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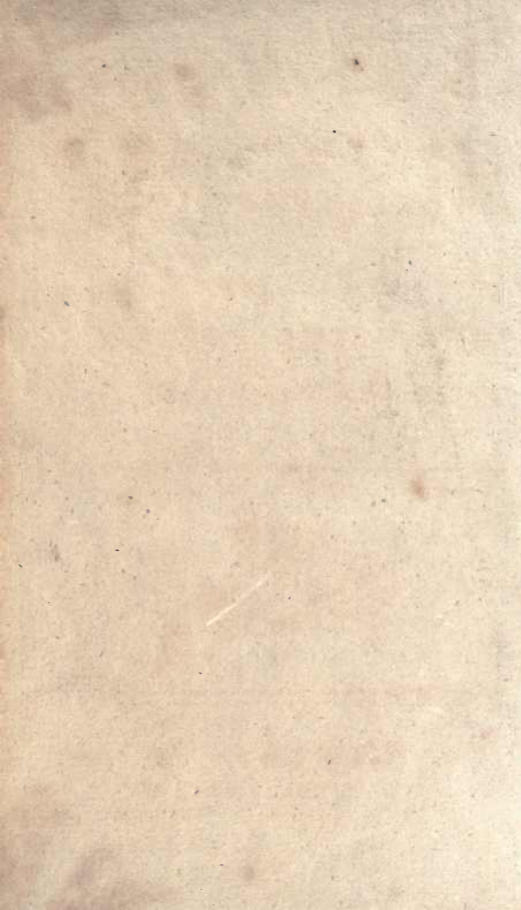
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ESSAYS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

BY THE LATE

JOHN TRENCHARD, Esq;

Never before PUBLISHED;



LONDON,Printed for A. MILLAR, in the *Strand*.

MDCCLV.

ESSAYS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

BY THE LATE

JOHN TRENCHARD, ESQ.

Member of the Faculty of the University of Edinburgh.



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MDCCLXXII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Essays were found in the study of the late JOHN MILNER, Esq; and were communicated to the EDITOR, at his earnest request.

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ESSAY I.

On MIRACLES.

SIR,

I HAVE lately entered into dispute with a roman catholick, (whom I suspected to be a priest) at the desire and in the presence of a lady, that he had been long endeavouring to pervert; and having, as I thought, unanswerably shewn the monstrous absurdities of the religion he owned, how all its doctrines were solely calculated for the advantage of the priests, the ruin of people, and the destruction of every thing that is good; and that he was no ways able, either from reason or scripture, to defend any one doctrine wherein he differed from protestants: then his next defence was to de-

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preciate reason, and to shew the insufficiency of scripture without human aid and tradition. Upon which, I demonstratively proved to him, that when he had taken away the only standards by which we could come to a certainty of the truth of the christian religion, it would stand upon the same foot of evidence with the heathen superstitions; which he vainly endeavoured to refute. And when he found that he made no impression upon the lady he proposed to convert, his last retreat was to Miracles, where he thought himself impregably intrenched.

HE said, Miracles were the first proofs of the jewish and christian religions; and that they were as necessary now in this age of infidelity, heresy, and schism, as they were in the first ages of christianity; and the power of effecting them continued still in the romish church, and no other, which he offered as an undeniable argument that the spirit of God alone inspired
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that church. And when I smiled at the impudence of the pretence, he immediately, in a passion, bolted out several absurd stories of Miracles, which he pretended had been lately done by friars and nuns in Spain and Italy, and with a dogmatical air declared, that they were attested by so many living witnesses, examined upon oath by persons of that candour and authority, and recorded with that exactness, that it was impossible to reject them but upon principles which would destroy all Miracles whatsoever.

ALL the objections I could make, arising from the improbability of the stories themselves, the partiality of the relators, and the appearing marks of fraud (as that they were done only amongst themselves; that those who first told them, or afterwards approved them, were not competent witnesses, having an interest in the fraud; and that they were not done in the sight of those who were

to be converted by them) were wholly lost upon him: he still insisted upon matter of fact; and asked me, if I refused to believe a fact done in my own age, and in a neighbouring country, attested by many living witnesses, and examined and approved in the most solemn manner, by bishops and laymen of the first character and distinction? How could I pretend to believe matters said to be done in distant ages and in distant countries, liable to all these objections, and many more, arising from the uncertainty of written tradition, as well in relation to the persons who wrote it, as the candour and accuracy of transcribers, editors, and translators?

To put an end, therefore, to these foolish pretences and idle legends, I shall endeavour, in this paper, to shew the nature of Miracles, that none have been performed since the first ages of christianity, and that they can be a proof of nothing which is against virtue and the good of man-

mankind; and, in order to it, shall begin with shewing the difference between a natural action and a miraculous one. By nature, I mean that situation or order God placed things in at the creation, and that motion or operation he gave them to preserve and continue that order; and this was certainly a Miracle at first.

A Miracle, or *actio mirabilis*, is an action to be wondered at; as when God Almighty interposes, and by his omnipotent power alters the order he at first placed the universe in, or enables or empowers other beings to do so: but some other appearances are Miracles to us, though, properly speaking, they are not so in themselves; as when he has disposed things so at the beginning that some events shall happen but very rarely, and has hid the immediate causes of them so far from human sight and enquiry, that we cannot trace them to any superior cause but to himself alone, and consequently cannot

sickness, fear, melancholy, or surprize; or they might have dreamed without observing that they slept, or might fancy they saw it between sleeping and waking; but any other person that one of them tells it to, has a further chance of being deceived, because he cannot be sure that the other did not tell him a lye; and if the second tells it to a third, the last is still at a greater uncertainty, because either of the other may be deceived themselves, or may have a design to deceive him.

By the same reason, the further it goes, the uncertainty is still greater, because the more relators there are who receive it one from the other, the more chances there are that some of them may mistake or pervert the story, or make a new one. If the Miracle was said to be done in a former age, and is conveyed down by books, then the uncertainty must be yet greater, because these books may have been corrupted by fraud, ignorance, or negli-

gence ; perhaps, wrong transcribed by clerks, perverted by editors, mistaken by translators ; or the books themselves might have been foisted upon the world under venerable names, as we see many books often are and always have been.

WE can only have the authority of those we personally know nothing of, that they were wrote by others of whom we know nothing neither ; and can have no greater assurance of the truth of the matters conveyed in them, than we have of the candour, judgment, or accuracy of those through whose hands those things are conveyed to us ; and if it does not appear that they had candour, judgment, and accuracy, our belief must be proportionable. If those books are translated into other languages, then the skill, care, and integrity of the translators, must also fall under consideration. If any person cannot read or understand either of the languages, then he can know no more than

than what other people tell him, and his belief depends upon their honesty and knowledge; but if any one understands one or both the languages, then his belief depends upon his conception of things conveyed in them, in which, experience tells us, that men differ very widely. If those languages have been long dead and out of common use, it will be very difficult, in many instances, to come at their true meaning; because, the time of speaking, the person who spoke, his manner of life and education, and many other things, fall into consideration: language, like every thing else in nature, being in perpetual rotation, and constantly varying, infomuch that if two people of the same country who lived at some hundred of years distance, could rise again, they would not, in many instances, understand one another.

WE are told in scripture, that false prophets shall arise and do wonders, which shall

shall almost deceive the elect, but we are forbid to believe them by Christ, if they preach any doctrine contrary to his: it is certain they cannot be true Miracles, for then we could not disbelieve them, without rejecting all Miracles. Therefore it is plain that he meant there would be such impostures and juggles carried on by confederacy, that people that were most upon their guard, would be liable to be deceived by them, if they did not wholly disbelieve them. And it seems as if he directly levelled at the many forgeries which he foresaw would be used in the church of antichrist; and therefore he, in effect, told his hearers, that Miracles should cease in the world upon the establishment of christianity. They were necessary at his first coming to make his doctrine received; and all who saw them could not but believe them and the doctrine which he taught; and when that was thoroughly established, there was no further need of them; and we are forbid to believe any,
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how great soever they may appear to us, which are brought to prove a contrary religion; and there is no need of any more to prove what is so fully proved already.

BUT, on the contrary, the pretences to them has done great mischief to the world: the papists, as has been said, pretend to have done numerous Miracles in their church, and still pretend to do them; and, as I have shewn you in one instance, when they are driven out of all other arguments by fair reasoning, have recourse to a Miracle-working power amongst themselves. And I neither know nor have heard of any other way of answering that argument, but by rejecting and wholly disbelieving it; for if we will enter into the detail, and appeal to human evidence, they can bring so many witnesses and so many records, with all Mr. Lesley's four marks, and fourscore more, if necessary, that it will be next to impossible that way to disprove them; and I
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conceive we have nothing left to say, but that their witnessers were deceived or suborned, or, since their deaths, belied; that their records were forged, or compiled fraudulently; and that all their transactions of that kind have been carried on by juggling and confederacy, amongst those, who gained power and wealth by imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of the people; and that those few who saw the cheat, durst not oppose priestly power, supported by public authority; and so by time, and by being often told, and never contradicted, the Miracles which at first were laughed at by many, came to be believed by all, or almost all.

I BELIEVE there has been no new religion ever advanced in the world, but the founder of it either pretended to do Miracles, or Miracles were said to be done by him, by his followers, and believed by them; and I do not see how they can be disproved

disproved by any one who offers Miracles alone for the truth of his own religion, though they are ever so well proved. If you tell him that he is imposed upon, he will certainly retort the same upon you, and will prefer the authority of his own ancestors, and their records, before yours. If you tell him that his priests have an interest, and get riches and authority by telling the story, he will tell you the same. If you tell him that all other nations and sects who were cotemporary with his founder, laughed at the cheat, and disbelieved his Miracles, which were related only by his own followers, he will have the same answer ready; for the Miracles of all religions are denied by all who are not of that religion, or whose religion is not founded upon it. If you ask him to produce a new Miracle to convince present disbelievers, he will ask the same of you; and perhaps tell you, that there are enough done already; and if you will not credit the old ones, you will not believe
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the new. So that I cannot see how it is possible for any person in one church, to convince another of the truth of a Miracle done in it or for it, without concurrent inspiration from above, which is a new Miracle.

BUT though the papists alone, of all sects amongst christians, pretend to the power of doing Miracles, yet all sects in their turns pretend that Miracles are done for them: there is scarce a battle, a plentiful year, a lucky escape of a great man, an unexpected recovery from a fit of sickness, or any unusual phænomenon of nature, but is made a Miracle of by one party or other, and attributed to an immediate interposition of providence, which is certainly a Miracle. Eclipses, meteors, earthquakes, great inundations, great thunder and lightning, and common as well as uncommon appearances of nature, have been in many ages thought to be Miracles, or the supernatural productions
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of intelligent beings; and are thought so still by many nations, and by many people in all nations, who do not know the causes of them; and so are a great variety of actions done by leger-de-main and juggling.

UNDER this great uncertainty of what is a Miracle, and what not, I conceive there can be no way in nature to put mankind enough upon their guard, against the numerous frauds, impositions, delusions, and pretences, of enthusiastical impostors and pretenders to inspiration, and the power of doing Miracles, but to convince them that they all ceased at the establishment of the christian religion; and that all the extraordinary and uncommon phænomena of nature (which must sometimes happen) are the productions of that order and disposition which God gave to it at the beginning. Allow one thing to be a Miracle, and Miracles will be multiplied as fast as new passions, prejudices,

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dices, fears or frauds; and I think there can be no possible criterion in nature, by which we can distinguish the ordinary from the extraordinary works of providence.

IT can be no criterion that an event happens but seldom; for it is undoubtedly possible in the nature of things, that an action may happen but once, and yet have a proper cause; and we know that some comets do not make their revolution in five hundred years, and yet their motions are as regular as those of the sun and moon. No man can tell what the powers of nature are; and it would appear to us no more a Miracle for a mare to foal a baboon than a colt, if it happened so often; or than there is if she now foaled a monster, as females of all kinds sometimes do. We are wholly ignorant of the first principles of animals, as whether they receive their formation in the womb, or in the body of the male,

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and have existed from the beginning of the world, and passing through the body of the male, are conveyed into the eggs of the female for expansion; and we cannot be sure that they may not find other matrixes to bring them to perfection; and have no reason to think otherwise, than that we do not see it; and from any thing that can appear to the contrary, it might have been so in the primæval state of the earth, which probably was much more prolific than the present.

EXPERIENCE shews us, that infinite millions of animals are produced and brought to life by particular winds and seasons, and sometimes those which have not been observed for ages before; but whether they are produced by eggs, which for many years have borne the extremities of heat and cold, or by any other means, we are wholly ignorant. We daily see strange mutations of bodies, as grass and corn into flesh and blood, flesh and

blood into earth, and earth into corn and grafs again; wood into ftone; and water, as it is faid, into cryftal; and thefe things we do not wonder at, becaufe we every day fee them: but if we fhould fee any tranfmutation that we are not ufed to, we are amazed, and ready to think it a Miracle, though it may poffibly have natural caufes, which we know nothing of. We have an inftance in fcripture of the magicians of Egypt pretending to Miracles, and great ones too; for it certainly appeared to be as great a Miracle to turn a ftick into a ferpent, as for one ferpent to eat another; and it is plain they deceived Pharaoh, who was not convinced by Mofes's fuperior Miracle, and would not let the children of Ifrael go. This is an undeniable inftance how great the powers of nature or delufion are; for the actions of the magicians certainly were not done by the power of God; and we are not told in fcripture that they were done by the power of demons, as without doubt

we should have been, if that was the case; and though we use the word magician now to signify conjurers, yet then the word signified only wise-men and philosophers.

I THINK, therefore, from all which has been before said, that so many questions will naturally arise about the validity of Miracles, what are Miracles, as well as the nature of the proof necessary to coerce belief, that I may safely say, that no evidence of their being done can be sufficient of itself to establish any doctrine, or to prove the orthodoxy of any church, and much less can they prove the truth of any thing which has a direct tendency to destroy righteousness and virtue; and consequently we must look out for some other resting-place, which our Saviour has given us in these words, (*viz.*) *If any man will do the will of God, he will know of the doctrine whether it be of God*: he hath given us all faculties and lights to distin-

guish natural right from wrong, to know that every man has a right to his own actions, when he does not injure another, and consequently to the fruits of his invention and industry ; that every one ought to use another as he would be used himself ; that we ought to assist our neighbours, as we ourselves would be assisted ; that we ought to be grateful to those from whom we have received benefits ; and above all, to himself, from whom we have received our beings, and every thing we enjoy ; and a thousand pretended revelations, confirmed by as many pretended Miracles, cannot efface these plain truths out of minds which are not perverted by fraud or education.

IT is a common, as well as an unanswerable, argument made use of against the papists, when they would persuade us to believe in transubstantiation, that they destroy the evidence they appeal to ; for those to whom our Saviour spoke, and who saw
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him break bread and drink wine, and heard him say that they were his body and blood, could have no other evidence but their ears and their eyes; and we can have no more evidence now, that such words are in scripture, but our eye-sight; and we have not only the evidence of those senses, but of all our senses, that there is no transmutation of the elements. The same may be said in the matter I treat about, (*viz.*) That we have nothing but our reason whereby we can know that there is a God; that that God is true, and that he has given revelations to men: and the same reason tells us, that he is the best being in the universe; that he cannot act foolishly, capriciously, or cruelly towards his creatures, nor give some of them a power to injure or oppress the rest; and consequently any revelation to that purpose cannot come from him; and that all Miracles which are brought to prove it, are impostures.

ESSAY II.

On TREATIES.

SIR,

THE Gothic institution of monarchical government (which by their conquests upon the Roman empire was settled in most parts of Europe) was calculated to give all powers to the crown which were necessary to protect and defend the people, and to restrain all such powers as could be made use of to oppress them; but since, from the nature of power itself, the prince in possession, had often, if not always, the means to do one or the other, it therefore intended, by amply providing for the dignity and splendour of his throne, and by making him personally
easy,

easy, to leave him under no temptation to abuse his power. All marks of grandeur were heaped upon him, all homage and respect paid to his person, and all the lesser errors of government, though dictated by his will, were never supposed to be done by his authority; but those who did them were answerable for them. The laws were called his laws, though made by his states, and he had only a bare liberty of rejecting, without altering them. They were likewise supposed to be executed by him, though he could not determine judicially one single case. His equitable conscience was directed by his keeper or chancellor; his laws were executed by his judges; his fleet commanded by his lord high admiral; and he had a council to advise him in such matters of government as depended upon his discretion. All these were answerable, in their several stations, for such defects in the administration as fell under their cognizance and execution.

IN this kind of government, for the most part, the king had a power of declaring war and peace, and consequently of making Treaties about both; but as he could not, in fact, make the first, with any hopes of success, without the concurrence of his states, who must have assisted him to do it, so he could not expect any reasonable effects from the peace and Treaties he made, unless these too met with the same concurrence and approbation; the consent of the states being often, if not always, necessary to enable him to perform them. For if he could have engaged them in wars, and obliged them to support these wars with constant supplies, he had virtually the power of raising money; since there can be no difference in raising it immediately, by a prince's single authority, or of commanding or obliging others to raise it for him; the same reasoning is true in relation to the making and executing of Treaties; so that in effect, though not in name, the

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people were parties to all Treaties which concerned their happiness and security. And I shall here beg leave to offer my reasons how far this was essential to that form of government. It is certain no wise state, or scarce any other, would depend upon Treaties, made with a government so constituted, upon any other foot, and such were ever accounted the king's leagues, and not the people's.

THE power committed to one or more persons to make Treaties, is a trust given for the public advantage: but if the persons so entrusted, combine with those they negotiate with, to betray the interest of their principals, or to serve any interest different from theirs, the same is a breach of this high trust, and void of itself, they having no such powers committed to them. If king Charles the first had, as he was charged (I hope unjustly) entered into a Treaty with the duke of Lorrain, for troops to insult his people: or, if the
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late king James had agreed with his brother of France for twenty thousand men, to bring popery and slavery upon us, will any one say, that England would have been bound by these Treaties made against themselves? If the general of an army is constituted a plenipotentiary, with full powers to conclude his principals, and he should sign a Treaty, by virtue of which, the state he contracts with, is to assist him in making himself prince over his masters; is this Treaty a valid Treaty?

SUCH as is the constitution of any country, such must be all the powers which are derived from it; and consequently all powers which are inconsistent with the nature of it, and which would destroy that constitution, must be void in themselves. If in old Rome, for instance, where the sovereignty was divided between the lords and commons, the lords had signed a league with any foreign state, concerted and intended for their own obvious advantage

tage and separate grandeur, and for the depression, destruction, or apparent disadvantage of the commons; or if their patrician dictators or consuls had signed it; What would the plebeians have said to such a Treaty? Undoubtedly they would have told the authors of it, that they were trusted to make Treaties for the public advantage, and not for their own; and that capital punishment was the properest recompence for such capital treachery: and probably they would have told the state treated with, that, instead of concluding the old war, they had given a just provocation for a new, by combining with their servants, and corrupting them. Agreeably to this spirit, they acted towards those generals of theirs, who, having suffered themselves to be surprized and beset by the enemy, at a pass, made an ignominious Treaty of peace for themselves, by which the Roman army was obliged to pass, disarmed, under a gallows. The Romans were so far from thinking themselves

selves bound by this infamous Treaty, that they delivered up to the enemy the shameless and cowardly authors of it, and went on with the war, and did justice, by this conduct, both to themselves and their enemies. An example fit for all wise nations to follow.

I would not surmise, that Treaties, which seem to be solemnly made, ought to be broken upon light pretences. For when proper negociators are fairly chosen, and make use of their best discretion to serve their prince and country, and yet are over-reached by the address and subtlety of those they negotiate with, it would be absurd to say, that a nation should fly off from its engagements upon no better pretence. But if the power of a state should get into hands, that carried all things by caballing, that employed none in its councils or negociations, but such as were pre-engaged to act with them upon any terms; that should afterwards make pocket-leagues, apparently against
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the interest of that state, or without any view to its interest, and then keep them in hugger-mugger, to defend themselves, and justify unwarrantable actions, by producing them upon occasion: and if this too should happen in a state, so constituted as before; as for example, in Poland, where all leagues that bind them, ought to be entered upon record, that every person whatsoever, at least every person trusted with the safety of the country, may have ready access to them; and yet those, who made them, should refuse or decline to shew them, or use any arts to evade shewing them; — I say, in such a case as this, What ought to be thought of such leagues? Are they to be confirmed, or ought such leagues, and such league-makers, to have another sort of fate? Ought they to be thought Treaties between nation and nation, or a combination of traitors? And shall they make their crime their reason and defence; and tell their principals that, because they are made
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knavishly, they ought therefore to be kept faithfully.

TREATIES are laws of friendship, and mutual advantages between nation and nation, whilst their interest continues the same, and whilst the benefits they receive from each other, are greater than the dangers they apprehend; as municipal laws are treaties between subject and subject, and between magistrate and subject, for the mutual support and convenience of themselves and of each other. And as free states make laws for their own, that is, the general advantage; so they make public treaties, by the same rule, for the public good: Arbitrary princes, indeed, who make laws for themselves, against their subjects, make treaties with the same view, and keep them private, or make them public, as they think fit; and no other can be expected from those sort of governors, who live in a state of hostility with their own people: but, in a free country,

country, where the measures of equity and common sense are observed, and where the subjects are bound by nothing but known law, it is a monstrous insult upon them, a bold denial of their liberty, and robbing them of their birth-right, to involve them in dangerous and chargeable Treaties, of which they know nothing, and from which they can only reap losses and expence. This is to execute laws before they are published, and to draw a nation, by the means of its own power and money, into a snare against itself; it is a ready way to make a nation weak enough, and a government strong enough to seize its liberties.

To trust any persons with making Treaties, and acting in pursuance of them, without telling what they are, is as absurd and dangerous as trusting them with great sums of money, without knowing why; nay, it is much the same thing. Every one knows, that one of the greatest proofs
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and barriers of public liberty, is the people's holding their own purse, and opening it as they see cause, for their own protection and security; but if they give their money blindfold, it may as well, and indeed more probably, be employed against them, as for them. Nor is it enough to tell them, that such a sum is to make good such a Treaty, if they know nothing of that Treaty, or if that Treaty is nothing to them. A court may, with the same art and modesty, ask them for two millions extraordinary, and tell them it is all for their protection; and then raise an army of an hundred thousand men to protect them accordingly.

THE nature of Treaties, as well as all other laws, calls for their being made public, else they look more like Conspiracies than Treaties; and two courts, under the equivocal and fallacious name of a Treaty, may be engaged, and have been engaged, in black designs, to enslave their
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own people as well as their neighbours; and then indeed they have very great reason for making a very great secret of these their public transactions. But first to make a public Treaty, for the good of a nation, and then keep it a secret, for fear of the nation, is a contradiction that argues great guilt.

WHEN a Treaty is made evidently for the honour and advantage of a nation, it is evidently for the honour and advantage of those who make it, to render it as public as they can. When men deserve well of a nation, they do not use to be afraid of receiving its thanks; but when they have wronged, sacrificed, or betrayed it, it is as natural to cover their deeds, as far as they can, with darkness. It is certain, nothing concerns a nation more, than to know its own Treaties, by which it must reap so much good or evil. The pretence of keeping them a secret, from foreign nations, is a jest, after they are

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made, who will have an hundred ways to know them; and to keep them a secret from the nation, who is bound by them, and is to execute them, is something for which we cannot find a name bad enough in language. What shall we say of Treaties, which would cost a nation ten or twelve millions, for purposes, which could never have brought ten groats to that nation; but, on the contrary, very probably, peril? What shall we say of king Charles the second's Treaties with his brother of France, which so aggrandized that haughty monarch, that all Europe could not secure themselves from his usurpations and designs, but at the expence of a war, which has almost bankrupt all Europe. These blessed Treaties, most of them secret ones, have cost England, in particular, near an hundred millions of money, too much of it yet unpaid, but hanging, like a terrible cloud, over our heads, and threatening us with ruin. I hope this dreadful instance, so well known

to every body, will prove a sufficient example and warning to us.

IF it is the business of one nation to watch the steps and behaviour of another, to be acquainted with its interests and views, and to discover every Treaty it makes, I think every nation ought, with greater reason, to be made acquainted with the Treaties made in its behalf with other nations, and Treaties to be executed at its own expence. Even England has paid very dear for clandestine Treaties, and had like to have paid still dearer, even her religion and liberties, for secret combinations, or Treaties, made between her governors and those of France and Rome.

A FREE people, while they trust their servants to propose proper Treaties for them, must still reserve a right to themselves, to judge afterwards whether they are proper Treaties or no, and to receive

or reject them accordingly; and no minister, conscious of his own duty and innocence, but will stand the public judgment; and whoever denies to do so, denies his own innocence, and becomes obnoxious to public displeasure and enquiry.

It is therefore the interest and duty of every nation, when any amongst them would draw them into wild and chimerical wars, upon pretence of Treaties made without their knowledge, or against their interest and consent, to value them only as waste paper, and to tell the contractors roundly, that no Treaty can be made in behalf of any state, without taking in the interests of that state; and that if it does not, it is *nudum pactum*, a blank Treaty, or rather a conspiracy against that state; that the authors and advisers ought to be delivered up, or punished at home, and the partial and treacherous contract declared void.

No country ever did, or ever can, give a power to act against the apparent interest of that country; and even Treaties, made with the utmost circumspection, and founded upon the best reasons, must cease, when those reasons cease; otherwise all treaties must subsist to the end of the world. Treaties may wear out, and die, as well as every thing else in nature. If England, for example, enters into a league offensive and defensive with Spain, Will any man say, that that Treaty ought to subsist, if France and Italy fall into the hands of Spain? The power and interest of empires are perpetually floating; and every Treaty with any of them has this tacit condition annexed to its continuance, namely, that the several interests of each, continue in the same situation, or, at least, that they be not directly different.

I HAVE heard of a country, where a subject grew in great favour and authority,

rity, by rummaging successfully for old dead Treaties, amongst dust and worms. It seems he at last found one for his purpose, but such a one as neither he, nor any body else, durst advise the making of at that time : but I humbly conceive, he and his Treaty ought to have been committed together, to dust and worms again.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

ESSAY

E S S A Y III.

On ELECTIONS.

S I R,

NO subject, at present, fills the mouths of all parties, and of all men in all parties, so much as frequent parliaments, frequent Elections of those parliaments, and to have the Elections free, unbiaffed, and incorrupt: and, without doubt, the liberty, the happiness, and security of all England, as well as every man's private property, depends upon these first principles of all good government. But it is of no consequence who are elected, or how they are elected, if the choice, when fairly made, is not to be valid; or if one part of those who are chosen, or perhaps

not chosen, but only returned, shall choose over again the others : this strikes at the fundamentals of liberty ; and, instead of calling together the representatives of a free nation, to speak the sense of the whole, and act for their general interest, subjects their fate to be determined by a cabal, or a party faction, under the direction of the worst men amongst them.

ALL parties, in their turns, have complained of this enormous evil ; and I wish I could say, that all parties too had not given occasion to this complaint ; which, I believe, no party have ever yet found their account in, upon ballancing profit and loss, or ever will do, unless such who intend to oppress them all. It is high time, therefore, to put an end to this dreadful and threatening mischief. Let not the sound of liberty be profaned any more by those who would destroy all liberty. Let us not talk any more about corruption amongst the inferior part of mankind,
and

and the many abuses suffered by it, till the fountains of all justice are cleared from corruption. Such as is the spring's head, such will be the stream which flows from it.

LET us mend ourselves, and every thing else will be mended of course: but with what grace can any one complain of want of justice, who will do none? Or who, without contempt and indignation, can hear an affected pretender to patriotism, hold forth upon public honesty, or, indeed, any sort of honesty; hear him harangue against courtiers, stock-jobbers, bribery, rapine, or any sorts of corruption, whilst he himself is undermining the foundations and pillars of society; and, perhaps, for some petty and trifling consideration, will deny to his fellow-member, and to his country, common justice, and thereby render justice itself, (which is the only support of all government)

ment) the tool and lacquey of ambition and knavery.

THIS is an abuse that few men have owned the defence of, and yet fewer have endeavoured to remedy. But upon the presumption, or hopes, that the prevailing parties in England, will see a necessity to unite for their common interest, and consequently do to one another that justice, which they hope to receive; I shall offer a few thoughts which would influence my own resolutions, whatever effect they may have upon other people's; and will first observe, that though no man, or body of men, are, or can be, so very great, as to be above governing their actions by the strict and impartial rules of honour and justice; yet, in all circumstances, they are not alike obliged to direct themselves by the same rules of evidence, and of coming at that justice.

THE end of evidence is to know the truth, and whatever will contribute to shew the truth, is evidence; though it may be not be legal and regular evidence in inferior courts, which are, and ought to be, tied up by strict and positive laws, as well in respect of the manner as the reasons of their judgments; and if any inconvenience arises from such restrictions, the legislature will be at hand to remedy it; whereas, if they were left entirely loose, it is to be feared they would never set bounds to themselves. There is an odd sort of maxim in law-books, and in the mouths of many lawyers, viz. *Boni judicis est ampliare jurisdictionem*; which in English, is, That it is the duty of a good judge to usurp more authority than he has a right to, and than the law gives him.

BUT this is not the case of a house of commons; for in all circumstances there must be a formal resource somewhere. I
confess,

confess, it appears to me to be a solecism in politics, in the common determination of property, to place it any where but in the legislature; or, which is the same thing, in a power accountable to the legislature; there cannot be two omnipotent powers in earth, any more than in heaven; and every power which is not so, must be accountable to that which is; for a court which can judge of laws, by its own authority, and without appeal, or being answerable for their judgments, can make laws. I dare say his holiness will ask no more of the christian world, than to consent to allow him to be infallible interpreter of scripture, and judge of what is scripture, and then it will be his own fault if he does not make it a nose of wax, and to signify what he pleases.

THEREFORE, I conceive, it would be a blunder in government, to make the house of commons the final judges of other men's property; for that would be to

make

make part of the legislature the whole legislature, and would be inconsistent with our species of government; and consequently, no prescription could give them a power which would destroy the constitution they acted under. And though they might, for some time, temporize with the people's fears, and manage such a jurisdiction with caution, till it was well established; yet, from the nature of men, and of power itself, our government must at last centre in a democracy; for all power is of a growing nature, and men will always do what they can do, when they can meet no restraints, but what they put upon themselves.

BUT however absurd, and inconsistent with our constitution, it is for them to be the last judges of other men's property, yet they must be sole judges of their own privileges, the orders of their house, the legality of their Elections, and the rights of their members to sit, unless they sub-
ject

ject themselves, and their being, to a dependence upon collateral or inferior powers; and as they are unaccountable to any regular authority for their judgments in these matters, so they are to judge only by the general rules of good sense and honesty, and by such methods as they prescribe to themselves, which is called *lex parliamentaria*. The essential and separate privileges each house has, as a house, must be derived from the original constitution of our government, and not from positive laws made under that constitution; for there must have been powers qualified to make laws, before laws could be made; and if those powers should abuse their trust, and encroach upon one another, there can be no regular authority to determine between them, but they must recur to the first principles of all government; nor can there be any provision against this evil in mixt forms of sovereignty.

A LEGISLATIVE power, therefore, or, which is the same thing, a power which is the last resource, and is accountable to no other, must act according to discretion, though they ought to take especial care that their actions are discreet and just. To apply this to the jurisdiction of the house of commons, over their own members, and, particularly, in relation to Elections, it would be absurd to suppose they can be tied to any other rules than good sense and integrity. They have, undoubtedly, a liberty to come at the truth, by all means, which do not intrench upon private men's rights: and since some people tell us, that they are not allowed to make use of the word of God, to deter man from disobeying God (I confess, I cannot tell why) they are the more concerned to think of all other methods by which they can regulate their judgments.

Now

Now it is most certain, that a number of concurring circumstances, tending to prove one point, is a much stronger evidence than the affirmation of one or two men, especially when they cannot be subjected to the penalties of perjury, in which consists the essence and terror of legal perjury; for, without doubt, a solemn affirmation is equally binding in conscience. Every honest man's word is his oath, and must be made in the presence of God, whether he declares it so or not; and the declaring what every one knows before, does not add to the solemnity, unless a man wants to be put in mind of it.

'Tis a misfortune to live in an age, when we must make use of distinctions about bribery, which, in any shape, must appear detestable to an honest man, even though he should think it necessary to his country's safety, to make use of it; but it must be obvious to all mankind, in the present corrupt state of boroughs, if any
number

number of men have the means of getting money enough, at any price, to bribe the Electors to vote contrary to their inclinations and their duty, and no gentlemen have generosity and public spirit enough, to offer to them proper inducements to make them vote according to them, that one parliament may put an end to the freedom and prosperity of England.

I HOPE soon to see an end put to this great and enormous grievance, which subverts the foundations of all government, and, if not remedied, must soon cause its dissolution; but till something of this kind can be done by the whole legislature effectually, I conceive it to be, in some measure, in the power of the house of commons, to remedy a grievance, under which the greatest part of the gentlemen of England suffer, by being bought out of their neighbouring boroughs, by courtiers, company-men, brokers, or grocers, and such like heroes; many of whom

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would find better employment in cheating in the alley, or in their shops, than in pretending to govern nations, which they are wholly unqualified to do.

Now, as I have said before, there are many ways to come at the knowledge of these corruptions, though positive witnesses are wanting, and which carry in them much stronger proof than the affirmation of single persons. If, for example, a man, whose face is not known in any borough, or his name has never been heard of there, but with detestation, opposes, with success, a neighbouring gentleman, of known reputation, character, and interest, this is presumptive bribery, and carries in itself much stronger evidence than ten positive witnesses; and no honest man can lay his hand upon his heart, and say that he is not satisfied, next to demonstration, that such a man obtained his Election by bribes or promises.

IT is ridiculous to expect farther evidence, to prove a thing which proves itself. If a man has no character, credit, or suitable fortune, to induce or enable him to get into the house of commons, and yet expends a great sum of money, to obtain a seat there, it is plain, that he intends corruption, must have used corruption, and will endeavour to make his reprizals upon the public. If the money is his own, he will be paid it again, with large interest; and, if it is not his own, it is easy to know, by knowing his patrons and dependencies, whose jobs he is to serve, and who set him to work. Ask, *Cui bono?* that is, who is to receive benefit, besides himself, by his unseasonable zeal? and you will know who gave him the money, and for what reasons he gave it.

I shall take the liberty, therefore, to make the same distinctions here, about bribery, as the lawyers use about killing

a man. If one kills another, unprovoked, it is murder, and the murderer is hanged. If two quarrel together, and one is slain, it is manslaughter in the survivor, and he is burnt in the hand: but if one man kills another, to prevent his killing him, it is *se defendendo*, and the manslayer is acquitted: So a man, who is guilty of voluntary and unprovoked bribery, ought to be cast out of the house with shame and indignation, and the other's Election declared good. If two men engage in a bribing-match, *viz.* who shall offer most, the Election ought to be void, and neither ought to take advantage of the other's corruption.

BUT if a country gentleman proposes to stand upon his natural interest and merit, in a borough, and, perhaps, is called thither by the voice of the people, and the country round, and yet, if the awe and apprehensions of his virtue and steady resolutions, to oppose all corruption, shall
animate

animate and provoke public oppressors to oppose him, and to bribe the Electors from their inclinations and their interest, then, I think, if this gentleman, at his own expence, will endeavour to secure an interest, which he had, at first, without any, and which he still wishes to be his, with no other view, but to serve his country, and disappoint those who have no other view but to betray it; I say then, if this is bribery, it is bribery *se defendo*; and I shall always think myself at liberty to call it excuseable; if not commendable bribery; for it would be a strange story, if any set of men should be suffered, by outrageous and exorbitant bribery, to drive all the gentlemen of England into great expences, to qualify themselves to serve the public, and hinder others from ruining it, and then to let them take advantage, from those expences, to hinder them from doing so.

WHEN Cæsar joined his interest with L. Luceius, to obtain the consulate against Bibulus, and was determined to carry it, the only way he could carry it, *viz.* by bribery, the great men and senators of Rome, resolved to oppose him with the same weapon, as knowing well the desperate designs of that parricide against the commonwealth, *Ac plerique pecunias contulerunt, ne Catone quidem abnuente illam largitionem ea republica fieri*, says Suetonius. The nobles raised large sums out of their own fortunes, even Cato himself contributing his share, to serve the republic, and save his country.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

ESSAY IV.

ON CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

SIR,

I MEAN to consider, in this paper, one branch of parliamentary justice, that of hearing undue returns, and making void unjust Elections; and I do it the more chearfully, because the present parliament has already given proofs of eminent candour and impartiality that way, beyond any past parliament that I can remember.

COMMITTEES of Elections have been commonly called committees of Affections; and the members often went to them with

their votes in their mouths, not to hear and be convinced, but to determine. The justice of the cause, and their own opinion, were out of the question; they found it agreeable to their directors, to turn out one man, right or wrong, and bring in another, by the same measures; a command, or a nod, or a hint, superseded their faculties; and their place, or their pay, or their hopes, left them not free agents. I have sometimes considered them as puppets, pulled backwards and forwards, and contrary ways, by a string, guided by a hand which every one knew, though nobody saw it; and when I have seen them renouncing their understanding, and all honesty, and making flourishes, and uttering speeches, which contradicted both, I could not help imagining, that I beheld a great man's hands busily employed in managing the wires, and governing the motion of the machines. At other times I have compared them to wind-instruments, which sounded, or were silent,

silent, just as the master blowed into them; and have heard them utter at night, the breath with which he had filled and endowed them in the morning. In another view, they have seemed to me, a band of armed mercenaries, fighting or retreating, wounding or giving quarter, at the word of command; falling upon friend and foe, without knowing the cause of quarrel, venturing their lives and their souls for so much a day, invading for pay, and besieging for plunder, and going upon the most desperate attack, for pistoles and fair promises.

THESE gentlemen did not seem to know their own value, or rather valued themselves at no more than they were really worth; a way of judging by no means natural, nor indeed much practised. They should have at least capitulated for two or three days of liberty, during a whole session of servitude, or rather for a propriety in their own souls and consciences,

ences, one day in seven. It was a confession that a man was little worth, when, in the disposal of himself, he must either lose his price, or make no reserve of body, mind, or integrity, in any instance, but go roundly into the chain, and wear it without grumbling. Now it would have been a greater proof of their importance, if they would have preserved ever so small a share of their spirit, free for their own use, and that of their friends: an independent action, now and then, would have done them credit, and left them at least a pretence to say that they were *sui juris*, and their followers of their own opinion. But to sell all, even to the very breath that they blowed, and to be ready, at all calls, to say, and sign, and swear, and to forswear, countersign, and unsay, in strict conformity to the word and politics of the day, was a severer bondage, and much more shameful and comprehensive, than that of the oar; and, in truth, ought to have ended in it.

BUT,

BUT, with pleasure I say it, we have now a parliament of another stamp and genius; a parliament zealous to support the court, without forgetting that they represent their country; a necessary and reasonable distinction, which all parliaments have not made; but, on the contrary, some of them have unnaturally oppressed the subject, by serving the false interests of the crown, and by tamely complying with its enormous demands.

THIS temperate and impartial spirit in this parliament, gives us an agreeable assurance, that as in all other things, so particularly in the business of petitions, they will hear equitably, and determine justly. They will consider themselves in the situation of judges, who ought to be divested of all passions, but for truth and equal justice, and come prepared to hear evidence, without a bias to this man's name, or that man's interest: or, if there be any partiality, it ought to go no further

ther than wishes, that the best man may have the best cause.

WHILE they are examining disputed Elections, a matter of the greatest moment is before them; not only the cases of particular men, and the privileges of particular boroughs, to which, however, all justice is due, and every just man will do it, but their judgment upon particular men, may affect all men; and their determining the rights of single towns, may establish or destroy the rights of England.

INJUSTICE is not to be done, even to criminals; and, perhaps, there is more mischief and danger to be apprehended from doing violence, to an obnoxious man, than to a man perfectly unexceptionable, whom every man will be ready to defend and take part with; but while the most, or the best, are indifferent how an ill man is used, a precedent is made, and a gap is opened, to use all men ill. The
worst

worst men have a right to be used well, in instances where they do no ill. A pick-pocket is not to be punished as a rebel; and it is murder in any private man, to kill a murderer, unless for self-defence.

FOR a house of commons to expel a man, because some, or the most, or even all of them, do not like him, would be as manifest injustice as to take away his life, or his estate, which they may think another deserves better.

IT is an alarming precedent of corruption and partiality, to inferior tribunals, to see the first and the highest, act partially, wantonly, and corruptly: and the laws are like to be but negligently executed, or rather sadly perverted, when those who make them, act against them. If bad examples, in the lowest life, are but too catching and diffusive, how fatal and universal must be their influence, when they come from the directors of the public
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in the face of the public? when they who govern all men's actions, do themselves the most abandoned actions; and they who make laws against oppression, are, even in their legislative capacity, oppressors? It is an old observation, That when the fountain is muddy, the streams cannot be pure.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

ESSAY

ESSAY V.

ON OFFICES and CORRUPTION.

SIR,

IT is a pretty amusement, in discourses about morality and justice, to talk of the virtue of former times, and of the degeneracy and corruption of our own. Such speculations do well fill the mouths of preceptors, and the harangues of orators, and fall, properly, from the pens of poets and essay-writers: but wise men will know, that mankind are always the same in the same circumstances; and, if they are more virtuous in one age, or in one country, than in another, it is owing to the different relations they stand in towards each other. It is certain fact, that

in all times, and countries, almost every one will pursue what appears to him to be his own interest, and make all others subservient to it, if he can. Here, therefore, is the single reason of entering into society, which is a common agreement to preserve mutual interests: and if any man, or any number of men, can find separate advantages, in abusing the rest of the same society, common experience shews us that, for the most part, they will ever pursue them; and honour, conscience, and public good, will either signify nothing at all, or only what he or they shall please to make them signify. Power sanctifies all measures; and as the strongest will give the laws of right and wrong, the weakest must submit to them; and in submitting to them, will, by degrees, think them just, or, at least, not dare to say the contrary.

LIBERTY was never better understood, nor could have more pretended advocates for

for it, than when the Romans lost theirs: every party had it in their mouths, and were as ready to defend it against others, as to take it away themselves. It accomplished oratory, excellent discourses, express laws, and a few bold patriots, could have defended it, it had been defended: but the public treasure had got into the hands, or under the direction of a few men; and with that treasure they corrupted some, and enslaved all: and it is foolish to hope that men, when they have money enough to give, will not give it for their own advantage, and get others to take it upon their own terms. Cæsar might have held forth long enough, upon the services which he had done to the common-wealth, upon the justice of his cause, and upon the injuries received from Pompey, if he had not had the plunder of Gaul, and the public money to have backed his pretensions. He knew himself a violent traitor, and therefore bribed every considerable man in the city, and

senate of Rome, and was every year bribing them, not to call him to an account for his outrageous rapine and abuse of power ; and at length having long prepared his way by a course of unprecedented corruption and excesses, for many years, he laid violent hands at once upon Rome, and the world. There is no argument so heavy and convincing as a purse of gold, which, as blunt as it is, will make its way through towns and assemblies, and penetrate into cabinets, and into stubborn as well as into tender consciences.

LAWs can signify nothing, unless they are executed ; nor, as I have said once already, will they ever be executed, unless those intrusted with them have an interest in their execution. People are never the better for having a right, if they cannot come at that right ; and they are never to trust it in the power of those, who have an interest to take it away. Who will put a sword into the hands of a known assassin,
and

and then preach to him against the wickedness of committing murder? or, what virtuous lady will deliver herself into the power of a ravisher, and depend upon her intreaties and tears to avoid violence?

BUT, blessed be God, this is not our case, for where is there a man amongst us, who is not an advocate for general liberty? the courtiers mean nothing else: the whigs and tories accuse one another with want of zeal for the publick good, or with not having enough of it; and even the jacobites say they mean the same thing by endeavouring to bring in the pretender. And sure, when there is so favourable and universal a disposition towards liberty, safe must be the word, and we can be in no danger of losing so precious a jewel, when every party is determined to defend it: and if it should appear, after all, that we are not altogether so safe, as so much virtue ought to make us, we have this com-

fort left, that we are assured that these several sets of patriots will unanimously concur in all further measures necessary to make us so.

These measures shall be the subject of this paper. It is certain, that many attempts have been made in former reigns, against the liberties of England, but the undertakers went preposterously to work.

First they would bribe us without pence,
Deceive us without common sense,
And without power enslave.

Sometimes they hoped to win us with pulpit oratory, and university distinction; sometimes by party animosities, and by playing these parties upon one another: often by the corruptions of Westminster-hall; often by blustering and bullying; once or twice by getting together troops without money to pay them; at other times

times by wheedling us and telling us, it was for our good to be enslaved, and by calling all those who had no fancy to it, Republicans ; and in order to render that sort of government odious, they christened all designs and attempts to make the people happy, and to secure the rights they were born to, by the name of a common-wealth, or the spirit of a common-wealth : and then, that their hands might not be looked into, whilst they were playing this worthy game, they have declined to call parliaments for years together ; and so they thought they might rule unmolested.

BUT all these were the doughty schemes of shallow politicians ; for, men will not be long prated, and distinguished, and bullied out of their senses and estates. Parties will at last understand one another and unite against their common enemies. Judges are tied up to known rules, and, when they transgress them, cause universal

resentment. Impotent threats create only jest and laughter: troops will not fight without pay; and they must get a sort of establishment, before they will have gallantry enough to force it. Good words will buy no bargains; nor will people think it their interest to be undone. The word Common-wealth has been found out to signify the common benefit; and the people of England have thought that their own government, when duly administered, provided better for it, than any other that they knew; and always refused to pay any taxes, but what were given by parliament; or paid them so unwillingly, that the court was never the better for them, since it wanted power to force them effectually. So that all these methods have proved ineffectual, and have produced new privileges to the people, and new restraints upon their governors, who never undermined the root of liberty, but they made it thrive the better, by jogging and opening the ground, and letting in the sun
and

and refreshing showers upon its fibres, and by given hints and opportunities to better establish it.

BUT after many vain and fruitless efforts, the ax was laid at last to the root of the tree. The whole people of England were found too many to be deceived or corrupted, nor could the majority of them be made to conspire against themselves; but being too many also to meet together, and take care of their own affairs, they have been obliged by their constitution to trust the same to the honesty and direction of a few: and it was found much easier to corrupt these few, than to persuade, deceive, or frighten all. Our governors, some ages since, had not found out the secret of bribing the people's representatives, with the people's money, nor had they enough of their own to do it; but that discovery was reserved for the restoration of king Charles the second, whose ministers made the parliament, their jackalls to hunt

down the lion's prey, only for the picking of the bones. This cost the court nothing, but got for them a great standing revenue, and frequent and exorbitant supplies, a small part of which, these worthy patriots had for betraying their principals, even all the people of England; and the rest was given to the court-ladies, pocketed by the ministers, or spent to keep up troops, and in other projects further to enslave the people, who paid the whole reckoning, we may be sure.

It is a great blessing to these poor nations, that this dreadful practice is not now followed: but since human affairs are subject to perpetual rotation and everlasting vicissitude, we ought to take all advantages in a good reign, to hinder the mischiefs, which may happen in a bad; and I think I may venture to say, that there is no way in nature, to hinder one sort of men from giving money, and another from taking it, but by letting them have
none

none to give or take; or by appropriating it in such a manner, and annexing such difficulties to the disposal, that no one will dare to offer it, or to take it when 'tis offered; and all who do not hope to get any of it, will certainly, if they have any wit, join in measures to hinder others from getting it, who have no more right to expect it, than they themselves have.

I SHOULD be very glad if gentlemen, better versed in this sort of traffick, who have formerly gained great experience in the science of disposing of the publick money usefully, and at present have the ill luck to get none for themselves, would assist us under our present difficulties, and shew the world, that they know how to save their country, as well as how to ruin it. But for fear, that we may be so unfortunate as not to have the advantage of their skill and acquired knowledge, I shall offer my own thoughts, for want of better, how, in some measure, to prevent this great evil.

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I HUMBLY propose, that all public money hereafter given should be strictly appropriated to the uses for which it is given, and that a standing committee be regularly appointed (of which no member to have a place, or a pension) to enquire, whether it has been disposed of accordingly.

NEXT I offer, with all submission, that it be a capital crime, for any person to give to a member of the house of commons, or for any member to receive, any pension, gratuity, or reward from the crown, or from any person acting under the crown, or the ministry, or employed by them, directly or indirectly, unless the said pension, &c. be entered, within so many days, in a publick office, (there named) to which every person may have resort; or for any person to give or take any office or pension, in trust for another, or to pay any part of it to another, without entering the same as before; and every

ry person discovering, and making full proof, to have his pardon, and to hold the said office, so purchased or procured, *quamdiu se bene gesserit*.

THIRDLY, that it shall be capital for any person, or persons, to take a sum of money, gratuity, or promise, in order to obtain, or to use their interest to obtain, any office, or preferment from the crown, or from any officer or minister acting under it, with a proper reward for discovery.

WHETHER any thing like this will meet the approbation of wiser men, I cannot be a competent judge; but I have some private reasons to suspect shrewdly, that I have not offered a toothsome expedient: however, such as it is, you have it, and if people will not come into it, we can easily guess why. And indeed, with my weak understanding, I cannot find one reason, why any man who designs to take

no money, but what he may own, should decline to own it; nor can I see how honest ministers can suffer by being hindered from doing what they ought not to do. If there should be occasion to trust any member of the house of commons, with a sum of money for secret services; this provision will neither hinder those services, nor discover what they are; and if, by discovering the person employed, there should be any danger of pointing out what he is to do, there are able men enough in the kingdom to be found out without the doors of St. Stephen's chapel; and I dare say those within will have employment left for all their honest abilities.

IN short, there is but one of two things to be done, if ever we should have a corrupt court, and a corrupt ministry: the first is, to be undone by letting the corruption go on: and the other is, to endeavour to hinder it; and if we will not do the last, we must submit to the first.

BUT

BUT suppose some should say, For what have we taken all this pains, made all this bustle, and spent all this money? have other people gorged themselves with delicacies and sumptuous banquets, and must we come at last only to the hare's foot, and be forced to make good our promises whether we will or not? *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*

I CONFESS, sir, I cannot answer these arguments, and therefore it is high time to conclude.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

ESSAY VI.

ON PRACTICABLE MEN.

SIR,

AMBITIOUS men, when they have any thing to do, will employ in it, such who are fit for it; some to flatter, others to frighten; some to lie and betray for them in private, others to harangue and defend them in publick. All these are a necessary sort of Swiss, or rather knights of the post, without the formality of swearing; and accordingly as men are disposed, or not disposed, for these laudable employments, they are called Practicable or Impracticable men.

By

PRACTICABLE MEN. 79

By this rule, he who has a judgment, a soul, and a conscience of his own, is a humourist, and unfit for business; he is an Impracticable Man: but he who has a prudential spirit, pliable enough to take the impressions of the times, and to support the language and livery of the day, is worth having, or even buying; he is a Practicable Man. These are the men, who, like the inferior actors at the play-house, chuse no parts, but take their parts from the managers, and are politicians, officers, fiddlers, orators, poets, and buffoons, at the discretion and command of their superiors.

It is indeed to be owned, that some men must have their knaves, as well as their fools, and that the honestest of them cannot be without them, no more than a sberiff can be without his hangman. I would only contend, that it is needless that all their people, and followers should be knaves, unless they themselves are the greatest.

80 PRACTICABLE MEN.

greatest. Why all hangmen, unless all their work be hanging work? they shall have a necessary number of rogues, or if they please, Practicable Men, and I hope no body will say that there is any great want of them. However necessary small rogues have formerly been to save great rogues; it is certain, that honest men are always necessary to save a nation, whenever the saving of a nation happens to be any part of the business, which is to be done.

I WILL further own, that there are men in the world, men of parts and virtue, utterly unfit to do business in concert, from a spirit of impatience or jealousy, which never leaves them, and renders them incapable of giving up honest points to gain knavish ones; a compliance absolutely necessary in the transaction of some sorts of affairs. The doing of good, as valuable a thing as it is, will find but few patrons and undertakers, unless they find
their

their own good in it, and therefore to engage them to serve others, they must be allowed to serve themselves; nor would any reasonable man deny them that advantage; but their serving those who employ them, with themselves, is a condition that every honest man ought to exact from them. This is more eminently true, in those whose business and duty it is to serve the public; I say for such especially, to serve themselves, without serving the publick, or at the expence of the public, and to sacrifice a nation to their own ambition and security; are sufficient reasons to render every man of common honesty, impracticable to their designs. And yet there have been, in former reigns, such men as these, that most wanted Practicable men of the vilest stamp, who would act for them, without reason, or against reason, or for an ill reason; and all men who would not be willing traitors, and ready prostitutes, were forsooth, Impracticable Men.

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Most men are governed by ambition, vanity, avarice, or some other appetite; and therefore money, title, pleasure, and power, will render them Practicable to the terms upon which they are to be had, let the terms be what they will. *No money, no Swiss*, but any Swiss for money. Honour is often sought, and come at by the most infamous means; for such is the crookedness of the human mind, that honour and honesty in the mouth of the vilest man, signify no more than the two chief ingredients in his own character; and men generally assume as much merit from their being faithful in the greatest rogueries, as from being faithful in the proper place, and often more.

WE rarely measure the merits or demerits of men by any other rule, than as they are for us, or against us, no matter whether right or wrong; and when one knave calls another a Practicable Man, he means him a complement; as much as to say,
he

he is one of us, he will stick at nothing.

ONE of these Practicable Men has for his conduct but one fixt rule, and that is an implicit, and ready submission to the word of command, and even to the nod of those who give it. He is bound to like and approve every thing that comes from his directors, or is done by them, and must help in doing it. He must sign a blank to espouse no opinion; but be ready to entertain all, and to oppose all. He is to practice contradictions, and to find reasons for them, and against them, at the word of command: he must therefore defend or oppose the same thing, be it good or bad, if there be occasion, as there often is. He is to sacrifice all for hire, his conscience, time, friendship, veracity, health and all; and yet still remains obliged; and perhaps next day, he must tread backwards, and sacrifice all these against that very thing, for which he sacrificed them all the day before.

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Now any worthy gentleman, who is accomplished this way, and can do and undo all these things, is in a fair road to get riches, and will keep them, when he gets them, as several in my time have done. Turnspits and mill-horses are very Practicable creatures, and therefore are well fed, and seldom turned out of their posts, till through age they can turn round no longer; and then indeed they are left to contempt or starving, or perhaps knocked on the head, by those whom the poor slaves had served so faithfully.

ONE certain mark, among many others, by which one might have known one sort of these Practicable Men, in some former reigns, was his violent attachment to the first minister. With them every uppermost man was the greatest man that ever lived, and perhaps, when he ceased to be the uppermost, the worst. When he was in power, he was almost omnipotent; and
when

when out of it, was scarce endowed with common faculties. A certain very great person, formerly lost a vast deal of his bright character by dying, even among those, who while he kept his life and power, gave him the highest. I was once visiting a gentleman in a considerable station, when he received the news that this grandee was taken ill. He fetched a deep sigh and said, that we could better bear the loss of Scotland or Ireland, than the loss of that great man : but meeting him in the park three days afterwards, and condoling with him upon the aforesaid great loss, he shook his head, and said angrily, *it had been happy for this poor nation if he had never lived.* Then he went on to call him names, and to say things of him, which, in great tenderness to his memory, and in obedience to a judicious resolution, I forbear to repeat.

NOTHING is a greater jest to a Practicable Man, than a concern for the public,

§6 PRACTICABLE MEN.

lic, or even the name of public virtue. This is not strange, but it is extremely provoking. For though it would be downright impudence in these Practicable knaves to pretend any zeal for a cause which they betray; yet it is still more unpardonable impudence in them, to laugh at that which every man living ought to reverence; and that which every man, who has either religion or common honesty, and either fears God, or regards man, will reverence; and their doing so, is declaring to all the world, that they are worse than wolves and tigers, and greater enemies to mankind; and it is calling upon mankind to spurn them out of society, and out of the world, which cannot subsist in any manner of felicity, but by preserving those sacred bonds of public honesty, and publick virtue, which these profligate traitors shew themselves bent to break, or not to defend.

AND

AND yet to shew what a creature man is, there have been too many instances of men, who were famous for public spirit, while they were out of power, and grew more infamous for want of it, when they had no longer any occasion for it. Nay, some of them could hardly hear the word mentioned, without being affronted. But it is too common for men, when their own condition is mended, to grow very easy as to the public, about which they were so anxious before; and they have often wondered, that people will never be satisfied, when they had not one reason to be satisfied, whatever the said wonderers might have had.

By the same means, that men become Practicable to those, whom they hate; boroughs become Practicable to such as they never saw. The city knight had nothing to do, but to knock upon the bottom of his hog-trough (by which, I suppose, he meant his own pocket) and

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presently a whole corporation grew practicable to the found.

BUT there is less jest than melancholy in the purpose, and method of making men Practicable, when they who do so, are gone so far as to declare (as it is said, some of them have, more than once, unwarily but truly declared) that men of virtue, are not the men they want. Such men will not be led blindly, nor act rashly and wickedly, nor be bought slavishly, nor driven tamely: but rogues have a price, which they know how to give, and for that price they will bear any burthen, and go any length.

GREAT men have had often, from custom, figure, and impunity, a sort of a wrong right to laugh at public spirit; but for every little dirty hireling, who will be any man's dog for porridge, to join in the laugh, calls aloud for the whip from every porter in the street;

street; unless he is protected by those, who must either protect their rogues, or they will get nobody to serve them.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant

CATO.

ESSAY

E S S A Y VII.

ON FRUGALITY.

SIR,

PARCIMONIA *magnum est vectigal.* A frugal administration of the publick treasure is one sign of a well governed state, which can never be well governed where the publick treasure is ill administered. When it is thrown away lavishly, ill courses, lying pretences, and oppressive methods are generally taken to get more: and as ill practices must be supported by worse, that which the people give for their preservation, will be probably turned to their ruine; and when they have given more than they can spare, part of it may be wickedly applied to force them, or to bribe those intrusted with the disposal of their wealth, to give all that remains; and thus a conspiracy may be formed against a country with its own money. Where-
ever

ever, therefore, measures are evidently taken in any country, which tend to impoverish a people, and to rob them in effect of their property; we may easily guess what the authors of such measures aim at, though they swear the contrary till they are black in the face.

WHEN the publick money is not applied as it was intended, what security can a people have that any other part of the government will be administered as they intended it should? It is too true that he who does what he pleases with the money of a nation, may do what he pleases with a nation; and there is all the probability in the world that he who throws away public money will throw away public liberty, which public money was given to preserve.

The liberty of a country is founded upon the limitations and restraints put by it upon its magistrates; and no magistracy

tracy can be limited without limiting their revenue and expence: as money is the measure of every thing, a power that wants no money, need want nothing else. Money creates fleets, armies, confederates, dependents, and obedience. Nor is it much alleviation to say, that it must be asked before it is given. If whatsoever is asked is given, and no account is required of the application; some of the most arbitrary princes in Europe observe still the form of calling the states and asking supplies. Thus a very great prince abroad, convenes the states of his several dominions, and demands a supply, which is just as much as the courtiers have a mind to, that is to say, all that the poor people have without their bellies. A popish elector, too, calls occasionally the same sort of mock parliament, and what he takes from his subjects, is forsooth the gifts of the states, who give what they cannot help giving. Nay his highness of Moscovy has lately had a meeting with a

very strange assembly in that country, a parliament of Russes, where great civilities passed between them and their prince whom they saluted emperor.

BUT nothing of all this is so shameless as was the business of loan money in king Charles the first's time. His ministry had not found the parliament so complaisant as others have been, and so resolving to have no more, issued a proclamation forbidding people to talk of parliaments, which indeed had made them tremble, by looking into their hands, and taking care of liberty and the nation. They therefore determine to make use of their own power and their master's name to raise money, and took methods suitable to so worthy a design; many illegal, many oppressive, *and all scandalous*, as my lord Clarendon expresses it. One of their methods was that of loan-money, or of obliging every man whom they thought fit to lend them what sum they thought fit;

fit; and if he refused to part with his money against law to their banditti, he was sent to goal. This was called a free gift. The business of ship money was not more modest, or less arbitrary. Every county in England was to pay them as much money as would build a ship; and the money was exacted, and the navy not the better for it.

HERE was money raised by violence against law and consent; and the raising of money with the consent of the people and then applying it afterwards contrary to their intention and interest, is the next worst thing. They who have a right to give money, have a right to direct the application of it in general, and in particulars, as far as they can foresee them. I know but one instance in England, where the commons of England ever gave a sum of money without directing which way it was to go; which example, I hope, will never be repeated. I know not what is
high

high treason, if misapplying public money, upon which every thing in every state does so manifestly depend, be not high treason. He who deceives me out of my money, by getting it from me for such a purpose, which he mentions and I approve, and afterwards applies it to purposes which he does not declare, and which I condemn, does as effectually rob me as if he bound me and took it by force; with this further aggravation, that he adds treachery to plunder; as he does impudence more provoking than all the rest, if he comes and asks me for more, or expects to be used like a friend by me, whom he has used as an enemy.

If a Father allows a son so much a year to maintain himself, and a couple of servants; and he throws away that allowance upon mistresses, race-horses, or gamesters, and comes and desires more of his father, for that he has spent his allowance, without owning upon what, or denying that

that it was enough, would such a father be justified in giving him any other treatment than that due to a prodigal, and striking him out of his will? I should think the father as mad and inexcusable as the son, if to supply the wild and debauched expences of a profligate, he mortgaged from year to year till he had left nothing to mortagage, but was reduced to beggary and a goal.

IF a general is trusted with an army for the defence of his country, and throws away his men in mad vagaries of his own; or employs them at home merely to keep up his own power and figure; or abroad to draw foreign powers into a treasonable confederacy with him; or puts the money given him for the support of his army into his own pocket; or loses it by gaming, and then comes and desires more; would not this behaviour of his appear such a mixture of madness, impudence, and treason,

treason, as both entitled him to Bedlam and Newgate?

OR if any man trusted with publick money, for such and such purposes expressly mentioned, applies none of it, or little of it, towards those purposes, and cannot pretend that is not sufficient for them; and yet comes boldly and asks for more, without telling what is become of the last; is not his guilt, impudence, and phrenzy the same with that of the above general, and deserving as severe a fate?

THE state of Athens was so sensible of the danger of misapplying public money, that, to prevent it, they made the following awful and noble law; “ That
 “ whereas a thousand talents were assigned
 “ yearly for the defence of Athens against
 “ foreign invasions; if any person pre-
 “ sumed to lay out, or but proposed to
 H “ lay

“ lay out that money, or any part of it, on
 “ any other design, he should suffer death.”

By the law of Athens no free Athenian could be sent in bonds ; and yet they who had embezeled or misapplied the public money, were excepted out of this law, and denied the benefit of it. It was capital there for any man to enter upon any office or magistracy, if he was not able to pay his debts ; because they presumed he would rob the state to pay them : Nor could he sue for another office, till he had made up his accounts for the last ; nor till he had done this, was he suffered to travel abroad, or to sell or give away by will any part of his estate. So exact were the Athenians about their civil list, so frugal of the public money, and so careful of preserving liberty, by the only ways it could be preserved.

THE state of Venice is famous for her Frugality : the magistrates, who manage her publick treasures, are observed by so many

many eyes, and must pass their accounts before so many judges (even as many as there are nobles) that it is impossible for them to cheat the publick, with any safety. The Doge himself has but about three thousand pounds a year, and spends almost half of that, at the four great annual feasts, at which he must be present; and his children after him, are answerable for his administration. It was therefore natural for the procurator Nani to say, as he does in the account of his embassy in France, That the French king, if he could, would tax the sun and the air, and that therefore the people are under unspeakable calamities from the insatiableness of their governors: but this, says Nani, is not the king's fault, but that of his ministers, who do all the mischief without him. I shall only add here, as to Venice, that the least mismanagement in the state is unpardonable in the council of ten.

NATIONS, as well as families, are undone by profuseness, and paying their servants bills without examination. Is it to be imagined, that a steward will not put half, or all of his master's estate, in his pocket, or waste it in his pleasures, if he may? The most generous people in the world, whatever they give towards the glory, fortunes, or maggots of their governors, ought, in common sense, to reserve something for their own subsistence, and preservation: it is madness to give all away, and worse to give more than they have; a case which, however, is not without a precedent. A nation may give away so long and so fast, to satisfy the wantonness, greediness, or ill designs of their governors, till in the end they have nothing left for their own defence; or at least so little, that enabled by their liberality, their governors may take what remains without asking.

WORDS cannot express the horrid barbarity of starving a nation to gorge a court. Even every the least tax has such
 I hard

FRUGALITY. for

hard consequences, that nothing but harder necessity, the necessity of a country, should create a new one, or continue an old. It is something very mournful and affecting, that in most countries, a poor woman, who by hard labour earns eighteen pence, or two shillings a week, to maintain herself, and perhaps four or five small children, or is maintained at that expence by the charity of others, who can scarce maintain themselves, must yet, out of that poor sum, pay a fifth or a sixth part towards a tax, which perhaps is applied to maintain idlers and debauchees: that honest country-men, with large families and mortgaged estates, must pay a fourth part of what remains, towards wild expeditions, or pensions paid to intruders, mistresses, tools, and traitors: that young virtuous ladies, of good blood and breeding, must marry as they can, far beneath themselves: that a clan of vultures, beggars and stock-jobbers, just risen out of the earth, may mount unnaturally into

coaches and fine equipages: and that honest tradesmen must be vigilant and industrious in vain, and break without their own fault, because the money of their nation is gone another way; and yet this is often the case in enslaved countries, and eminently so in a neighbouring one.

It must therefore affect every honest and tender heart, when he is raising a tax, even the most necessary tax, to remember, that he is adding to a burthen, which is already breaking the backs of his countrymen. But what a hard and brutish spirit must that man have, who, while his country is gasping under its many pressures, can add a fresh one to them, because out of it he is to have a fowl and a bottle; and can for a drunken night, add years of misery to his country, and to his own posterity.

METHINKS it is worth the while of a government, as it is in the second place,
agreeable

agreeable to their duty, to enquire how much a nation is able to pay, and yet continue a nation? If it owes any debts and can pay them, why are they not paid? If it cannot, why should they be increased? Why new demands made, and new burthens added? It seems but injudicious in any government to make their demands so excessive, that they cannot come twice. Some sort of governors are for stripping the people at once, and go on, where they have power, till they have left neither money nor people. Such a father of his country, takes all he can, and by all the methods he can. But princes who may be or are safe in the affections of their people, (as in all limited monarchies they undoubtedly may be) will lose much more than they get by such cruel and unreasonable extortions; since it is certain, that more is to be got yearly from a people well used, for an hundred years together, than can be got from the same people oppressed, for five years together. But alas

too many princes and governors, like other men, are governed by present appetite.

PROFUSENESS creates want, and want which tempts private men to be knaves, makes publick men oppressors: Henry the second, and third of France were good-natured princes, but prodigal and expensive, and to supply themselves, took all violent and oppressive methods to squeeze money from their people. We had a prince once amongst us, who, though he had not spirit enough to set up openly for lawless power, as well as he loved it; yet was lavish to extremity, and being always in necessity, was ever hunting after new resources for money, and refused none that were offered: hence so many companies and monopolies to the ruin of trade, and so many vexatious prosecutions and arbitrary fines in the star-chamber: the blood-suckers who were about him, and constantly preying upon him, put him upon preying upon the publick.

THERE

THERE is no end of the mischiefs of publick prodigality, nor of instances which shew them. Every nation will find sufficient causes of necessary expence, without seeking want only after new ones; and it is misfortune enough to a nation to run in debt, and be reduced to great hardships for its own preservation; but for nations to be beggared, mortgaged, pillaged, and undone for Prester John, or the man in the moon, or for the bleak and bloodless provinces of Lapland, and Nova Zembla, is beyond all human patience: and yet great kingdoms have often been exhausted and ruined, by being forced or deceived by their governors into endless wars, about dry titles, barren islands, and pitiful towns.

ROME was long famous for an honest and frugal management of the publick money, and for a disinterested magistracy; till both senate and people were corrupted with their own money by those,
 who

who by that pernicious means enslaved them; and afterwards they paid a thousand times more for their oppression, than ever their protection had cost them.

Ipsa Roma sui merces erat; the Romans were bribed and bought with the money of Rome. Whoever reads the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, and 54th chapters of Suetonius, in the life of Cæsar, will see how he came by his power; by what incredible rapine he was enabled to bribe; and with what an amazing profusion of bribes, he escaped the early and legal death of a traitor, which was preparing for him. He corrupted his country with its own money, and oppressed it with its own arms.

I AM charmed with a saying of Gracchus in the better times of that great state. He had been a great minister and governor of Sardinia, and could say for himself, when he left it; *Zonas quas plenas argenti extuli, eas ex provincia inanes retuli.* “ I spent my own money in

“ my employment, and the coffers
 “ which I carried full thither, I brought
 “ empty back.” A rare example, and
 a precious servant in a state! How ami-
 able must be the character of such a
 governor, in the eyes of the governed.
 There is a good deal of analogy, be-
 tween a family and a state; and if a
 gentleman need desire no other cause
 to turn off his steward, than that he
 will bring no vouchers for his bills;
 that he finds his estate continually wast-
 ing under him, and his tenants mise-
 rably used, and their hearts estranged
 from him; a prince, who has either
 his own, or his peoples interests to
 serve, need be at no loss in the like
 circumstances, what counsels to pur-
 sue.

I am, Sir, &c.

F I N I S.

my employment, and the collector
 which I carried into the shop, I brought
 empty back." A man says, and
 previous to this, in a time of low price
 he must be the owner of such a
 woman, in the eyes of the government,
 he is a good deal of money, he
 can a family and a fine; and if a
 woman had, during no other cause
 than off his head, than that he
 is being no justice for his bills,
 he had his bills continually writ
 order him, and his account with
 by each, and their bills changed
 an time a year, who has either
 one, or the people, in order to
 ve, and so on, as he is in the like
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and so on, in the



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