

The image shows the front cover of an antique book. The cover is decorated with a dense, intricate marbled pattern in shades of blue, red, and cream. A dark, textured spine is visible on the left side. In the center, a white rectangular label with a black border contains the title and author information in a black, calligraphic script.

Wm. Stephens

A Teller.

1705

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[By Wm. Stephens]

A

LETTER

TO THE

Author of the Memorial of the
State of England.

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TO THE
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OF THE

Memorial of the State of England.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year 1705.

LETTER

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE

LEGISLATIVE

COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF

S I R,

I Am not going about to send you an Answer to your Book: For as for three parts of it I must acknowledge it unanswerable. You have stated the Case of Dissenters so distinctly; and so closely and solidly evinc'd the Reasonableness and Necessity of Toleration, that I think no good Man can find any just Cause of Exception, much less of Quarrel to your Book upon that account. Nor do I esteem it the less, because the Argument is exhausted, and thereby discours'd before by several able hands. Only it is to me the Subject of the greatest Wonder and Pity, that a Nation which boasts so much of Liberty as ours, and whose Tongues and Pens are so intirely freed from any unjust Restraint and Controll, should stand in need of being so often put in mind of a Principle so evidently founded in Nature, Reason, and Scripture it self. I will not deny, but that something might reasonably have been said for Persecution of Dissenters in the Jewish Commonwealth, and among *Turks* and *Heathens*, whose main points of Religion consisted in the *Opera operata* of external Ceremonies and bold Performances, which, as to the Matter and Manner of them, were laid down and instituted in express, positive and intelligible Terms: But to talk of Persecution in a Religion which consists of Mysteries and Duties which are to be believ'd and perform'd altogether in a mental and spiritual Manner, and which the Infliction of corporal Punishments can in no manner Influence or Amend, must needs be the most monstrous and absurd Conceit that ever entred into the Minds of such who have the Privilege of Thinking. And I cannot but be Confident that by this time with the help of your, and other sufficient Persons Labours in this Respect, all Sincere, and well-meaning Christians are fully convinc'd of the Truth and undeniable Certainty

of this Principle: and that there are none who pretend otherwise, but such as act against their own Convictions out of a base and selfish Intention to deprive others of their lawful Goods and Possessions; ridiculously endeavouring to divest Men of that undefeatable Right and Property which Mankind enjoy, and must necessarily enjoy the Freedom of their own Thoughts. Toleration therefore is a Claim which all Christians may demand as a natural and common Right; unless it be those who refuse the same Justice to their Fellow Creatures. For it is evident that such Persons ought to be excluded from it, as those who will not suffer others to live, do forfeit the Title to their own Lives; since the Principle of the one is as self-evident as the other: For I have no better a Right to breath the free Air, than I have to think a free Thought; and therefore any manner of Restraint upon the Mind by the Artifice of Education, whereby any one is prepossess'd with Prejudice, and diverted from his free and natural Course of Thinking, into the narrow Compass and Limitation of any particular System whatsoever, is as Barbarous, Absurd, and Unjust, as stopping the Course of Blood in his Arteries, or the passage of his Breath thro' his Wind-pipe; the design of these Men being nothing else than to make open War with Nature it self, and abolish the Difference she had made between rational and brute Animals. The Saying of *Solomon* is true, *That if you train up a Child in the way he should walk he will not leave it when he is Old*; and the Reverse is also as true, that if you train him up in the way he should not walk, he will in all probability, adhere to it when he is Old: As common Experience shows us. And therefore no doubt but the wise Man intended that Children should be only taught such things as they could well judge of; such as moral Duties, and those Parts of Knowledge, and natural Religion as were in themselves demonstrable and self-evident and not that they should be taught to stammer out by rote like Parrots, the Metaphysical Points of Revelation, before they are capable to entertain any distinct

Notion or Idea's, of them: as is the common Method and Practice of all Perswasions at this day: and so well establish'd by Custom among us, that I see no Glimpse of Hopes that it should ever be reform'd. And yet I take this to have been the true Source from whence all our Distractions have flow'd, and the only Root of Bitterness from which have sprung all those Animosities and unnatural Feuds and Divisions which have been among Christians from the beginning down to our times.

'Twas this which made the Dissenters, when uppermost, as Narrow and as partial to their own particular Sects as any other high madding Churches. Upon which Account I confess that I was formerly unconcerned for all their sufferings at the Hands of our high Church, and should have been so though they had been much more severe. For I considered that they were but paid in their own Coin: And nothing could be called Cruelty that was exercis'd upon such, who would have done the same, or worse to others if it had been in their Power. And I was, by what I saw in that kind, convinc'd that they who underwent most, and glory'd most in their Sufferings, would have prov'd the most Furious in their Persecutions. It being for the most part the same Highflying Spirit, which leads to both the Extreams. And there is no doubt but that the same Hot-headed, fiery Constitutions, of those who suffer in one Religion, would have dispos'd them to same Obstinacy, if they had been bred up in any other. Besides, all the bigotted Zealots of any Perswasion, are most tenacious of this Opinion, that all but themselves and those of their way, shall most certainly be damn'd in the other World: And therefore they think it Meritorious to shew their Zeal and Indignation against those Enemies of God in this Life. And the same warm Disposition of Spirit prompts them to run into Sufferings as naturally as Fire draws Fire.

I am glad therefore, for the Dissenters sake, that you give us better hopes of them in your 36th Page; and that their

Opinions and Behaviour have of late been such as to make them worthy of the Toleration they enjoy; [and yet I could wish they or their Ministers (at least) would give some further publick Testimony of that Information in this Respect. And I think at this time it would tend very much to their Honour as well as Benefit, to approve of an universal Toleration of all manner of Opinions that are meereley religious, and respect Conscience only.

Besides, it would be most seasonable in this Juncture, when her Majesty in conjunction with the Parliament, and the true Church of *England*, have given such effectual Proofs of their Moderation in the Dissenters behalf. This I think is the least Return which can be expected from them by the Government and the Church; and I shall leave it to them to consider whether the Neglect of some such publick Act of theirs may not in time incline our Church to think that she is playing a Game with Sharpers upon the Square; and that whilst she exercises Gentleness and Meekness towards them, she does at the same time but foster a Snake in her Bosom, which may one day hiss at her, and fly in her Face, by vertue of that very Warmth and Nourishment which she out of Charity and Christian Condescension has thought fit to afford them. And this I would put them in mind of for their own sakes; that they may be thereby intituled to Toleration as a Right, and nor as a Favour only,

I should for the sake of my Country, be very much pleased to see that the imtemperate Heat, and Enthusiastick Fervour of the Presbyterians in *England* is so much settled and abated, in Comparison of what it is in *Scotland* or *Geneva*. It were also to be wish'd that such a Declaration of theirs should be absolute and in General, without the least Subterfuge for Prevarications or ambiguous Judgment. For I am not Ignorant how ready all sorts of Ecclesiasticks have been to lay hold on any Handle to withdraw themselves from their Engagements, tho' it be never so wretched and mean. This is well enough known in other Countries amongst the

Papists; and I am sorry there will be here so just an Occasion of reviving an Instance of this Nature among Protestants in our own Country.

In the Reign of King *Edward VI.* there was a Commission issu'd out to enquire after Anabaptists, Hereticks, and Contemners of the Common Prayer; of which Commission *Cranmer* was at the Head. Before these Commissioners was summoned a Woman who is called an Anabaptist in the History (though I think by the Doctrines which she professeth she might rather have been stiled a *Socinian*) who persisting in her Belief, was by Definitive Sentence (whereunto I find *Hugh Latimer* also a Party) adjudged and declared an Obstinate Heretick, and delivered over to the Secular Power. This Sentence and Certificate to the King upon it, is expressed *Verbatim* in the same Stile and hypocritical Cant which the Papists had always used. The King seemed resolved against signing the Warrant for burning her, and urged it as a piece of Cruelty, too like to what he had so lately condemned in the Papists, to burn any for their Consciences. But *Cranmer*, (who was employed to persuade the King to it) argued from the Law of *Moses*, by which Blasphemers ought to be stoned; and told the King that he made a great difference between other Points of Divinity, and those that were directly against the Apostles Creed; that these were Impieties against God, which the Prince, as being God's Deputy, ought to punish, as the King's Deputies were obliged to punish Offences against his Person: And thus was the poor Woman, by imposing upon the innocent Simplicity of the young King, distinguished out of her Life by this most Reverend Persecutor: To which *Ridley* also consented after his Endeavours to reclaim her proved ineffectual.

The good King signed the Warrant with Tears in his Eyes, altogether unsatisfy'd with *Cranmer's* Argument; professing that he did it only in submission to his Authority, and charging it upon the Archbishop's Conscience, if he had done wrong. This Act of Barbarity, so contrary to the Clemency of the Gospel, was of ten retorted upon them by
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the Papists, who said that it was plain that the Reformers were against Burning, only when they were in fear of it themselves.

Notwithstanding this, about two years after another was burnt in *Smithfield* for holding a Socinian Doctrine, tho' otherwise of an Inoffensive, Pious and Exemplary Life which he confirm'd by his admirable constancy in kissing the Stake and Faggots, which were to burn him, in a quite different Disposition to that which was found in *Cranmer*, either at his Trial; or Execution.

Thus we see that altho' these Reverend Prelates had declared their Opinions, against Burning for matters of Conscience (or as you express it) for points of meer Religion and Opinion, yet how easie a thing it is for Clergy-men to resolve all Differences, from their own pragmatistical Sanctions, into Blasphemy and Impiety against God: Which are Words of such a Vogue and Ambiguous signification as have in all ages served the turns of Bloody Persecutors, to destroy all those who divide from them in opinion, tho' otherwise ever so sincere and Virtuous.

My Author Dr. *Burnet*, observes, upon these Instances, and upon a Report that the Archbishop, had consented in *K. Henry VIII's* time, to the Burning of *Lambert* and *Ann Ascew*, that what he did in those matters, did not flow from Cruelty of Temper; *but was truly the Effect of those Principles by which he governed himself.* Which indeed could be no other than the Principles of bigotted Zealotry: The Nature whereof is so uneasy and pestiferous, as neither to be quiet it self, nor suffer others to be so. But it will endure burning, and at the same time, commit others to the Flame: Burning being an Article which they do *dire & petere vicissim*, &c. This sufficiently confirms what I said before, that Persecuting and Suffering are compatible in the same Persons. And I think that a Man must be endued with a greater share of tenderness than is requisite for all the proper Offices of Humanity, who can pity the sufferings of such

Martyrs as these. For I know no juster Sanction in the whole Book of Nature and Reason, than this, *He that persecutes for Opinion let him suffer for Opinion.* And with this Sir, I shall conclude what I thought necessary to superadd to the Project which takes up three quarters of your Book: wherein I allow, that you have done ample justice to your Argument; and therefore I shall not intermeddle any further in a Province which has been so well manag'd by you, my Intention being chiefly to consider what you have alledg'd concerning the Ministry. To which I think I may have reason to make some small Reflections: wherein I will not affirm that you really did design any Partiality, tho' I must needs say, that by the general good Account you are pleas'd to give us of all Persons concerned in the present Ministry, and the severe Censure you think to pass upon others who have been formerly in the same Stations, together with your profound Silence as to any Miscarriages in our present Establishment; you have given no small occasion to the general Report and Opinion that this part of your Book was not written with the same Candour and Ingenuity, nor with the same fair and impartial Intention of doing Service to your Country, as the other three.

Whether this be so or not, 'tis the same thing to me, who design not to consider the Affairs of this Nature as they are represented by others, but as they are in themselves, so far as I am able to attain the knowledge of them. And I am sure it requires no great Penetration to understand that the Matter, and whole Subject of Contention between the several adverse Parties and Factions, who have been opposing one another with so much Heat and Violence for near this twenty Years past, has been nothing else but the possession and enjoyment of the several publick Places and Employments which the Court has in its power to bestow. All manner of Pretensions to the publick Service on the one hand, and all the Clamours for promoting the Interest of the

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Church on the other, have principally and ultimately center'd in this only Aim and Design. And a Man must have made but a very slight and superficial observation of our Courts and Parliaments, who is not convinced of this beyond all manner of Doubt and hesitancy. This is *the Mark of the Prize of their high calling* to which they all *press forward without looking upon what is behind.* In a Word (to allude to a Heathen as well as a Christian Author, *Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.* Yet notwithstanding this is allowed to be the chief Cause of all this Struggle, I will not deny but that many of those who are and have been concern'd in publick Employments, might secundarily and subordinately have respect to the Good and Advantage of their Country, in attaining of their preferment. And this is indeed as much as can reasonably be expected from the best, who have really gain'd a great deal of honour for their Endeavours to preserve to us the Protestant Religion, together with our Rights and Liberties intire, whilst others who have succeeded them in the same Posts, have done all that lay in their Power to Root up the very Foundations, of Property and true Religion. I would not be thought to detract from the good Qualifications of any, whom her Majesty has been pleas'd to Employ in the Administration of Affairs. Yet since you have thought fit to give up and Sacrifice, the Honour and Merit of the Ministers of the last Reign, to the Reputation of our present Managers, I think I shall do but common Justice to several of those Gentlemen, whom I respect for their Worth and Merit, if I should set this matter in its true Light; and without any false and undue Reflections upon others, endeavour to vindicate their proceedings from the many mistaken Aspersions which you, and others have undeservedly cast upon them.

And in the first Place, as to the great and principal Head and Subject which employs your whole Book, and for which the present Ministry is so much exalted and extolled by
you,

you, viz: Moderation; I think I may safely say that it was not only begun and settled in the last Reign, but was to all intents and purposes preserv'd and maintain'd as inviolably and sincerely as at present. And I believe that no Man can doubt but that King *William III.* and those Gentlemen call'd *Whigs*, who had the honour to advise with him, would have done every thing that was in their Power still to confirm and secure it against all Opposition. Is it not to these Persons we owe our Act of settlement? which is a perfect Vindication of our Rights and Liberties which were just before invaded and almost overthrown. Is it not to them we owe our Establishment upon a much freer and safer bottom than ever yet was known in *England*? were not these the Persons who gave the first check to Tyranny, and oppression both in State and Church? And is not the Settlement made by them the Cause of that most invaluable Blessing of her Majesties happy accession to the Throne? Those who have a Mind to be more fully satisfy'd herein, have nothing else to do, but to look over the Acts of Parliament which pass'd in that Reign for the general good and Advantage of all *England*: Most of which were procured by the means and interest of these Gentlemen, when a small distance of Time, and a new Reign have made us so ungratefully to forget.

It ought likewise to be considered that many of them did not only joyn and assist King *William* in his glorious Expedition against the late Tyranny, but by their Learning and ability so well justify'd the Revolution, and made so great an Impression upon those who were otherwise minded that we may without presumption affirm that by their means chiefly the Crown was placed upon K. *William's* Head; All which still had been of little advantage to us, if they had not by their indefatigable endeavours procur'd us such Laws and Constitutions as in

all probability may prove a firm Security to us for the Future.

I need not multiply particulars, but shall only instance in one which ought to be always fresh in our Memories by reason of its vast Concern and Importance; I mean the settling of our Coin. which was an Act so visibly necessary not only to the Welfare but to the very being of our Government, at that most critical juncture, when our open Enemies and false Friends had taken the advantage of that disorder amongst us; and had almost wrought us up to a general Distraction and Confusion. We cannot but remember what Fears and Discontents were then coming amongst us what dayly Expectations the *French* King and his Friends abroad and at home had then conceiv'd of some publick Disturbances that would happen amongst us upon that account; all good Men were strangely alarm'd, and began to be sadly sensible of what might be the issue of such a dangerous Emergency; and were almost in despair of ever winding themselves out of that extraordinary Difficulty. Not but that the remedy was apparent and obvious, but the Conspirators against the welfare and happiness of their Country either shew'd themselves altogether averse from applying any remedy at all to that growing Malady; or else had on purpose invented such fallacious and ineffectual remedies as serv'd only to skin over the Wound that it might shortly break out again in a more fatal and violent Eruption. Then was it in the Day of this Distress, that these Patriots (to their immortal Honour I speak it) with indefatigable industry, and a most generous concern for the Publick good, were the means of restoring our Coin; or rather of improving it in a better Scheme than was ever before known in *England*, or perhaps in any other part of the World. And all this was done without considerable damage to particular Persons.

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This defeated the Hopes and Expectations of our Enemies, and gave new life to our Affairs, which went on from that time in a more smooth and uninterrupted Channel, notwithstanding all that our Conspirators could do by their most pernicious Opposition; Amongst whom, I could nominate more than one of no mean Stations in the present Ministry. These Particulars, with many more that may be enumerated, are too recent in our Memories to be forgotten, by any but such who are willing to let any thing slip out of their Minds, that does not serve a present purpose, and think it more for their turn to pass over unmention'd what is true and undeniable; and insist rather upon a few Objections which have been raised against them by a particular Faction, with a great deal of Partiality; but with how much reason, we shall now proceed to consider.

And first, for the main and terrible Centure that some people have passed upon them for being of Opinion against Disbanding our Army: I do not yet find that the honest part of the Nation have condemn'd their Proceedings in that Affair: Nor do I see any reason why it should be imputed less to their Foresight and care of the Publick, than to Chance, that the Event has since plainly discover'd that they were in the right. For if we consider the great Charge we have since been at in raising a new Army (whereby we have lost above a Million of Money) and that the *French* King still kept his Forces on foot; it were not only improvident to Disband an Army that must soon cost us dear, both to our Purse, and Pains to raise again; but also very Impolitick to divest our selves of the only Security we had remaining against the Attempt of a powerful and ambitious Neighbour, ready provided with all the means necessary to Invade and Destroy either

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ther our selves or our Confederates, which is the same thing: Unless we should reasonably suppose that the *French* King Maintained and Paid his Troops only for the Ostentation of his Glory, and the vanity of looking upon them at a Rendezvous. The contrary hereof soon appeared, when the *Dutch* narrowly escaped from being swallowed up by him; and all that we could do (for want of any Army ready raised) could scarce come time enough to rescue them. It may also be considered that they opposed the Army at that time. were such as were notorious for their Disaffection to the Person of *K. W.* as well as to the Principles upon which his Government was founded. And I believe, the most partial of those Whiggs, who joyned with him, will not deny at this time, that the disbanding of the Army was a piece of Service very Acceptable and Extreamly Beneficial to the *French* King; tho' I am far from thinking those Whiggs had any such Design: But that some Parties had, is more than Questionable, as well from the whole Tenour of their Proceedings in other matters, as from their Undutiful, and unmannerly Behaviour towards *K. William's* Person in that particular. Amongst these, I might again reckon several who are in very conspicuous Posts in our present Management.

And as to what is objected concerning the Bill for Trials in Cases of Treason; it is notorious that the Bill was brought into the House by such who were then conspiring against the Safety of our Common-wealth, as it was then settled in the Government of *K. William*, and who hoped that they might be enabled to carry on their Plots and Machinations with greater Security and Success to them and their Party, by means of such an Act; the opposing whereof at that time ought not to be imputed to any thing else but their

their Zeal for the Safety of their King; whose Life was of that vast Consequence to all Europe; and whose Preservation ought to have been highly regarded by all true *Englishmen*, whose Lives and Liberties he had so well secur'd by the Accomplishment of so many inestimable Benefits to the Nation. Nor can it be imagined without the greatest Injustice, that those Gentlemen who opposed the Bill, could ever design to deprive the Subject of so considerable an Advantage; since 'tis well known that no Persons joyned more heartily in it than they, provided that it might not take effect till after the Death of that King: And methinks 'tis very Disingenious in any body to blame those who refused it for the sake of the King, and at the same time to approve of those who brought it in with a purpose to betray him. This, I think, is *strangely unbecoming a true Whigg, or a true Englishman*. We ought to consider the Persons we have to deal with, and to know that what is proper and seasonable at one time, may not be so at another; and that the Circumstances of Persons, Times and Places do often differ: To which a Respect ought to be shewn accordingly; that many things which in general appear Just and Lawful, may not always be expedient; and that extraordinary Cases will require extraordinary Measures. This the wise Man teaches: And without doubt it was upon this Ground that more Parliaments than one were induced to suspend to Act of *Habeas Corpus* for a time, in favour of so extraordinary a Person as K. *William*: and what was never done (as I remember) since the making of that Act, was now by a greater Majority consented to, out of a tender regard they had to the safety of their great and glorious Benefactor. Tho' 'tis certain that that Act was not suspended when several Conspiracies were discovered in the Reign of K. *Charles*
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the II, yet for King *William's* sake. it ceased though it were of much more consequence to the Liberty of the Subject, than the Bill of Trials in Cases of Treason. Nor was this Suspension opposed by any but those who were known Enemies to the Revolution: Amongst whom I must again take the freedom, to place some part of our present Administration.

And there can be no doubt but that the same Reasons, and politick Inducements prevail'd on the same Persons to oppose the Bill for Triennial Parliaments so far that it might not take an *immediate* Effect. For since the Nation had been so generally Poysoned and Infected by the adverse Party of Jacobities and High Churchmen, who had made it their business in every Country and Corporation to represent the King, and all his Actions and Designs in false and counterfeit Colours, to the disadvantage of him and all who were Friends to the happy Revolution under him, it was but common Policy, I had almost said *Self-Defence*, to provide for the Continuance of a well affected Parliament, and to keep out of the House those Persons whose business and design was to dispose matters for the return of the late abdicated Tyrant, and to Subject us again to the fears and dangers of Popery and Arbitrary Power from which we thought our selves so happily delivered by the auspicious Conduct of his Majesty. Nor was this Opposition different in its design from the other, which was only to comply with the different Circumstances of the times; without the least thought of abridging the Nation of so useful a Statute. Hereof I am Confident, there are Members enow of that House who (though they Voted on the other Side, can and will at this day bear them Witness.

As for the Judges Bill, if I remember right, it was brought into the House by those Gentlemen themselves and thrown out by the adverse party after the first Reading. I will not be positive in this matter: But it is plain that this Bill did not meet with the same Friends and Adversaries with the others, else it would have passed in the same manner as they had done.

How much these Gentlemen have by their Abilities and Industry contributed in this Reign to the preservation of her Majesty, and her Government, cannot be overlooked but by such who are willfully blind. And though I am not used to be positive, yet I do confidently affirm, it is chiefly owing to them, that her Majesty and her Kingdoms were not delivered bound and gag'd into the Hands of the *French* King, at the beginning of this Reign. For I think it will not be denied, even by our chiefest Ministers, that we were then running headlong with the most blundering Precipitation, into the Snares that were laid for us by our most implacable Enemies both at home and abroad.

It may be said perhaps that these Managers found out their Mistake in time; and rectified their Miscarriages, by settling us upon a right bottom. I grant it, and am glad of it: But at the same time we are not to forget who were the Persons that stemm'd this Tide all along, who were the Persons who shew'd these Dangers, and thereby rescu'd us from the bold Invasions of the Jacobites and High-Church, as also the Majority of the last House of Commons; for which we are chiefly indebted to some of those Gentlemen in the House of Lords, in conjunction with those ever Reverend and Honourable Prelates of King *William's* making. What occasion therefore there could be for your picking Thanks and Faults at the same time

upon the account of these Gentlemen, I cannot any way discover : You were no way led to it by the Memorialist. And what you have said in justification of the present Ministry, would have been intire without it. And whatever you may think of the matter, I can assure you that it is not every Person that you have thought worthy of your particular Commendations, that will esteem you ever the more upon this account. And that there are others of all degrees in the present Government, as well as infinite Numbers out of it, who do not think you have shew'd any extraordinary Judgment in making your Court at the expence of those Gentlemens Reputations,

So much I have thought fit to say for the present, in their behalf, tho' without either their Direction or knowledge ; tho' at the same time I am convinc'd that they do not stand in need of such an imperfect Vindication as mine : Nor do I think them any ways inclin'd to revive a Discourse of this nature ; which howsoever officious it may be thought by some, I am sure it is not less necessary or reasonable than the Cause which was given for it.

Having therefore endeavoured to wipe off the Dashes of your Pen against these worthy and Noble Patriots, I shall in the next place consider the Flourishes of your Stile, bestow'd with such an unsparing Hand upon our present Managers, wherein indeed you have much the advantage of me, by fighting under the Buckler of Power, and arm'd Authority, against the poor and weak Defence of simple and naked Truth.

This however, can be no discouragement to me, who had much rather be convinced that I am in the wrong, than to be able to carry an unjust Cause, tho' with the greatest Triumph and Advantage.

I have some reason to hope, but much more to wish that the present War may in a short time terminate to our Honour and Happiness. And I am the more encouraged to think so, because her Majesty in her Gracious and Glorious Speech, has in a manner assured us of the good Posture of our Affairs, and that we shall act vigorously in all places upon the Offensive the next Campaign. Besides the Consideration of our publick Money's being well husbanded, and dispos'd of to the best Advantage, together with the known Courage and Conduct of the Duke of *Marlborough*, which was shewn in that most Memorable Victory obtained against the *French* at *Blenheim*, will not suffer me to give an entire Credit to those invidious Reports which are spread about the Town, to the great disparagement of our Ministry, by some discontented, tho' well-affected Friends to the Government. And yet at the same time, I must say, that if I knew well how to answer them, I should not be so uneasy to hear them.

We are told by a Noble Lord, in his late *Anniversary* Speech, that *the last Campaign began with more promising Hopes than he believes the next will*. I think this was boldly enough said in her Majesty's Presence; when she had so lately express'd her self from the Throne to the contrary. I could have wished however that this Noble Peer had been pleas'd to have told us his Reasons for it. For we do not think that he uttered the true and genuine Thoughts of his Heart, when he thought fit to lay our Miscarriages at the door of the Confederates. But how much soever this *Peer*

was induced to mince the matter, there are great Numbers of others in all parts of the Town, who make use of much more Freedom, and less Reserve in their Discourses about the last Campaign. They say, 'twas managed both to our Dishonour and infinite Disadvantage, that the *French*, who were broken, and distracted in their Measures, have thereupon reassumed their Courage, and have had the Confidence to rally and defy us; that the secret Designs and Negotiations the *French* Agents have been this Winter carrying on among the Northern Princes, and the Measures that have been concerted in those Parts to break the Confederacy, by raising Disputes and Quarrels among themselves, and so necessitating them to withdraw their Troops from the common Service, is, as they say, owing to the same Mismanagement.

The Business of *Lubec*, the Difference between the States of *Holland* and the King of *Prussia*, and that Prince's Design of sending Succour to the *Swede*; the Insurrections in *Bavaria*, the Success of the Malecontents in *Hungary*, and the Straits and Difficulties of Prince *Eugene*, are all put by these People to the same score: None of which would or could have happened, if we had stuck to our first Scheme; which could not have failed of putting a glorious End to the War, if we had pursued the Design capitulated with our Confederates, and maintained our Post instead of that precipitate Retreat, or rather Flight from the *Moselle*, towards the *Maese* and *Sambre*.

This, I confess, is a heavy Charge. But I told them all, that this Misfortune was to be placed to the Account of Prince *Lewis* of *Baden*, who would not suffer his Troops to joyn us according to Agreement; That it was justly suspected that Prince *Lewis* was in the *French* Interest; and had a Design to expose us to the Insults of the
whole

whole *French* Army under Marshal *Villars*. To this I was answered (not without some contempt) that I had given too much Ear to the Accounts brought over by Mr. *Du---l* and others, who were notoriously affected to the present proceedings : That if I had consulted the *Forreign* Papers, I should have been fully satisfy'd that part of the *German* Army had joyn'd us, near the time agreed on, and that the rest were marching towards us with all convenient Expedition. And tho' Prince *Lewis* might have been indispos'd, yet this prov'd no hindrance to the March of the *German* Forces who were never known to have been earlier in the Field than at that time.

They say further that we our selves were a sufficient Force to have kept our Ground (at least) against the *French* Army till the rest had come up to us : That we had a plentiful Magazeen at *Treves* which was stored with all manner of Provisions the last Winter, for this very purpose : Which made our desertion so much the more unaccountable. That this is so (say they) appears because the Diet of *Germany*, who could not be misinform'd of a Matter so near 'em, found no fault in Prince *Lewis's* conduct or Integrity ; but made him *Generalissimo* of all their Forces, and that the *Germans* were really march'd for the *Moselle*, was undeniable, not only in *Forreign* News-Books, but in our own Gazetts ; that when Marshal *Villars* had ravaged the Country which we had relinquish'd, and set down before the *German* Lines at *Lauterburg*, dayly Reinforcements came to Count *Thun-ger's* Camp from the *Moselle* ; and they say, 'twas impossible those Forces should return from the *Moselle* if they had not first gone thither. I told them that I thought they were misinform'd, and made wrong Judgment on these matters ; and so was leaving them : But they pursu'd me closely, and asked me what I had to say to the succeeding Conduct, and why we did not
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make the most of what was put into our hands of passing the Enemies Ditch, when our Army had so much the advantage both in Number, Bravery and Discipline, when we should have pursued them at the Heels, and have profited our selves of the Enemies surprize, whom we had then in Chase upon a full Cry? we ought not to have suffer'd them to have squatted in *Lovain*, till they recovered their Fright, and took breath, whereby they were enabled afterwards to keep us at a Bay.

I told them, that we who were not upon the spot were unable to judge of those matters; and that for all their jesting, the Ditch was (no doubt) a deep Ditch and a Long. That the Enemies fear added Wings to their Flight, which are always more prevalent than those of hope; and that only part of the *Dutch* forces had pass'd the *Dyle*, and that by reason of the excessive Rains last Summer the River was so overflow'd, that the Rest of the Army could not pass over to them. But they told me that I might as well have said nothing; and still question'd me if I had no better Apology for the affair of *Over-Isch*. I asked them what they meant by that? For sure they could not be ignorant that our General had there push'd on an attack which might in all probability have given the last deciding Blow to the *French* Forces, if we had not been basely and cowardly deserted by the *Dutch* General Officers and Agents. They shook their Heads and told me that if I had Read, *Myn Heer Slangenburg's* Letter I should have found a quite different Relation of the Business, which if it had not been true, *Slangenburg* durst not have sent it in that manner to the States themselves: nor could he have any Interest in imposing upon them at that rate, well knowing that the States Commissioners in the Army, and their General Officers would soon have informed them to the contrary;

ry: Nor would he have appealed to those Commissioners for the Truth of what he affirm'd if he had known it to be false; nor durst he have had the confidence to dispute the Matter with a Person, of the Duke's Power and Interest in the States General, but upon clear and undoubted evidence of Fact.

He takes the Boldness to contradict our Generals Letter which say's, that Orders were given for the attack about Noon, whereas there was no mention made of any such design to the *Dutch* Generals till six in the Evening. He takes Notice that the Duke's Letter to the States, was Printed the very next day after it was sent to them; but not by their Order: and five hundred Copies of them sent immediately to the Army, and industriously dispersed in other Places. He ventures to say that the Duke could not possibly have any intention to make that attack; for there had been no view made of the Enemies Post, nor any passages opened which lay between us and the *French* and which were necessary to be passed before we could come to an engagement. This Surprize so late in the Evening, put the *Dutch* General Officers and Agents into a great Confusion as not knowing what they were to do. The Officers notwithstanding all this uncertainty, declared themselves ready to Fight if the Agents would consent to it: the Agents knew not what to do in it, being altogether in the Dark how, or by whom those Counsels had been taken. It was thought at least the best expedient to send away forthwith General *Saliss*, *Nuyells*, and other Officers to view the Enemies Posture, and to take notice, as well as the time would permit of the Advantages and Disadvantages of a Battle, and to report their Opinions to the Commissioners. Upon their return they acquainted the Commissioners with what they had observed, with their opinion that there was no

probability of being able to break in upon the Enemy : that the attempt was vastly more hazardous than at the Battle of *Blenheim*, where one or more of them had been : And yet that had been esteem'd a rash Enterprize : That for their parts they thought it was not justifiable in Prudence, or Discretion, yet they were ready to obey commands, and do their utmost.

The *Agents*, after having throughly weigh'd all these matters were of opinion that they ought not to hazard a Battel, nor expose their Army to such evident danger of being Destroy'd. This was the event of that affair, which, considering their surprize so late in the Evening, could not be expected to be otherwise. And this (as *Slangenbergh* insinuates) our General well knew, who never so much as intended a Battle as appears by that unaccountable shuffling, and odd half-paced Method whereby that whole affair was managed from the beginning to the End : And which *Slangenbergh* takes only to be a Bravado that seem'd to offer at something that might recover the Credit he had lost in the former part of the Campaign ; and to lay the blame on this Miscarriage upon the *Dutch* (as he had the other upon the *Germans*) in order to get a more absolute Power and Command into his Hands, as the Duke plainly enough hints at in his Letter to the States.

And indeed *Slangenbergh's* conduct in this Matter, has already been sufficiently vindicated by the Majority of the United Provinces who have Application to the rest that he might have a separate Command ; and the reason why the other Provinces did not give their consent will not be difficult to guess, if we consider the great caution the States of *Holland* must necessarily be under with respect to their carriage towards a Person of the Dukes Authority and prevalency in the Court of *England*. They further urged that if this account was
false

false, it were highly necessary that the Duke should make the contrary appear: For neither is his Reputation or Quality, above taking Notice of such Reflections as these. Nor would there have been wanting Persons who, out of officious promptitude to a Man of his Power, and Interest, would readily lay open the Mistakes of the Letter, and Disabused the World in so many Particulars wherein their *Munificent* Patron had been Misrepresented.

The profound silence therefore wherein these things are rather hush'd and concealed, instead of being vindicated, makes People apt to take them *pro confesso*: And so for want of a convincing Answer our most Noble Duke must be constrain'd to lie under the Scandal of so many reproachful imputations. And truly at this rate tis impossible to conceive how far Peoples audacious Surmises may carry them. For they were not content with all this, but gave broad hints that this exorbitant desire of command, and those advantages given to the Enemy last Summer, could have no other aim or design than to enable and Countenance him, in making an advantagious bargain for himself with *France*, by selling them a Peace to the inconceivable loss and detriment of his own Country and the Confederates. Nor did they forget to put me in mind of several Meetings and private intercourses that pass'd between his Excellency and such as were proper and suspected instruments for such sort of Negotiation. His being twice with the Marquess of *Allegre* in private Discourse before he went to *Paris*, was thought by some to be more than was due in complisance only to a Prisoner of War.

And it is thought by others that a Pass might have been granted to *Dou Pedro de Ronquillo* for his Journey to *Aixla Chapelle* without so much intimacy as was be-

tween them. This every body says that his Grace out of common discretion (which is not wanting to him at other times) ought to have avoided all manner of secrecy with those, and such like Persons, especially at a Time when there was such a general Discourse of Peace all over this part of the World. For besides what had been attempted of this kind by the *Swiss* Cantons, and others that I could Name, it is well enough known that two *French* Emissaries resided for some time in *Holland* upon that Account : And made their proposals underhand till they were at last banished the Country, and their propositions rejected with contempt.

I told these Objectors that I was extremely surpriz'd to see that they should pass such severe Censures upon one who had deserv'd so well of his Country, and the whole Confederacy, and whose sincerity and hearty engagement against *France*, were manifested as clear as the Sun, by that unexampled Defeat which he and Prince *Eugene* had given them at *Hockstet*. I was answer'd, that this was far from being an excuse for his not doing the same again, when he had a much greater advantage over them. But in truth the Case was very much alter'd now from what it was; and it is possible for a Man to be a hearty Enemy one Year and a good Friend the Next, that it was necessary to humble the *French* King in the *first* Place, and to reduce him to such a Condition as might force him to make Applications for a Peace, which being once done, it was no wonder that such Methods were afterwards taken as might promote his Original intent in beating them.

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They further gave their Opinions, that we are in a deplorable Condition; for since the Clamours in *England* and *Holland* against a treacherous and disadvantageous Peace, may possibly disappoint the high expectations of gain which some Persons entertain'd in that Way, the next thing may be to take such Measures as may continue the War as long as possible, as being the remaining profitable Project to enrich particulars at the expense of the Publick; which already groans for want of Money and Trade.

The Wonderful Success that has attended our Forces in *Catalonia* under the command of my Lord *Peterborough* (though there was no publick thanks for it) is far beyond whatever could be expected (I would not say intended) by those who sent him thither. And if he had return'd to us *re infectâ*, he would have lost no Honour at all by it, since he was so meanly equipped, and so wretchedly provided for such an Enterprize, that there was no humane probability of its ever taking effect, though every Souldier had been as great a Hero as his Lordship. But Fortune (who has often signally appear'd in our favour) was not willing, it seems, to baulk a Man of his Lordship's Bravery and good affection to his Queen and Country; but directed a random Shot (as some say) into the Enemies Magazine, which yet would not have gain'd our Victory if it had not been Seconded by the more than ordinary conduct of his Lordship and the Officers under him. For I shall rather impute it to these Gentlemens cool and deliberate Valour, than to the Common reason given about the Town, that when they saw themselves betray'd and exposed, they Fought like Lions, resolving to overcome the difficulties wherein they were entrap'd, and force their way through a thousand Deaths and dangers to the

amazing surprize and difapointment of their *Spanifh* Enemies and good *Englifh* Friends, who fent them upon fuch an Errant adventure. Nor does it any way derogate from their merit that they were affifted by Fortune, in an enterprize which without Fortune, could never have been atchieved; fince they withftood or overcome all other oppofitions and discouragements whatfoever: Amongft which may be reckoned thofe very Orders which are mention'd in the *Portugal* Ambaffadors Account, and Publish'd here by Authority. How this News was received by fome who are near the Court, is as eafie to be gueft, as what the Succours to be fent thither by the fame Perfons are like to be. No doubt if it be by their appointment they will be proportionable to their original Forces. For they are very ftady in their proceedings, and will no way vary from the Rules they have propos'd to go by; amongft which one is that the brightnefs of any one Man's performance, ought not to Eclipse the Honour of *Others*. But 'tis not to be doubted, but the Parliament (to whom her Majefty nas fo heartily and affectionately recommend this affair) will fend them fuch timely and effectually fupplies, as may recover the difadvantages of the laft Campaign, and give a happy turn to the affairs of the Confederates in the *only* Place where *now* it can reasonably be expected: Wherein particular care ought to be taken that whatfoever affiftance is design'd them may have its full intire effect, that we may not lofe by negligence or treachery this only opportunity put into our hands to affect the Enemy in his moft fenfible Part, by penetrating further into his Dominions by this paffage which is fo fairly and widely laid open.

For as to any other Seat of the War, there seems no probability of doing any thing more at present, than keeping our Enemies at a stand. For since that unhappy Disappointment at the *Moselle*, the *Germans* will with Difficulty keep the *French* out of *Bavaria* , and the Enemies Countrey. And if the *Dutch* and we together should happen to take a Town in *Flanders* ; 'tis no more than a Grain out of a handful of Corn, and serves only to afford us the Prospect of a never-ending War.

And as for the Negotiations which are now carrying on by a certain Person in his Travels, and from whence some people expect great Matters, it will in all likelihood vanish into nothing else but an intention of Collecting his Presents at *Vienna* and the other *German* Courts; and they concluded what they had to say, with this Remark, That it was absurd to expect that any Good can proceed from the Root of all Evil.

I told them that they would soon find themselves mistaken in their Politicks, and so left them; and shall further leave them to be satisfied by you, Sir, since you are turned the Court Advocate: And I heartily wish you could do it to the satisfaction of all honest *Englishmen* ; and should be glad you could find as little ground for these Accusations, as for those of your Memorialist; and should congratulate your Success in this Case, as much as I really do in the other

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But these are not such Objections as your Memorialist and such like Authors will make. Nothing is more pleasing to them, than to see our Affairs go wrong. Nor are they likely to find fault with such Miscarriages as tend to strengthen their own Faction and Party. Others make these Complaints with Grief, whilst they hear them with Joy; and tho' they should behold the State ruining before their Eyes, they would still cry out of nothing but *the Church, the Church.*

If therefore you can gratifie us so much as to clear up these Objections to the Conduct of this great Personage whom we would willingly respect and honour; you will do us a signal Pleasure, and make us the less concerned about his L---dy, either as to what may be maliciously urged against her or ridiculously alledged in her behalf; but shall leave her M-----y to be advised by her in such things which without doubt she understands far better than the greatest Statesman in Christendom.

There is a certain Gentleman, which I would have taken no more notice of than your Memorialist had done, but that you seem to be angry that he was left out of that Book. Lest therefore I might also incur your Displeasure; and because you are generally censured for going out of your way in an unnecessary Defence of one who was no ways accused; I shall endeavour to clear you from that Charge of Officiousness for the future; and shall not be much concerned, tho' you should prove as angry that he is here mentioned,

ed, as that he was there omitted. And truly I think he might every whit as well been pass'd by in your Book as in the other, if you could as easily pass'd by any pretence of making your Court to a Person of his Station and Power.

I am not so well acquainted with your Memorialist as to know his Reasons for his gross Omissions, but shall be content with the Reasons you give it your self, which seem to me probable enough, *viz: Out of hope that they might securely depend upon his good Offices, and that he may one time or other become a Mediator in their behalf.* Truly Sir, if that Gentleman's conduct be well considered, they might have reason enough to hope that in time he may be disposed to do them the same, or as many good Offices as he had formerly done with so much Spleen and Hypocrisy, as contributed all as in him lay to frustrate the good effects of our late happy Revolution. And for which great Services he was thrice chosen S——r by them. It is Therefore no wonder that they should expect to meet in their turn with a Man who had deserted and betray'd all Parties. And no doubt but they depend upon him as a sure Card let the Worst come to the Worst.

Therefore I can the more readily agree with you that it was not done *with any design to render him suspected*, for I dare engage they have too tender a Regard to his Reputation, to do him any prejudice upon that Account. Though I think so much unnecessary Caution is but thrown away upon one who is already past Suspicion.

I shall not therefore dispute the Matter with you, whether this grand Omission was occasioned either by hope of his assistance, or fear that he might betray their Secrets or any other inducement, so long as you agree with me that it could not be out of *Love*. For I must still bar that, whether you speak of Jacobite, Williamite, Whigg, Tory, Trimmer, High or Low Church, or any other Party. And if we were to pick out single Persons in the Case I am afraid we should find as few vouchers as in your case of the Foreman of the Church's grand Jury. You say indeed that *he hated extremes in all Parties*, had you said he is hated extremely in all Parties, you had varied less from the the Mark than from the Words.

However, as to his aversion to extremes I can go along with you half way in that also, since I never heard that he was extremely Honest, or extremely Sincere: And as for the other half I shall but copy the Character given him by all Parties, if I should say that he is extremely ---- and extremely ---- you know what I mean Sir well enough, and I do not think that I write the more obscurely by using strokes instead of Words. This I am sure of, that if his *literature* was as extreme and *consummate* as these last mentioned qualities he might well pass for the most Learned Man of his Time. *His knowledge in the Laws of Parliament, and the Peoples liberties* may for ought I know be as you say: Though I think it had been more material to have shewn the good he had ever made of It.

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I have heard it said that he has been at charges for voluminous Collections, and he has taken sufficient care that it should be known, and that it might be thought he had them as much in his Head as in his Closet. And thus by establishing an opinion of his great Knowledge, by inveighing much against the ill management of the Revenue, by popular harangues, and by affecting to draw all business to his own hands, by endeavouring (through his skill in the Rules and Methods of the House of Commons) to obstruct and defeat all Motions which were not of his own making, he insinuated himself into the good liking of a credulous and unwary party: Who having trusted him with the management of their Complaints against some chief Ministers and others in high Posts and employments, have been betray'd by his faint and partial attacks, in hopes thereby to render himself more considerable to both Parties whilst at the same time both were betray'd. This is the knowledge, and these are the great parts for which some People arrive to great Fame, and high Places.

To which I shall only say that there can be no attaining these consummate Qualifications without first rejecting and abandoning all Sense of Truth, Honour, Modesty or Shame, and resolving to stick at nothing though never so vile and profligate which may contribute to their designs. Whilst we have such persons as these near our C----, never tell us of Poets, Footmen, &c. For even *Mordecai Abbot* himself has left a better Name behind him for his Honest, and

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faithful

faithful dealing in the discharge of his Employment than any such as these are like to do whom you make choice of for your best and brightest Characters.

And thus by establishing an opinion of his great Knowledge by inserting much against the management of the Revenue, by popular language, and by affecting to draw all his arguments to his own advantage, (through his skill in the House and the House of Commons) to himself and his friends all Relations which were not of his own making he insinuated himself into the good liking of a considerable and unwary party: Who having united with him in the management of their Country's Affairs, Ministers and others in high Office and Employment

Sir Tours, &c.

have been carry'd by his talents and partial attacks, in hopes thereby to render himself more considerable to both Parties which at the same time both were party.

F I N I S.

To which I shall only say that there can be no attaining this end, unless we are first of all rejecting and abandoning all sorts of vain Honour, Modesty or Shame, and resolving to look at nothing though never to vile and profane which may contribute to their delight. While we have such notions as these near our Eyes, we shall never be able to see a better Time follow for the Health and

