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THOUGHTS

ON

THE CAUSE

OF THE PRESENT

DISCONTENTS.

Hoc vero occultum, intestinum, domesticum malum, non modo non existit, verum etiam opprimit, antequam perspicere atque explorare potueris. Cic.

THE THIRD EDITION.



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THOUGHTS

ON

THE CAUSE

OF THE PRESENT

DISCONTENTS.

IT is an undertaking of some degree of delicacy to examine into the cause of public disorders. If a man happens not to succeed in such an enquiry, he will be thought weak and visionary; if he touches the true grievance, there is a danger that he may come near to persons of weight and consequence, who will rather be exasperated at the discovery of their errors, than thankful for the occasion of correcting them. If he should be obliged to blame the favourites of the people, he will be considered as the tool of power; if he censures those in power, he will

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be

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be looked on as an instrument of faction. But
in all exertions of duty something is to be hazard-
ed. In cases of tumult and disorder, our law
has invested every man, in some sort, with the
authority of a magistrate. When the affairs of
the nation are distracted, private people are, by
the spirit of that law, justified in stepping a
little out of their ordinary sphere. They enjoy
a privilege, of somewhat more dignity and
effect, than that of idle lamentation over the
calamities of their country. They may look
into them narrowly; they may reason upon
them liberally; and if they should be so fortune-
ate as to discover the true source of the mischief,
and to suggest any probable method of removing
it, though they may displease the rulers for the
day, they are certainly of service to the cause of
Government. Government is deeply interested
in every thing which, even through the medium
of some temporary uneasiness, may tend finally
to compose the minds of the subject, and to
conciliate their affections. I have nothing to do
here with the abstract value of the voice of the
people. But as long as reputation, the most
precious possession of every individual, and as
long as opinion, the great support of the State,
depend entirely upon that voice, it can never
be considered as a thing of little consequence
either to individuals or to Government. Nations
are not primarily ruled by laws; less by violence.
Whatever original energy may be supposed either
in force or regulation; the operation of both
is, in truth, merely instrumental. Nations are
governed

governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or his superiours; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it; I mean, — when public affairs are steadily and quietly conducted; not when Government is nothing but a continued scuffle between the magistrate and the multitude; in which sometimes the one and sometimes the other is uppermost; in which they alternately yield and prevail, in a series of contemptible victories and scandalous submissions. The temper of the people amongst whom he presides ought therefore to be the first study of a Statesman. And the knowledge of this temper it is by no means impossible for him to attain, if he has not an interest in being ignorant of what it is his duty to learn.

To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind; indeed the necessary effects of the ignorance and levity of the vulgar. Such complaints and humours have existed in all times; yet as all times have *not* been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself, in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemperature of our own air and season.

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Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment, if I say, that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man in or out of power who holds any other language. That Government is at once dreaded and contemned; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors; that their inaction is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence; that rank, and office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world, have lost their reverence and effect; that our foreign politicks are as much deranged as our domestic oeconomy; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection, and loosened from their obedience; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce; that hardly any thing above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire; but that disconnexion and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in Parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time: these are facts univervally admitted and lamented.

This state of things is the more extraordinary, because the great parties which formerly divided and agitated the kingdom are known to be in a manner entirely dissolved. No great external calamity has visited the nation; no pestilence or famine. We do not labour at present under any scheme of taxation new or oppressive in the quantity or in the mode. Nor are we engaged in unsuccessful war; in which, our misfortunes might easily pervert our judgement; and

and our minds, fore from the loss of national glory, might feel every blow of Fortune as a crime in Government.

It is impossible that the cause of this strange distemper should not sometimes become a subject of discourse. It is a compliment due, and which I willingly pay, to those who administer our affairs, to take notice in the first place of their speculation. Our Ministers are of opinion, that the increase of our trade and manufactures, that our growth by colonization and by conquest, have concurred to accumulate immense wealth in the hands of some individuals; and this again being dispersed amongst the people, has rendered them universally proud, ferocious, and ungovernable; that the insolence of some from their enormous wealth, and the boldness of others from a guilty poverty, have rendered them capable of the most atrocious attempts; so that they have trampled upon all subordination, and violently born down the unarmed laws of a free Government; barriers too feeble against the fury of a populace so fierce and licentious as ours. They contend, that no adequate provocation has been given for so spreading a discontent; our affairs having been conducted throughout with remarkable temper and consummate wisdom. The wicked industry of some libellers, joined to the intrigues of a few disappointed politicians, have, in their opinion, been able to produce this unnatural ferment in the nation.

Nothing indeed can be more unnatural than the present convulsions of this country, if the

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above account be a true one. I confess I shall assent to it with great reluctance, and only on the compulsion of the clearest and firmest proofs; because their account resolves itself into this short, but discouraging proposition, "That we have a very good Ministry, but that we are a very bad people;" that we set ourselves to bite the hand that feeds us; that with a malignant insanity we oppose the measures, and ungratefully vilify the persons, of those, whose sole object is our own peace and prosperity. If a few; uny libellers, acting under a knot of factious politicians, without virtue, parts, or character (such they are constantly represented by these gentlemen), are sufficient to excite this disturbance, very perverse must be the disposition of that people, amongst whom such a disturbance can be excited by such means. It is besides no small aggravation of the public misfortune, that the disease, on this hypothesis, appears to be without remedy. If the wealth of the nation be the cause of its turbulence, I imagine it is not proposed to introduce poverty, as a constable to keep the peace. If our dominions abroad are the roots which feed all this rank luxuriance of sedition, it is not intended to cut them off in order to famish the fruit. If our liberty has enfeebled the executive power, there is no design, I hope, to call in the aid of despotism, to fill up the deficiencies of law. Whatever may be intended, these things are not yet professed. We seem therefore to be driven to absolute despair; for we have no other materials to
work

work upon, but those out of which God has been pleased to form the inhabitants of this island. If these be radically and essentially vitious, all that can be said is, that those men are very unhappy, to whose fortune or duty it falls to administer the affairs of this untoward people. I hear it indeed sometimes asserted, that a steady perseverance in the present measures, and a rigorous punishment of those who oppose them, will in course of time infallibly put an end to these disorders. But this, in my opinion, is said without much observation of our present disposition, and without any knowledge at all of the general nature of mankind. If the matter of which this nation is composed be so very fermentable as these gentlemen describe it, leaven never will be wanting to work it up, as long as discontent, revenge, and ambition, have existence in the world. Particular punishments are the cure for accidental distempers in the State; they inflame rather than allay those heats which arise from the settled mismanagement of the Government, or from a natural ill disposition in the people. It is of the utmost moment not to make mistakes in the use of strong measures; and firmness is then only a virtue when it accompanies the most perfect wisdom. In truth, inconstancy is a sort of natural corrective of folly and ignorance.

I am not one of those who think that the people are never in the wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say, that in all

disputes between them and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people. Experience may perhaps justify me in going further. Where popular discontents have been very prevalent; it may well be affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of Government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the State, it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake. “*Les revolutions qui arrivent dans les grands etats ne sont point un effet du hazard, ni du caprice des peuples. Rien ne revolte les grands d’un royaume comme un Gouvernement foible et derangé. Pour la populace, ce n’est jamais par envie d’attaquer qu’elle se s’uleve, mais par impatience de souffrir**.” These are the words of a great man; of a Minister of state; and a zealous assertor of Monarchy. They are applied to the *system of Favouritism* which was adopted by Henry the Third of France, and to the dreadful consequences it produced. What he says of revolutions, is equally true of all great disturbances. If this presumption in favour of the subjects against the trustees of power be not the more probable, I am sure it is the more comfortable speculation; because it is more easy to change an administration than to reform a people.

* Mem. de Sully, vol. I. p. 133.

Upon a supposition, therefore, that in the opening of the cause the presumptions stand equally balanced between the parties, there seems sufficient ground to entitle any person to a fair hearing, who attempts some other scheme beside that easy one which is fashionable in some fashionable companies, to account for the present discontents. It is not to be argued that we endure no grievance, because our grievances are not of the same sort with those under which we laboured formerly; not precisely those which we bore from the Tudors, or vindicated on the Stuarts. A great change has taken place in the affairs of this country. For in the silent lapse of events as material alterations have been insensibly brought about in the policy and character of governments and nations, as those which have been marked by the tumult of public revolutions.

It is very rare indeed for men to be wrong in their feelings concerning public misconduct; as rare to be right in their speculation upon the cause of it. I have constantly observed, that the generality of people are fifty years, at least, behind-hand in their politicks. There are but very few, who are capable of comparing and digesting what passes before their eyes at different times and occasions, so as to form the whole into a distinct system. But in books every thing is settled for them, without the exertion of any considerable diligence or sagacity. For which reason men are wise with but little reflexion, and good with little self-denial,

10 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF denial, in the business of all times except their own. We are very uncorrupt and tolerably enlightened judges of the transactions of past ages; where no passions deceive, and where the whole train of circumstances, from the trifling cause to the tragical event, is set in an orderly series before us. Few are the partizans of departed tyranny; and to be a Whig on the business of an hundred years ago, is very consistent with every advantage of present servility. This retrospective wisdom, and historical patriotism, are things of wonderful convenience; and serve admirably to reconcile the old quarrel between speculation and practice. Many a stern republican, after gorging himself with a full feast of admiration of the Grecian commonwealths and of our true Saxon constitution, and discharging all the splendid bile of his virtuous indignation on King John and King James, sits down perfectly satisfied to the coarsest work and homeliest job of the day he lives in. I believe there was no professed admirer of Henry the Eighth among the instruments of the last King James; nor in the court of Henry the Eighth, was there, I dare say, to be found a single advocate for the favourites of Richard the Second.

No complaisance to our Court, or to our age, can make me believe nature to be so changed, but that public liberty will be among us, as among our ancestors, obnoxious to some person or other; and that opportunities will be furnished, for attempting at least, some alteration to the prejudice of our constitution. The^c
attempt^{ts}

attempts will naturally vary in their mode according to times and circumstances. For ambition, though it has ever the same general views, has not at all times the same means, nor the same particular objects. A great deal of the furniture of ancient tyranny is worn to rags; the rest is entirely out of fashion. Besides, there are few Statesmen so very clumsy and awkward in their business, as to fall into the identical snare which has proved fatal to their predecessors. When an arbitrary imposition is attempted upon the subject, undoubtedly it will not bear on its fore-head the name of *Ship-money*. There is no danger that an extension of the *Forest laws* should be the chosen mode of oppression in this age. And when we hear any instance of ministerial rapacity, to the prejudice of the rights of private life, it will certainly not be the exaction of two hundred pullets, from a woman of fashion, for leave to lye with her own husband*.

Every age has its own manners, and its politics dependent upon them; and the same attempts will not be made against a constitution fully formed and matured, that were used to destroy it in the cradle, or to resist its growth during its infancy.

Against the being of Parliament, I am satisfied, no designs have ever been entertained since the

* “ Uxor Hugonis de Nevill dat Domino Regi ducentas Gallinas, eo quod possit jacere una nocte cum Domino suo Hugone de Nevill.” Maddox, Hist. Exch. c. xiii. p. 326.

12 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF Revolution. Every one must perceive, that it is strongly the interest of the Court, to have some second cause interposed between the Ministers and the people. The gentlemen of the House of Commons have an interest equally strong, in sustaining the part of that intermediate cause. However they may hire out the *usufruct* of their voices, they never will part with the *fee and inheritance*. Accordingly those who have been of the most known devotion to the will and pleasure of a Court, have at the same time been most forward in asserting an high authority in the House of Commons. When they knew who were to use that authority, and how it was to be employed, they thought it never could be carried too far. It must be always the wish of an unconstitutional Statesman, that an House of Commons who are entirely dependent upon him, should have every right of the people entirely dependent upon their pleasure. It was soon discovered, that the forms of a free, and the ends of an arbitrary Government, were things not altogether incompatible.

The power of the Crown, almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence. An influence, which operated without noise and without violence; an influence which converted the very antagonist, into the instrument, of power; which contained in itself a perpetual principle of growth and renovation; and which the distresses and the prosperity of the country equally tended to augment,

ment, was an admirable substitute for a Prerogative, that, being only the offspring of antiquated prejudices, had moulded in its original stamina irresistible principles of decay and dissolution. The ignorance of the people is a bottom but for a temporary system; the interest of active men in the State is a foundation perpetual and infallible. However, some circumstances, arising, it must be confessed, in a great degree from accident, prevented the effects of this influence for a long time from breaking out in a manner capable of exciting any serious apprehensions. Although Government was strong and flourished exceedingly, the *Court* had drawn far less advantage than one would imagine from this great source of power.

At the Revolution, the Crown, deprived, for the ends of the Revolution itself, of many prerogatives, was found too weak to struggle against all the difficulties which pressed so new and unsettled a Government. The Court was obliged therefore to delegate a part of its powers to men of such interest as could support, and of such fidelity as would adhere to, its establishment. Such men were able to draw in a greater number to a concurrence in the common defence. This connexion, necessary at first, continued long after convenient; and properly conducted might indeed, in all situations, be an useful instrument of Government. At the same time, through the intervention of men of popular weight and character, the people possessed a security for their just portion of importance

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portance in the State. But as the title to the
Crown grew stronger by long possession, and by
the constant increase of its influence, these helps
have of late seemed to certain persons no better
than incumbrances. The powerful managers for
Government were not sufficiently submissive to
the pleasure of the possessors of immediate and
personal favour, sometimes from a confidence in
their own strength natural and acquired; some-
times from a fear of offending their friends,
and weakening that lead in the country, which
gave them a consideration independent of the
Court. Men acted as if the Court could re-
ceive, as well as confer, an obligation. The
influence of Government, thus divided in ap-
pearance between the Court and the leaders of
parties, became in many cases an accession rather
to the popular than to the royal scale; and some
part of that influence which would otherwise
have been possessed as in a sort of mortmain
and unalienable domain, returned again to the
great ocean from whence it arose, and cir-
culated among the people. This method there-
fore of governing, by men of great natural
interest or great acquired consideration, was
viewed in a very invidious light by the true
lovers of absolute monarchy. It is the nature
of despotism to abhor power held by any means
but its own momentary pleasure; and to an-
nihilate all intermediate situations between
boundless strength on its own part, and total
debility on the part of the people.

To

To get rid of all this intermediate and independent importance, and *to secure to the Court the unlimited and uncontrouled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour*, has for some years past been the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the Crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partizans of the Court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people; without any attention to the dignity of the greater, or to the affections of the lower sorts. A new project was therefore devised, by a certain set of intriguing men, totally different from the system of Administration which had prevailed since the accession of the House of Brunswick. This project, I have heard, was first conceived by some persons in the court of Frederick Prince of Wales.

The earliest attempt in the execution of this design was to set up for Minister, a person, in rank indeed respectable, and very ample in fortune; but who, to the moment of this vast and sudden elevation, was little known or considered in the kingdom. To him the whole nation was to yield an immediate and implicit submission. But whether it was for want of firmness to bear up against the first opposition; or that things were not yet fully ripened, or that this method was not found the most eligible; that idea was soon abandoned. The instrumental part of the project was a little altered,

to accommodate it to the time, and to bring things more gradually and more surely to the one great end proposed.

The first part of the reformed plan was to draw *a line which should separate the Court from the Ministry*. Hitherto these names had been looked upon as synonymous; but for the future, Court and Administration were to be considered as things totally distinct. By this operation, two systems of Administration were to be formed; one which should be in the real secret and confidence; the other merely ostensible, to perform the official and executory duties of Government. The latter were alone to be responsible; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the Court against the Ministry*: this party was to have a large share in the emoluments of Government, and to hold it totally separate from, and independent of, ostensible Administration.

The third point, and that on which the success of the whole scheme ultimately depended, was *to bring Parliament to an acquiescence in this project*. Parliament was therefore to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connexions, and character, of the Ministers of the Crown. By means of a discipline, on which I shall say more hereafter, that body was to be habituated to the most opposite interests, and the most discordant politicks.

politicks. All connexions and dependencies among subjects were to be entirely dissolved. As hitherto business had gone through the hands of leaders of Whigs or Tories, men of talents to conciliate the people, and engage to their confidence, now the method was to be altered; and the lead was to be given to men of no sort of consideration or credit in the country. This want of natural importance was to be their very title to delegated power. Members of Parliament were to be hardened into an insensibility to pride as well as to duty. Those high and haughty sentiments, which are the great support of independence, were to be let down gradually. Point of honour and precedence were no more to be regarded in Parliamentary decorum, than in a Turkish army. It was to be avowed as a constitutional maxim, that the King might appoint one of his footmen, or one of your footmen, for Minister; and that he ought to be, and that he would be, as well followed as the first name for rank or wisdom in the nation. Thus Parliament was to look on, as if perfectly unconcerned; while a cabal of the closet and back-stairs was substituted in the place of a national Administration.

With such a degree of acquiescence, any measure of any Court might well be deemed thoroughly secure. The capital objects, and by much the most flattering characteristics of arbitrary power, would be obtained. Every thing would be drawn from its holdings in the country to the personal favour and inclination of the

18 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF Prince. This favour would be the sole introduction to power, and the only tenure by which it was to be held: so that no person looking towards another, and all looking towards the Court, it was impossible but that the motive which solely influenced every man's hopes must come in time to govern every man's conduct; till at last the fervility became universal, in spite of the dead letter of any laws or institutions whatsoever.

How it should happen that any man could be tempted to venture upon such a project of Government, may at first view appear surprizing. But the fact is, that opportunities very inviting to such an attempt have offered; and the scheme itself was not destitute of some arguments not wholly unplausible to recommend it. These opportunities and these arguments, the use that has been made of both, the plan for carrying this new scheme of government into execution, and the effects which it has produced, are in my opinion worthy of our serious consideration.

His Majesty came to the throne of these kingdoms with more advantages than any of his predecessors since the Revolution. Fourth in descent, and third in succession of his Royal family, even the zealots of hereditary right, in him, saw something to flatter their favourite prejudices; and to justify a transfer of their attachments, without a change in their principles. The person and cause of the Pretender were become contemptible; his title disowned throughout Europe, his party disbanded in England.

His Majesty came indeed to the inheritance of a mighty war; but, victorious in every part of the globe, peace was always in his power, not to negotiate, but to dictate. No foreign habits or attachments withdrew him from the cultivation of his power at home. His revenue for the civil establishment, fixed (as it was then thought) at a large, but definite sum, was ample, without being invidious. His influence, by additions from conquest, by an augmentation of debt, by an increase of military and naval establishment, much strengthened and extended. And coming to the throne in the prime and full vigour of youth, as from affection there was a strong dislike, so from dread there seemed to be a general averfeness, from giving any thing like offence to a Monarch, against whose resentment opposition could not look for a refuge in any sort of reversionary hope.

These singular advantages inspired his Majesty only with a more ardent desire to preserve unimpaired the spirit of that national freedom, to which he owed a situation so full of glory. But to others it suggested sentiments of a very different nature. They thought they now beheld an opportunity (by a certain sort of Statesmen never long undiscovered or unemployed) of drawing to themselves, by the aggrandisement of a Court Faction, a degree of power which they could never hope to derive from natural influence or from honourable service; and which it was impossible they could hold with the least security, whilst the system of Administration

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rested upon its former bottom. In order to
facilitate the execution of their design, it was
necessary to make many alterations in political
arrangement, and a signal change in the opinions,
habits, and connexions of the greatest part of
those who at that time acted in publick.

In the first place, they proceeded gradually,
but not slowly, to destroy every thing of strength
which did not derive its principal nourishment
from the immediate pleasure of the Court. The
greatest weight of popular opinion and party
connexion were then with the Duke of Newcastle
and Mr. Pitt. Neither of these held their im-
portance by the *new tenure* of the Court; they
were not therefore thought to be so proper as
others for the services which were required by
that tenure. It happened very favourably for
the new system, that under a forced coalition
there rankled an incurable alienation and disgust
between the parties which composed the Admi-
nistration. Mr. Pitt was first attacked. Not
satisfied with removing him from power, they
endeavoured by various artifices to ruin his cha-
racter. The other party seemed rather pleased
to get rid of so oppressive a support; not per-
ceiving, that their own fall was prepared by his,
and involved in it. Many other reasons pre-
vented them from daring to look their true
situation in the face. To the great Whig families
it was extremely disagreeable, and seemed almost
unnatural, to oppose the Administration of a
Prince of the House of Brunswick. Day after
day they hesitated, and doubted, and lingered,
expecting

expecting that other counsels would take place; and were slow to be persuaded, that all which had been done by the Cabal, was the effect not of humour, but of system. It was more strongly and evidently the interest of the new Court Faction, to get rid of the great Whig connexions, than to destroy Mr. Pitt. The power of that gentleman was vast indeed and merited; but it was in a great degree personal, and therefore transient. Theirs was rooted in the country. For, with a good deal less of popularity, they possessed a far more natural and fixed influence. Long possession of Government; vast property; obligations of favours given and received; connexion of office; ties of blood, of alliance, of friendship (things at that time supposed of some force); the name of Whig, dear to the majority of the people; the zeal early begun and steadily continued to the Royal Family: all these together formed a body of power in the nation, which was criminal and devoted. The great ruling principle of the Cabal, and that which animated and harmonized all their proceedings, how various soever they may have been, was to signify to the world, that the Court would proceed upon its own proper forces only; and that the pretence of bringing any other into its service was an affront to it, and not a support. Therefore, when the chiefs were removed, in order to go to the root, the whole party was put under a proscription, so general and severe as to take their hard-earned bread from the lowest officers, in a manner which had never been

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known before, even in general revolutions. But
it was thought necessary effectually to destroy all
dependencies but one; and to shew an example
of the firmness and rigour with which the new
system was to be supported.

Thus for the time were pulled down, in the
persons of the Whig leaders and of Mr. Pitt
(in spite of the services of the one at the ac-
cession of the Royal Family, and the recent
services of the other in the war), the *two only*
securities for the importance of the people;
power arising from popularity; and power arising
from connexion. Here and there indeed a few
individuals were left standing, who gave secu-
rity for their total estrangement from the odious
principles of party connexion and personal at-
tachment; and it must be confessed that most
of them have religiously kept their faith. Such
a change could not however be made without a
mighty shock to Government.

To reconcile the minds of the people to all
these movements, principles correspondent to
them had been preached up with great zeal.
Every one must remember that the Cabal set out
with the most astonishing prudery, both moral
and political. Those who in a few months
after tumbled over head and ears into the deepest
and dirtiest pits of corruption, cried out violently
against the indirect practices in the electing and
managing of Parliaments, which had formerly
prevailed. This marvellous abhorrence which
the Court had suddenly taken to all influence,
was not only circulated in conversation through
the

the kingdom, but pompously announced to the publick, with many other extraordinary things, in a pamphlet * which had all the appearance of a manifesto preparatory to some considerable enterprize. Throughout, it was a satire, though in terms managed and decent enough, on the politicks of the former Reign. It was indeed written with no small art and address.

In this piece appeared the first dawning of the new system; there first appeared the idea (then only in speculation) of *separating the Court from the Administration*; of carrying every thing from national connexion to personal regards; and of forming a regular party for that purpose, under the name of *King's men*.

To recommend this system to the people, a perspective view of the Court gorgeously painted, and finely illuminated from within, was exhibited to the gaping multitude. Party was to be totally done away, with all its evil works. Corruption was to be cast down from Court, as *Atè* was from Heaven. Power was thenceforward to be the chosen residence of public spirit; and no one was to be supposed under any sinister influence, except those who had the misfortune to be in disgrace at Court, which was to stand in lieu of all vices and all corruptions. A scheme of perfection to be realized in a Monarchy far beyond the visionary Republick of Plato. The whole scenery was exactly disposed to captivate those good souls, whose credulous morality is so invaluable a treasure to crafty

* Sentiments of an honest Man.

politicians. Indeed there was wherewithall to charm every body, except those few who are not much pleased with professions of supernatural virtue, who know of what stuff such professions are made, for what purposes they are designed, and in what they are sure constantly to end. Many innocent gentlemen, who had been talking prose all their lives without knowing any thing of the matter, began at last to open their eyes upon their own merits, and to attribute their not having been Lords of the Treasury and Lords of Trade many years before, merely to the prevalence of party, and to the Ministerial power, which had frustrated the good intentions of the Court in favour of their abilities. Now was the time to unlock the sealed fountain of Royal bounty, which had been infamously monopolized and huckstered, and to let it flow at large upon the whole people. The time was come, to restore Royalty to its original splendour. *Mettre le Roy hors de page*, became a sort of watch-word. And it was constantly in the mouths of all the runners of the Court, that nothing could preserve the balance of the constitution from being overturned by the rabble, or by a faction of the nobility, but to free the Sovereign effectually from that Ministerial tyranny under which the Royal dignity had been oppressed in the person of his Majesty's grandfather.

These were some of the many artifices used to reconcile the people to the great change which was made in the persons who composed the

the Ministry, and the still greater which was made and avowed in its constitution. As to individuals, other methods were employed with them; in order so thoroughly to disunite every party, and even every family, that *no concert, order, or effect, might appear in any future opposition.* And in this manner an Administration without connexion with the people, or with one another, was first put in possession of Government. What good consequences followed from it, we have all seen; whether with regard to virtue, public or private; to the ease and happiness of the Sovereign; or to the real strength of Government. But as so much stress was then laid on the necessity of this new project, it will not be amiss to take a view of the effects of this Royal servitude and vile durance, which was so deplored in the reign of the late Monarch, and was so carefully to be avoided in the reign of his Successor. The effects were these.

In times full of doubt and danger to his person and family, George the Second maintained the dignity of his Crown connected with the liberty of his people, not only unimpaired, but improved, for the space of thirty three years. He overcame a dangerous rebellion, abetted by foreign force, and raging in the heart of his kingdoms; and thereby destroyed the seeds of all future rebellion that could arise upon the same principle. He carried the glory, the power, the commerce of England, to an height unknown even to this renowned nation in the times of its greatest prosperity; and he left his
 succession

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succession resting on the true and only true
foundations of all national and all regal greatness;
affection at home, reputation abroad, trust in
allies, terror in rival nations. The most ardent
lover of his country cannot wish for Great Britain
an happier fate than to continue as she was
then left. A people emulous as we are in affec-
tion to our present Sovereign, know not how to
form a prayer to Heaven for a greater blessing
upon his virtues, or an higher state of fe-
licity and glory, than that he should live, and
should reign, and, when Providence ordains it,
should die, exactly like his illustrious Prede-
cessor.

A great Prince may be obliged (though such
a thing cannot happen very often) to sacrifice
his private inclination to his public interest. A
wise Prince will not think that such a restraint
implies a condition of servility; and truly, if
such was the condition of the last reign, and
the effects were also such as we have described,
we ought, no less for the sake of the Sovereign
whom we love, than for our own, to hear
arguments convincing indeed, before we depart
from the maxims of that reign, or fly in the
face of this great body of strong and recent ex-
perience.

One of the principal topicks which was then,
and has been since, much employed by that
political * school, is an affected terror of the
growth of an aristocratic power, prejudicial to

* See the Political Writings of the late Dr. Brown, and
many others.

the rights of the Crown, and the balance of the constitution. Any new powers exercised in the House of Lords, or in the House of Commons, or by the Crown, ought certainly to excite the vigilant and anxious jealousy of a free people. Even a new and unprecedented course of action in the whole Legislature, without great and evident reason, may be a subject of just uneasiness. I will not affirm, that there may not have lately appeared in the House of Lords a disposition to some attempts derogatory to the legal rights of the subject. If any such have really appeared, they have arisen, not from a power properly aristocratic, but from the same influence which is charged with having excited attempts of a similar nature in the House of Commons; which House, if it should have been betrayed into an unfortunate quarrel with its constituents, and involved in a charge of the very same nature, could have neither power nor inclination to repel such attempts in others. Those attempts in the House of Lords can no more be called aristocratic proceedings, than the proceedings with regard to the county of Middlesex in the House of Commons can with any sense be called democratical.

It is true, that the Peers have a great influence in the kingdom, and in every part of the public concerns. While they are men of property, it is impossible to prevent it, except by such means as must prevent all property from its natural operation; an event not easily to be compassed, while property is power; nor by any means to be
wished,

wished, while the least notion exists of the method by which the spirit of liberty acts, and of the means by which it is preserved. If any particular Peers, by their uniform, upright, constitutional conduct, by their public and their private virtues, have acquired an influence in the country; the people, on whose favour that influence depends, and from whom it arose, will never be duped into an opinion, that such greatness in a Peer is the despotism of an aristocracy, when they know and feel it to be the effect and pledge of their own importance.

I am no friend to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the constitution, I should be free to declare, that if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form, than lost in that austere and insolent domination. But, whatever my dislikes may be, my fears are not upon that quarter. The question, on the influence of a Court, and of a Peerage, is not, which of the two dangers is the most eligible, but which is the most imminent. He is but a poor observer, who has not seen, that the generality of Peers, far from supporting themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion of their proper dignity, and to run headlong into an abject servitude. Would to God it were true, that the fault of our Peers were too much spirit! It is worthy of some observation, that these gentlemen, so jealous of aristocracy, make no
 complaints

complaints of the power of those Peers (neither few nor inconsiderable) who are always in the train of a Court, and whose whole weight must be considered as a portion of the settled influence of the Crown. This is all safe and right: but if some Peers (I am very sorry they are not as many as they ought to be) set themselves, in the great concern of Peers and Commons, against a back-stairs influence and clandestine government, then the alarm begins; then the constitution is in danger of being forced into an aristocracy.

I rest a little the longer on this Court topick, because it was much insisted upon at the time of the great change, and has been since frequently revived by many of the agents of that party: for, whilst they are terrifying the great and opulent with the horrors of mob-government, they are by other managers attempting (though hitherto with little success) to alarm the people with aphantom of tyranny in the Nobles. All this is done upon their favourite principle of disunion, of sowing jealousies amongst the different orders of the State, and of disjointing the natural strength of the kingdom; that it may be rendered incapable of resisting the sinister designs of wicked men, who have engrossed the Royal power.

Thus much of the topicks chosen by the Courtiers to recommend their system; it will be necessary to open a little more at large the nature of that party which was formed for its support. Without this, the whole would have

been no better than a visionary amusement, like the scheme of Harrington's political club, and not a business in which the nation had a real concern. As a powerful party, and a party constructed on a new principle, it is a very inviting object of curiosity.

It must be remembered, that since the Revolution, until the period we are speaking of, the influence of the Crown had been always employed in supporting the Ministers of State, and in carrying on the public business according to their opinions. But the party now in question is formed upon a very different idea. It is to intercept the favour, protection and confidence of the Crown in the passage to its Ministers; it is to come between them and their importance in Parliament; it is to separate them from all their natural and acquired dependencies; it is intended as the controul, not the support, of Administration. The machinery of this system is perplexed in its movements, and false in its principle. It is formed on a supposition that the King is something external to his government; and that he may be honoured and aggrandized, even by its debility and disgrace. The plan proceeds expressly on the idea of enfeebling the regular executory power. It proceeds on the idea of weakening the State in order to strengthen the Court. The scheme depending intirely on distrust, on disconnexion, on mutability by principle, on systematic weakness in every particular member; it is impossible that

that the total result should be substantial strength of any kind.

As a foundation of their scheme, the Cabal have established a sort of *Rota* in the Court. All sorts of parties, by this means, have been brought into Administration, from whence few have had the good fortune to escape without disgrace; none at all without considerable losses. In the beginning of each arrangement no professions of confidence and support are wanting, to induce the leading men to engage. But while the Ministers of the day appear in all the pomp and pride of power, while they have all their canvas spread out to the wind, and every sail filled with the fair and prosperous gale of Royal favour, in a short time they find, they know not how, a current, which sets directly against them; which prevents all progress; and even drives them backwards. They grow ashamed and mortified in a situation, which, by its vicinity to power, only serves to remind them the more strongly of their insignificance. They are obliged either to execute the orders of their inferiors, or to see themselves opposed by the natural instruments of their office. With the loss of their dignity, they lose their temper. In their turn they grow troublesome to that Cabal, which, whether it supports or opposes, equally disgraces and equally betrays them. It is soon found necessary to get rid of the heads of Administration; but it is of the heads only. As there always are many rotten members belonging to the best connexions, it is not hard to persuade

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suade several to continue in office without their
leaders. By this means the party goes out much
thinner than it came in; and is only reduced in
strength by its temporary possession of power.
Besides, if by accident, or in course of changes,
that power should be recovered, the Junto have
thrown up a retrenchment of these carcasses,
which may serve to cover themselves in a day of
danger. They conclude, not unwisely, that such
rotten members will become the first objects of
disgust and resentment to their antient connex-
ions.

They contrive to form in the outward Admin-
istration two parties at the least; which,
whilst they are tearing one another to pieces,
are both competitors for the favour and pro-
tection of the Cabal; and, by their emulation,
contribute to throw every thing more and more
into the hands of the interior managers.

A Minister of State will sometimes keep him-
self totally estranged from all his colleagues; will
differ from them in their councils, will privately
traverse, and publicly oppose, their measures.
He will, however, continue in his employment.
Instead of suffering any mark of displeasure, he
will be distinguished by an unbounded profusion
of Court rewards and caresses; because he does
what is expected, and all that is expected, from
men in office. He helps to keep some form of
Administration in being, and keeps it at the
same time as weak and divided as possible.

However, we must take care not to be
mistaken, or to imagine that such persons have
any

any weight in their opposition. When, by them, Administration is convinced of its insignificancy, they are soon to be convinced of their own. They never are suffered to succeed in their opposition. They and the world are to be satisfied, that, neither office, nor authority, nor property, nor ability, eloquence, council, skill, or union, are of the least importance; but that the mere influence of the Court, naked of all support, and destitute of all management, is abundantly sufficient for all its own purposes.

When any adverse connexion is to be destroyed, the Cabal seldom appear in the work themselves. They find out some person of whom the party entertains an high opinion. Such a person they endeavour to delude with various pretences. They teach him first to distrust, and then to quarrel with his friends; among whom, by the same arts, they excite a similar diffidence of him; so that, in this mutual fear and distrust, he may suffer himself to be employed as the instrument in the change which is brought about. Afterwards they are sure to destroy him in his turn; by setting up in his place some person in whom he had himself reposed the greatest confidence, and who serves to carry off a considerable part of his adherents.

When such a person has broke in this manner with his connexions, he is soon compelled to commit some flagrant act of iniquitous personal hostility against some of them (such as an attempt to strip a particular friend of his family estate), by which the Cabal hope to

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render

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render the parties utterly irreconcilable. In truth, they have so contrived matters, that people have a greater hatred to the subordinate instruments than to the principal movers.

As in destroying their enemies they make use of instruments not immediately belonging to their corps, so, in advancing their own friends, they pursue exactly the same method. To promote any of them to considerable rank or emolument, they commonly take care that the recommendation shall pass through the hands of the ostensible Ministry: such a recommendation might however appear to the world, as some proof of the credit of Ministers, and some means of increasing their strength. To prevent this, the persons so advanced are directed, in all companies, industriously to declare, that they are under no obligations whatsoever to Administration; that they have received their office from another quarter; that they are totally free and independent.

When the Faction has any job of lucre to obtain, or of vengeance to perpetrate, their way is, to select, for the execution, those very persons to whose habits, friendships, principles, and declarations, such proceedings are publicly known to be the most adverse; at once to render the instruments the more odious, and therefore the more dependent, and to prevent the people from ever reposing a confidence in any appearance of private friendship, or public principle.

If

If the Administration seem now and then, from remissness, or from fear of making themselves disagreeable, to suffer any popular excesses to go unpunished, the Cabal immediately sets up some creature of theirs to raise a clamour against the Ministers, as having shamefully betrayed the dignity of Government. Then they compel the Ministry to become active in conferring rewards and honours on the persons who have been the instruments of their disgrace; and, after having first vilified them with the higher orders for suffering the laws to sleep over the licentiousness of the populace, they drive them (in order to make amends for their former inactivity) to some act of atrocious violence, which renders them completely abhorred by the people. They who remember the riots which attended the Middlesex Election; the opening of the present Parliament; and the transactions relative to Saint George's Fields, will not be at a loss for an application of these remarks.

That this body may be enabled to compass all the ends of its institution, its members are scarcely ever to aim at the high and responsible offices of the State. They are distributed with art and judgement through all the secondary, but efficient, departments of office, and through the households of all the branches of the Royal Family: so as on one hand to occupy all the avenues to the Throne; and on the other to forward or frustrate the execution of any measure, according to their own interests. For

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with the credit and support which they are known to have, though for the greater part in places which are only a genteel excuse for salary, they possess all the influence of the highest posts; and they dictate publicly in almost every thing, even with a parade of superiority. Whenever they dissent (as it often happens) from their nominal leaders, the trained part of the Senate, instinctively in the secret, is sure to follow them; provided the leaders, sensible of their situation, do not of themselves recede in time from their most declared opinions. This latter is generally the case. It will not be conceivable to any one who has not seen it, what pleasure is taken by the Cabal in rendering these heads of office thoroughly contemptible and ridiculous. And when they are become so, they have then the best chance for being well supported.

The members of the Court Faction are fully indemnified for not holding places on the slippery heights of the kingdom, not only by the lead in all affairs, but also by the perfect security in which they enjoy less conspicuous, but very advantageous situations. Their places are, in express legal tenure, or in effect, all of them for life. Whilst the first and most respectable persons in the kingdom are tossed about like tennis balls, the sport of a blind and insolent caprice, no Minister dares even to cast an oblique glance at the lowest of their body. If an attempt be made upon one of this corps, immediately he flies to sanctuary, and pretends to the most inviolable of all promises. No conveniency of
public

public arrangement is available to remove any one of them from the specific situation he holds ; and the slightest attempt upon one of them, by the most powerful Minister, is a certain preliminary to his own destruction.

Conscious of their independence, they bear themselves with a lofty air to the exterior Ministers. Like Janissaries, they derive a kind of freedom from the very condition of their servitude. They may act just as they please ; provided they are true to the great ruling principle of their institution. It is, therefore, not at all wonderful, that people should be so desirous of adding themselves to that body, in which they may possess and reconcile satisfactions the most alluring, and seemingly the most contradictory ; enjoying at once all the spirited pleasure of independence, and all the gross lucre and fat emoluments of servitude.

Here is a sketch, though a slight one, of the constitution, laws, and policy, of this new Court corporation. The name by which they chuse to distinguish themselves, is that of *King's men*, or the *King's friends*, by an invidious exclusion of the rest of his Majesty's most loyal and affectionate subjects. The whole system, comprehending the exterior and interior Administrations, is commonly called, in the technical language of the Court, *Double Cabinet* ; in French or English, as you choose to pronounce it.

Whether all this be a vision of a distracted brain, or the invention of a malicious heart, or a real Faction in the country, must be judged

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by the appearances which things have worn for
eight years past. Thus far I am certain, that
there is not a single public man, in or out of
office, who has not, at some time or other,
born testimony to the truth of what I have
now related. In particular, no persons have
been more strong in their assertions, and louder
and more indecent in their complaints, than
those who compose all the exterior part of the
present Administration; in whose time that
Faction has arrived at such an height of power,
and of boldness in the use of it, as may, in the
end, perhaps bring about its total destruction.

It is true, that about four years ago, during
the administration of the Marquis of Rocking-
ham, an attempt was made to carry on Govern-
ment without their concurrence. However,
this was only a transient cloud; they were hid
but for a moment; and their constellation blazed
out with greater brightness, and a far more vi-
gorous influence, some time after it was blown
over. An attempt was at that time made (but
without any idea of proscription) to break their
corps, to discountenance their doctrines, to re-
vive connexions of a different kind, to restore
the principles and policy of the Whigs, to re-
animate the cause of Liberty by Ministerial
countenance; and then for the first time were
men seen attached in office to every principle
they had maintained in opposition. No one
will doubt, that such men were abhorred and
violently opposed by the Court Faction, and that
such a system could have but a short duration.

It

It may appear somewhat affected, that in so much discourse upon this extraordinary Party, I should say so little of the Earl of Bute, who is the supposed head of it. But this was neither owing to affectation nor inadvertence. I have carefully avoided the introduction of personal reflexions of any kind. Much the greater part of the topicks which have been used to blacken this Nobleman, are either unjust or frivolous. At best, they have a tendency to give the resentment of this bitter calamity a wrong direction, and to turn a public grievance into a mean personal, or a dangerous national, quarrel. Where there is a regular scheme of operations carried on, it is the system, and not any individual person who acts in it, that is truly dangerous. This system has not risen solely from the ambition of Lord Bute, but from the circumstances which favoured it, and from an indifference to the constitution which had been for some time growing among our gentry. We should have been tried with it, if the Earl of Bute had never existed; and it will want neither a contriving head nor active members, when the Earl of Bute exists no longer. It is not, therefore, to rail at Lord Bute, but firmly to embody against this Court Party and its practices, which can afford us any prospect of relief in our present condition.

Another motive induces me to put the personal consideration of Lord Bute wholly out of the question. He communicates very little in a direct manner with the greater part of our men

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of business. This has never been his custom.
It enough for him that he surrounds them
with his creatures. Several imagine, therefore,
that they have a very good excuse for doing all
the work of this Faction, when they have no per-
sonal connexion with Lord Bute. But whoever
becomes a party to an Administration, composed
of insulated individuals, without faith pledged,
tie, or common principle; an Administration
constitutionally impotent, because supported by
no party in the nation; he who contributes to
destroy the connexions of men and their trust
in one another, or in any sort to throw the de-
pendence of public counsels upon private will and
favour, possibly may have nothing to do with
the Earl of Bute. It matters little whether he
be the friend or the enemy of that particular
person. But let him be who or what he will,
he abets a Faction that is driving hard to the
ruin of his country. He is sapping the founda-
tion of its liberty, disturbing the sources of its
domestic tranquillity, weakening its govern-
ment over its dependencies, degrading it from
all its importance in the system of Europe.

It is this unnatural infusion of a *system of Favouritism* into a Government which in a great part of its constitution is popular, that has raised the present ferment in the nation. The people, without entering deeply into its principles, could plainly perceive its effects, in much violence, in a great spirit of innovation, and a general disorder in all the functions of Government. I keep my eye solely on this
system;

system; if I speak of those measures which have arisen from it, it will be so far only as they illustrate the general scheme. This is the fountain of all those bitter waters of which, through an hundred different conduits, we have drunk until we are ready to burst. The discretionary power of the Crown in the formation of Ministry, abused by bad or weak men, has given rise to a system, which, without directly violating the letter of any law, operates against the spirit of the whole constitution.

A plan of Favouritism for our executory Government is essentially at variance with the plan of our Legislature. One great end undoubtedly of a mixed Government like ours, composed of Monarchy, and of controls, on the part of the higher people and the lower, is that the Prince shall not be able to violate the laws. This is useful indeed and fundamental. But this, even at first view, is no more than a negative advantage; an armour merely defensive. It is therefore next in order, and equal in importance, *that the discretionary powers which are necessarily vested in the Monarch, whether for the execution of the laws, or for the nomination to magistracy and office, or for conducting the affairs of peace and war, or for ordering the revenue, should all be exercised upon public principles and national grounds, and not on the likings or prejudices, the intrigues or policies, of a Court.* This, I said, is equal in importance to the securing a Government according to law. The laws reach but a very little

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little way. Constitute Government how you please, infinitely the greater part of it must depend upon the exercise of the powers which are left at large to the prudence and uprightnes of Ministers of State. Even all the use and potency of the laws depends upon them. Without them, your Commonwealth is no better than a scheme upon paper; and not a living, acting, effective constitution. It is possible, that through negligence, or ignorance, or design artfully conducted, Ministers may suffer one part of Government to languish, another to be perverted from its purposes, and every valuable interest of the country to fall into ruin and decay, without possibility of fixing any single act on which a criminal prosecution can be justly grounded. The due arrangement of men in the active part of the State, far from being foreign to the purposes of a wise Government, ought to be among its very first and dearest objects. When, therefore, the abettors of the new system tell us, that between them and their opposers there is nothing but a struggle for power, and that therefore we are no-ways concerned in it; we must tell those who have the impudence to insult us in this manner, that of all things we ought to be the most concerned, who and what sort of men they are, that hold the trust of every thing that is dear to us. Nothing can render this a point of indifference to the nation, but what must either render us totally desperate, or soothe us into the security of ideots. We must soften
into

into a credulity below the milkiness of infancy, to think all men virtuous. We must be tainted with a malignity truly diabolical, to believe all the world to be equally wicked and corrupt. Men are in public life as in private, some good, some evil. The elevation of the one, and the depression of the other, are the first objects of all true policy. But that form of Government, which, neither in its direct institutions, nor in their immediate tendency, has contrived to throw its affairs into the most trustworthy hands, but has left its whole executory system to be disposed of agreeably to the uncontrouled pleasure of any one man, however excellent or virtuous, is a plan of polity defective not only in that member, but consequentially erroneous in every part of it.

In arbitrary Governments, the constitution of the Ministry follows the constitution of the Legislature. Both the Law and the Magistrate are the creatures of Will. It must be so. Nothing, indeed, will appear more certain, on any tolerable consideration of this matter, than that *every sort of Government ought to have its Administration correspondent to its Legislature*. If it should be otherwise, things must fall into an hideous disorder. The people of a free Commonwealth, who have taken such care that their laws should be the result of general consent, cannot be so senseless as to suffer their executory system to be composed of persons on whom they have no dependence, and whom no proofs of the public love and confidence have recommended

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recommended to those powers, upon the use
of which the very being of the State depends.

The popular election of magistrates, and popular disposition of rewards and honours, is one of the first advantages of a free State. Without it, or something equivalent to it, perhaps the people cannot long enjoy the substance of freedom; certainly none of the vivifying energy of good Government. The frame of our Commonwealth did not admit of such an actual election: but it provided as well, and (while the spirit of the constitution is preserved) better for all the effects of it than by the method of suffrage in any democratic State whatsoever. It had always, until of late, been held the first duty of Parliament, *to refuse to support Government, until power was in the hands of persons who were acceptable to the people, or while factions predominated in the Court in which the nation had no confidence.* Thus all the good effects of popular election were supposed to be secured to us, without the mischiefs attending on perpetual intrigue, and a distinct canvass for every particular office throughout the body of the people. This was the most noble and refined part of our constitution. The people, by their representatives and grandees, were intrusted with a deliberative power in making laws; the King with the control of his negative. The King was intrusted with the deliberative choice and the election to office; the people had the negative in a Parliamentary refusal to support. Formerly this power of controul was what kept Ministers in
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awe of Parliaments, and Parliaments in reverence with the people. If the use of this power of controul on the system and persons of Administration is gone, every thing is lost, Parliament and all. We may assure ourselves, that if Parliament will tamely see evil men take possession of all the strong-holds of their country, and allow them time and means to fortify themselves, under a pretence of giving them a fair trial, and upon a hope of discovering, whether they will not be reformed by power, and whether their measures will not be better than their morals; such a Parliament will give countenance to their measures also, whatever that Parliament may pretend, and whatever those measures may be.

Every good political institution must have a preventive operation as well as a remedial. It ought to have a natural tendency to exclude bad men from Government, and not to trust for the safety of the State to subsequent punishment alone: punishment, which has ever been tardy and uncertain; and which, when power is suffered in bad hands, may chance to fall rather on the injured than the criminal.

Before men are put forward into the great trusts of the State, they ought by their conduct to have obtained such a degree of estimation in their country, as may be some sort of pledge and security to the publick, that they will not abuse those trusts. It is no mean security for a proper use of power, that a man has shewn by the general tenor of his actions, that the affection;
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the good opinion, the confidence, of his fellow
citizens have been among the principal objects
of his life; and that he has owed none of the
gradations of his power or fortune to a settled
contempt, or occasional forfeiture of their
esteem.

That man who before he comes into power
has no friends, or who coming into power is
obliged to desert his friends, or who losing it
has no friends to sympathize with him; he who
has no sway among any part of the landed or
commercial interest, but whose whole importance
has begun with his office, and is sure to end
with it; is a person who ought never to be
suffered by a controuling Parliament to continue
in any of those situations which confer the lead
and direction of all our public affairs; because
such a man *has no connexion with the interest
of the people.*

Those knots or cabals of men who have got
together, avowedly without any public principle,
in order to sell their conjunct iniquity at the
higher rate, and are therefore universally odious,
ought never to be suffered to domineer in the
State; because they have *no connexion with the
sentiments and opinions of the people.*

These are considerations which in my opinion
enforce the necessity of having some better rea-
son, in a free country, and a free Parliament, for
supporting the Ministers of the Crown, than
that short one, *That the King has thought proper
to appoint them.* There is something very courtly
in this. But it is a principle pregnant with all
forts

sorts of mischief, in a constitution like ours, to turn the views of active men from the country to the Court. Whatever be the road to power, that is the road which will be trod. If the opinion of the country be of no use as a means of power or consideration, the qualities which usually procure that opinion will be no longer cultivated. And whether it will be right, in a State so popular in its constitution as ours, to leave ambition without popular motives, and to trust all to the operation of pure virtue in the minds of Kings and Ministers, and public men, must be submitted to the judgement and good sense of the people of England.

Cunning men are here apt to break in, and, without directly controverting the principle, to raise objections from the difficulty under which the Sovereign labours, to distinguish the genuine voice and sentiments of his people, from the clamour of a faction, by which it is so easily counterfeited. The nation, they say, is generally divided into parties, with views and passions utterly irreconcilable. If the King should put his affairs into the hands of any one of them, he is sure to disgust the rest; if he select particular men from among them all, it is an hazard that he disgusts them all. Those who are left out, however divided before, will soon run into a body of opposition; which, being a collection of many discontents into one focus, will without doubt be hot and violent enough. Faction will make its cries resound through the nation, as if the whole were in an uproar,
when

when by far the majority, and much the better part, will seem for a while as it were annihilated by the quiet in which their virtue and moderation incline them to enjoy the blessings of Government. Besides that the opinion of the meer vulgar is a miserable rule even with regard to themselves, on account of their violence and instability. So that if you were to gratify them in their humour to-day, that very gratification would be a ground of their dissatisfaction on the next. Now as all these rules of public opinion are to be collected with great difficulty, and to be applied with equal uncertainty as to the effect, what better can a King of England do, than to employ such men as he finds to have views and inclinations most conformable to his own; who are least infected with pride and self-will, and who are least moved by such popular humours as are perpetually traversing his designs, and disturbing his service; trusting that, when he means no ill to his people, he will be supported in his appointments, whether he chooses to keep or to change, as his private judgement or his pleasure leads him? He will find a sure resource in the real weight and influence of the Crown, when it is not suffered to become an instrument in the hands of a faction.

I will not pretend to say that there is nothing at all in this mode of reasoning; because I will not assert, that there is no difficulty in the art of Government. Undoubtedly the very best Administration must encounter a great deal of opposition; and the very worst will find more
support

support than it deserves. Sufficient appearances will never be wanting to those who have a mind to deceive themselves. It is a fallacy in constant use with those who would level all things, and confound right with wrong, to insist upon the inconveniencies which are attached to every choice, without taking into consideration the different weight and consequence of those inconveniencies. The question is not concerning *absolute* discontent or *perfect* satisfaction in Government; neither of which can be pure and unmixed at any time, or upon any system. The controversy is about that degree of good humour in the people, which may possibly be attained, and ought certainly to be looked for. While some politicians may be waiting to know whether the sense of every individual be against them, accurately distinguishing the vulgar from the better sort, drawing lines between the enterprizes of a faction and the efforts of a people, they may chance to see the Government, which they are so nicely weighing, and dividing, and distinguishing, tumble to the ground in the midst of their wise deliberation. Prudent men, when so great an object as the security of Government, or even its peace, is at stake, will not run the risque of a decision which may be fatal to it. They who can read the political sky will see an hurricane in a cloud no bigger than an hand at the very edge of the horizon, and will run into the first harbour. No lines can be laid down for civil or political wisdom. They are a matter incapable of exact definition.

But, though no man can draw a stroke between the confines of day and night, yet light and darkness are upon the whole tolerably distinguishable. Nor will it be impossible for a Prince to find out such a mode of Government, and such persons to administer it, as will give a great degree of content to his people; without any curious and anxious research for that abstract, universal, perfect harmony, which while he is seeking, he abandons those means of ordinary tranquillity which are in his power without any research at all.

It is not more the duty than it is the interest of a Prince, to aim at giving tranquillity to his Government. But those who advise him may have an interest in disorder and confusion. If the opinion of the people is against them, they will naturally wish that it should have no prevalence. Here it is that the people must on their part shew themselves sensible of their own value. Their whole importance, in the first instance, and afterwards their whole freedom, is at stake. Their freedom cannot long survive their importance. Here it is that the natural strength of the kingdom, the great peers, the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, the substantial yeomanry, must interpose, to rescue their Prince, themselves, and their posterity.

We are at present at issue upon this point. We are in the great crisis of this contention; and the part which men take one way or other, will serve to discriminate their characters and their principles.





