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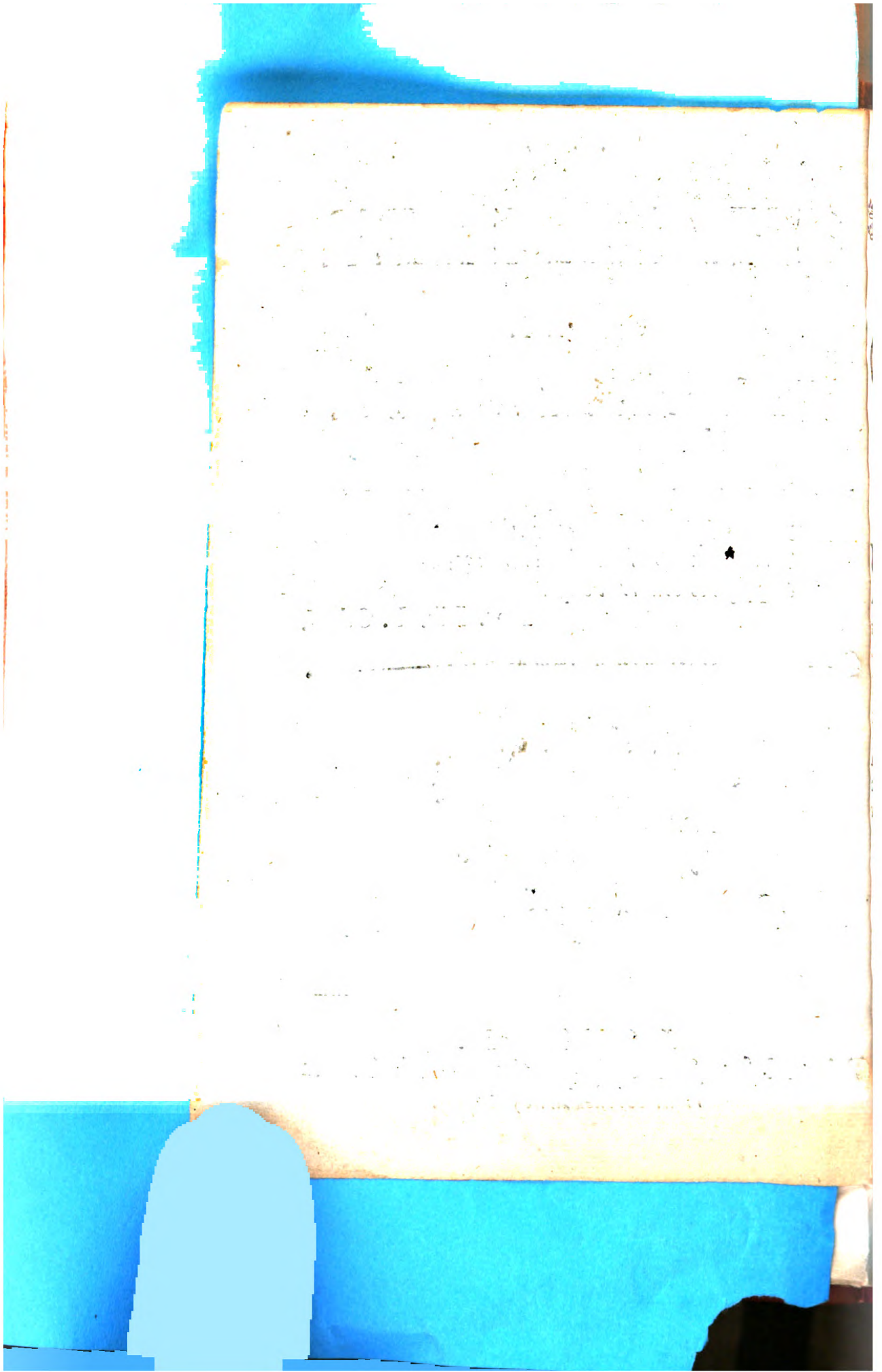
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THE
CHARACTER
OF AN
Independent WHIG.

*Periculosa plenum opus aleæ
Tractas; & incedis per ignes,
Suppositos cineri doloso.*

Hor. Lib. II. Ode I.



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T H E

CHARACTER

O F A N

Independent *WHIGG.*

Independency at Court is a Heresy in Politicks, never pardoned, much less countenanced there. Our Whig, therefore, adheres to his Principles, and has no other Pretensions to a Place.

-----Caret invidenda sobrius aula. He scorns all implicate Faith in the State, as well as the Church. The Authority of Names is nothing to him; he judges all Men by their Actions and Behaviour, and hates a Knave of his own Party, as much as he despises a Fool of another. He consents not that any Man, or Body of Men, shall do what they please: He claims a Right of examining all publick Measures, and, if they deserve it, of censuring them. As he never saw much Power possessed without some abuse, he takes upon him to watch those that have it; and to acquit or expose them according as they apply it, to the Good of their Country, or their own crooked Purposes.

As to Religion, our Whig is a Protestant; not because he was born so, according to the canting Absurdity in Vogue; or bred so, since in Infancy Religion is acquired like a Lesson in Grammar, purely by the Help of Memory; and therefore Children learn it, whether it be good or bad, as they do Language

from their Nurse or their Parents. But he is a Protestant because his Judgment and his Eyes inform him, that the Principles of that Faith are warranted by the Bible, and consistent with our Civil Liberties; and he thinks every System which is not so, to be Forgery and Imposture, however dignified or distinguished.

In Consequence of this, he has a great Respect for the Office of a Clergy-man and for his Person, if he deserves it. But if his Doctrine or Practice disgraces his Order, our Whig owns his Contempt for the Men. The Clergy are the best or the worst of Men; and as the first cannot be too much honoured, the latter cannot be too much despised. It is a good Example, and there is equal Reason in it. Why should Virtue and Villany fare alike? Names do not change Qualities, nor Habits Men. Where is the Equity of Rewards and Punishments, and consequently the Force of all Laws, human and divine, if vile Men must be revered, and the good can be no more?

It is but reasonable that all Men should be judged by their Actions, and reverenc'd or scorn'd according to the Goodness or Wickedness of their Lives, without any Regard had to their Titles or Garbs; which signify no more than a Breath of Wind, or the Bark of a Tree.

There is not a greater insult upon the Understandings of Mankind, than for Priests to challenge Respect from their Habit, when they have forfeited it by their Behaviour. There is no Sanctity in Garments. A Rose in a Man's Hat does not enlarge his Piety. Grace is not convey'd by a Piece of Lawn, or Chastity by the wearing of a Girdle. A black Gown has neither more Sense, nor better Manners than a black Cloak. Nor is a black Cloak more edifying than a Fustian Frock; no more than a Cambrick Bib is an Antidote against Lewdness, or an Attonement for it.

This consecrating of Garments, and deriving Veneration from a Suit of Cloaths, is barefac'd Priestcraft.

craft. It is teaching the Practice of Idolatry to a Gown and Cassock. If a little senseless Pedant, who is a living Contradiction of Virtue and Breeding, can but whip into Orders, and cover himself with Gape, the first Thing he does is to overlook and affront all Mankind, and then demand their Reverence. His Surplice is his Citadel, and he claims the Impunity of an Ambassador for being graceless and saucy.

As to the common Defence which is made for their Immoralities; namely, That they are Flesh and Blood as well as other Men, it is a watch Piece of Sophistry. If they are not better than others, how are they fit to mend others? And if they can't leave their Captivity to Sin and Satan, how come they to claim so near an Alliance with Heaven? If they have God's Commission in their Pockets, and yet will engage in another Service, what Name and Treatment do they deserve? We know the Fate of Rebels and Deserters in a Lay-Government. Can Men succeed to the Apostles with the Qualities and Behaviour of Apostates? How will they reconcile a holy Calling to infamous Lives? A Clergyman who is as bad as an ill Layman, is consequently worse. In that Character there is no Medium between doing Good and doing Mischief; since the Influence of Example is stronger than that of Precept. As the Doctrine and Practice of Piety, make up the Profession of a Clergy-man, he who deserts Truth and Holiness, deserts his Profession, and ought to be no longer own'd a Teacher of Religion, but shunned and hated, as a Foe to Religion and Mankind.

The Clergy have made such a terrible and inhuman Use of Power, in all Ages and Countries where they could come at it, that our Whig is for keeping their Nails always pared, and their Wings clipp'd, in this Particular. Reason and Liberty are the Two greatest Gifts and Blessings which God has given us, and yet where-ever a priestly Authority prevails, they must
either

either fly or suffer. They are Enemies to the Craft, and must expect no Toleration. Darkness and Chains are the surest Pillars of the sacerdotal Empire, and it cannot stand without them.

Let us remember Archbishop Laud, who having got the Regal Power out of a weak Prince's Hands, into his own, set his Face against Truth, Property, Conscience and Liberty, and trampled them all under Foot for several Years together. A Spirit of Cruelty and Dominion govern'd this Man, and he govern'd King and People. His Heart was so impiously bent upon destroying Conscience and the Constitution, and exalting the Priesthood, that when any Man was oppressed in a paltry, tyrannical, Bishop's Court, the Judges in Westminster-Hall durst not obey their Oaths, and the Law, by believing him; but were forced to be forsworn, to avoid the Anger of his Grace. This upstart, plebeian Priest, hoped to see the Time, When ne'er a Jack Gentleman in England would dare to stand before a Parson with his hat on. A fine Scene truly! to see a Gentleman of Fortune and Breeding, stand stooping, and bare-headed to a small, ill-nurtured Vicar; who had, perhaps, formerly clean'd his Shoes, and liv'd upon the Crumbs that came from his Table.

Let us look back into former Ages, and round Europe at this Day, and see whether abject Slavery in the People is not, and always has been, the certain Consequence of Power in the Priests. It cannot be denied.

I thank God I know no Power our Clergy have but that of suing for Tithes, and the like Privileges, which they receive from the Law alone. Those Ecclesiasticks who claim, by Divine Right, any other Power, than that of Exhortation, talk Nonsense, and bely the New Testament. To the Law, and the People who made that Law, they owe their Bread; and to set up for an independency in Opposition to both

both, and pretend to a Mastership over them, is arrogant, dangerous, and ought to be penal, I am told it is capital, here in *England*, for a Protestant to go over to the Romish Religion, and yet shall a papist dare publicly from the press and the pulpit, to claim and justify the most essential, and most formidable principles of popery; and thereby declare his Renunciation with that Bloody Religion, which is supported by Frauds, Bondage, and human Slaughter: And shall he for all this go unquestioned; This in my Opinion is to contend with Impunity for Usurpation and Rebellion.

Some would seem to qualify these pretensions, by saying, That they claim a power, but not an independent power; Which seems, in this Case, a Sort of a Contradiction. For if it is a power, then is it properly speaking, a Jurisdiction of Subjection, and an Authority under an Authority. And while the Law and the Hierarchy are thus own'd to be Master and Man, we desire no more.

Our Whig is for an unlimited Toleration of all Dissenters whatsoever, who own the Laws and our Civil Form of Government. As to their religious Opinions, they are justify'd in them by sincerity; and even where that is wanting, God alone is able to judge, and has a Right to punish. In Matters of Conscience, he that does his best does well, though he is mistaken. Here all Men must determine for themselves: He who follows another in this Case, without Enquiry, is a Man's Votary, and not God's. As we have a Right to enquire into the Truth of any Religion, we have also a Right to leave it, if it appears false: But if it stands the Test of Examination, and appears true, then is our Adhearance to it found upon our own Judgment, and not upon Authority. If there be no Right of Inquiry, where is the Use of

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perswasion, which implies Doubt; Or of Reading the Scripture, which implies Understanding; We believe not a Thing 'till we think it true, and cannot believe it, if we think it false: And to punish Men for having Eyes, or having none is equally diabolical and tyrannical.

Men disagree daily about Matters which are subject to the Examination of Sense; and is it likely that we can be all of a Mind about Things which are invisible and disputable; Doctors themselves are daily cavilling; every one contradicts another, and yet all are in the Right, and each demands our Faith to his particular Invention. We cannot follow all; and among equal Authorities pray which is the best; For the same Reason that we cannot believe every one of them, we need believe none of them upon their own Word.

Our Whig goes farther, and thinks that all protestants ought to be equally employed in a State to which they are equally well affected. The Magistrate has nothing to do with Speculations that purely concern another Life; nor is it of any Consequence to him, whether his Subjects have a greater Fondness for a Cloak or a Surplice: Their Affections to the political power, and their Capacity to serve it, are only to be consulted and encouraged. Provided a Man loves Liberty and his Country, what is it to the Commonwealth whether he sings his prayers or says them; or whether he thinks a Bishop or a Presbyter the nearest Relation to *St. Paul*.

These two Words (*Bishop* and *Presbyter*) signify in Scripture, one and the same Thing, and are equally used to signify one and the same Officer. Our great Churchmen, indeed, have been pleased to think the Bible mistaken in this Matter, and to be in the right themselves. They have made Episcopacy and *Presbytry* as opposite to each other, as paradise

Paradise and Purgatory; and have frequently gone to cutting of Throats to prove their Point.

I must confess a Diocese, and a Seat in the House of Lords, are unanswerable Reasons for the Divine Right of Episcopacy. There is no Way of confuting them. You may as well argue with a *Guinea-Merchant* against the selling of Slaves.

Besides, a lordly Creature, who never preaches (Miracles having long ago ceased) and keeps a great Table and Equipage, and enjoys all the great and good Things of this Life, carries in all these Marks such an Evidence of his being *St. Paul's* right Heir, in a lineal Descent, that I wonder any Body dare doubt it.

However, as the plainest Things in Faith are made doubtful among Divines, who have an admirable Knack at starting Difficulties, where no Body else would expect them; our Whig is of Opinion, that the Teacher who walks on Foot, has as good a Title to dispute about Religion, and maintain his own, as the Right Reverend Doctor, who supports his Orthodoxy with a Coach and Six; and should be as much encouraged by the Civil Magistrate, if his Principles and Behaviour square with the Constitution. *Is a Man a better Neighbour, or Subject, for nodding to a Table, at the upper End of a Chancel, or for pronouncing his Faith towards the East; Our Churchmen may find good Cause to enjoin these necessary Things, which the Scripture had forgot, and enjoy great Benefit and Obedience from the Practice of them; but in temporal Matters, I am not fully convinced that they make a Man's Head wiser, or his Heart honest.*

I cannot here omit taking Notice of an old fallacious Cry, which has long rung in our Ears; namely that of *No Bishop, no King*. This solid Argument was used, with Royal Success, by King James the first, when he sat Deputy for the Clergy, and disputed with the Puritans, at the

Conference at Hampton-Court. It was, indeed, the best he could use; however he strengthened, and embellished it, with several imperial Oaths, which he swore on that Occasion, to the utter Confusion of his Antagonists, and the great Triumph of the genuine Clergy and the Archbishop, who bestow'd the Holy Ghost upon his Majesty, for his Zeal and Swearing on the Church's Side.

This stupid Saying has formerly filled our Prisons with Dissenters, and chased many of them to America; and by this Means weakened the Kingdom and the Protestant Religion, to keep up good Neighbourhood between the Bishops and the Prince. But they were neither the Bishops, nor their Creatures, that restored King Charles the second, but a Set of true blue Presbyterians, who were rewarded for it with Gaols, Fines, and Silent Sabbaths.

Loyalty is not confined to the Mtre. Bishops have given more Disturbance, and occasioned more Distresses to Prince and People, than any other Sort of Men upon Earth. This I can prove. Our own Bishops, for near an hundred Years before the Revolution, were in every Scheme for promoting Tyranny and Bondage. On the other Hand, our Dissenters were ever eminent Opposers of Arbitrary Power, and always lived peaceably under those Princes who used them like Subjects. If they took up Arms when they were oppressed, Churchmen have done the same, and often without that Cause.

Had it not been for Dissenters, I question whether we should now have had either this Constitution, this King, or this Religion. It is well known that a great Majority of our Churchmen have got Claims and Principles utterly irreconcilable to either. The most mischievous Tenets of Popery are adopted and maintained, and the Ground upon which our Security and Succession stands, is boldly undermined. It is dreadful, and incredible what a Reprobate Spirit reigns amongst the High Clergy.

The Convocation have fallen fiercely upon those who have fallen upon Popery and Jacobitism. And what a Popish, Impious and Rebellious Spirit reigns at Oxford, they

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themselves save me the Trouble of declaring. Disaffection is promoted; open and black Perjury is justified; and it is held lawful to defy Almighty Vengeance for a Morsel of Bread. A Man's Conscience is tried by an Oath, and he that can swallow any has none.

But it is not enough to shipwreck their Souls for their Livings nor to keep this hellish Corruption at Home. As they practise so they teach and the spreading of their own Guilt, and the making others as bad as themselves (if Laymen can be so) is made the Duty of their Functions, and the Business of their Lives. Can Antichrist do worse? And are these Men who walk in the Paths of Atheism and Perdition, fit to lead others to Holiness and Eternal Life?

One of the greatest Men of the last Age told King William, that the Universities, if they continued upon the present Foot, would destroy Him, or the Nation, or some of His Successors. And they have ever since been endeavouring to make good his Words. That Prince was so thoroughly apprized of the dangerous Genius and Principles of these two Bodies of Men, that he intended a Regulation, but, as it is said, was prevented by the pernicious Advice of the late Duke of S———, who had at that Time gained the King's Confidence, and was at the Head of the Whigs, but was betraying both, and making a Party with the Tories, as afterwards plainly enough appeared.

How far, and how fast, these Seminaries have since then corrupted and inflamed the People, every Body knows, and the Nation feels. Had it not been for them we should have lighter Taxes and fewer Soldiers.

Upon the Coming in of His present Majesty, we thought we had a Right to expect such Measures of Government as would not only secure Us for the Time being, but prevent a Relapse into the Dangers out of which Providence had just plucked Us by the Death of ———. It is certain that the King brought along with Him, and still preserves a Disposition to do Us all the Good which we can propose or desire.

All those Whigs therefore who had no secret Ends to serve by dark Dealings with the Tories, nor private Fortunes to raise by neglecting or perplexing the Publick, insisted upon the Punishment of those who had bargained away the Nation, and upon a Visitation of the Universities, and both were undertaken and promised. But why neither was done, they who are concerned can best tell, if telling was proper. In the mean Time they cannot blame us for guessing.

I am only sorry that the great and surprizing Tenderness, which some have shewn for the High Clergy, has not been able to produce one Instance of Loyalty or Moderation. Perhaps the Priesthood will accept of no Alliance without a total Alteration; and that the Adoption of two or three eminent Persons of their Faction into Partnership with some other eminent Persons, pretending to be of a different Faction, will not do.

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However that be, the Universities seem to dread no such Thing as a Visitation. Whether they have Assurances given them, or whether they take their Conjectures from our other Measures for Reformation, I cannot say.

The same Spirit which leads us to lessen our Taxes and clear the Publick, and to enlarge the bottom of Liberty and the Protestant Faith by unyoking of Dissenters, will carry us also to remove the Corruption of our Seminaries, and their disaffected Spawn in too many Parishes. But when such a Spirit will arise, we are not able to foretel. We have been already long deluded with many Prophecies and Promises of that Kind, which, as positive as they were, and as probable as they appeared, have never been fulfilled. We have been even tired with hoping and believing, and now Despair and Infidelity have succeeded, and are like to last as long as their Causes last.

Our Liberties, in the mean Time, lye exceeding precarious. The High Clergy have still the same Engines to play against them, which in Time past have gone very near utterly to overturn them. Their Divine Right is preserved as the Apple of their Eye; a blind Belief in *them* is inculcated with all their might; and a blind Obedience to any Royal Idol, who will purchase their Flattery by worshipping them, is at all Times the Burden of their Harangues. As to this last Article, we are, I thank God, very safe at present; but the *present* will not be always.

I could here wonder, for two or three Pages, at the marvellous Strength of Nonsense, and the pitiful Weakness of Human Minds, who by the Perswasion of Falshood and Contradiction can grow zealous for their own Bonds and Wretchedness. And yet is it not so in most Countries, where People are miserable by the Advice of their Priests to please a Tyrant?

There are Bounds set to the Power of our Princes by the same Laws which made them Princes. An *English* King is limited as well, though not as much as a *Dutch* Stadtholder and for the same Reason. The difference of Names alters not the Case. Would a *Dutch* Priest dare, in that free Country, to tell the People, that they ought to be Slaves to an Officer of their own making, and yet go without a Whipping, or a Dismission, or something still worse? Is it High Treason to assert that a King has no Title, and ought to be deposed? And is it no Crime to argue and maintain that the People are Slaves, and their Lives and Property at the Mercy of one whom they created, and whose Duty it is, to defend those Lives and that Property? It

Let us remember the sad Fate of *Sweden* and *Denmark*. They run into Debts by running into Wars, and the Court took the Advantage of their Necessities to seize their Liberties. They grew Slaves by growing insolvent. Under his Majesty's Reign we fear no such Thing; and, I hope, we shall scorn to suffer it under any other. Besides, as we are told a Remedy is intended, I doubt not but we shall see it the present Sessions, when our Burdens will be eased, and our Difficulties removed. There is a noble Fund of Wealth in the Nation, and we are yet redeemable, if proper Persons offer to undertake it.

Our Whig is a declared Enemy to all Wars, if they are not absolutely necessary. Though he honours a Soldier as he does a Physician, yet he prays to God that he may never have Occasion for either. Arbitrary Courts abroad, are, for the most Part, composed of Officers of the Army; and our Whig has so great a Weakness about him, that he cannot, without very uneasy Images, see a Glare of Scarlet where he would least wish it. He would not have the Men of the Sword grow familiar to the Eyes of the People, nor become the Equipage of our *British* Kings.

Military Men are a proper Equipage for those Princes who are Fathers of their People against their Will; who lay the Foundations of Justice in Fear and Blood, and use the Sword as the most natural Means to support those Foundations. In Countries that are enslav'd, the Sword is the Civil Magistrate: That is not ours is almost a Wonder, considering the Disposition in many of our former Princes to Armies. Our Kings of the *Norman* Race were perpetually raising *English* Forces for the Preservation of their *French* Dominions, and engaging us in eternal Wars on that Score. The Army that enslaved *Sweden* was raised for the Defence and Enlargement of their *German* Provinces, which were always a Burden to that Kingdom, and, at length, its utter Ruin.

We do not at present see in *Great Britain* many more Forces than are necessary to the Civil List; and I hope in proper Time there will not be one more. They furnish another Topick for Clamour to the disaffected, who raise Rebellions, and when they have given Occasion for more Soldiers and more Taxes, cry out, *Oppression! Oppression!* Sure these People are mad; they dread the Power of the Court, and yet are every Day helping it to more.

If a right Use had been made of the late Rebellion, we might have had now no new ones to fear. But, for whatever Reasons I will not pretend to guess, the Surgeons of that
Time

Time were so exceeding gentle in their Operations, that they left a Core in the Wound. Without doubt the Motives for Clemency were irresistible.

I must here acquit his Majesty from the Imputation of any Fondness of a Standing Army. I dare say the Proposal to Disband our Forces after the Rebellion, met with no delay from *Him*; and I have been told that he lately refused a very importunate Request to increase His Troops. I must also do Justice to the Gentlemen of the Army for having so well done their Duty. If our High Clergy were but equally faithful to their Oaths, and equally Friends to their Country, we should have seen neither new Troops nor Rebellions, The Army has sav'd us from the High Church. But for all that I have said, I should be sorry to see the People of *England* either love or fear a standing Force: To do either infers Danger.

I doubt not but when his Majesty shall think fit to disband more Troops, his Ministry will act with Alacrity and without Art: Because the dismissing of some common Soldiers *only*, after much Expectation from one Party, and more Noise from another, will be subject to unkind Interpretations.

I hope the Power of Quartering Soldiers is always impartially executed, and that no Consideration is of any Force on this Occasion, but that of the publick Security, and the Loyalty or Disloyalty of the Towns. I am persuaded we shall never hereafter see a Regiment removed out of a Town avowedly disaffected, into another which does not want Dragoons to keep it quiet, purely because the commanding Officer has it in his Eye to stand Candidate for that Town, if ever there should be another Occasion; as I am informed has been practised in former Reigns.

Our Whig was well enough pleased with our Attack upon the *Spanish* Fleet. It became us, as Sovereigns of the Sea, to pull down betimes the rising Maritime Power of *Spain*, and thereby secure our Dignity and Trade. But whether the Blow was well pursued, I am not a proper Judge. I shall only say, for the Honour of *Great Britain*, that we are certainly the best *Allies* in the whole World, and have the most civil way of fighting our Neighbours Battles for them.

It is a very uncommon, though perhaps a necessary Kindness, to employ at an immense Expence the Royal Navy of *England* as Transports for the Emperor's Troops, and to cruise about a Country at such a distance from us, and for so long a Time together. I doubt not but there will be very good Reasons given for it, if the Parliament shall ever think fit to call for them.

I must here do our Superiors the Justice to own, that they take effectual and speedy Methods to finish the Spanish War. For notwithstanding that we had a great Fleet in the Streights, and another in the Baltick, a Third was dispatched with much Resolution and Expence to frighten the Cardinal into pacifick Measures, and to conquer Vigo, tho' we were threatn'd at the same Time at Home with a dreadful Invasion from the late Duke of Ormond. But no domestick Danger can hinder a brave People from exerting their martial Genius, and making a heroick Figure abroad.

In this Vigo Expedition it is said we have had wonderful Success. For, not to mention that the Town would infallibly have been plundered, had not the Inhabitants gutted their Houses when they run away, it is certain we have vanquish'd several great Guns and brought them away Captives. It is also credibly reported that we have taken from the Enemy some of their Fishing Tackle.

Our Whig allows Great Men to have their private Failings and Passions. It cannot be otherwise; and they are unreasonable and ill bred who upbraid them with it. But in the Name of God let them not indulge them at the Expence of the Nation. Let them not postpone the Care of the publick Welfare to mind their own. Let them not out of personal Piques give up Whig Boroughs into Jacobite Hands. Let them not for the sake of a Mistress or a Crony disabuse worthy Men, and patronise worthless. Let them not run into mad Dangers, and then endeavour to alter and confound the Constitution for their personal Security from those Dangers. Let them not out of Self-ends, and for secret (perhaps pernicious Jobs) be tampering and juggling with the Nation's Enemies, and deserting and betraying that Party which is eminent for its Love of Liberty, to those who are its stigmatized Enemies.

The Duke of Buckingham, chief Minister to the blessed Martyr, involved his Country in two Wars, at a Time, when the Exchequer was empty, with the two great neighbouring Kingdoms, because he was balked in his lustful Designs upon a French Lady and a Spanish. And the Duke of Lauderdale, because he was disobliged by the Kirk, a Member of which he once was, ruled his native Kingdom of Scotland by a great Army and sanguinary Laws, all the Reign of King Charles the Second.

I cannot forbear digressing a little here, to shew the wretched State of Scotland at that Time. High Church, which by Force and Cruelty had expelled Presbitary, enjoyed then a rare Time of revelling in the Blood of Schismatics. The Orthodox Priests became every where In-
formers

formers against the Preaching and Praying Nonconformists, and the Soldiers, to please the Priests, became their Burchers And the poor religious People, when caught provoking the Clergy by Devotion, were unmercifully put to Death without Law, Jury, or Record. So were those Men rewarded, who had received and crowned that King, when his Life was sought by those who took away his Father's.

But to return. I can prove it, that the whole Legislative Power of this Nation has been in former Reigns engaged in gratifying a diabolical Passion of one Man; and our Security and Liberties have been sacrificed to Humour or a Mistress. When a Minister makes haste to be rich, the Service of his Country must either lye still, or go on no faster than he gets by it. A whole People was finely employed when they were labouring for the Pocket of one who was betraying them at the same Time. Most Men are willing to allow a great Officer, if he would but carefully cook the Nation's Money, to lick his own Fingers and thrive upon his Employment. But he who exhausts the Nation for his own Use, is a publick Highwayman, and the whole Kingdom should be his Prosecutors. I do not believe that there are any such Practices at present— I pray God defend us from them for the future. That such such Things may be safely done, is evident from hence, that of all the overgrown Leeches of the last Reigns (for I suppose there have been none in this) not one has been yet drained of his ill got Wealth,

Gaming is so dreadful a Vice, especially in those who are any way entrusted with our Liberties, that I cannot pass over it in Silence.

A Man who will venture his Estate, will venture his Country. He who is mad enough to commit his All to the Chance of a Dye, is like to prove a faithless Guardian of the Publick in which he has perhaps no longer any Stake. It is a Jest, and something worse in a Man who flings away his Fortune this way, to pretend any Regard for the good of Mankind. His Actions give his Words the Lie. He sacrifices his own Happiness, and that of his Family and Posterity, to a sharper or an Amusement, and by doing it shews that he is utterly destitute of common Prudence and natural Affection; and on the contrary, an Encourager and Example of the most destructive Corruption; and after all this ridiculously talks of his Zeal for his Country, which consists in good Sense and Virtue joined to tenderness for one's Fellow Creatures. When he has wontonly reduced himself to a Morsel of Bread, he will be easily

easily persuaded to forsake his Wretchedness and accept of a Bribe. Who would trust their Property with one who cannot keep his own? The same vicious Imbecility of Mind which makes a Man a Fool to himself, will make him a Knave to other People. So that this wicked proneness to play, which is only the impious Art of undoing and being undone, cuts off every Man who is possessed with it, from all Pretence either to Honesty or Capacity. I doubt *England* has paid dear for such Extravagancies. A Law-maker and a Gamester, is a Character big with Absurdity and Danger. I wish that in every Member of either House Gaming were attended with Expulsion and Degradation; and, in every Officer Civil or Military, with the Loss of his Place. A Law enjoining this Penalty would be effectual, and no other can. We see it goes on, upon the present Foot, in spite of Satyr and Acts of Parliament. I would have this execrable Corruption meet with no Encouragement. The Frowns of the Court would certainly put a check to it, but then there must not be an Office kept to propose for it.

Our Whig has an equal Aversion to Masquerades. They are a Market for Maidenheads and Adultery; a dangerous Luxury opposite to Virtue and Liberty. There was something like them formerly in the Reigns of our worst Princes, by the Name of *Masks*. As the present Reign resembles these in nothing else, so neither would I have it resemble them in this. They were revived, or rather introduced, after the *French way* by a *Foreign Ambassador*, whose only Errand then in *England* could be but to corrupt and enslave us, and for that End this mad and indecent Diversion was practis'd and exhibited by him as a popular Engine to catch loose Minds, or to make them so, with great Success. What good Purpose they can serve now, I would be glad to know. — The Mischief of them is manifest both to the Publick, and private Persons; a Handle is taken from them to traduce some great Characters, whom I would have always revered; and they are visibly an Opportunity and Invitation to Lewdness.

If the People will have Amusements, let them have warrantable and decent ones; as to Masquerades, they are so much the School of Vice, that excepting a Law to declare it innocent and safe, I question whether Human Invention can contrive a more successful Method of propagating it.

The Practice of the Commonality is formed upon the Example of the Great, and what the latter do the former think

think they *may do*. If a City Wife has it in her Head, against her Husband's Inclinations, to take the *Pleasures* of the Masquerade, she has but to tell him that my Lady Dutchess of ——— is to be there (no doubt upon the same Errand) and the poor, sober, saving Man must submit, and be *content* to be in the *Class* of his *Betters*.

From the Source of Prostitution I fear many a worthy Man takes to his Arms a tainted and vicious Wife, and finds in her a melancholly Reason both for himself and his Posterity to curse and detest Masquerades, and all those that encouraged them. I was in hopes they were at end. I heard that the Theatre in the *Hay Market* was to be used intirely another way, and that our Understandings were only to be affronted this Winter in that Place with *Italian Quavers* and *Cremona Fiddles*; for which I was not sorry, since some degree of Reformation. Let us make much of it—— Though I would feign hope it is not the only one we are like to see.

Some weak People would insinuate, as if those in high Place promoted these infamous Amusements as a Means to divert busy Heads from diving into their Actions——But this must be a malicious and senseless Slander, since all the Measures of these Gentlemen are so clear and honourable that they themselves need fear no Scrutiny.

Having neither Wife nor Daughter of my own, I am anxious only for the Ease and Reputation of those that have. So that I have no Motive but the Love of publick Virtue to say what I have said upon this Theme.

I could wish that those Reverend Gentlemen, whose Business and Duty, it more properly is, to expose this Scene of Iniquity, had prevented me. If our Lent Preachers have omitted it, I can ascribe it to nothing but Forgetfulness, or *their good Breeding*. And yet where is there a more necessary, where a more affecting Subject? Here, O ye Bishops, Priests and Deacons, shew the *Zeal* with which you abound; here shew *Danger*, not to the Church indeed, but *Danger* to Virtue, *Danger* to Christianity! Here alarm your Peoples Ears, here rouse their Passions; and cease combating *harmless Notions* and *dry Ideas*, till you have utterly defeated glaring Vice and exorbitant Debauchery.

Our Whig is an irreconcilable Enemy to the selling of Places, or conferring them partially. To be given to the Worthiest, is the publick Voice upon this Occasion. They are the national Rewards

for well deserving, or a Capacity of deserving well; and it is evident Injustice, and a kind of Robbery, to dispose of them upon other Motives. If the Candidate has Merit, the tacit Consent of the People is already on his Side; and why should he give Money for that which is his due? If he has not Merit, why should he have the Recompence of it? Freely you have received, freely give, is a Precept which has Reason as well as Inspiration to recommend and enforce it.

Most or all of the great Places are given gratis to those who, as their Fortunes, do not want them, and no Cause can be assigned but Avarice and Want of Human Compassion why any of the small ones should be sold, when they are sought for the most part as the Means of Life and Subsistence.

He that can bargain away a little Post, would from the same vile Principle dispose of a great Kingdom upon valuable Considerations; and sooner, as the Price must be greater, and consequently the Motives stronger.

Every Guilt of this kind, when detected, should be branded with Incapacity and a publick Mark of Infamy. It is making Traffick of ones Country: It is plundering Worth of its Birthright; and it has a Degree of Malignity and vileness in it, which ought to be narrowly watched and severely punished. It is true this Villany cannot be always detected openly but by observing Mens Circumstances we may guess whether they spend or lay up more than their honest Income; and if they do, we may take them for Criminals, and either oblige them to account for these Exceedings, or disable them from hurting us any more in the same Station.

In King Charles the Second's Time, a French Woman or two, and a Tribe of other hungry Courtiers who came with him from beyond Sea, did by the Connivance of the Ministry, and in Confederacy with them, make a fair Penny of the Birthright of Britons. The Parliament of that Time, who should have been the Guardians and Watchmen of the Publick, were themselves engaged in a Trade of Corruption, and spoke, or held their Tongues, as they were paid. In that Long Parliament there was a Majority of Pensioners, who overlook'd these dark Dealings and many more, particularly that of the Arbitrary increase of the Prince's Guards, which was the first Approach towards a standing Army. These Guards have never been reduced since. This shows the dreadful Danger of Precedents.

But neither ought Places to be bestowed out of private and personal Regards. I have heard of the Time when a near obscure Jacobite, was put into a fine Post for Life, purely of a piece of Work which deserved no more than an Attorney's Fee.

Fee. Besides, the Publick had no concern in it. When, at the same Time, very many deserving Whigs remain'd unprovided for, and even neglected, though they had done their Country more Service than some who had much better luck.

There were a sort of Men amongst us many Years since, who being of great Consequence to themselves, had adopted the Craft of Churchmen, and very solemnly assured us that the Nation was always in eminent Danger when they were not in Place. But as soon as the Steerage was committed to them, and they were got into a way of thriving, all was safe and yet nothing altered, It was of no Moment how other Posts were conferred, provided *they* enjoyed the *greatest*, and the Power of giving the smaller. If a Pretender was worth Money, or had done a *private* Jobb, no matter for his Parts and Principles; *Worthlessness* and *Jacobitism* were no Bars to Preferment, nay, the *Tories* were invited to accept of very good Places and welcome provided they aimed not at the *highest of all*. But for the Whigs of the private and inferior Class, they were at Liberty to do what Good they pleased to their Country and to Mankind, without the least Pretensions to the Friendship of the *Great*: On the contrary, they were told they very arrogantly disoblighd them, and marr'd their Schemes, by their officious Behaviour.

I am perswaded it is otherwise now, and that in due Time we shall see the *Bishop of Bangor* prefer'd suitably to his great Merit. I hope it is not inconsistent with any Schemes. I am sure the Interests of Truth and Liberty are nearly concerned in it. For my Part, I should not wonder if both Houses of Parliament address'd his Majesty to give his Lordship the best Bishoprick in *England*, as he is the best Defender of the Liberties of *England*.

I hope it is not true what I am told, namely, That the Bishop has not only met with hard Usage and Disappointment, but even hard Names, from some People for his keeping up a Spirit which hindred the Adoption of some true Sons of the Church into certain Schemes.

Let me alone and I will let you alone, is no longer the Language of Children at play. A much wiser sort of People have taken it up, and it appears to be the first Article of a certain *Bargain*, which all last Winter we were put in Hopes of.

If such People could have their will, the Seminaries and their Missionaries might go on to Scatter their Poison, and level their Doctrines against the fundamental Security of this Nation; to strike at the Root of our Peace; to over-bear the most glaring Truths with bold and dangerous Falshoods, and

to have it in their Power to make us miserable Bondmen whenever they have a fair Opportunity, then not a Stroke must be struck that may displease or disappoint them; not a Corruption be removed that they are fond of; not a Clergyman rewarded, nor any Body else, who has writ in Defence of Liberty, and made them angry.

But Almighty God has been so merciful to this poor Nation, as to bless us with a Ministry, who scorning all mean Transactions, will also scorn to enter into any Measures of Union and Confederacy with the High Clergy, till the whole Body of them have given us *demonstrative Proofs* of their Attachment to our *present Settlement and Civil Rights*; but will, on the contrary, enable the Dissenters, in the mean Time, to defend us and themselves against any future Attempts to disturb and enslave us.

While His Majesty reigns, let Him have what Councillors He will, our Liberties will be secure: His very Person and Countenance show Him to be a virtuous, wise, and beneficent Prince, and every Action of His Life confirms it. But will He live for ever? And can we forget our many Struggles with the High Clergy for the Preservation of our Liberty? Are not those Men, whom we set up and maintain, for ever endeavouring to pull us down, and to make a Prey of our Property, and Slaves of our Persons? Do they not claim our Lands for their Possessions, and us for their Vassals? Have we not been forced to wage War with our own Mercenaries.

May we not therefore expect during His Majesty's Reign Security against the Time to come? Have we not been promised it? And will any Body dare to affirm that he refuses it? No, no, I wish others were as ready to ask as he will be to comply. His first and chief Care, the Nation's Happiness, is concerned in it; and the Nation's principal Care, the Security of His Person and Family, is also concerned in it: And they who oppose or neglect it, oppose and neglect both.

The Dissenters have undeniably proved themselves excellent Subjects and *Englishmen*; and it will always be their Interest to do so, while they have that Protection and Encouragement which God and Nature, and our Constitution allow them. They aim at no independent Power. They have no Pretensions upon the Lands and Liberties of *England*. They have to a Man kept their Oaths to the Government, and opposed the Rebellion. They are a sober and industrious People, and Promoters of Morality and Trade, two great Props of Liberty. And the highest Objection against them is, That they will not kneel down to a Priest, nor worship a piece of Crape.

Yet

Yet they still stand where they did, and are like to stand; for it seems there are many Affeuerations and Oaths gone forth against them, *That the Dissenters shall rise no higher.*

It is fit Dissenters should know that they deserve, in every Respect, the best Usage the Nation can give them; and the honest Part of the Nation, to do it Justice, is not to blame if they want it.

Every Government stands by confiding in those that love it. The present Ministry owe their Being so to their Principles of Liberty, and their Adherence to the Succession. And is it not equally reasonable that the Dissenters, who have the same Plea, should possess in a proper Degree the same Favour? And yet have they any other Reward than Two or Three meer Negatives? They contributed largely to save the Nation, and *therefore they are not persecuted.* Exceeding kind and bountiful.

Their Zeal and Industry, to say nothing of their Expences in choosing Protestant Members for the present Parliament, will, I don't doubt, be powerful Motives with grateful Men to relieve these their Friends and Benefactors from the Fetters of Tests which were intended against Papists. And the remarkable Spirit and Alacrity which they shewed in quelling the late Rebellion, tho' at the Danger of Penalties and Prosecutions, was likewise a loud Demand upon those who could take their Thoughts off themselves, and turn them to the publick Interest, to distinguish with Qualifications and Rewards such a numerous Body of well affected Men.

That such a publick Spirited Design could not have been carried through, will hardly be believed, Projects of a very different and inferior Nature have been attended with surprizing Success. And not one Bill, or Scheme, that had the least Face of publick Good, has miscarried. No; we have been triumphant in our Undertakings in the House of Commons: Infomuch that it is hard to determine which is more remarkable, the Zeal of that House for the Ease and Interest of the Publick, or its commendable Faith in the Ministry.

A certain Project indeed was very justly, and very fortunately for *Great Britain*, received by all *disinterested Persons* with a general Abhorrence. What must some Men have done, when nothing can screen them but the altering and overturning of Foundations?

But to return, and put the Behaviour of High Church in Ballance with that of the Dissenters. The corrupt Clergy were through all *England* pushing at our Settlement with all their Might and Malice. Some of them indeed were wary
and.

and silent, but their good Will was never the less. So true is it, that *they who are not for us, are against us?* Even in their Neutrality they were forsworn. Thus the Ambassadors of Peace and Truth, and the great Advocates for Non-Resistance became the Trumpeters of War, and the Patrons of Perjury and Rebellion.

If the Dissenters knew what Bargains are driven, and with what Contempt they are spoken of, and what a mortal Antipathy there is in some People against giving them any substantial Advantages, they would not be so very free in drinking certain Healths, which are now, for good Causes, omitted by their truest Patrons in Town. But I am told they themselves begin to be pretty well cured of their wonted Fondness that way. God knows, they have sufficient Reason. Mr. W— was once their great Favourite: They see how he served them. Have they found others much kinder? I wish that even their professed *Plenipo's*, who lose nothing by being at the Head of their Affairs, do not now and then drop their Zeal for *Separation*, in Consideration of a Bank Bill, or a pretty Income. It is certain they go every length; whether consistently with their Commission, let their Principals judge.

There has been lately a Motion made in the *Irish* Parliament, in favour of Protestant Dissenters in that Kingdom. I will not suppose they are beholding for this Fayour to the Author of the Letter to the Archbishop of *Canterbury*; but of this I dare be positive, That if some People have half as much Zeal for passing such a Bill in *Ireland*, as they had, and, I am told still have, for passing another in *England*, it will not hereafter miscarry.

P. S. In the Second Part of this Character will be considered the Affair of a Northern War.

F I N I S.