as they are the most sure and sudden. Besides, the dangers they are sometimes in are not seen or credited till they are past remedy. Domitian therefore said well, *Conditionem principum miserrimam, quibus de conjuratione comperta non crederetur, nisi occisis*: "It is a miserable lot that of princes, never to be believed as to any conspiracy formed against them till it has had its effect, and they are fallen by it." Sueton. in *Domitian*. C. 21.

I shall refer to another paper my further considerations upon the condition of a prince.

G

I am,&c.

No. 3. SATURDAY, November 2, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-305]

SIR,

I have already sent you a letter about the condition of an arbitrary prince: I here send you another; and what is said in both does in some respects concern all princes, especially all princes who do not make the fixed and standing laws of their country the rules of their government. For though I do not think it possible for any prince, the wisest and most vigilant, and virtuous to avoid all the inconveniences which I have observed usually to attend a crown; yet it is my opinion, that a prince of a legal and limited state, who defends the laws and rights of his people to his people's advantage, will be defended by his people and the laws; that a righteous administration will be too powerful for unrighteous factions, and make him safe in the love of his subjects, against the leaders and deceivers of parties, and against the intrigues of his own servants, who will be obliged to serve him faithfully in their own defence, and cannot distress him where his people love him. But as this has been the condition of few, very few princes, they have generally reduced themselves to the evils and hardships which I have already mentioned in part, and shall now further set forth.

Such princes are generally poor, notwithstanding their great revenues. Their income is scarce ever well husbanded. The great number of officers necessary to gather it in, must all be paid suitable to the grandeur and bounty of a prince; and it is well if they do not finger more of it, much more than their pay; so that it comes into his coffers with large abatements; and the bulk of his rents is far short of the name, yet by that name his wealth is computed; and hence expectations from him are higher than his ability to answer them.

If his money be wasted in his receipts, it is still more so in his issues. His revenues are distributed, as well as collected, by a great number of officers, with great salaries, who, in the payment of his bills, frequently value their own gain more than their master's credit, and keep in their hands for their own use the money which they should pay away for his. For this reason he buys almost every thing extremely dear, sometimes at double, nay, treble its value; because they who will sell have large interest for slow and uncertain payment: Neither is it uncommon, that those who buy for him, combine with those who sell to him, and divide the profits of an extravagant bill: Even officers who do not conspire against his purse out of sordidness, frequently do it to oblige their friends; so that he is at least cheated on one side. I have known a piece of ground sold to a king at fifty times its value, and an old house for not much less; and the like enormous prices received for a piece of painting, for a horse, and for a paltry rarity, which, for the benefit of a friend, they who had his ear persuaded him to purchase.

But besides all this, let his revenues be as great as they will, the demands upon them are commonly greater. Every service done him costs him dear; and it is well if he pays not equally dear for disservice and treachery; a price which yet he is obliged sometimes knowingly to pay, to deceive and flatter an enemy, or a false friend, whom he dares not crush. The pretensions too of those who never served him, but fancy that they did, or that they can, are infinite; and they will be too apt to distress him without provocation, if he do not reward them without cause, or beyond their merit. Whatever they do for him, or think they can do, claims a high price, not according to its worth, but according to their own conceit, and to his grandeur; and all his gratuities are expected to be great, how small soever they and their pretensions are who expect them: Others, who think they can hurt him, will make a virtue of

not being mischievous; but not a virtue which is to be its own reward, but such a virtue as will seek revenge where it is not rewarded; so that he must pay as well for false services, and for no services, as for real services; his foes for sparing him, and his friends for defending him, and both rather according to the measure of their own selfish value and importance, than suitably to reason, or even to his ability.

And as such princes are, I think without exception, oppressors of their people, they must fear those whom they oppress, and depend for their security either upon a nobility or an army, or upon an army only; two sorts of men equally ambitious and insatiable, who will expect to riot upon the spoils of the prince, as he does upon the spoils of the people, and will turn upon him if he disappoint their avarice and pride, nor spare him if he spare his subjects.

The Roman emperors were no longer safe than they were feeding the soldiery with largesses, and sometimes all that they had to bestow was not a sufficient bribe to save their lives. The immense revenue of the whole Roman world was too little for the soldiery alone, though the provinces were ransacked, tortured, and exhausted, to increase it. The emperor was but a name: The soldiers were the state, the governors of the state, and the gentle landlords of Europe, Asia, and Africa; as the Great Turk is at this day but the creature and property of the janizaries, who are the real disposers of the Turkish diadem, and the real governors, or rather emperors, of Turkey. He who has the name, is but the gatherer of their rents; and they hold him in such alarms, that he is scarce secure of his life for a day, and in such necessities, that to satiate them, he is forced to be daily killing and plundering his bashaws, glutted with the plunder of the provinces; which to supply this constant and progressive plunder, are reduced to regions of gloomy solitude and desolation: And all this wealth of so great and so fine a portion of the earth does but end in a fee to a tribe of rogues, renegades, and vagabonds, to save their master's life.

No prince's coffers are full enough to answer all demands; and as to the places and bounties which he has to bestow, he may engage by them a number of people in his interest; but he makes a greater number of enemies, because to every such favour there are many pretenders, and all are disgusted but he who gains it; and the boundary between disgust and enmity is so very small in such cases, that it is scarce to be measured, or indeed discerned. Where twenty people aim at the same thing, he can make a friend of but one.

Hence such a prince must be subject to perpetual and painful hypocrisy, by being obliged to soften disappointments with good words, which, perhaps he does not mean; and with fair promises, which he cannot keep. It behoves him to please all that he can please, and to provoke none wilfully; for, in spite of his greatest complaisance, many will be provoked by disappointments which he cannot prevent.

No sort of men are under such great restraints as to liberty of speech princes as are; nor can the greatest power give them this freedom with any safety. For, besides that a loose in mirth and jests affects their dignity, and weakens its awe, their words are all thought to have design in them, and are readily caught up and misapplied, especially where they seem any way to relate to their own power, or to the persons of men. Caesar did at least hasten the conspiracy against him by a miserable pun of his: He said, that Sulla, who had resigned the dictatorship, was a novice in letters; he could not dictate.

From these words of his, perhaps spoken in pure jest, the measure of his ambition was taken, though I think there were much better proofs against him. Galba was murdered by his guards, for an honest unwary speech of his: He declared, he would choose soldiers, and not purchase them: And Cassius Chaerea, captain of the guards to Caligula, put that prince to death, for railing him upon his effeminacy.

All satirical railleries are the more felt, and the least forgiven, the higher they come. A sarcasm from a superior is an insult, because it cannot be returned. No man cares to bear a severe jest, which only serves to shew him how much lower he is than the person who makes it; and therefore no wise or good-natured man will make such jests. Greatness is so naturally apt to be proud, that we generally expect no better from it, and are ready to see pride in great men where they really have none, or shew none; and because we hate pride, we are apt to hate greatness, which we consider as the cause of pride: an imputation which all great men can never be too careful to avoid; and let them be ever so careful and complaisant, they will never wholly avoid it: And therefore stateliness of behaviour, and imperious airs, are signs of great want of sense, and the certain causes of hate.

Great men can never be too well-bred. We are naturally quick-sighted enough to see the difference between us and them, and can only be reconciled to it by their treating us as if there was none; but supercilious pains taken on their side, will surely create distaste and enmity on ours. We think that they owe us a sort of amends for being greater than we; and if they can pay us with affability and condescension, they pay easily, and have no occasion to complain.

Caesar was never forgiven for receiving the Roman magistracy sitting: And some passionate expressions of King Charles I against the Parliament, did him more mischief than all his former encroachments upon the constitution; as these expressions created personal enemies, and a fear and distrust of his spirit and sincerity. His father, still less capable of supporting the dignity of a crown, and of preserving the affections of his people, had such a wild mixture of timidity and pride, and familiarity, that many of them hated him, more despised him, and yet none feared him. He would sacrifice his reputation with his people to the titillation of a poor pun, and manifest his passion for absolute power, rather than smother a wretched witticism, or a quaint conceit, hardly worthy of a country school-master. When a fit of bouncing was upon him, then he was the oldest king in Europe, and, he trowed, the wisest, and would be master of the purses of his subjects; but when the Parliament had put him into a fright, then they had an humble sermon from him, larded with scraps of Latin, upon the duty and restraints of a sovereign; and logick was chopped, and distinctions were made, upon that head.

His private conversation was low and cheap; and when the crown was off, the King was never seen; his tongue never lay still, and his usual themes were far unworthy of royalty: He delighted in sifting metaphysical questions, and in discussing dark points in divinity, and in smutty and familiar jokes; and it was usual with him to fall upon men with rude language and ill breeding: His condescension to others was as full of meannesses, and the obscenities and fulsome style of his letters are below the lowest mechanick. It was impossible to know him and reverence him. Those who were raised by him, and most obliged to him, treated him with contempt, and hectored him when they could not wheedle him: And it was usual with him to give and take such language, as no gentleman would give or take. He was particularly free of his oaths and his kisses, practices beneath a great or a grave man. He was so ignorant of his character, and so fond of logick, that from a great king he descended to be a disputant on one side in a squabble of divines. His reputation abroad was as low as at home. He talked much of king-craft; but his maxims, which he was always uttering, were poor ones, and foreign princes derided him. In their treaties with one another, they either took no notice of this keeper of the balance of Europe, or always outwitted him. In his own negotiations with them, they over-reached and baffled him, even to wantonness; and treated his long letters and his learned labours with small regard: His premonition to princes, and his books of divinity, had no influence on the powers of Christendom.

King Charles II had more sense, and more accomplishments: He had the parts and address of a gentleman; but he was too ludicrous for a King. He had many pleasant stories, and told them well: He made very good jests, and diverted his friends over a bottle. But the monarch suffered in the merry companion, and his good-nature was the occasion of many ill-natured railleries. His great familiarities with his subjects made them very familiar with the dignity of the diadem; and he never made so many jests as were made upon him. The freedoms which his own dear friends the wits used with their sovereign, and their sarcasms upon so great a prince, are astonishing.

Scarce any of the words of a prince fall to the ground; they therefore ought to be cautious what words they utter. Whatever he says, and his manner of saying it, will be apt to make impressions either to his advantage or disadvantage. His sayings quickly fly abroad, and are at the mercy of every interpreter; and when once his words are publick, it depends no longer upon himself what meaning his words shall bear. The publick rarely distinguish the man from the King; but with them in every thing he acts and speaks as a King, and consequently by all his words and actions that come abroad, his royal dignity is affected, though they regard neither.

My next letter shall be upon the same subject.

G

I am, &c.

No. 4. SATURDAY, November 9, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Trenchard] ↩

[IV-314]

SIR,

The actions of a prince are more liable to censure than his words. His words, which can be heard but by a few, may be misrepresented; and this his friends may plead in his defence: But his actions publish themselves; and all men will pretend to judge what all men see, and what concerns all men. Nor must he expect to be judged by the motives, and intention of his conduct, but by the effects. Those motives, however just and necessary, are not always such as he can avow; and if he mean one thing, and pretend another, he cannot with a good grace take it ill that his sincerity is suspected.

Henry III of France dispatched Monsieur Bellievre away to England as his ambassador extraordinary, to interpose his royal credit with Queen Elizabeth, for the life of Mary, Queen of Scots; and great consequences were expected from so much zeal and ostentation. Nor was ever any thing more strong, laboured, and pathetick, than Monsieur Bellievre's speech upon that occasion. In it all the topicks of mercy, of consanguinity, of charity and forgiveness, of good policy, of the sacredness of the blood of princes, and the ill example of shedding it, were urged and exhausted with great earnestness and art. The French King's pious concern for his sister-in-law was dressed up in moving colours, and warm arguments were fetched from the safety and reputation of Queen Elizabeth herself. Never was such a dolorous farce! The ambassador had private orders to solicit in his Majesty's name the execution of Queen Mary, and alleged the same arguments for that execution.

Now the whole of this conduct, so full of contradiction and insincerity, was necessary to his condition. It concerned that prince's reputation with his people, and with all the Catholicks in Europe, to interest himself in the life of a Catholick queen, his brother's wife: If he had not, he had furnished the Guises and the League, already too popular and powerful, with a new advantage against him. They had already charged him with heresy, though he had murdered a world of hereticks to demonstrate his Catholick zeal. But it concerned him full as nearly, that that Queen should neither be restored to Scotland, nor succeed Queen Elizabeth in England, and thereby strengthen the hands of the League, and her uncles, the Guises, against him.

Queen Elizabeth, who was a wise princess, acted the same double part in the same affair. The security of her life and her crown was precarious while the Queen of Scots lived; and yet the life of her royal cousin and sister was so dear to her, that the importunity and repeated addresses and petitions of Parliament, with all the doughty casuistry and logick of her spiritual counsellors, the bishops, could hardly prevail upon her tender conscience to rid herself and her realm of so dangerous an enemy; and after she had submitted her many scruples to the love and fears of the people, and to the holy reasonings of the bishops, she was forced to be surprised into the signing of the death warrant; which, after all, she never meant to have executed, but only kept over the sentenced queen *in terrorem*. But this her merciful purpose was frustrated by the officious zeal of Secretary Davison; for which the poor man was disgraced.

This was all illusion. No person upon earth wished more passionately for the death of Mary, Queen of Scots; but she did wisely to save appearances. She had good reasons for what she had done; and reasons equally good for not bearing her testimony to the rightfulness of

putting a queen to death.

Queen Elizabeth escaped the bloody hand of her sister Mary, by the policy of King Philip her husband, which got the better of his bigotry and natural cruelty. His wife had no children, and the crown must descend either to her sister Elizabeth, who was a Protestant, or to the Queen of Scots, who was a papist, and also Queen of France. He hated Protestants, but loved his interest better; and saved the princess, to prevent so much power from falling into the French scale. This was just policy; but he durst not own it: It would have made him odious to the court of Rome, and to the popish world.

Thus princes themselves become subjects; subjects to the censure of their people: And to please them, or to avoid their displeasure, are often obliged to disguise their actions, often to disown the motives of their best actions, and sometimes the actions themselves. This acting in masquerade is a restraint which most princes, the most haughty and unlimited, must undergo. Not Louis le Grand, nor the Great Turk, durst declare to his people, that he oppressed them to satiate his pride or avarice; that he went to war through ambition, and spilled their blood for fame.

Caesar, the mighty and successful Caesar, had no other deity but false glory! But, with all his power and fortune, he was not powerful enough to declare, that he shed human blood, and enslaved the world, only to make more noise than any man in it; for this great glory of his was no more but noise and mischief. His purpose of war with the Parthians was only to gratify his restless spirit, and to employ the spirits of the Romans, which, by enslaving them, he had incensed; and he was no longer easy and safe, than he was fighting and killing. But this was a secret not fit to be told, and the honour and benefit of the Romans were boldly pretended; that is, the Romans were to have certain losses, and no purchase, for the honour and benefit of the Romans: For, if he had conquered all Parthia, which was no ways probable, Rome would have been never the better, but, on the contrary, must have sacrificed many Romans to the pride and pleasure of Caesar.

Oliver Cromwell sought the Lord upon all occasions, and all that he did was the Lord's doings; and because many of the saints preached it, numbers believed it. Now, though this was downright impudence, which, to a wise man, is worse than silence, yet it passed with a party. Parties generally act implicitly: Watchword and cant pass with them for reason, and they find great conviction in a few solemn unmeaning sounds. The partisans of Caesar vindicated their purpose of making him a king, by a foolish old prophecy never heard of before, that none but a king could conquer the Parthians. They could not have devised a better argument; it convinced the whole party, and filled their mouths with an answer to the stiff-necked republicans. Had Cromwell been declared King, I doubt not but his preachers would have found a revelation for it, and probably the coronation sermon would have abounded with texts that gave him the diadem. It would not have been the first nor the last time that the Bible has been made a great courtier, and heaven the voucher of wickedness and falsehood. The last argument of the Spanish clergy for the expulsion of the Moors, was a bell in the church of Vililah, which rung of its own accord; and though it uttered nothing but sound, yet expressly commanded that expulsion, and fully satisfied King Philip's conscience. It was a miracle; and what should miracles be worked for, but for the confusion of infidels and hereticks? And who should see the design of miracles executed, but those who interpret miracles?

Princes must say something for their best and worst actions; which is a confession, that they are not so unaccountable as some would make them. Their reputation is at the mercy of their people; and when their reputation is lost or lessened, they cannot possess their crowns in much peace, nor indeed in much safety. Hence nothing is so tender as the reputation of a prince, and nothing ought to exercise his thoughts and fears more. He must not measure his

publick fame by the fine tales told him by those who are well paid for the tales, and dare not always tell him truth, for fear of losing that pay. It would be more to his advantage to hear the worst things that are said of him; for while he is falsely told that all things go well, he will never think of altering his conduct, how wrong soever he is; and going on in an error for want of honest information, has been the ruin of many princes. They cannot go abroad for truth, and rarely hear it at home; and the evil day has come upon them when they thought themselves most secure; or if they have heard part of the truth, it has come disguised to their ears; and the complaints of the people, forced from them by oppression, have been represented as the clamours of malcontents, and as the voice of faction. And it is very true, that faction often rails without ground; but it is as true, that faction often derives its chief power from complaints that are wellgrounded. Nor is it at all good reasoning to justify every thing which faction condemns.

—*Fas est & ab hoste doceri.*

Some men, especially great men, would never hear of their faults, were it not for their foes; and princes might often have learned better lessons of government from the satires made upon them, than from their many panegyricks. Their panegyricks consecrate their worst actions, and never find any thing to be mended; but in satire there is always some truth, and often a great deal; and where there is no truth, there is no satire.

It is the interest of a prince, to know what his subjects think of him and his government: It is a duty which he owes to himself as well as to them; and though he may hear of many evils and grievances which are fathered upon him, and yet not owing to him, he will probably at the same time hear of many that he has power to remove, or to mitigate. Let him do his best, he will have many enemies; but this is no reason why he should not lessen their number, by lessening the cause all he can.

It is a hard matter for a prince to learn his true character at second-hand: His surest way is to learn it from himself, from the measures which he pursues, and from the effects which they ought to have upon the minds and fortunes of men. His friends will sanctify or palliate his greatest faults; and his foes will make crimes of his greatest virtues. If he be a bigot to a reigning superstition, wise men will despise him; and if he despise superstition, the bigots, who are always the majority, will curse him. Nor will the most able and upright administration be of any merit with them, if he do not season his administration with the blood of infidels and hereticks, and exclude the best and soberest part of his subjects, from any share in his protection and paternal mercy; and if he fall in with this religious fury, he destroys or provokes his soberest and best subjects. So that to be a saint one way, he must be a devil on the other; a character very common in the world: And if he do not exercise his rage for enthusiasts, he must expect to feel theirs, and to have his humanity and wisdom exposed and treated as atheism. To butcher, or be butchered, is the lot of a prince who rules over bigots; a sort of madmen, who would father their own frenzy upon the deity, and make him thirst after the coolest human blood to assuage it. The Spanish Inquisition is a priestly slaughter-house, a dreadful tribunal erected against the lives, consciences, and faculties of men; and yet no King of Spain could attempt to suppress it, without expecting to lose his life in the attempt. Nor is it in the power of the Pope to suppress popery. And the Great Turk, absolute and irresistible as he is, were he to turn Christian, could not live half an hour.

Princes are under the same difficulty, when they would cure another mighty evil in their government. Standing armies are standing curses in every country under the sun, where they are more powerful than the people; and yet it is hardly possible for a prince that rules by an army, to part with his army, or to set up any new authority over them. He will find them armed against himself, as well as against his people or his neighbours; and he cannot relieve his subjects, if he would. The Asiatick governments, and all that are like them, are modelled

for the destruction of [the] human race; and yet the best and wisest man that ever lived, were he at the head of one of those governments, must act according to its bloody maxims, or quickly perish. Brutus, in the place of the Great Turk, must have been a Great Turk, and observed all the essential principles of that savage monarchy. Human wisdom cannot give freedom to Turkey; and if the laws of liberty, practised amongst us, were to be followed there, especially in cases of treason, there would be an end of the empire in a month, and every bashaw would be an independent king. Great empires cannot subsist without great armies, and liberty cannot subsist with them. As armies long kept up, and grown part of the government, will soon engross the whole government, and can never be disbanded; so liberty long lost, can never be recovered. Is not this an awful lesson to free states, to be vigilant against a dreadful condition, which has no remedy.

This therefore is the situation of the best arbitrary prince, as to his conduct and popularity. The good that he would do, he cannot do; and the good that he does, he sometimes dares not own. He is often hated for his best deeds, and slandered for his noblest qualities: If he rule by soldiers, he must oppress his people; and if he favour his people, he is in danger from his soldiers. Where there are factions, he is sure of one of them for his foes; and is exposed to the cruelty of the bigots for his mercy to all men. As to limited princes, who have the laws for the rules of their actions, and rule their actions by those laws, and study in all things the happiness of their people, they may be secure from the convulsions which are scarce separable from absolute monarchies; nor are they necessitated to exercise the violence and fraud by which the others subsist, unless they have the misfortune to govern a people mad with enthusiasm and bigotry: And there is no remedy but to overcome the enthusiasm, or to be carried away with it; to comply in some instances with reigning and popular prejudices; to elude their force by seeming to yield to them; and in time, by patience and prudent management, wholly to destroy them.

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I am, &c.

No. 5. SATURDAY, November 30, 1723.

Considerations upon the Condition of Prime Ministers of State. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-322]

SIR,

I have considered, in three former letters, some of the many evils that encompass royalty: I shall here consider the condition of great ministers; who are far from being so happy as they appear. Those who view them at a distance, are apt to measure their happiness by their greatness; and, as they do in other things, to take appearances for proofs. They see the elevation of great men, the shew that they make, the numbers that follow them, and the obedience and adoration which are paid them; and from all this infer a suitable degree of felicity. This is wrong reasoning. The world affords not more unhappy men, than those who seem to abound in happiness, by abounding in certain things, which others, who have them not, consider as the means of happiness. The increase of fortune is followed by an increase of cares; and riches and power, so much the aim of all men, as the chief causes of worldly happiness, are no more capable of giving it, than of giving health, strength, or beauty; but often become real misfortunes, and the bitter sources of misery in various shapes. All which will be more manifest from an enquiry into the condition of a great man.

In his pursuit of greatness he will meet with many rough rebukes, and many shocking disappointments. Things, upon which he had set his heart, will often fail him; and the next hopes of his ambition be often frustrated. Little men and small accidents will frequently do him great and essential harm; and the chance of a day destroy the schemes of years. Those who are his equals, will not care to see over their heads one who they think ought to be at their elbow; and when he offers to break out of his rank, will be apt to give him an invidious pull backwards. They will not care to see their companion become their master; and such as are yet greater than he, will not love one who would be as great as they, and when he is as great, would be greater; one, who, having been accustomed to mount above his equals, aims visibly at equalling his superiors or at having none.

Here are the beginnings of numerous conspiracies against him and his ambition; conspiracies that will watch his steps, retard his advancement, blast his views, and perhaps his reputation; and, when he has gained ground, be ready to set him back again: They will often reduce him to difficulties, often to despair, or to painful patience, and make his ascent tedious and tiresome: They will be heavy weights upon him while he rises, and thorns in his side when he is risen; and possibly push him over a precipice at last.

In his state of exaltation he will find new difficulties to encounter, besides most of the old ones increased; and the grandeur which he had so long and so painfully pursued, he will now find to be chiefly pomp and name, the reputation of happiness without happiness: He will meet with a thousand mortifications which a private character is a stranger to, and which but for his elevation he would have never known. He will never be able to oblige all who are able to hurt him, if they be not obliged; nor to terrify all who can distress him, if they be not terrified. By this power he will think himself entitled to honour and submission; and where he misses the same, as certainly he often will, his vexation will be as great as are the notions which he entertains of his worth and power; and those notions being generally sufficiently selfish, that is, extreme, that vexation must likewise be extreme.

Hence a disappointment in small things often gives men great disturbance; not from the value of the thing, but from the value which they put upon themselves; and great men are not apt to value themselves less than other men are, but much more, and, at least, in proportion to their greatness. A private man's vineyard could not be of much importance to a king; but a king thought it of great importance to be refused, when he had set his heart upon having it. Ahab could not brook this refusal of Naboth; and therefore "Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased; and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." 1 Kings xxi. 4. Archbishop Laud was equally discontented, and more enraged, by a jest of Archy, the King's fool, upon the mad and unsuccessful pranks which his Grace was playing with religion in Scotland; so enraged, that though Archy was a professed arid allowed buffoon, and had made many jests equally severe upon the King himself without offence, yet of so fierce and unforgiving a temper was the Archbishop, and so much a greater man than his Majesty, that poor Archy was by a solemn act of council banished the court, for offending his meek Grace of Canterbury.

Such instances shew, that trifles are capable of mortifying the most exalted men, because the most exalted men think that they ought to be balked and ruffled in nothing, and expect to be protected by their exaltation from all contradiction and opposition: Whereas greatness, which must be supported by much action, and by the co-operation of many persons, does, by increasing their necessities and views, increase also their anxieties and disappointments. They will need many helps, and be obliged to embark in many designs; and both the helps and the designs that they relied on will often fail them. And as they will find the cause of that failure in the shortness of their power, it will be natural for them to be trying expedients to enlarge their power: If those expedients miscarry, as they frequently will, their uneasinesses are multiplied by an attempt to cure them: If they succeed, the success will only imbitter their enemies, and probably help to strengthen them, by furnishing them with a popular handle for reproach, and for alarming the publick. And as to their friends, who are only to be made so by giving each his lot in the power which they assist to raise, it is not to be expected that they will raise it so high, as no longer to want their assistance, unless in cases perfectly desperate, when in the last struggle of parties one or other must inevitably swallow all; and then the respect of persons must carry it.

But I speak here of the usual contention for the usual advantages of power, which is not to be acquired without difficulty and struggles, unless where by the maggot of a prince a favourite is raised in a day; as King James I from a stripling, without name or experience, or any fitness for business, made young Villiers his first minister for his handsome face. But, however it may be thus hastily got, or rather given, that minister found that it was not easily kept: for, though he was possessed of his master's whole authority, and invested, in effect, with royalty; and though that weak timorous king did not at first, and afterwards durst not, refuse him any thing, how absurd, extravagant, and arbitrary soever; and though the civil and military lists were filled with his creatures and family; yet he was not too big to be shaken: His foundation, as strong and broad as it was, felt many terrible convulsions; and if King Charles I who had likewise taken him for his minister, or rather for his master, had not loved him better than he loved the constitution, and parted with the Parliament rather than part with Buckingham, his fall must have been as swift as his rise, as it was afterwards sudden by the hand of an assassin.

Cardinal Richelieu, infinitely more able, and far more powerful, as that monarchy, which he governed with a high hand, was more absolute than ours, was never free from difficulties, dangers, and embarrassments: And though by his great talents and good fortune he overcame them almost as fast as they arose; yet still they arose as fast as he overcame them. The intrigues of the cabinet against him were so many, so powerful, and so constant, that, though he had almost all Europe to contend with, he declared, that one chamber (meaning the

cabinet) embarrassed him more than all Europe. The plots against his power were perpetual, and there were frequent plots against his life: Cardinal de Retz (then the Abbot de Retz) owns himself to have been engaged in one, and Monsieur Cinqmars died for another. Cinqmars was the King's favourite, and the King knew his design, though it does not appear that he approved it; but it is certain that he hated the Cardinal, as did all France.

As his power grew, his crosses and danger grew; so much are they mistaken, who from the growth of power expect equal ease and security. Cardinal Richelieu had the entire power of France in his hands, her armies, her garrisons, and her finances: The King was no more than his pupil; and every thing that obeyed the monarchy, obeyed him. Mazarin, who had the same authority, but seems to me to have been rather a little tricking Italian than a great politician, underwent so many insults, disgraces, dangers, and disappointments, that none but a man mad with ambition and avarice would have held his place upon such miserable terms.

G

I am, &c.

No. 6. SATURDAY, December 7, 1723.

The same Subject continued. [Gordon] ↩

[IV-329]

SIR,

It is true, that the ministers whom I mentioned in my last were arbitrary ministers, and committed acts of power, which made them justly terrible; but it is equally true of Cardinal Richelieu, that his justest and his wisest actions created him the most powerful enemies, and the greatest danger: And it is true of every minister, that the good which he does is as odious to faction as his errors are, often more; and that his services to the publick are, in some instances, through misrepresentations, from envy, made distasteful to the people, who must feel those services before their distaste be removed. And if he has made, or they believe that he has made, any ill steps (a case by no means rare), they will be apt to believe that all his steps are ill, to confound the good and the bad, and to hope no good from him. Nor has he any ready way of removing those ill impressions, but by some such sudden and signal act of praise and popularity as perhaps he has no opportunity to perform; and to remove them by degrees, and by a continued series of worthy actions, perhaps the term of his life, or of his power, is not sufficient. And as sometimes the most glorious actions are done with ill views, he who does them will not be more adored by some, than he will be dreaded and reproached by others. And hence the beginning or increase of factions, which almost always extol or condemn implicitly, and by no other rule but that of blind affection and blind antipathy.

And as faction, on one side, will be watching, thwarting, and exposing all that he does; his own party, on the other, will be making advantages of his distresses, and consequently be distressing him more; and he will find it harder to defend himself from his friends, and to preserve their dependence, than to disappoint his foes: Every party hangs together by interest, and every particular means his own. It is impossible to gratify all; and all that are not gratified are disobliged: Whoever therefore is at the head of a party, has but an uneasy station. Whatever blaze he may make, and however absolute he may seem, his disappointments often equal his triumphs; and when we say that he carries all before him, it is because we see his successes, but not his difficulties.

Besides, he has equal trouble and solicitude from small as from great matters. For every little favour which he has to bestow, he has numerous little suitors, as well as several great ones, who become suitors for the small, and think their reputation concerned not to be denied. So that perhaps there are a dozen considerable men soliciting earnestly for one inconsiderable place, and each ready to resent a refusal, and to disappoint him in something of greater moment, if he disappoint them in that, as he must do most of them. Sometimes he has twenty embarrassments of the like nature upon his hand, besides many greater; as particularly, when several considerable men are all candidates for some considerable thing, which can only be given to one; and all the rest are made enemies, or cool friends.

And as there is no greatness without emulation, his attacks from rivals must be incessant, and frequently powerful and dangerous. They who follow power, will themselves never want followers; and such as aim at his place, will never want creatures, nor consequently strength. It sometimes happens that one of his own creatures, whom he trusts (as he must trust somebody), shall make use of that trust to supplant him; a method which, I think, is as frequent as any other; and hence he is sometimes persuaded by his false friends into measures which they intend shall destroy him. Sometimes schemes are offered him, which they know he will reject; and then his non-compliance, however honest, is made a crime, and

the cause of his disgrace; and he often bears the reproach of the evil counsels which he opposed. Sometimes a step taken to subdue his rivals, shall end in exalting them; and sometimes an advance made to win his enemies, throws him into their power. Add to all this the difficulty of managing the humours of a prince, and of pleasing the people at the same time. A hard task! Princes are afraid of a minister who has too much credit; and he cannot serve them, if he has none. Neither is the favour of the most powerful prince able always to preserve a minister. The demands of the people, or of a great party, often make his dismissal unavoidable; of which there are endless instances. Cardinal Richelieu, indeed, found a way to govern the French king and the French nation, in spite of themselves; but I have already shewn what uneasinesses he underwent. No prince will love a minister whom he dares not part with; and no minister will care to be of so little importance as to be parted with at pleasure.

It is another plague of greatness, that he who has it has scarce any leisure, any agreeable moments to throw away upon amusements and indolence; even when he is doing no business, the cares of business follow him, with a concern for preserving and enlarging his power, always attacked from one quarter or another, and always liable to be attacked in some weak place or other. The necessity of receiving and of making many applications, of raising some creatures, and gaining others; of disappointing the machinations and assaults of enemies; of making many dispatches, or directing them to be made; of giving access and part of his time to such as have or claim a right to see him, who will always be many, and always resent it if they cannot see him; and of concerting and pursuing favourite projects: I say, all this must either engage him entirely, or he cannot expect to stand. Perpetual industry and anxiety are generally the terms upon which he stands; and if he be idle or recluse, his affairs will be in confusion, and he himself pursued with clamour, as neglectful of the publick, and unequal to his trust. Nor will the partiality and authority of the prince be able to protect him long, at least without exposing his own reputation for the idleness of his minister.

When therefore a minister is strongly addicted to his pleasures, it is a great misfortune to a prince, to the people, and himself. A man whose head is often warm with wine, or perpetually possessed with women or gaming, must often neglect business, or do it hastily. This is not only postponing, but sacrificing the publick to pleasure. Thus the Duke of Buckingham involved us in two wars at once, with France and Spain for disappointed lust; and thus the invasion of Italy by Francis I, the unfortunate Battle of Pavia, the loss of a noble army, the long captivity and imprisonment of that great king, were the effects of the passion of one of his ministers for an Italian beauty, whom he was resolved to enjoy once more, at the peril of his master and of his dominions.

It is true that the pleasures of a minister, which do not affect the publick, ought not to offend it; but it is as true, that however private and personal they are, they will give publick offence; and it is his misfortune that they can scarce ever be hid. His haunts and diversions will soon be observed and known. Several people must be trusted, some of them will certainly whisper; and private whispers about publick men will grow to be publick rumours; and amongst the rigid and precise, or those who pretend to be so, the man of pleasure always passes for a debauched man.

A minister is liable to the same or greater censure of misrepresentation in the making or enlarging his fortune. Men may, by accidents, by conspicuous parts, by the caprice of a prince, or by the partiality and weight of a party, arrive at greatness without the assistance of wealth: But wealth is, doubtless, a great help to a man who would rise; and he who is careless of acquiring it, judges ill. It is one of his greatest stays, and sometimes his only one. Now, however fairly he comes by it, it is odds but part of it, if not the whole, will be ascribed to corruption. Ill-natured comparisons will be made between what he had, which will be generally lessened; and what he has, which will be more generally aggravated; and the fruits

of private management and industry will be called publick plunder. So that as the neglect of riches is imprudent, the accumulation of riches is unpopular. I have known great ministers go poor out of employment, when it was thought that their estates were immense; and what others had got was sometimes reckoned ten times greater than it proved.

The last thing which I mention upon this subject is, that men who have once tasted of greatness, can scarce ever after relish a private life. The toils, tumult, and anxieties, inseparable from power, make them often sick of it, but never willing to leave it. Self-love tells them, that as nothing is too much for them, so they are constantly worthy to keep what they have; and as the displacing them is a contradiction to this opinion, and the putting others in their room a declaration that others are more worthy, their pride is and continues inflamed, and they are never to be cured of hatred or emulation towards their successors. So that, besides the loss of power, and consequently of homage, pomp, and submission (a tribute always dear to all mankind), they live ever after angry and affronted; and if they have any pleasure, it is when things go wrong under their successors. Nor can old age and infirmities, unless they be such as render them utterly unfit for business, cure them of this uneasiness and painful ambition. England affords instances of men who have lived forty years after their dismissal from power, in a constant struggle to regain it: At fourscore they were in the midst of intrigues: When they had lost all other appetites, their lust of power was in its vigour; upon the brink of the grave, their eyes were unnaturally turned backwards to secular grandeur, and their souls bent upon dominion.

This is one of the greatest curses which attend power, that they who have enjoyed it, can rarely ever after enjoy retirement; which yet they are always extolling, and seeming to long for, while it is out of their reach. In the hurry and solicitude of employment, beset with cares, fears, and enemies, they see the security, ease, and calm of recess; but are never to be reconciled to the terms upon which it is to be had. What! Descend from on high, and from giving laws to a nation, be lost in the multitude, and upon a level with those who adored them, and see others adored in their room; others, whom probably they hated, probably despised! This is a sorrowful and a dreadful thought to ambition; and they consider their discharge as a sentence of ignominy and exile.

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I am,&c.

FINIS

Endnotes to Volume 4

- [*] Dr. Clarke's remarks upon a philosophical enquiry concerning human liberty. Page 43.
- [*] Here he mentioned one of the highest dignities in the church.
- [*] Westminster, in the time of Dr. Atterbury, whose protection, or that of his high bailiff, some bawdy-houses claimed against the authority of the justices of peace.
- [*] The Independent Whig.