







A BRIEF AND IMPARTIAL

R E V I E W

OF THE

S T A T E

OF

GREAT BRITAIN, &c.



A BRIEF AND IMPARTIAL  
R E V I E W  
OF THE STATE OF  
G R E A T B R I T A I N,  
AT THE  
C O M M E N C E M E N T  
OF THE  
*Fourth Session of the Fifteenth Parliament*  
OF THE  
P R E S E N T R E I G N.  
HUMBLY ADDRESSED  
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND HONOURABLE  
THE  
L O R D S A N D C O M M O N S  
O F  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

— Quod si exemeris ex Naturâ Rerum benevolentiæ Junctionem, nec  
Domus ulla, nec Urbs stare poterit; ne Agri quidem Cultus permanebit —  
Quæ enim Domus tam stabilis, quæ tam firma Civitas est, quæ non Odiis  
atque Diffidiis funditus possit everti?

CICERO.

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A

BRIEF AND IMPARTIAL

REVIEW, &c.

THE hour of quiet and repose is the season most proper for cool and dispassionate reflection. The alarm and hurry incident to busy and eventful scenes, and the turbulent passions excited by a suspension of hope and fear, in a state of extended and hazardous hostility, disqualify the mind for such attentive consideration of the commonwealth, as is necessary, in order to enable a good citizen to act in the manner most conducive to the solid and substantial interests of his country. Such consideration is useful at

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all times, but more particularly so in a period decisive of our future welfare.

Without mature reflection, and a detailed view of the state of public affairs, there is danger that the honest and unsuspecting will become dupes to the selfish and designing. It is not my purpose to question the degree of regard and reverence due, to that species of public opinion, which is usually termed the *voice of the people*. But I cannot forbear to observe, that the true way to preserve its dignity and importance, is to render it the voice of truth and justice, and a sober discretion. The voice of the people ought never to be degraded to the echo of revenge, discontent and disappointed ambition. To make the popular voice the just standard of public virtue, it is necessary that it should be the result of minute investigation and attentive enquiry. It will be contemned and disregarded, when debased to the inconstant acclamation of inconsiderate temerity, or to the idle clamour of misguided folly.

It

It cannot therefore be an unprofitable task, to attempt to enlighten the public mind, that the energy of national opinion may be directed with efficacy to promote the general welfare. This, I think, will be found more necessary in the present, than in any past time.

On setting out to the public view a plain state of our affairs, both foreign and domestic, it will be seen, that if there ever has been a season of peculiar emergence—a crisis of uncommon delicacy—If there has been, at any time, a conjuncture in the affairs of a nation that called for the collective wisdom, and united exertion of the whole body of the people, it is to be met with in the present situation of the British empire. It is the purpose of the present address, to collect into one point of view, the numerous difficulties and embarrassments, with which we are surrounded on every side—To sketch out such a picture of our true situation, as will move every British heart and hand to co-operate in the great work of restoring us to our former prosperous

state. The plan of *systematic discord* has had a long trial, and most calamitous issue. Every good man wishes to see it buried in the same grave, where it has laid the grandeur and prosperity of his country.

It is something, that we have got a breathing time from our difficulties—It has been dearly purchased, and requires much management and address to turn it to account. In this pause of calamity, we have time to look around us, and contemplate the many new political relations, which the independence of America has introduced. Many and great as the changes are, that have been already produced by this revolution, I hazard but little in pronouncing it pregnant with events, still more numerous and important.

The difficulties are considerable that attend any speculation on a subject, at once complicated and new. History furnishes no lights to guide us, in a conjuncture, to which nothing parallel can be discovered in the annals of mankind. The  
balance

balance of power, which has exercised the talents, and agitated the passions of the European world, for near a century past, is now entirely destroyed, and a fresh equilibrium is to be sought after in the nice equipoise of new divisions and subdivisions of alliance, power, jealousy and competition. Were a new world to have sprung up from the depths of the ocean, flourishing in men, arms, cultivation and commerce; a more entire and complete reverse of system in the politics of Europe, could not have been effected.

Nor is it the actual situation of things, that alone has been reversed by the late revolution. The opinions of mankind have undergone a mighty change. All the specious plausibilities of the world have lost their authority. The minds of men unrestrained by the reverence due to ancient maxims, and established usage, are universally agitated with a busy spirit of change and innovation. Those, who are acquainted with the mighty influence of opinion in all human affairs, are not to be informed, what

what a large portion of political obedience depends upon its authority.

Retrospective wisdom, and book knowledge, are little available in such a trying concurrence of difficulties—It requires a prompt sagacity to discern the objects actually passing in view, and to adapt our conduct to the exigency of the times, instead of dully plodding on in the antiquated trammels of an exploded system. It is not the least of her misfortunes, that Britain should be obliged to quit her ancient maxims, and be compelled, in her old age, to enter upon a new study of experimental policy, where knowledge is to be gradually gleaned from laborious discovery, independent of any known established theory. An intimate acquaintance with the thousand ways in which our remaining power and commerce are liable to be affected, by the shifting impression of a new empire, in a new world, is a science the most abstruse and complicated.

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This impression is felt in all quarters—In our treaty with France, we find a stipulation for new commercial regulations—The same in the Spanish treaty—The Dutch too, I mean the ruling faction in Holland, seem but little disposed to renew the ancient connection that has subsisted between England and her, with little exception, from the revolution to the present time. Such are the symptoms of change abroad, created by American independence, while in its domestic affairs, England feels the shock to the very center of her commerce and power. Can any man, who means honestly to the commonwealth, think this a fit time for exasperating the bitterness of internal division, and attempting a revival of past animosities?

On a more distinct view of our affairs, it will evidently appear, that this general picture of our difficulties and embarrassments, is, by no means, overcharged. It will be pressed home to the conviction and feeling of every man, that to extricate us, are required not only a combination

nation of whatever is left to this country, of talents, of virtue, of personal weight and family consideration, in the higher orders; but also the chearful concurrence, and animating confidence of the people at large. To begin with our foreign politics.

France has been so long in a state of constant competition, and so frequently of bitter hostility with this country, as to be deemed, and generally stiled, her natural enemy. The propriety of the phrase may be an object of criticism; but the justness of the national feeling that originally gave birth to it, has seldom been questioned. The *national* antipathy to France, is by no means founded on a *national* contraction of sentiment; it originates from the necessary relation of things, and a strong sense of *national* interest. Where two great states are so situated, as that the security and power of the one are dependent on the weakness and depression of the other—Where the gain of one is the loss of the other—A sentiment of self-preservation, and, what is almost equally forcible

cible in its operation — a sentiment of ambition intolerant of equality, will for ever keep nations so circumstanced in a state of secret rivalry, or open hostility. France and England furnish an example in point. Ever since the growth of the power of France, by the union of her provinces, the depression of the House of Austria, the weakness first, and consequent accession of Spain, and the creation of a formidable marine by Lewis XIV. that power has proved a most dangerous neighbour to Great-Britain. Nor will the competition cease, till a decided superiority or an entire subjugation of either kingdom be fully accomplished.

To give an adequate view, therefore, of the present state of our foreign politics, it will be necessary to consider our new relations to other states, as they have a tendency to affect our grand relation, to this our great and natural rival, and in this consideration to look attentively to the changes which commerce, the



great source of power, has sustained by the late revolution. In pursuance of this plan, the most natural way is to begin with America, the great original cause of all the late and present alterations.

It is painful to be obliged, at the outset, to consider America as an accession to the House of Bourbon. But that such an intimate union, political and commercial, as is highly detrimental to this country, subsists at present between America and France, is a truth universally obvious.

The political connection depends so much on causes in their nature transient and temporary, and moulds in its very constitution so many repelling principles, which the operation of a strong external necessity has compressed for a time into a forced union, that its duration cannot be lasting. Its dissolution, however, must be the work of time, and can be very little accelerated by any efforts of ours. On the contrary, any interposition on our part in the present jealousy of the *New States*, and  
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during the obsequious dependence of Congress, and the American agents, on the *liberality* of France, would probably have a tendency the very reverse of what we hoped. Therefore, great as is the pressure of the present evil, we must bear it with patience, and leave to time the gradual but certain operation of the intrinsic causes of disconnection, interwoven with the French alliance. When the Americans are left to themselves, they will soon discover a jealousy of French influence, equally strong as their late impatience of British sovereignty. In the mean time, caresses and adulation can serve to no other end but to humble Great-Britain, and render America more suspicious and less practicable. Let us stand with temper and firmness on the fair ground of our right, and adhere to the spirit of treaty. America will neither condemn nor suspect us.

In regard to commerce, our ministers have adopted what to me seems a very wise and politic measure, and the only one immediately necessary. I allude to the act of council prohibit-

ing all intercourse, between the New States and the British West-India islands. This measure deserves a good deal of consideration, both for its own importance, as well as its having been the object of much censure.

There is a degree of popular intoxication, inseparable from a great and successful revolution, which, added to an infatuated facility in our first negotiations, has misled the Americans to think; that they had been fighting, not merely for a naked, barren independence, but an independence that was to be clothed, cherished and fostered with all the tender care and fond solicitude which, in the Halcyon days of former connection, she had so amply experienced. The vast range of important territory to which the different colonies had some pretensions, as British subjects; — the valuable fisheries carried on in the same right on the coasts of Newfoundland; — an island discovered, settled, and defended at an immense expence to this country; — the monopoly of the fur trade: —

All

All these enormous concessions, which were meant for conciliation, are considered by the Americans, as so many legal appurtenances to independence. Is their gratitude called forth by this extravagant profusion of kindness? Far otherwise. The fact is, that while the policy of the British government was lavishing commerce and territory on America; while it was complimenting away, in all the refinement of a duplicity that ever recoils on its author, Canada and the fisheries, the Americans were employed in meditating heavy and unequal duties on the British trade. While the British negociators are sacrificing their friends and allies, — the Loyalists and the Indian nations; — while they are lavishing the commerce, dominion, marine, and good faith of their country, on the *hope* of regaining the American trade — the New States are employed in securing to France the *jura amicissime gentis*, in exclusion of Great Britain. I refer the reader to the very disproportioned duties imposed by America on the several articles of English and  
French

French West-India produce. They have lately appeared in the daily papers, and therefore need not be here repeated. But it is worthy of remark, that these highly partial duties are in a manner prohibitory of almost the whole *export* trade, from the British islands, to the American continent. Observe, then, the justice of the American complaints. They prohibit us from the sale of *our* produce, the only benefit to be expected, from *their* intercourse, with the British West Indies. This lucrative part of the trade they confine to the French ; and yet they complain, that we preclude them from vending their *native* commodities in the *British* islands.—*Modest America ! Unassuming independence !* — Who, in the name of *reciprocity*, can refuse such equitable demands ?

What renders these pretensions still more mortifying, is, that they are urged in the high tone of the *preliminaries*. A compliance with them is not treated as matter of *favour* but of *right*. Independence has been pretty well fledged by the grants, that have been already made — The  
West

West Indies are now demanded, to put it in full feather. But the genius of concession no longer predominates in the British councils — The policy of bartering solid advantages for speculative returns of gratitude and affection is *now* no more. The present ministers act on plainer maxims; they are resolved to concede nothing without a suitable equivalent. This I take to be the true ground of the late act of council, which has been the subject of so much preposterous animadversion.

What, in the name of wonder! will these clamorous advocates for unlimited indulgence to the New States have us do? Will they, with an abject and ruinous complaisance, force on the unrequiting fullness of independence, all the long train of bounties, privileges, and exemptions, in favour of American produce, with which our statute book is loaded? — In return for what? For an impracticable spirit, for contumely and proscription. For God's sake! let us stand on the ground of the advantages we possess,

possess, and leave the Americans to the blessings of independence !

I know it will be objected, that the Eastern provinces, depending much on the export to the West Indies, on ship building and the carrying trade, will be greatly distressed by the measure in question. To this I answer, that as they no longer make a part of the British empire, it cannot be expected that we should relieve *them*, by distressing *ourselves*. Except in the general interests of humanity, what are the distresses of the Eastern provinces of America to us ? They are certainly no more our concern, than the Eastern provinces of China and Japan. Let their own government relieve them out of their own resources.—Let France, their most favoured nation, relieve them. — Or let them shew England, that it is *her* interest to remove her restrictions, by an adequate return of benefit, and *she* will relieve them. — It is idle to talk of gratuitous benefits in the intercourse of nations. The act suspending the American trade is therefore a measure of just policy,

policy, founded on a due regard to our commercial interests. It cannot be justly construed into a measure of irritation, inasmuch as it steers equally clear of the intemperance of resentment, as of the folly of unbalanced concession. It is an act that we must abide by, till the Americans concede something equivalent in return. The policy of Gotham would be disgraced, by adhering to the ridiculous spirit of *preliminary reciprocity*. It has already debased us to the contempt of America, to the scorn of our enemies, and to the ridicule and pity of the rest of the world.

But another objection, much more serious in appearance, is that the act in question will provoke a spirit of retaliation in the New States. The very turn of this objection discovers the quarter whence it originates. If I rightly understand the term, retaliation presupposes an aggression. Is there any aggression in regulating our own trade? But as there is a new species of political *reciprocity*; so, it seems, is there a new kind of *retaliation*, now for the first time discovered, for the purpose of frightening us from doing what it is plainly right and wise in us to do. *Reciprocity* has cost us pretty dear.



God forbid that *retaliation* should be equally chargeable !

But wherefore are we to be stretched upon the rack of American retaliation ? Truly, because we will not admit the New States to a share, perhaps to the whole of the profits of our West India trade, in return for their excluding us from their markets. They have been taught to connect ideas the most dissimilar and irreconcilable, — to associate *independence* with *the advantages of British subjects*. The British West Indies are not open to the Swedes, nor the Russians ; wherefore is it that these nations do not threaten to *retaliate* ? They have a much better claim than independent America ; they have not admitted the subjects of any other state to superior advantages in their ports. Will the New States *retaliate* on Spain, unless they are indulged with a free trade to the Spanish main ? At this rate, there is to be no end to American *retaliation*. Or shall we be told that the English, who are the only people aggrieved by the tariff of the New States, are to be the only object of their *retaliation*, unless they admit them to a participation, on their own terms, of a trade monopolised by every other maritime nation ?

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The demands of the New States are made pretty much after the following fashion. “ We have excluded you,” says America, “ from every advantage of our past connection. — You were a tyrant, no longer worthy our favours — We have, besides, heaped calamity upon your head, and loaded you with insult — In return, you have secured to us, in perpetual sovereignty, a fertile and extensive territory, which, while subjects, we enjoyed only in a disputed pretension — You have granted to us your most valuable fishery — We have excluded you from ours — You have granted us the fur trade, with the absolute command of all the forts, lakes, rivers, and carrying places that are necessary to secure its monopoly. We have requited you with proscriptive duties — Concede to us a free access to your West-India possessions, and the carriage of your sugars to the European market ;— ship building is our trade ; we, therefore, can carry them cheaper than *British-built* ships — Grant this, or we will *retaliate*.” — Better to perish with the little honour the peace has left us, than submit to such disgrace and humiliation from a *French* Congress, from *French* agents, and a confederacy of frantic committees !

But what are to be the dreadful effects of the just resentments of their High Mightinesses the New States ? *You will exasperate America to such a degree, that the whole of her trade will become an accession to France* — This is the idlest of all possible fears ; the widest from all rational theory on the subject of commerce, as well as the most contradictory of experience.

Commerce founded in a great measure on imaginary wants, is as free of spirit, and as independent of restriction as the fashions, opinions, and caprices of mankind. It may be some times moulded by much care and art, but it must be guided with a pretty close conformity to its natural principles. These principles are as various as the habits, customs and sentiments of men, as diversified as the climes they breathe in, and the countries they inhabit. Are these principles of commerce capable of being strained from their bias, by the arm of legislative authority ?

Neither does the preference of the Americans rest merely on opinion. The superiority of British manufacture, particularly of our woollens and hardware, secures to us a considerable share of the American trade. In the most dreary period of the late war, it is well known, that  
British

British manufactures forced their way to their old market in the colonies, under every possible discouragement from the ruling powers. I appeal to the experience of our merchants. Has the trade increased considerably since the cessation of hostilities? By no means. These facts are worth a thousand speculations. They prove in the most forcible manner, the irresistible bias of the American market to the British trade.

No restraints will be sufficiently efficacious to extinguish the deep-rooted predilection of the Americans for articles of British manufacture. It is a sentiment founded on inveterate habits, and upheld by a strong sense of convenience. What then have we to fear from the paper chains, with which the French have fettered the American trade? On the first pinch of restraint, the wily American will slip his neck from the harness, and leave his *great* and *good* ally to the idle condolences of *the council of the Amphycetions*. British commerce with the strongest fibres, and the soundest stamina, is the most dastardly of cowards. The slightest appearance of competition and restraint serves to throw this highly nervous system into convulsions. But the alarm soon wears off, and the native  
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vigour of its constitution in a short time restores it to its natural health.

There is another circumstance, that gives us an advantage above the French in the American market. The superiority of his capital enables the English, to give a longer credit, than the French merchant. This circumstance, so momentous in all commercial concerns, has a more powerful operation in America than elsewhere. There are few men of large fortunes in America, fewer than in any other country of equal population, and general opulence. It is a fact that in some of the northern provinces there are not two men, who can afford to spend a thousand pounds a year out of their own country. The number of those, who could cultivate their lands without an advance of many articles of European manufacture, was inconsiderable even before the war. They must have been reduced still lower by their late exertions. It is unnecessary to apply these remarks.

But suppose our ministers to have every possible disposition to conclude a commercial treaty with America, as I am fully persuaded is the case; I would fain know, on what prospect of  
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permanence, it can be negotiated in the present juncture? Not to mention the unnatural leaning of America to the interests of France, whose influence is now at its zenith, and will be hereafter hourly on the decline, what security can we have, that the New States will carry into effect the stipulations of their agents? Are their powers derived from Congress, or the provincial sovereignties? If from the first, they will be disowned by the assemblies; if from the assemblies, they will be disregarded by the committees. There is no established executive, at present in America — In the genuine spirit of freedom, every man is his own governor. From Congress we can only expect the courtesy of recommendatory letters. Are the British plenipotentiaries to pilgrim it from Penobscot to Savannah, in search of the *reliques* of the *common sense of America*? Are they to conclude a separate treaty, with every petty association, civil and military, which maintains an independent sovereignty within its respective districts? \*

\* That there are men amongst us, who would favour a negotiation of this kind, *their practices nearer home* fully evince—But that such practices will meet the approbation of men of integrity and independent principles, is an expectation, somewhat too sanguine.

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The importance of the policy, proper to be observed towards America, will sufficiently apologize for my having treated this subject so much in detail. The plan observed by the present ministers, differs totally from that of their predecessors. The former negotiated on the principle of exchanging substantial advantage, for shadowy expectation. The latter, in the spirit of plain dealing, are determined to give up nothing, that belongs to us, without an adequate compensation. Whether it be for the interest of this country to have a *commercial line* drawn in the spirit of Mess. Oswald's *territorial boundary*, I leave to the discernment of the reader.

Nothing in my mind can be equally efficacious to bring America to reason, as the present strain of vigorous policy. To maintain this, it is necessary that Parliament should decisively concur with the views of ministers. Let us shew the bold face of Unanimity and a stable government to America, and they will treat us with respect and obsequence.

I am in the next place, to proceed to examine the new relations in which Holland stands, as well in respect of this country, as of France. In what manner the United States have become  
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an accession to our natural enemy, is not, I believe, so generally known, as a matter of such importance deserves. In order to have a clear idea of this, as well as of the present disposition of the people of that country, it will be necessary to look back to the ancient politics of the states.

Soon after the establishment of the Dutch commonwealth, we read in their history, that it became divided into two powerful parties, which have subsisted ever since with little intermission—The one composed of the friends and adherents to the Prince of Orange—The other consisting principally of the Aristocratic members of the commonwealth. The former is known by the name of the *Stadtholder's*, the latter by that of the *Louvenstein Faction*. The Louvenstein party have ever been as warmly devoted to the French, as their adversaries to the English interest. There is a third party, called the Democratic, which is very considerable at all times, and at present carries with it a very great sway. This is the general outline of the state of parties in the Dutch commonwealth; there are several inferior subdivisions of interests, but they fall in with one, or other of the two great leading Factions.

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But it is to be remarked, that the English interest has been often predominant, when the power of the Stadtholder has been at a very low ebb. Nor is the renovation of our ancient union with the States, at all connected, with the restitution of the prerogatives and former influence of the Stadtholder. This is a question of domestic policy, which it would be the extreme of folly, for Great Britain to intermeddle in, as she might thereby disgust some of her best friends, and still farther exasperate her enemies. The democratic party has often fluctuated from one side to the other. It is at present entirely French, and totally averse from the Stadtholder.

From the tragical termination of the power of the De Wittes, but more particularly since the revolution, to the commencement of the American war, the English interest had maintained a decisive ascendancy—Yet the power of the Stadtholder had, in that long interval undergone many revolutions. The consolidating nature of commerce, which serves to compact the principal maritime powers, into one great trading empire, partially jealous, but united in general interest—A common jealousy of the formidable growth of the power of France—joined  
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with a cordial interchange of good offices—had cemented so firmly the union between England and Holland, that it continued near a century unshaken. It is reported of a great man, that he used to say ; “ *England and Holland were like man and wife, they might pout and wrangle; but it was their interest not to part.*” We may consider them therefore at present, as in a state of temporary separation \*.

It seldom happens that the ties of natural affection, or political convenience, are dissolved without the ill offices of third persons. In the present case, every engine of intrigue and corruption has been exerted on the part of France, to detach the States from their connexion with England. From the first appearance of any formidable symptoms in the discontents of America, the most refined and unwearied policy was employed by that power to secure at least a neutrality on the part of Holland in the projected attack on England. By a liberal and well directed application of very considerable sums of money, the attachment of old friends was secured, and numerous proselytes were gained

\* Never were political, and matrimonial divorces more in vogue.

over to favour the new system. It is a notorious fact, that a million of florins have been annually appropriated for some years back, to secure the single province of Zealand to the French interest. Such arguments are powerful in all countries. In Holland they are irresistible. The event is known to all.

The leaders of the French faction, which at present lords it without controul in the Dutch councils, are the *grand pensionary, Van Guyzlaer, Zeebergen, pensionary of Haerlem, and the Capellans*. The character of *Van Berkel* is well known. As to *Van Guyzlaer*, bold, turbulent and factious—Ambitious, supple and unprincipled—He attaches himself indifferently to any set of men, and embraces, without scruple, any system of measures, which hold out the fairest prospect of gratification to his insatiable appetite of power and emolument. The *Capellans* are violent popular leaders, who, by their virulent speeches and publications have succeeded in inflaming the populace against England; and in securing the democratic weight to the Louvenstein Faction.

From this brief sketch of the present dispositions of the Dutch, it is plain, that a long and  
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intricate train of delicate policy is necessary on our part, in order to counteract the machinations of France, and restore Holland to her natural position. It requires a steady and vigorous hand to give her politics their true bias. From our friends every thing is to be expected, while we have at the head of affairs, a nobleman, connected by blood, principle and hereditary attachment, with that English interest in that country. But above all, a strong and bold-faced administration, is requisite to secure that degree of respect and confidence in this country, which alone can be effectual, to create that respect, which must ever be the basis of all true friendship.

I am aware, it will be asked—*Are the ministers, who imposed such rigorous terms of peace, the proper instruments of conciliation with Holland? Are they, who compelled the Cession of Negapatnam, and wrested from the Dutch a lucrative monopoly, —auspicious messengers of harmony and friendship!* To this I answer, that to give Holland a disgust for the French alliance, is the most effectual measure for smoothing the way to a reunion with that nation. Could any thing be better calculated for this purpose, than to shew the Dutch, by palpable experience, how grossly  
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they have been duped by that power who first involved them in an impolitic war, and after multiplied losses and disgraces, at the last made them the sacrifice of an inglorious peace ? This objection is naturally made by those who agreed to restore Negapatnam and Trincomalé, that a spirit of uniform concession might be maintained from the Mississippi to the Ganges. But, in the name of Decency ! let us hear no more of complaint against ministers, for securing to this poor exhausted country some compensation for her mighty sacrifices\*.

\* Nothing can more strongly evince the folly and absurdity of concession, when meant for the purpose of conciliation, than an event, which has lately happened. An English nobleman of some consequence in his country, who had offered to the Dutch, *when he happened to be Minister*, Negapatnam with one hand, and Trincomale with the other, and besides had seasoned the gift with all the spices of the East, in a late tour through the provinces, has met with a very ungrateful return for such unbounded liberality. The noble Lord hath himself announced to the public, that the only favour he had met with from this thankless people was barely — *that he was not torn in pieces by the mob*. Such is the disposition of the Dutch populace to a *conceding* minister—While the friends of England, which description comprehends almost every man of high rank in the Dutch provinces, treated with a marked *coldness and distrust*, the *bosom friend of the Comte de Vergennes*.

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I have now explained the double relations that both Holland and America stand in, with respect to Great Britain and France, in which we discover dispositions highly alarming to the former, and every way favourable to the latter. We see our friends and kindred deserting and spurning us; we see them united with our most inveterate enemy to work our ruin. We see both America and Holland rushing madly from their spheres, to take an unnatural position in the House of Bourbon. The courage of the most undaunted must melt within him, in such a mighty convulsion of the political system of the world. France, the center of all these prodigious commotions, has just concluded a glorious and successful war, in all the pride of triumph, and with all the pomp of enlarged commerce, of extended territory, and of a flourishing marine. Let us not weakly imagine, that the formidable confederacy, which but now menaced our destruction, has been dissolved by the late pacification. The conjuncture is rendered more favourable, but its final dissolution, must be effected by the united efforts of wisdom, unanimity, vigour and confidence. Should the disordered members of that overwhelming confederacy, be suffered, without molestation to acquire shape and consistency, under the plastic influence

influence of politic France, there is an end to the glories of the British name—There is an end even to national security. But I cannot be brought to think, that the independent gentlemen of England, will unite with the house of Bourbon — to weaken their country, by intestine divisions—to disturb the repose of their sovereign—and to blast the credit and prosperity of their country, by a capricious instability, that must inevitably reduce us to the mockery of the world. An honest man will forget his little prejudices, at the call of public welfare — A great man will subdue them, for the accomplishment of a noble end, by the only practicable means.

It has been remarked of the people of England, that foreign war has been always efficacious, in quieting the rage of faction, and restoring unanimity, and consent at home. If the wars of other times had this effect, how much more strongly ought the place of the present to operate to the same end? Does any man living doubt, that the circumstances of the present peace, are more calamitous and alarming, than of any former war, except the last, for a century past? If he does let him read the preliminaries, and look to the present state of foreign politics. Let him look to the navy of France — to the  
delusions

delusions of Holland, and the distractions of America. Let him ask Russia what her projects are? Whether her vast ambition does not grasp the commerce of the East, by opening the Caspian and the Black seas, and securing the navigation of the rivers, that nearly connect them? Ask the Empress whether her plan, be not to secure that important trade, which poured the riches of the East into ancient Pontus, and enabled Mithridates to make head for so many years, against the full braced vigour of the Roman arms? what will be the fate not only of that inestimable commerce, but of every other branch of trade, should an active power, possess that vast range of fertile territory, in which the indolent Mussulman reposes in his Harum, abounding with such opportunity of ports, and such convenience of inland navigation, as scarcely any other country can boast? Besides the track by the Caspian, to the Northern and Eastern parts of India, will not the old trade with Hindostan, so long enjoyed by the Soldans, and the Caliphs by the red sea, and the isthmus of Suez, be once more attempted? These tracks are infinitely shorter, than that by the Cape of Good Hope. Should these considerations fail of conviction, I pronounce the understanding of such a man, an abject slave to faction, and his state



of political blindness utterly incurable. But my hopes of such men are not very sanguine—It is to the independent, the candid and dispassionate I address myself—It is the remaining virtue of the nation, which I adjure, by every thing dear and valuable, which is left—by the honour and security of the State—by themselves—their children and posterity—not to leave their country a prey to civil Discord, and the sport of destroying Faction.

But loud as is the call for unanimity, from external emergency, the demands from internal embarrassment will be found equally urgent. I am fully sensible, that I am now to attempt a very delicate task. If I speak freely of our domestic politics, I may be thought, to press hard on certain distinguished characters, of weight and consideration in the country. I have hitherto avoided, as much as possible, all personal strictures. It is no longer in my power, to follow my private inclinations, without deserting the cause of truth and the public. In this choice of difficulty, I think it better to hazard the indignation, even of persons distinguished by birth and power, than to leave any thing unsaid, which may serve to inform the public mind, and enable the popular voice to utter the sentiments

ments of truth and justice. To secure the co-operation of the people in important schemes of national utility, is an object of such consequence, that for the attainment of it, he must be lukewarm in the public cause, who will not run some risk. In the discussion, therefore, of questions of internal policy, my duty to the public, obliges me to a necessary frankness, at the same time that a regard to decency will ensure a proper degree of moderation and temperance. As my great object is to engage the united exertion of the nation by setting before them the extreme urgency of our situation, I shall confine myself to such questions, as create a general anxiety. In the first rank of this description, stand the affairs of the East India Company.

The present alarming state, of the commercial and territorial concerns of the British Company trading to the East Indies, is an object of such magnitude, as deserves the earliest attention of Parliament. The abuses in the government of the Company, both at home and abroad—The heavy debts both to the public and individuals, incurred by a corporation, possessed of an immense capital, at the head of the most lucrative monopoly in the world—The disregard of legal authority by the proprietary

at home, and the servants of the Company abroad—all together bespeak something radically defective, in the constitution of the Company, which without a speedy, and effectual cure from the seasonable interference of parliament, must inevitably terminate, in a total dissolution of its power and importance.

The observations, which I intend to make on the affairs of the Company, are meant to be bottomed on the authority of the reports and resolutions, of the *secret* and *select Committees*. As it has become the practice to deny the credit of these documents, it therefore is requisite, that I should try to establish their authority, before I proceed to state facts, or deduce any reasoning from their contents.

The select committee was appointed so long since as the year 1781, and has now sat without intermission for three entire sessions; in which time it has brought forward a prodigious body of evidence, which throws the fullest light upon the whole, and every part of this intricate and complicated business.

This committee is composed of gentlemen of the most unsullied probity, and first-rate talents,  
whose

whose knowledge of the subject cannot be questioned, and whose industry and perseverance are only to be equalled by their candour and fairness—To distinguish individuals, without naming the whole, would be invidious.

The proceedings of this highly respectable committee have been always open and public—The testimony of witnesses has been taken in the most solemn manner—The witnesses have been many in number, and all of them possessed of the fullest knowledge on the points, to which they have been examined—The most material evidence has been collected from the very persons, who were principals or accomplices in some of the most flagrant acts of delinquency.

So many circumstances, I believe, have never before concurred to stamp authority on the proceedings of a committee. A person would think, we were giving a logical detail of the constituents of the highest degree of credibility, instead of the actual state of the select committee on India affairs, and its manner of proceeding.

Yet are the reports of a committee so constituted, and proceeding in such an exemplary manner, daily libelled as groundless imputations

tations of unreal delinquency ; and the members, who compose it incessantly traduced with the most indecent scurrility. But they have an enjoyment beyond the reach of detraction—They have the heart-felt consolation, of having done their duty to their country, by furnishing a knowledge of the measures, requisite to be adopted, in order to save the Company from irretrievable bankruptcy, and to restore to the wretched natives of India, the protection and security of lawful government.

The resolutions brought forward by the secret committee, are a farther confirmation of the deference due to the reports of the select committee. There is such a precise coincidence of opinion between the resolutions of the secret and the reports of the select committee, as nothing but the uniformity of conviction from the same view of things, could have possibly produced. It were ridiculous to talk of a collusion, between the members of the different committees, each in itself, and both composed of persons differing on every other question of policy. — Were they capable of such business, they could have no possible motive to induce them to commit such a flagrant breach of the high trust reposed in them.

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There is therefore every degree of credit due to the reports of the select committee, that the closest investigation, aided by the most unsuspected testimony, and a respectable concurrence, can confer upon the result of parliamentary enquiry. Such is the solid foundation on which I mean to ground my remarks. From this evidence it will be made appear, that the corrupt ascendancy of the proprietary is the great source of all the distresses of the Company both at home and abroad. For sake of clearness of method, I shall begin with a brief account of their conduct under the operation of the act of 1773.

The corruptions of the proprietary body, and the insignificance of the Court of Directors, under their controul, are so fully set forth, and authenticated in the ninth report of the select committee, that but little can be added to what is there said. I shall extract a few facts from that invaluable document, as sufficient for my present purpose.

The first is, the proceedings of the General Court on the charge brought against Mr. Hastings, for having assisted, for a sum of money, to be paid to the Company, in extirpating the  
innocent

innocent nation of the Rohillas. On this charge Mr. Hastings was censured by the Court of Directors, who prepared an application to his Majesty for his recall. The General Court first unanimously censured this measure — In a short time after a majority of the proprietors shewed a disposition to approve the conduct of the governor, and resisted the application of the Court of Directors for his recall. This took place in the year 1775, when the regulating act of 1773 might be supposed to have had its full operation. A charge of peculation against the governor was dismissed at the same time.

The next instance of glaring partiality of the proprietors to Mr. Hastings was in their *acquiescing* in his continuing in the government of Bengal, after he had resigned, and a successor had been nominated by the Court of Directors, and approved by the crown.

I state these facts briefly without either comment or inference, as they have been already so fully discussed in the ninth report. A governor-general of Bengal, who has the superintendence of an annual revenue of four millions sterling, which is double to what the whole revenue of England was in the reign of Charles II. who  
has

has engrossed besides the whole vast patronage of that kingdom, civil, financial and commercial, could not fail to find or *create* many advocates in a body constituted on the plan of the proprietary — where money is power — and the conduct of individuals cannot be known from the practice of voting by ballot. Thus has the self-elected, and self-approved governor of Bengal continued in his high station, unmolested, except by some faint murmurs of the Court of Directors.

The General Court, under the influence of the servants of the Company, had now acquired an undisputed ascendancy over the Court of Directors. The next step was, to gain a victory equally decided over the authority of Parliament. Could this be accomplished, it was expected that it would have completely established the independent sovereignty of the governor and his General Court. The object was of such magnitude, as to deserve at least a vigorous attempt, which was made in the following manner.

On the authority of a most respectable committee, which had employed years in investigating the state of the Company, a resolution passed the House of Commons, for the recall



of Mr. Hastings. This alarmed the proprietary, who immediately assembled in General Court, and *ordered* the Court of Directors, not to yield obedience to the vote of the House of Commons.

The Court of Directors were now divided between the authority of Parliament, and the *commands* of the General Court. In order to extricate themselves from this difficulty, a middle course was resolved on. The Court of Directors instituted an enquiry of their own into the conduct of Mr. Hastings. The result of this enquiry was to concur with the vote of the House of Commons. This resolution of the Court of Directors brought matters to extremity.

A General Court was immediately convened, which without any form of enquiry, without examining a single witness, or calling for a single paper of any kind, after a short and tumultuous debate, instantly rescinded the resolution of the Court of Directors, though backed by the authority of the House of Commons; and though the whole executive power of the Company was vested in the Court of Directors, by the regulating act of 1773.

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Now it was to be seen, to which of these authorities, the Court of Directors would yield obedience. That Court did not long continue in suspense. The directors had been so long in a habit of implicit submission to the dictates of the General Court, conceiving themselves bound by their resolutions, that they forthwith rescinded their order for the recall of Mr. Hastings, and prepared a letter to the governor to inform him of the sentiments of the proprietors.

While the nation was yet in amazement of this open defiance of all lawful authority, a new election of directors came on. The General Court took this opportunity of manifesting still farther their utter contempt of the proceedings of Parliament.

Though the Court of Directors had suffered themselves to be overborne by menaces into an *acquiescence* in the measures of the General Court, they had not hitherto actively co-operated in the plan of the latter, of openly disclaiming all parliamentary authority. In order therefore to cement indissolubly, all the parts of the independent Republic governing the East Indies, in a firm compacted confederacy, under one

head, they took advantage of the present opportunity, to raise to the Directory Mr. Sullivan, a person labouring under a parliamentary censure of delinquency in the government of the Company. This extraordinary measure was accompanied with the elevation of others, to the same trust, who had shared deeply in the mismanagement of the Company's affairs, and were warmly attached to the interests of Mr. Hastings.

In this manner is an independent confederacy, attempted to be set up in all the pride of Sovereignty, for the purpose of plundering without controul or account the British dominions in the East. The Company is no longer a commercial corporation. It is a political body raised on the ruins of commerce, and attentive only to share in the rapine and peculation of those, who are called the Company's servants.

The Court of Proprietors is no longer composed of individuals, who have thrown their money into the Company's stock, for the sake of sharing in its commercial profits. The proprietary is made up of the friends, agents, dependents, and accomplices of the rulers abroad, qualified by the spoil, and attached by the patronage

tronage of Bengal. This state of the Company's government calls loudly for the vigorous interposition of Parliament, as well to rescue the Legislature from contempt, as to secure the trade of the nation, from the dreadful shock, which threatens every moment to overwhelm it.

This necessity will appear in a stronger light, on a view of the conduct of the rulers abroad, after they had completely new-modelled the constitution of the Company at home.

Governor General Hastings, secure of the *loyalty* and obsequious attachment of his *faithful house of Proprietors*, began to disregard the councils, and remonstrances of his *privy council*, the Directors. These remonstrances were treated with contempt, lest, as Mr. Barwell tells us, they should impair the *dignity* of Mr. Hastings' sovereignty in the eyes of his subjects.

Salutary admonitions have been ever deemed subversive of the *dignity* of great princes—This is an innate principle of royalty—Never was it more fully manifested than in the present instance—Never were the decrees of the Roman Senate, spurned with more contempt and haughtiness

ty aversion by Nero, or Caligula, than the orders of the Court of Directors have met with, from the *self-throned sovereign of Bengal*.

Next to refusing good advice, the sentiment most natural to a *mighty Prince*, is to extend his dominions by conquest. The *proprietary Emperor of Hindostan*, had the dazzling examples, of Alexander and Tamerlane, before his eyes. Never has conquering spirit been more true to its principles. Never has it been more pompously attended with all its long train of exactions, oppressions, blood-shed, massacre, extirpation, pestilence and famine. His *subjects* have been beggared to feed the war with supplies. And some of the finest countries of the world have been desolated by the wild projects of his frantic ambition.

The resources of Mr. Hastings have been much extolled in the House of Commons and elsewhere. That the friends of the governor, have reason to speak with *rapture* of his *resources*, I make not the least question. With the *proprietors*, an increase of investment would at any time pass current for the extirpation of a whole people. But the public can never be brought to consider with approbation, what is  
justly

justly imputed to Mr. Hastings as the highest strain of delinquency. Even the proprietors would feel the effects of Mr. Hastings' *resources* in the failure of the investment of the present year, and the more than problematical danger of its never being revived to any valuable extent, were they not in the habit of *other* compensations for the loss of commercial profit. Are we to thank Mr. Hastings, for exacting from the wretched natives of Bengal, a temporary supply to answer exigencies created by his own misconduct? Are we to thank him for the plunder of imprisoned princes? Are we to thank him for his monopolies, and exactions, which have exhausted every source of future taxation and revenue? To what are owing, the ruin of trade—The rapid decrease of population—The decay of cultivation in the once flourishing kingdom of Bengal—The pride of Hindostan! and the granary of the East! To the *resources* of Mr. Hastings. *Mr. Hastings' resources are—Beggary, ruin and extirpation.*

I know that certain persons have been in the habit of attributing the distresses and embarrassments of the Company's affairs to the war with France—I would ask these advocates for Mr. Hastings, whether the Mahratta war was owing  
to

to the rupture with France. Whether the irruption of Hyder Ally was owing to this cause? These wars are known to have been fomented by Mr. Hastings' treatment of the native princes, and his criminal projects of conquest. It is no longer doubtful, that the French armament was ordered to the East, in consequence of the tempting conjuncture, prepared by the policy of Mr. Hastings. Had it not been for the confederacy of the country powers, France would not have undertaken an expedition to a country, where she had not in possession a single port, town or fortress of any kind, nor so much territory, as might encamp a single company.

To one only cause are all our misfortunes in the east to be imputed. They have originated solely and exclusively from the wild ambition of *one* man, supported by a corrupt confederacy at home, unchecked by directorial or parliamentary controul.

The evil is at length brought home to the feeling of the public. The wound given to the resources of the Company's commerce, is felt to the quick in the revenues of the state. The payment of the duties on their imports is obliged to be suspended. The debts due by the Com-  
pany,

pany, to the nation, and private persons, without any reasonable prospect of being able to pay them, are very *considerable*.\*

\* The following is a statement of the debts, incurred by the Company at home.

East-India debt in England.

|  |   |    | £.               |
|--|---|----|------------------|
| To the customs   | — | —  | 100,000          |
| To freight and demorage  | — | —  | 294,704          |
| To freight and demorage  |   | —  | 324,000          |
| To bills of exchange   | — | —  | 2,460,000        |
| To goods and stores exported   |   | —  | 160,969          |
| To fundry articles in the department of the<br>committee exclusive of export |   | —  | 20,750           |
| To warrants passed the courts unpaid   |   |    | 87,700           |
| To supra cargoes commission  | — | —  | 7,559            |
| To money borrowed at the Bank with 4 per<br>cent interest thereon            |   | —  | 284,523          |
| To proprietors of private trade  |   | —  | 53,000           |
| To interest on annuities   | — | —  | 46,011           |
| To interest on bonds   |   | —  | 41,300           |
| To dividends on stock  | — | —  | 63,849           |
| Total English debt   | — | £. | <u>4,574,370</u> |

The whole making above four millions and a half of English debt. Where is the fund to discharge this vast debt? Why are the proprietors of India stock the only persons in the nation who do not tremble at the consequences?

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Instead



Instead of the Bengal investment standing in the high scale of a million sterling, the Company is reduced to borrow that sum from her own servants, at an interest of eight per cent. to supply the investment of the present year. Instead of fleets crowding our ports freighted with the precious commodities of the East, the property of British merchants ; we have now nothing left, but the importation of the fortunes of splendid delinquents, amassed by speculation, and rapine. Even this miserable traffic must shortly have an end, as there is nothing left for farther depredation. As soon as the governor general and the creatures of his power, have invested the whole of their ill-gotten wealth in returns from Bengal, at a profit of eight per cent. ; in the present course of things, there must be a final stop to the trade with that kingdom.

The extreme urgency of legislative interposition, in order to save the Company from irretrievable bankruptcy, and the nation from such a mighty loss of trade and revenue, as must be consequent thereon, is, I believe sufficiently established. The next consideration is the nature of the remedy to be applied. Nothing will be found effectual to this end, short of an entire

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ture reform, of the constitution of the Company. It is necessary to wrest the trade from the hands of politicians, and to re-establish it firmly on commercial principles.

Whether it be at all expedient to delegate to a company of merchants, such extensive sovereign powers, as are necessary for the government of a vast extent of populous territory, at such an immense distance from the seat of power, is a question, which has been already much agitated. It is a question of such magnitude and importance as to deserve a much abler consideration, than any I can give it. However I cannot help observing, that the circumstances of the times, if not the unalterable relations of things, would justify, a much more coercive and extended executive, and legislative controul, if not the entire assumption of both, in the territorial concerns of the Company. The abstract question of right, though evidently favourable to such a measure, goes but a little way towards a decision of the point. It is upon the solid ground of permanent advantage to the Company, and the nation, that the measure should be finally decided.

If a *high-handed* government, as some have said, be necessary for the administration of our eastern dominions, a *high-handed* executive at home, is indispensably necessary for the controul of such a government. If it be necessary to arm the representative of the British power in the east, with great prerogatives, and an extensive discretion, a magistrate clothed with such high command, should be obliged to yield the most implicit submission to orders from home. No suspensions, no qualifications, no compromise, should be admitted in respect of the positive orders of his superiors. Much less, should a contumacious disobedience, on principle, be a moment tolerated. Whether it be possible to give to a company of merchants, or if possible, whether it be wise, to confer such formidable powers on subjects, deserves a very serious consideration.

To me I own it seems *impossible* to confer on a body of merchants, whose capital falls far short of the revenue of the country, which they are to govern, such an efficient authority, as will not be eluded. It is a maxim in both the natural and moral world, that the accessory follows the principal. A governor general of  
Bengal

Bengal administering a *r  venue* of four millions, will 'till human nature undergoes a total change, inevitably gain an entire ascendancy over a company of merchants, dividing a few hundred thousand pounds. Thus it is evident that by attempting a weak and inadequate remedy, the evil of the present day will recur upon us every ten or dozen years.

A *commercial* company will not complain of such a measure. Trade has become a bankrupt, by the expensive fellowship of sovereignty — It has flourished as a private citizen — The meretricious blandishments of power will ever bring ruin on a merchant — Commerce cannot repose with safety in her arms.

But whatever the strength of the specific may be, which the wisdom of Parliament may think proper to administer, for the cure of the present distemper, the difficulties inseparable from the application, are easily foreseen. They arise from the delirious state of the patient; from the opposition of the custodees of the estate; and from the numerous tribe of legacy hunters, who expect large bequests of power and emolument, on the demise of the commerce and credit of their country. Clamour without doors, and a  
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vigorous opposition within, must be resolutely encountered.

The trumpet of Bengal has long since sounded the alarm of danger. From the very first institution of an enquiry, a light body of irregulars, were ordered to watch the enemy, and throw every possible impediment, in the way of investigation. As the danger has increased, their force has been gradually augmented. Their activity of late has been redoubled, so that scarce a day revolves, without bringing with it, a periodical return of abuse, against the characters and proceedings of the inquisitorial members.

These active troops combat with the desperation of men, whose existence is at stake. The wealth of Bengal has been liberally applied to fructify the press. Should the trade of Nabob-making be radically destroyed, the numerous body of veteran literati, will meet with as little encouragement, as the artists of Dacca have received from the British government. Billingsgate and St. Giles' will become as desolate, as the Carnatic, should Mr. Hastings be recalled. What mercy then could the hardy man expect, who first ventured to draw the veil, and, expose  
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to the public view the scorpion feet of Indian delinquency ? \*

But it is not from the praise-worthy zeal of men combating *pro aris & focis*, that you are to meet with the most formidable opposition. Speak of the delinquency of Mr. Hastings in the Commons — you instantly draw upon you the whole cry of his clamorous dependents. *Where is Mr. Hastings proved a delinquent? Will you condemn an absent man?*

Those men, who call for *proofs* of Mr. Hastings' guilt, don't consider the difference of evidence, that is necessary to convict in a court of justice, from that requisite to bring home criminality to a great executive magistrate. But the general sense of mankind will tell them, that, where charges of heinous offences are imputed, in the most solemn manner, before a competent tribunal, to

\* But little indeed has been shewn him by the exasperated corps — Save that they have not been hitherto so malicious as to praise him.

a magistrate in high trust and extensive command, such imputation is a sufficient proof of delinquency, unless it be fairly met and fully refuted. It is not a sufficient cause, for continuing a governor general in the despotic command of Asia, that he may possibly escape the legal penalties of a conviction at the Old Bailey. The character of a magistrate in such high trust, should be chaste, it should be free from even colourable imputations. Nothing in my mind more strongly evinces the radical deficiency of the constitution of the Company, than the circumstance of our being obliged to call the enormities of Mr. Hastings, by the gentle name of *delinquency*. Till offences of such magnitude come under the legal description of overt acts of treason and felony, or of some more general term comprehending every species of both, we can have no sufficient security for the obedience or upright demeanour of a governor general of Bengal. — As to his absence, it cannot be fairly made use of by his Advocates, as a plea of innocence, as every effort has been made by Parliament, to procure

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cure an opportunity of confronting him with his accusers. Had Verres continued in Sicily during his whole life, he might on the same plea, have been held out to the Romans, as an innocent, calumniated man.

But who is Mr. Hastings, who has braved for such a length of time, the united force of the whole legislature? Can any thing more forcibly evince to the apprehension of the public, how deeply the evil has taken root, than the difficulty not of punishing, but bringing to a trial this overgrown offender. The whole executive, and a considerable part of the legislative powers of the State, have been exerting their utmost force for years without effect, in order to *dethrone Mr. Hastings*; — the disgraceful contest is yet in suspense.\*

The necessity of a vigorous exertion of the whole legislature is all that is now requisite

\* Those who decry the credit of parliamentary enquiry, would reduce the House of Commons to a  
I very



quisite to effect a complete and substantial reform. The labours of the committees have furnished the most ample materials for the information of Parliament. The zealous support of men, of independent principles and fortunes, alone is necessary. Government, on the India business, may possibly be deserted by several, who are in the habit of co-operating with it on other occasions. Should the independent members unite with the present malecontents, and those interested in the present destructive system, the fate of this great question will be highly precarious. The vast importance of the objects to be secured by decisive measures, must be a strong incentive to secure the co-operation of every honest and disinterested man. The security of our Asiatic trade and dominions—the safety of a million and a half of the national revenue, which depends on this

very abject state. By wresting from that August Assembly, its inquisitorial privileges, you deprive it of all power either of protecting its friends, or annoying its enemies.

trade,

trade—but above all, the happiness and protection of the miserable natives of India call loudly, on the national justice and wisdom, for a manly and substantial reformation.

The very critical situation of the affairs of Ireland is another object, that must necessarily claim a great share of the attention of ministers, and in some shape or other be brought before Parliament in the course of the session; most probably by those who wish to take occasion from thence to embarrass government, and forward their own views and interests. I do not mean to give an opinion on the political measures, which are at present pursuing by the natives of that kingdom, nor of the propriety of the mode, by which they are attempted to be carried into effect. England should avoid at all times making herself a party in the domestic politics of her neighbours. As long as the Irish shew the same hearty disposition, to adhere to the spirit and letter of the union, so indispensable to the interests of both countries, on the footing on which, in conformity to their repeated requisitions,

quisitions, it has been lately settled, the Parliament of England can have neither pretence nor inducement to interfere in their constitutional concerns.

That there is not the smallest intention on the part of Ireland to depart in the minutest particular from their late solemn compact, does not admit of the least question. What I shall say on the subject, therefore, is not meant to imply the slightest doubt of the sincere attachment of the Irish to this country. On the contrary it will prove, that their loyalty to their Sovereign, and affection to England, are not to be shaken by all the artful industry of misrepresentation and misconstruction. Ireland is too grateful for the benefits lately received, not to feel a fresh alacrity in the cause of Great Britain. She is too wise, not to discern that the attempts of men, *fore from disappointment*, are meant to foment national jealousies and discontents, ruinous to both countries. The Irish must recollect with gratitude, and repay with confidence, the uniform and consistent conduct, of many  
persons

persons, who compose the present administration, on every question relating to their trade and constitution. In every change of fortune, they have held the same countenance to Ireland. In their adversity they have not flattered her, nor have they looked cold on her in their prosperity. At this moment they are desirous of complying with every demand, consistent with the welfare of both countries ; more the moderation of Ireland will not insist on.

That the most intimate fœderal union between the sister kingdoms, is necessary to the welfare and prosperity of both, is a truth so obvious, that it were an idle waste of time, to attempt to prove it. But the conclusions, generated by this undisputed proposition, are worthy the most serious consideration. If the preservation of the present connexion, be essential to the interests of Great Britain and Ireland, the means of strengthening the ties, which brace this connexion, must be highly important. To me, I own, a government respectable in strength, and creditable in its component parts, seems  
absolutely

absolutely requisite to this end. It follows that every attempt to diminish the respectability, and weaken the force of government, in either country, aims a mortal wound against the vital principle of the subsisting connexion.\* If in the present state of things, when the minds of men are but little disposed to adhere to what is known and customary, and the most passionate attachment is discovered for whatever is new and uncommon.—If during the continuance of this distempered appetite of the human mind, which loaths the plain and wholesome food, that has hitherto nourished political opinions and constitutional principles, and requires to be daily pampered with any endless variety of new projects, and fresh theories: If, in the very crisis of innovation, a disgust should be given of lawful go-

\* A noble Lord, who held a distinguished station in Ireland, is accused of having split the force of the Crown in that country into numerous divisions and subdivisions, of his *family connexions*, and *personal friends*. If this charge be founded, the noble Lord stands impeachable of the highest strain of delinquency, that was possible to be committed by a Viceroy, in the present critical situation of that country.

vernment,

vernment, through the abuses of a weak and fluctuating administration, consequences the most tremendous may be expected.

This consideration does not seem to have had its due weight with those respectable characters, whose correspondence with the volunteers has lately appeared in *all the daily papers*. Where they were asked their opinions relative to a great constitutional question, it might have been deemed wise, not to have introduced into their answers, *allusions to things and persons*, totally independent of the merits of the proposition to be discussed. It can make no difference on earth to the success of a parliamentary reform, either here or in Ireland, whether the Duke of Portland, or Lord Temple, Lord North, or Lord Thurlow, have a sway in the councils of his Majesty—Their sentiments on this, if on no other question, are perfectly unanimous. Therefore as nothing favourable to the cause of representation could be inferred from a change of administration, all censure of the present government must have had in view *other* objects, besides the event of that question. I can scarcely suspect persons of high rank and distinction in the country, of an *intention* to inflame the discontents, if any there be, in the sister kingdom.

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But most certainly it was imprudent to let any thing fall which might tend to exasperate, where temper and confidence are so highly necessary. Besides the mischief of these unseasonable allusions, the glaring contradictions, with which their plans of reform abound, is a circumstance highly unfavourable to the credit of this country. It may teach the volunteers to have a very contemptible opinion of the understanding of a nation, whose good sense they once respected, to find that the great and distinguished characters, whom they looked up to, as the British Solons\* of the day, have furnished them with theories of reform, which are complete answers to each other. The volunteers have already manifested a decrease of respect for the speculations of British reformers. † The volunteers complain, that when they consulted British legislators,

\* The Duke of Richmond and Dr. Price, Mr. Pitt and Dr. Jebb, Lord Effingham and Mr. Wyvil, have given in six different plans of Parliamentary Reform—Each is declared by its author to contain the only changes worth contending for.

† The Duke of Richmond's *simple* plan of extending the Right of Suffrage to every man in Ireland, and finishing the elections on one day, has been very indecently treated in the Provincial Assembly of Leinster. It was scouted, as giving the whole power of election to the mob, exclusive of some little difficulties in reducing it to practice.

*about*

*about the mode of reforming their Parliament,* they were answered by a *consistent* Philippic on the present administration, in which all agreed; and an *inconsistent* digest of reforming cross purposes, where they are all at variance. Can the towering structure of parliamentary purity, whose summit is meant to touch the skies, be possibly raised, in such a confusion of languages?

The Irish are a discerning people, quick-sighted in tracing the springs of political action. It must of course have infused into the minds of that people, no small degree of jealousy and suspicion, in regard of *English professions*, to observe the microscopic acuteness, with which certain men,\* who never manifested the smallest attention to the interests of Ireland, while they had the ability to serve her, *now* discover in the measures of the *present* government, principles, imperceptible to general apprehension, *which must necessarily create tumult and disorder in that country.* The lavish encomiums *now* bestowed

\* Witness Lord Thurlow's treatment of Mr. Townsend's bill for quieting the discontents in Ireland. And the noble Lord's *unparalleled* argument on the Dominica bill.



on the volunteers by persons, who formerly treated them with the most marked contempt, is another circumstance, which must have a tendency to depreciate the currency of *English profession*. †

Where there are so many causes to weaken the national credit with the inhabitants of Ireland, it is highly necessary to give every possible assistance to the measures of government, which are intended to conciliate the confidence of that people, and cultivate the benefits of the present connexion. As much as the character of the nation, must have necessarily suffered from the insincerity of complaisance, in the same proportion is it necessary to exalt the credit of the British government, lest the Irish should, from the late unfavourable specimens, think us, a faithless, chimerical, and timeserving people, utterly regardless of every constitutional as well as commercial question, which does not lead directly or indirectly to power and emolument.

† Lord Shelburne was heard in his place in the British House of Lords, in the face of his country to honour the volunteers with the name of “*an armed mob*” — Yet the noble Lord *now* deposes Doctor Price to calculate a panegyric on the *virtues* of this — *armed mob*. —

I have

I have now gone through the whole of what I proposed, at my outset, to detail in this concise review of the state of the nation, in which, I think, I have fully evinced the necessity there is for a compacted, vigorous, and decided government. But as my plan may be deemed imperfect, without saying a few words on the manner, in which such a government ought to be constituted, I must beg leave to trespass a little longer on the patience of the reader.

Parties, whether generally more conducive or prejudicial to the interests of the public, are allowed to be inseparable from the politics of a free state. It is therefore of the highest importance to the national welfare, that they be so managed, as that the greatest possible good may be derived from them, with the smallest possible inconvenience. In order to see, how this may be best done in the present juncture, it will be necessary, to look pretty far back into the state of parties.

The two great parties, which have subsisted in this country near a century, were marked at first with the widest line of discrimination of views and principles. The prerogatives of the crown, was the great ground, on which this

line of difference was first drawn. Ever since the Revolution, the first distinctions have been gradually disappearing, while others have insensibly sprung up in their place. The two parties however still retained their ancient names, though their principles and opinions had undergone an almost total change. *Whig* and *Tory* still continued to be bandied about, as the well known words of political rendezvous, though the latter had long deserted the weak and untenable ground of prerogative, and silently taken post behind the covert-way of influence. But as the change was gradual, and in the natural course of things; and entirely consistent with the spirit of first principles, the consequences were not at all disadvantageous to the interests of the public.

Things continued in this natural state of progression, from the Revolution to the commencement of the present reign. Then was begun the work of a new system, totally different from the constitution and end of both the parties, which had hitherto divided the nation. The influence of the crown, instead of being employed, as hitherto had been usual, in giving ascendancy to one or other of the leading parties; or in bracing the vigour of a coalition of  
both,

both, in trying emergencies; was now, for the first time, exerted with the impracticable aim of dissolving all parties, and abolishing for ever the national distinctions of Whig and Tory — What effect this plan must have had will be learned by looking a little into the nature of party.

Party is defined by Mr. Locke to be, *A number of persons confederated by a similarity of designs and opinions, in opposition to others.* The principle consequently of the new system, which had in view the extinction of all parties, must have been the destruction of every bond of union, by which men are united in a *similarity of political designs and opinions.*

The design was to appearance specious and plausible, as almost every new theory in government is, on a superficial observation. The evils of party were known, and had been often felt. It was therefore highly gratifying to public expectation, to hold out a prospect of entirely removing them. The popularity of the new plan, and its specious plausibility, were taken advantage of by those who had the honour of sharing the Royal confidence, to secure the approbation of a youthful, liberal-minded, sanguine Prince,  
highly

highly desirous of manifesting his ardent attachment to his people by new and uncommon instances of grace and favour.

Trial therefore was made of the new theory. Then it appeared that in the ardor of the benevolent dispositions of the Sovereign, and amid the fond delusion of national hope, the most ordinary maxims of political wisdom had been entirely overlooked. It was not foreseen, that nothing short of absolute despotism could supply the loss of that energy and vigour, which necessarily attend on a *similarity of designs and opinions*.

The consequences were exactly, what might have been fore-known, did the tumult of innovation admit of a moment's reflexion. A system of court cabal and political intrigue, was substituted in the place of the open and manly spirit, which had hitherto characterised the British monarchy. Division, weakness and treachery were introduced on principle, in the place of union, strength and good faith. The ancient parties were confounded and disordered by the attacks of this irregular enemy, who without coming to a decisive action, like the ancient British charioteers, incessantly harrassed the heavy  
bodies

bodies of political confederacy. The Tories as being less firmly compacted were entirely broken and dispersed. The Whigs made a long and desperate stand, but were at last disordered and obliged to quit the field.

The enemy now fully triumphant was left to his own plans and schemes of policy. Self-government is sure destruction to a lunatic. Discontents, disorders and tumults at home, weakness, pusillanimity and contempt abroad were the first fruits of the new system.

The character of one of the most amiable princes, that ever lived, was exhibited to his subjects through a medium the most unfavourable to his numerous virtues. The Sovereign was represented to his people, as the patron of treachery, and the rewarder of desertion of friends and abandonment of principles. His royal dignity was impaired by the intrigues and despicable cabals which surrounded his throne. His repose was hourly interrupted by the murmurs of his people, and the petty wrangles of men, who having purchased wealth and power, by the sacrifice of character and honour, naturally quarrelled about the division of the spoil. Even the sacred person of a British King was not exempted from the most unparal-

paralleled outrage, from the venal and flagitious wretches, who were the creatures of the new system.

The same spirit, which proceeded to such unprecedented enormities at home, was soon introduced into the administration of the distant parts of the empire. Our oldest and best friends, our nearest kindred, could no longer discern the ancient plainness and native honour of the British character, under the unnatural veil of artifice, insincerity and intrigue. The British parties were dissolved, but the British character was no where discoverable in the national government.

Hence all the multiplied calamities and disgraces of the present reign — Hence the mighty losses of trade and territory, under which the nation is at this moment sinking. This system has achieved in the short space of twenty years, what prerogative failed to accomplish in a hundred — What influence had been labouring near a century in vain. What the united force of the power and policy of the house of Bourbon could not accomplish, a system of disunion has effected. In the course of a few years of licentious policy, this system has weakened the  
force

force — diminished the resources — and degraded the character of the British nation. Ask the cause of the dismemberment of the empire, and the rapid strides of national depression and ruin? You are answered — *They are owing to the system of national division.* What has defaced the glories of the British name, and shaken the relations of the universe? *The system of division.* It has done all of ruin, disgrace and humiliation, that it was possible for it to do — It has contrasted the æras of *sixty-three* and of *eighty-three* — But *it has not extinguished the invincible vigour of the British spirit.*

On the remains of *this spirit*, on the great principle of resistance to this overwhelming system — the abyss of dominion and commerce — Is the present coalition of parties founded — The principle of support or resistance to this *system* is the true line of discrimination, that separates the parties, which at present divide the nation.

All the parties in the nation were broken and frittered into insignificance. Deserters from every denomination and description of men in the kingdom had taken a part in the new-constructed government, as interest and inconstancy had prompted. The eyes of the nation were

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now



now fully opened to its destructive tendency. Whig and Tory existed but in name. — They were ranged promiscuously under the banners of the common enemy. Nothing was left from which relief could be expected, but a renewal of confederacy on the ancient principles of the constitution.

What is whiggism? Is it not the native vigour of the British spirit, resisting, whatever is found practicably dangerous to the liberties, and prosperity of the nation? If this be not whiggism, it is something that does not deserve to be explained, it is a spirit which should have never existed — But that this is the spirit of whiggism can be easily evinced from its exertions in the cause of the constitution.

This spirit has undergone three great changes within a century. It opposed prerogative, as long as prerogative was dangerous to the rights and liberties of the subject — When prerogative was no longer formidable, and influence became alarming, the British spirit resisted its progress — At present the spirit of whiggism is up in arms against an enemy more formidable than influence and prerogative united.

The bond of union, which unites all, who deserve the name of Whigs, is a principle of resistance, to whatever threatens the constitution and welfare of the state — Let us reason of things, not of names — Is not this the bond of the present coalition? Their bond of union is not the antiquated maxims, which anciently united the Whigs of former times. It is a new necessity grown up within the memory of man — The impression is varied, but the bullion is the same. It is the ancient unbroken spirit of the British nation, which has triumphed on the ruins of the late system —

I am prepared for the little cavils of little men — *Is Lord North a Whig?* I will not retort this idle petulance, though I have such ample scope — But I would ask a seceding Whig, I respect the character, though under the temporary influence of delusion and error — Was not something to be relinquished by a virtuous citizen for the salvation of his country? Was the *Revolution* effected without a coalition of Whigs and Tories?

It is remarked by an elegant and judicious writer, that the generality of people are half a century behind-hand in their politics — Fatal

will it be to our liberties, and remaining power and trade, should the English nation, in the present juncture, furnish an additional example of the truth of this maxim. The numerous abettors of the late system are still in force. Several of the most respectable Whigs in the nation have been for a while misled by the sounds of ancient names. They mean honestly, but they are bewildered in the intricacy of distinctions, which exist no longer.

I intreat these men to look narrowly into the actual state of parties, and to examine the real situation of things. It is not in the depression, but the revival of parties, constructed on the spirit of ancient principles, that we are to seek the renovation of British honour and prosperity. The only question at present is, whether those who endeavour to restore the ancient state of things under which the nation flourished for a century, are to be preferred to persons, who seek to renew a system, which in the space of twenty years, has reduced it from the most flourishing to our present most miserable state. It is not a little question of station and emolument --- But a great and eventful question of system --- It is not the cause of men --- but of principle --- which is now at hazard ---

Οἷη πὲρ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.

POPE.

Men and their interests pass away --- But principle strikes root, and outlives many successive generations of politicians --- I implore the seceding whigs by their former virtuous struggles --- By the honours of their progenitors --- By the revered cause of whiggism --- for which their ancestors have fought and bled --- I adjure them by the miseries of their country --- and the distresses with which she is encompassed --- not to aid in restoring that desolating system, which required the whole united force of the nation to push it from its basis.

The nation has begun already to taste the fruits of union and vigour in her councils. Every thing has been done by the present administration, that could have been expected from it. They have rectified, as far as it was possible to rectify the blunders, and inaccuracies of the Preliminaries --- They have corrected their pernicious tendency, where it was practicable, without a breach of public faith. They have obtained for the nation some compensation for its losses

losses by the favourable terms with the Dutch, and thereby have given a degree of eclat to the issue of a calamitous war, and of a peace, still more calamitous. But above all they are united within themselves, and possessed of the confidence of Parliament. If we look to the constitution of the present ministry, it is composed, as every administration in this country should be of a coalition of talents, experience, property and character. Its constitution deserves confidence, and the principles, on which it has acted hitherto, ought to insure it.

It is no just objection to the constitution of the present ministry, that the passions, prejudices and interests of men have a share in it--- What human institution was ever entirely free from them? If they are known to influence the abstracted purity of religious faith, how can the soundest political principles be expected to escape the common lot of human opinion? *May I perish the day, when I stand up the advocate of an administration, formed on unconstitutional principles!* The very charges, which by its enemies are daily urged against the coalition, prove the soundness of the principle, on which it is bottomed. The most aggravating imputation brought against it, is that it is a formidable aristocracy, cemented  
with

with such strength and consistency, that no power in the nation can resist it. From William to George the Third, has any man employed either his tongue or his pen against a *whig* administration, who did not make use of a similar argument? In short, look to the *principle*, the *effects*, or the *sins* of the Coalition—you every where discern the genuine features of *whiggism*.

Let us now look to the candidates for power, and what do we see to tempt us to transfer our confidence from its present objects? We meet with a mass of discontent, composed of parts so very heterogeneous, that they agree in one thing only—namely, the pursuit of revenge and ambition, by any means, and at every hazard. Are we to expect from such a mass of contradictions, fermented by the ancient leaven of *systematic discord*, a stable and permanent government? What success can the nation expect to any of the important schemes of policy now in agitation from an administration so whimsically constituted? What can the Sovereign, what can the people expect from a revival of the *late system*? Contempt abroad,  
and

and distractions at home, must be the first fruits of power conferred on *such principles*. Without concert, without character, without popular favour, without Parliamentary support, or the Royal confidence,—the administration of *such men*, constituted on *such principles*, must inevitably lead to some dismal convulsion, financial or commercial.

T H E E N D.







