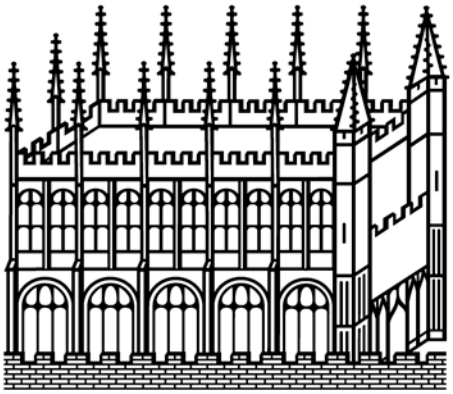

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

OF THE

PRESENT WAR,

AND ON THE

NECESSITY OF CONTINUING IT,

TILL A REGULAR GOVERNMENT IS ESTABLISHED IN

FRANCE.

Armis libertatem, patriam, parentesque, et alia omnia tegi.——SALL.

BY WILLIAM HUNTER, ESQ.

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CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

NEVER, in the annals of hiſtory, has a period occurred ſo momentous as the preſent. Whichever way we turn our eyes, a ſcene preſents itſelf, which muſt be viewed with diſſatisfaction and diſguſt; and, what is ſtill more afflicting, after weighing circumſtances with coolneſs and deliberation, we are obliged to confeſs, that war is preferable to peace.

The preſent conflict differs from all others in which we have hitherto been engaged. It is not a war of ambition, but of prudence: it is not a war of rivalſhip or choice, but of neceſſity and ſelf-defence. In order to explain myſelf more fully, I ſhall enter into a detail of thoſe cauſes which rendered it inevitable; and ſhall afterwards demonſtrate, that whilſt the politics of Europe remain in their preſent critical and fluctuating ſtate, it is both our duty and our intereſt to continue it.

Europe, after having enjoyed a long and proſperous peace, was, at length, diſturbed by the reſt-

leſs ambition of the French. Not ſatisfied with a gradual and rational change of government, which might have protected them from the tyranny under which they formerly groaned; which might have increaſed their individual happineſs, and have augmented their political ſtrength; they ſoon broke down the barriers of moderation and prudence. That which was eaſily obtained, they rejected with contempt; and, invading the regions of ſpeculation, proceeded in folly and wickedneſs, till they had waded through all the weakneſſes and crimes which can debaſe the character of man; till they had ſubverted all the eſtabliſhed principles of civil ſociety; till they had levelled all nominal diſtinctions of ranks; till they had eradicated all notions of religion and morality; in ſhort, till they had broken all thoſe links, and diſſolved all thoſe ties which are capable of uniting men together, or of rendering them happy. When they had accompliſhed this arduous and melancholy undertaking, they profeſſed, that their object was to erect a conſtitution on the baſis of equality. This abſurd ſcheme they attempted to reduce to practice; and, after ſplitting on a thouſand rocks, have, at laſt, eſtabliſhed a ſyſtem of the baſeſt and moſt atrocious deſpotiſm which ever diſgraced the proceedings of men.

When the ſcene firſt opened, we ſtood in anxious doubt, expecting an event which was to conſolidate the happineſs of a great and powerful nation. As it expanded, we foreſaw the evils which

it was likely to produce. If, however, they had only occupied themſelves about their own internal regulations, we ſhould ſtill have been at peace. We ſhould have viewed with commiſeration the ſufferings of the people; we ſhould have lamented that folly which allowed them to be deceived by the groſs arts of a ſet of daring demagogues; we might, perhaps, have endeavoured to act as mediators between them and an amiable Sovereign, who had nothing ſo much at heart as their welfare, and who was willing to make every ſacrifice which could promote and ſecure it; but we ſhould have interfered no farther: we might have interpoſed with good offices; but we ſhould never have threatened hoſtilities.

Unfortunately, however, the moment the prevailing faction had overpowered the oppoſition which was made to their invaſions, they turned their views to more remote objects. Not contented with having at their entire diſpoſal every thing which regarded internal organization; not ſufficiently employed with framing a government, on which the future glory of France was to depend; they diſcarded from their deliberations all the maxims of legiſlators, and, after having reduced their own country to a ſtate of abſolute deſolation, came to the reſolution of diſtributing what they choſe to term liberty to the whole world; which grand deſign was to be accompliſhed, by the total annihilation of every thing which is worthy of the attachment and veneration of men. Religion was

to be ridiculed; the altars of the Almighty were to be profaned; ſubordination was to vaniſh; all the moral and ſocial duties of life were to ſink into oblivion; and nothing but equality was to reign.

It was their profeſſed intention to ſubjugate all Europe. They ſucceſſively ſeized Avignon; attacked the Empire; invaded Savoy; oppreſſed Geneva; and, to crown the work, on the 19th of November, 1792, they paſſed a decree, which expreſsly declares their reſolution, to favour and aſſiſt the turbulent and diſaffected in every country, till they have enabled them to deſtroy their government, and to eſtabliſh another on their deſtructive principles. Long, indeed, before their rupture with Germany, their views had been clearly manifeſted. Their firſt ſtep was to break the Treaty of Weſtphalia; they even began to arm previous to the conference at Pillnitz; they next menaced with deſtruction the Electorate of Treves; and, when they thought their ſtrength ſufficiently increaſed, they declared war.

At the interview which the Emperor and the King of Pruſſia had at Pillnitz, they only entered into an engagement to protect the Royal Family of France from perſonal danger, and the total inaction, in which their armies continued, is a plain proof that they were pacifically diſpoſed. Had, therefore, the French been inclined to remain on friendly terms, the ſtorm might have been averted; but they found the neceſſity of engaging the public mind which was beginning to ſicken with diſappoint-

appointment, and to return from the mazes of theory and the airy excurſions of imagination.

When they openly avowed the principles which actuated them, we might eaſily perceive, that it was not their deſign to leave us long unmoleſted. The rivality, which has exiſted for ſo many centuries, between the two nations, we might be certain would excite their jealouſy, and make them deſirous that we ſhould fall among the firſt victims to their inordinate ambition.

When the object of their deſigns was ſo palpable, we ſhould certainly have acted a part highly injudicious and criminal, if we had not taken the alarm, and prepared ourſelves to meet an attack, which was ſo evidently meditated. When Briſſot and Condorcet publiſhed and circulated papers in France, purpoſely to increaſe the antipathy of the French, and to inflame their irreconcileable hatred, were not ſuch meaſures a ſufficient indication of their diſpoſition towards us; and did we do more than prudence required, by interdicting the exportation of corn and warlike ſtores? They attempted, indeed, to blind us by inſidious profeſſions; but, whilſt they were making them, did they not treat us as enemies? Were they not guilty of the moſt deteſtable perfidy? Did they not diſperſe emiſſaries over every part of the kingdom, to diſſeminate their pernicious maxims; to poiſon the minds of the people; to diſaffect them towards the laws; and to promote a revolution, which would have been followed by the ſame ſcenes of horrour

horrour and carnage which have for ever diſgraced the inhabitants of France, and imbued the very ſoil with ſtains, from which it can never be purified. And who were the traitors and incendiaries who made ſuch exertions to ruin us? Wretches, who pretended to have been perſecuted in their own country, and to have fled from penury and death. Rejected everywhere elſe, they applied for protection to the mildneſs and benevolence of the Britiſh Government. Our compaſſion induced us to liſten to their tale of woe:—we received them with open arms:—hungry and naked, we fed and clothed them:—we adopted them as our children; we ſheltered them with our laws; we nouriſhed them with our charity: and for this, they laboured to deſtroy us, by induſtriouſly propagating their diabolical principles, and thus repaid our generoſity with the blackeſt ingratitude.

Whilſt ſuch abominable meaſures, on the part of the French, were notorious to the whole world, could we be expected to remain inactive, and paſſively to ſubmit to thoſe inſults and incroachments which were deſtined to accompliſh our miſery and ruin? We, therefore, as became us, made preparations for a war, which it was evident, to all thinking men, could not be averted much longer; unleſs we were baſe enough tamely to allow ourſelves to be dictated to by Frenchmen, or fooliſh enough to be guided by their wild and deſtructive principles.

Baffled in the purſuit of their favourite plan, which was firſt to weaken us, by ſowing among us the ſeeds of ſedition and errour, they were highly exaſperated, and, whilſt they extolled their own ſpirit and wiſdom, launched out a proportionate torrent of abuſe againſt our ſtupidity and ſupineneſs. But, happily for this country, its inhabitants are not of the ſame fickle diſpoſition as the French. We regarded their language as a proof of their impotence, and were not diſpleaſed becauſe they reviled us; well knowing, that the invective, which is uttered by them, is honourable to thoſe againſt whom it is levelled. Notwithſtanding the diſtinction which they artfully ſtrove to create between the government and the people, affecting to revere the one, and offering the fraternal embrace; but branding the other with every epithet of antipathy and opprobrium, they could not delude us. We were not to be enticed into folly by the falſe charms of their new-fangled doctrines. We were not to be perſuaded, by any deceptions to which ingenuity could reſort, that our government was bad. Convinced, from the experience of a long ſeries of years, that it was adequate to all thoſe great ends for which it was inſtituted, we were not willing, merely from a love of innovation, to enter into the dangerous regions of theory and metaphyſics, and to riſk the loſs of what we at preſent enjoy, for the ſake of thoſe uncertain bleſſings, which any other code of laws might poſſibly adminiſter.

niſter. Attached, both from intereſt and gratitude, to that conſtitution which has been tranſmitted to us by our anceſtors, which was acquired by their vigour and perſeverance, and ſealed with their blood, we felt no inclination to engage in new experiments. Ever ſince its eſtabliſhment, the nation has continued to proſper, which is the ſureſt criterion of its value. Happy at home, and reſpected abroad, this enviable ſituation has ariſen entirely from the influence of our laws on our manners. Without any extraordinary natural advantages, we have long held the political balance, and have often been aſtoniſhed at the vaſt extent of our own reſources. Equally ſheltered from the ſcorching rays of deſpotic power, and the violent blaſts of democratic rage, we repoſe under the true tree of liberty, whoſe branches are able to protect us againſt every tempeſt. This is the tree round which the French perceived we were reſolved to rally—They ſaw, with grief, our fixed determination to defend the ſacred ſpot on which it grew and flouriſhed. They found that our laws were enthroned in our hearts, and defended by a panoply which they aſſaulted in vain.

The French, at length, perceived that all their machinations muſt eventually terminate in an expoſure of the folly of attempting to alienate our affections from our conſtitution. At firſt, indeed, by dint of money, and by an artful and aſſiduous activity, they met with ſome trifling encouragement.

ment. Their opinions were aſſented to by ſome few, who were too ſtupid to underſtand their own intereſts, or too depraved to purſue the intereſts of their country. At one time, even the Republican party, ſmall as it was, ventured to avow itſelf. Blinded by their prejudices, or miſled by their hopes, they flattered themſelves that they could create an inſurrection, which, if it fell ſhort of ſubverting the government, would, at leaſt, occaſion much diſturbance and embarraſſment. Daily aſſociations were formed; ſocieties were convened in different parts of the kingdom; regular communications were eſtabliſhed; and they began to imagine that their taſk, arduous as it was, would be crowned with ſucceſs. Grown bold from the forbearance of the executive power, they, at laſt, ventured to feel the pulſe of the people. What had hitherto been neglected, on account of the paucity and inſignificance of the agents, now appeared in a more unpleaſant ſhape, and a general alarm was diffuſed through the kingdom. But we all recollect how ſoon it ſubſided, and how precipitately this contemptible and deſperate faction ſlunk back from the face of day to the dens of infamy and obſcurity.

Government, having been once reduced to the neceſſity of adopting coercive meaſures, to ſtem the audacious inroads of the diſaffected, wiſely proceeded. The miniſtry were entruſted with a diſcretionary power; and Chauvelin, a wretch who

had diſgraced the character* which he pretended to repreſent, with ſeveral hundred of his ſeditious countrymen, was deſired immediately to quit theſe realms. France took fire at a meaſure which was calculated to inſure our internal peace and proſperity, and to render her plans of aggrandizement abortive. We continued, with activity, our warlike preparations, and, as ſhe had previouſly determined on a rupture, in caſe of failing in an attempt to enfeeble us by her doctrines, and to diſſolve our government, ſhe now formally declared war.

The firſt hoſtile act which the French committed againſt us, augured the injuſtice and rapacity which have ſince attended their arms. All the Engliſh veſſels, in their ports, were detained and confiſcated, not only in violation of a particular treaty,† by which it was ſtipulated that, under ſuch circumſtances, a ſpecified time ſhould be allowed for their departure; but in contempt of the general practice of nations. Thus was the ſtrife begun by a ſcandalous breach of faith.

If we could have preſerved peace on reaſonable and honourable terms, I am convinced that we ſhould never have engaged in hoſtilities. We were

* Every one muſt have remarked the ſpirit of ſedition which pervades all thoſe papers which Chauvelin tranſmitted, in his pretended political character, to Lord Grenville. Theſe were the public documents of the good will of his nation.

† The Commercial Treaty.

happy

happy and flouriſhing, and, certainly, could have no propenſity to implicate ourſelves in a war, from which little could be expected but an accumulation of burdens, and an effuſion of human blood. Yet the folly or the malignity of ſome has induced them to inſinuate, and to inſiſt, that nothing but the ambitious projects of Mr. Pitt could have involved us in the preſent conteſt. But can any reaſonable and moderate man allow himſelf to be ſwayed by a poſition which departs ſo egregiouſly from every ſuggeſtion of common ſenſe? Mr. Pitt, ſince he was firſt placed at the head of adminiſtration, had ſteadily purſued one conſiſtent plan, which embraced the extenſion of our commerce and the reduction of the national debt. All his views were directed towards the accompliſhment of theſe two points, and all his glory emanated from the ſucceſs which the wiſdom of his meaſures inſured. His foreſight, his judgement, his penetration, his vigilance, his aſſiduity, had been alternately exerted in the mazy and intricate tracks of finance, and he had, at laſt, eſtabliſhed a ſyſtem which ſurpaſſed all expectation, and raiſed the country to an unexampled pitch of grandeur and proſperity. The national debt was beginning to diminiſh; ſeveral taxes were repealed; the manufactures were flouriſhing; and both foreign and internal commerce were expanding every day. I do not, therefore, ſay it is likely, but is it poſſible, that this plan, which Mr. Pitt had been arranging ſince his firſt entrance into office, juſt as it was beginning to

operate,

operate, and to yield beneficial effects, ſhould have been ſuddenly deſerted, and ſacrificed at the ſhrine of a profitleſs and criminal ambition? Is it poſſible to conceive that Mr. Pitt ſhould have abandoned the fruits of his indefatigable labours, for eleven years, to gratify a momentary caprice; that he ſhould have forſaken the intereſts of his country; that he ſhould have checked the exuberant ſource of his renown, merely for the ſake of indulging in an idle and viſionary ſcheme?—It is impoſſible to maintain ſuch a poſition by any arguments whatever, and the more we inquire into the origin of the war, the more we ſhall be convinced that it aroſe, on our part, from abſolute neceſſity.

The French were, in every inſtance, the aggreſſors. They not only inſulted us by openly calumniating our government, in the national convention, and by laviſhing on us the moſt indecent invective; but they deputed emiſſaries to foment diſturbances and overturn our conſtitution; and the moment they were convinced that we were reſolutely determined to reſiſt, they declared war.

I am not, however, deſirous of drawing any ſtrength to ſupport my arguments from the mere declaration of war; becauſe, for ſeveral weeks previous to the commencement of hoſtilities, it was obvious, that they could not be avoided; and, if France had delayed the declaration much longer, it would, in all probability, have been made by us. I do not, therefore, wiſh to lay much ſtreſs on the declaration, as, without having recourſe to an

arga-

argument which is certainly frivolous in itſelf, I have an abundance of ſolid proofs to ſubſtantiate my opinion.

The baſe part which France acted anterior to the declaration, had already rendered a ſtate of warfare neceſſary; and we had diſcrimination enough to be convinced, that an open enemy is leſs dangerous than a falſe and deſigning friend. Their public acts ſo fully declared their intentions, that had the Miniſter diſregarded them, and ſuffered us to remain in a defenceleſs ſtate, he would have been guilty of treaſon to his country, and would have merited the odium and reſentment of all good citizens. It was his duty to be prepared againſt an event, which, however to be regretted, he was certain would befal us.

Circumſtances turned out as every rational man had foretold, and the war commenced. Fortunately our exertions had placed us on a reſpectable footing, and we were enabled to enter the liſts againſt our ancient adverſaries, without dejection or diſmay. Recurring to the recollection of our former victories; depending on the native courage and patriotiſm of Britons; and, above all, relying on the juſtice of our cauſe; we certainly had plauſible grounds to expect, that the conflict would be ſhortly terminated, and that our efforts would be crowned with ſucceſs. And the French, fortunately for themſelves and the world, would probably have been ſubdued in the courſe of the laſt campaign, had they lived under a regular government, and only

reſorted

reſorted to that ſyſtem of defence which is conſiſtent with juſtice, humanity, and reaſon. I ſay, conſiſtent with juſtice, humanity, and reaſon, becauſe, from the forcible means which the ruling faction have lately employed, it is plainly demonſtrated, that the inclinations of the nation are not conſulted; but, that they are dragged out, like devoted victims, to fight for a cauſe which they are convinced is pregnant with miſery and deſtruction, and which they would willingly deſert.

As many baſe and deſigning men have endeavoured to work on the paſſions of the multitude, by extolling the liberty which is enjoyed in France, and lamenting the ſlavery which diſgraces and oppreſſes the ſubjects of theſe kingdoms, I ſhall take a curſory review of the governments of each country, from which it will inſtantly appear, which is entitled to our attachment and reſpect, and which deſerves our abhorrence and execration.

Since the firſt ſuſpenſion and impriſonment of Louis XVI. the ruling powers in France have proceeded in a regular climax, through the various gradations of guilt. Often have we been ſo aſtounded at their ferocious deeds, that we have exclaimed. Human depravity has now reached its utmoſt pinnacle; its reſources are now exhauſted; and here it muſt ſtop. Yet we have found vice, after a pauſe, as if ſinking under fatigue, revive, and exceed thoſe bounds which imagination had traced. Hurried into the whirlwind of prejudice and paſſion, they have waded through the tem-

peſtuous

peſtuous ocean of diſorder and guilt. They have ſucceſſively adopted the moſt frantic ſchemes, and, acting under the influence of an unexampled delirium, have thought that no antagoniſt could withſtand them. Fluſhed with victory, and already in poſſeſſion of Nice, Savoy, and a rich and extenſive portion of the Empire, they meditated univerſal conqueſt. When they diſplayed the banner of profanation and vice, they expected that mankind would kneel, and worſhip it. They imagined that Europe would fall proſtrate before them, and that they would ſpeedily be able to erect the whole world into a nominal republic, over which they would deſpotically domineer.

After having inſulted their Sovereign by every ſpecies of indignity; after having heaped on him a load both of cruelty and contempt, they baſely inſtituted a mock-trial; accuſed him of crimes which he had never committed; and, after having denied him privileges which were accorded to the meaneſt of his ſubjects, paſſed ſentence on him in a moſt ſummary manner, and condemned him to ſuffer an ignominious death.—

> Hæc finis Priami fatorum; hic exitus illum
> Sorte tulit, Trojam incenſam et prolapſa videntur
> Pergama, tot quondam populis terriſque ſuperbum
> Regnatorem Aſiæ. Jacet ingens littore truncus,
> Avulſumque humeris caput, et ſine nomine corpus.

This was the debt of gratitude which Frenchmen thought fit to pay to virtue in diſtreſs. One of the

beſt Kings who ever graced the Throne of France, a fate was reſerved for him, from which vice, through the whole duration of the Monarchy, had been uniformly protected. But his misfortunes aroſe from an exceſs of meekneſs and goodneſs. Had he been of a leſs yielding nature, he might have been more fortunate.——Convinced that the Prerogatives of his Crown, when placed in the hands of a vicious Prince, muſt be detrimental to the happineſs and intereſts of his people, he wiſhed to ſurrender thoſe which were found oppreſſive, and to eſtabliſh a government on the baſis of juſtice and humanity. Every conſideration was ſubordinate to the welfare of his ſubjects. Louis XIV. who certainly was one of the moſt tyrannic and profligate Princes that ever ſwayed a ſcepter, was adored; whilſt Louis XVI. whoſe good qualities ſo eminently preponderated, that his imperfections muſt ſink into oblivion, was butchered on a ſcaffold.—The baſeſt act which ever ſtained the character of a nation, and which muſt brand its perpetrators with eternal infamy! Vile, ignominious people! Whilſt Louis XIV. tyranniſed over you, he was your idol; you trembled in his preſence; you crouched at his feet; you kiſſed your very chains. But when a Prince was placed on the throne, who was calculated to make you happy, and who ſubmitted to every mortification and diſgrace, rather than ſhed your blood; you firſt undermined his authority, by practiſing arts which were concealed under the cloak of attachment

ment and reſpect, and, when he was no longer to be dreaded, you appeared in your native colours, and ſacrificed him at the ſhrine of the moſt infamous and criminal vengeance. Men, who are actuated by ſimilar ſentiments, are only fitted for the yoke of ſlavery. They cannot bear the luminous rays of rational liberty; but, if relieved for a moment from the weight of their fetters, they enter on the wide expanſion of cruelty and depredation, and war againſt innocence and worth.

When the unfortunate Charles was brought to the block in this country, and not without ſome appearance of juſtice; for he certainly was as anxious to ſtrengthen his Prerogatives, as Louis was willing to reſign thoſe which had been tranſmitted to him by his anceſtors, and which he legally poſſeſſed, how differently were the ſentiments of the people expreſſed! The execution of Louis met with general approbation; but Charles was condemned to die by a faction, which, although formidable in point of power, was inconſiderable in number. Inſtead of the acclamations which attended the exit of Louis, Charles departed, ſurrounded by his people, whoſe ſolemn ſilence was only diſturbed by ſighs, and other tokens of contrition and grief. Although he had brought numberleſs calamities on his country, when the hour of ſeparation arrived, his people relented, and would willingly have reſcued him from his fate. When a king appeared on the ſcaffold as a malefactor, they

thought that the puniſhment exceeded the guilt, and they departed from the fatal ſpot, not exulting, and dancing, and ſinging; but with dejected countenances and heavy hearts.

When the French, by the murder of their Sovereign, had ſtamped their proceedings with the ſeal of infamy; when they had formally abjured all return to allegiance; when they had called forth the indignation and curſes of mankind; they thought they might as well proceed in a tragedy, which had commenced with ſuch a dreadful ſcene. They, therefore, boldly ſtepped forward on the ſtage, determined to explore the regions of barbarity and deſolation; to go in queſt of the moſt remote and unfrequented paths of guilt; and to practiſe every crime which the moſt wanton and depraved ingenuity could invent. One act of impiety and deſtruction followed another, with a celerity which future generations will ſcarcely credit. One moment we find them publicly ridiculing religion, diſavowing the exiſtence of a God, profaning his altars, and butchering his miniſters; the next, diſſolving every ſocial and moral tie, and tearing aſunder every link which can attach man to man, or inſure the advantages and comforts which reſult from ſociety; the next, invading perſonal liberty and individual property, and plundering the rich that they may tyranniſe over the poor. We obſerve, at ſhort intervals, different factions ſpringing up, and, as one is overpowered, like the heads of the Hydra, it is immediately

immediately replaced by another, who act, if poſſible, a more atrocious part. And had they not a range of crimes ſufficiently wide, without wreaking their barbarous and pitiful revenge on a defenceleſs woman? And is this the people who were once ſo famed for courteſy, who were the guardians of the female ſex, the profeſſed admirers of beauty, and among whom, to have been a woman was a recommendation to their compaſſion and protection? Yes, this is the ſelf-ſame people, who a few years ſince were commended and admired for their politeneſs, their gallantry, their humanity; who cultivated the arts and ſciences with zeal and ſucceſs; who, by their munificence, rendered their country the favourite aſylum of talents and merit; and who, from their hoſpitality and agreeable manners, were entitled to thoſe encomiums which were laviſhed on them by ſtrangers from every quarter of the globe. How this charming picture vaniſhes, when we behold them, ſeveral months after the murder of their King; when they had time to reflect; when the paroxyſms of party rage muſt have ſubſided; and the wanderings of a deluded imagination might have been corrected; preparing, a ſecond time, to exhibit to the world a ſcene, if poſſible, more heinous and atrocious! In the records of villany, where ſhall we find an act ſo diſtantly removed from the paths of honour and rectitude? Where ſhall we diſcover the public voice, acceding to the condemnation of a Queen, merely becauſe Fortune had placed her

on a throne, and the ſentiments of nature and duty had attached her to her huſband? Even if ſhe had committed crimes which merited chaſtiſement, had ſhe not ſufficiently ſuffered? Was not the loſs of a beloved huſband, her own ſorrows, and thoſe of her family, which muſt have ſharpened her afflictions; her degradation from a throne, the accumulated inſults of her people, the horrors of a priſon, enough to expiate a few levities of character, and a few venial tranſgreſſions? But neither theſe conſiderations, neither the recollection of her exalted birth, and her unparalleled hardſhips, nor the remembrance of that beauty which, although then prematurely faded from an exceſs of grief and ſuffering, once animated every heart, and was the admiration of every eye, could no longer excite compaſſion in the flinty breaſts of Frenchmen, or ſcreen her from their unmerited reſentment. Like the ſavages who exult in the writhings of a foe, whilſt he is expiring under their torture, they ſaw her periſh, not only without a ſigh, but with every teſtimony of inward ſatisfaction and brutal joy.

What a dreadful, what a degrading change of ſentiment and manner! Who could ever have conceived that a people, who had made ſuch advances in the refinements of life, ſhould have ſo ſuddenly embraced the erroneous notions, and imitated the bloody deeds of a ſavage tribe? Some centuries ago, when Europe was immerſed in ignorance, and every veſtige of learning, elegance, and ingenuity was obliterated from the face of the earth, the peculiarity

culiarity of its fate was occaſioned by an irreſiſtible cauſe. It was invaded by myriads of barbarians, whoſe inroads no oppoſition could withſtand; and whoſe object was, when they had gained poſſeſſion of a country, to make eſtabliſhments in it, and either by extirpating the inhabitants, or diſcouraging the progreſs of the arts and ſciences, to reduce every thing to the level of their own groſs and immoral conceptions. And, indeed, before theſe irruptions became formidable, every kind of learning had been gradually declining, ſo that the efforts which were made to complete its overthrow did not meet with any vigorous reſiſtance. But, in France, we find a people who, without any external compulſion, are warring againſt virtue, religion, politeneſs, and humanity; who are applying the axe to the root of ſenſibility; who are ſtriving to convert men into wild beaſts; and who are effecting this horrid revolution, not from neceſſity, or any conviction of its utility, but from abſolute wantonneſs and depravity of heart.

At the commencement of their troubles the French might have inſtituted a wiſe and happy form of government. In the Conſtituent Aſſembly, there were undoubtedly many men of information and talents; but they began with an errour, which attended them throughout their deliberations, and finally ruined the undertaking in which they were embarked. They never reflected that all reforms and changes muſt be gradually introduced; that the proper criſis muſt be watched; that men cannot

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make any very rapid progreſs in improvement; and that, before the work of emancipation is commenced, the minds of men muſt be prepared to receive thoſe impreſſions which it neceſſarily generates. Unacquainted with the true nature of liberty, they exceeded, in every inſtance, thoſe ſober bounds which diſcretion has traced; and, abandoning maxims, whoſe juſtneſs and aptitude experience has aſcertained, they entered into a wild diſcuſſion of ſpeculative points. Neither perceiving, nor underſtanding the wide difference between practice and theory, they endeavoured to renovate the very nature of man, and to reduce him to a ſtate which was ſuited to imbibe their impreſſions. They never conſidered that laws, which might be congenial to an infant country, could never be applied, with advantage or ſucceſs, to an ancient and numerous people, whoſe habits, whoſe prejudices, and whoſe vices were contending againſt their introduction. Thus, when they attempted to reduce their ideal government to practice, they found that it was quite inadequate to the means which it was propoſed to anſwer. Not having conſulted the temper and the inclinations of the people, they conſequently failed. This fatal trial roufed into a flame the crude and unſettled conceptions of men with regard to government. They had ſeen liberty, without comprehending it; they had taſted it, without knowing how to enjoy it. The paſſions of the multitude, once broken looſe from the reſtraint of laws, were not to be eaſily repreſſed. The charm was now

diſpelled

diſpelled which had enamoured them of their ancient conſtitution, and, ruſhing into the oppoſite extreme, they were clamorous after a republican form of government. Every branch of metaphyſics was inveſtigated; new experiments were made, which proved as unſucceſsful as the preceding ones; one conſtitution was ſupplanted by another; till, at laſt, the ſcene was cloſed, by the eſtabliſhment of a government the moſt odious and oppreſſive that was ever planned.

The ſyſtem of deſpotiſm which at preſent lacerates France is the moſt execrable and nefarious production that was ever impoſed on the credulity of mankind. Not one gleam of freedom ſhines upon it. On which ever ſide we ſurvey it, it is replete with deformity.—There is nothing in it which can excite our attachment, or conciliate our eſteem: and, whilſt we are dwelling on it, we are only reviewing an heterogeneous compendium of abſurdity and vice. Built on the wreck of reaſon and humanity, its only ſupports are cruelty and fear. Domeſtic harmony is deſtroyed, hateful ſuſpicion is generated, and the tribunal of mercy is crumbled to duſt. The hand of juſtice is no longer extended for the protection of the innocent; but a bloody deity, who has aſſumed her venerable name, appalling and exterminating as he ſtalks through a land of deſolation and guilt, leaves every where the traces of his barbarous footſteps. We behold Robeſpierre inveſted with a power, which exceeds what the moſt bloody tyrant ever poſſeſſed, and

exerting it in the promotion of more atrocious ends. How often has the dreadful maſſacre of St. Bartholomew been renewed! How often have the ſtreets of Paris been drenched with human blood! Who can count the number of victims that have been baſely immolated at Marſeilles, Lyons, Toulon, Nantes, and Bourdeaux? What corner of France is not polluted with blood, and ſtrewed with carnage?

Crudelis ubique
Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago.

Is not every man torn from his family, dragged to the army by force, and threatened with proſcription and death, if he refuſe to prolong the miſeries of his country? Where is the rich man who has not been perſecuted, and deprived of his property? And how many thouſands are there who, after having lingered for ſeveral months, on falſe accuſations, in dark and unwholeſome priſons, have been conducted from confinement to death? Where has not the fatal guillotine diffuſed horror and deſolation?—And if widows were to be heard deploring the loſs of their murdered huſbands, or if children were to weep for the return of their unhappy fathers, they would be immediately condemned to ſuffer the ſame fate.

The eſſence of liberty conſiſts in a knowledge of what the laws allow, and what they condemn. With ſuch a guide to direct him, a man immediately perceives the line of his duty, and is ſatisfied, that as long as he keeps within thoſe boundaries

which are preſcribed, he is ſafe. But when the laws are fluctuating every day, and are made ſubſervient to the views of intereſt and convenience, who can know when he tranſgreſſes, or what actions will occaſion the loſs or the ſecurity of his life? In France, every one may, no doubt, commend the Jacobin club, and beſtow the incenſe of panegyric on the proceedings of the convention; but who would inſure the head of him who profeſſed oppoſite ſentiments? Every one, in ſhort, is permitted to praiſe tyranny, and bloodſhed, and vice; but commendations on virtue, moderation, and liberty, are the forerunners of death. And who are reaping the harveſt of theſe deſtructive meaſures? None but the faction who iſſue them, and who glory in ſacrificing their country to their avarice and ambition. The rich have been perſecuted and robbed; the manufacturer is obliged to ſell the produce of his labour at ſo depreciated a rate, that it almoſt amounts to a community of goods; the poor are ſtarving from an abſolute ſcarcity of bread. The elegancies and ſuperfluities of life have vaniſhed long ſince, and the wants and neceſſaries are now beginning to diſappear. Such is the glorious reign of French liberty and equality, and ſuch the effects which it has produced.

It muſt, however, be admitted, that this ſtrange and unaccountable infatuation of the people, has chiefly enabled the French to make ſuch aſtoniſhing efforts, and to reſiſt with ſuch ſucceſs the exertions of the combined armies. The whole reſources of the kingdom are at the entire diſpoſal of the pre-

vailing party, who have concentrated all its riches and all its bodily force into one focus. Both agriculture and commerce have been almoſt totally neglected, and every thing has been applied to the maintenance of the war. The notion, however, of raiſing men in the maſs is abſurd in the higheſt degree. On ſome extraordinary occaſion it may, perhaps, prove advantageous; but an attempt to reduce it to a regular ſyſtem, and to provide for an army, conſiſting of ſuch a numerous body of men, for any length of time, muſt be fruitleſs and impracticable. Inſpired by the hopes of pillage, and intoxicated with a plentiful ſupply of ſtrong liquors, they may poſſibly be kept together for one campaign; but they are too unwieldy an inſtrument to manage long. Theſe unnatural exertions muſt, therefore, exhauſt them in the end. Whilſt their expenditure increaſes, the means of repleniſhing their coffers diminiſh, and the period, perhaps, is not far diſtant, when they will be obliged to acknowledge their weakneſs.—When we conſider the fate which has overtaken ſo many of their general officers, we are aſtoniſhed that men ſhould be ſtill found hardy enough to aſpire at any high and oſtenſible military ſtation; for moderate ſucceſs is no ſecurity, and to eſcape from the axe they muſt have fortune in their power. They muſt not only act prudently; but they muſt act luckily: they muſt not only perform their duty; but they muſt perform miracles. Yet when we turn over the page of hiſtory, and reflect how men, in all ages,

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have been ſtimulated by ambition and preſumption; how much the allurements of power conceal the dangers; how eaſily we are deceived, when judging of our own abilities, whilſt our apparent intereſt is concerned; how naturally we flatter ourſelves, that we ſhall be able to avoid thoſe errours which our predeceſſors have committed; and, above all, how willingly men of deſperate fortune embrace every opportunity of recommending themſelves to notice, our wonder ceaſes.

From this horrid proſpect, let us now turn our eyes on the fair edifice of the Britiſh conſtitution, a government which is peculiarly adapted to promote and to ſecure the happineſs of mankind. Here it is that true liberty flouriſhes; here it is that the true notions of equality prevail. Is there, in this country, any man ſo abject as to be diſregarded by the laws, as to be unſheltered from the injuſtice of his ſuperiors? Is there, on the other hand, any man, however exalted his ſtation, however affluent his circumſtances, who can commit a crime with impunity. Both the rich and the poor are equally amenable to the tribunal of juſtice, where innocence is uniformly protected, and guilt uniformly puniſhed. Thoſe who make liberty conſiſt in a power to act, in every reſpect, according to the dictates of inclination; and who define equality by an equal participation of property and rank, deduce their arguments from principles altogether falſe and untenable. It is totally impoſſible that an inſtitution, founded on ſuch vague notions, can ever

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obtain among men. Even in a ſtate of nature it cannot exiſt. Among ſavages, we ſee the chief diſtinguiſhed from his followers, the active from the indolent, the ſtrong from the weak. But, in civilized nations, where the mind of man has ſuch an extenſive range, theſe differences muſt be much more numerous and palpable. Were you to reduce the inhabitants of theſe kingdoms to-day to that viſionary ſtandard, would they continue there to-morrow? Would not the thrifty accumulate, whilſt the diſſolute waſted; would not the induſtrious thrive, whilſt the lazy failed; would not ingenuity and dulneſs, virtue and vice, learning and ignorance, meet with different rewards? To eſtabliſh ſuch a ſyſtem you muſt either annihilate the different propenſities which impel men to different purſuits; and you muſt endow every man with the ſame talents, the ſame accompliſhments, and actuate him by the ſame motives; or you muſt every day reſtore things to the original level, and effect a revolution once in four and twenty hours: and even then, during at leaſt the greater part of that confined period, inequality would triumphantly reign. But, for the ſake of argument, allowing that men had the inclination and power of ſubmitting to ſuch an ordinance, what would be the conſequence? Why this—The man of talents and induſtry, finding that the fruits of his labours were unjuſtly wreſted from him, to ſupply the indolent and abandoned, would no longer devote himſelf to ſuch profitleſs occupations; the whole kingdom would

would exhibit one barren waſte; and half its inhabitants would periſh from abſolute want. And, indeed, in France, although they have cajoled the people by an abuſe of language, where is the pretended equality of rank to be found? They have, it is true, extirpated the antient nobility, and decreed that their titles ſhall never be revived; but have they not been replaced by ſcoundrels and traitors, who enjoy their privileges under different names? If they have aboliſhed the epithets of Duke, and Marquis, and Baron, have they not their Miniſters, their Preſidents, their Generals, and their Colonels? But it is of no conſequence by what term a man is diſtinguiſhed; for all terms, before they are applied, are indifferent. And even after they have been applied, if the power and influence, which are annexed to any particular term, are diſſolved, and conferred under another, our former aſſociation of ideas can no longer exiſt; but the one loſes a ſignification which the other acquires. This is the artifice which they have adopted in France. They have changed, but they have not aboliſhed titles. Power and diſtinction ſtill ſurvive; a proof that even vice cannot be ſupported without ſubordination. Gradations of rank muſt, in fact, always exiſt among men. If we withdraw from ſociety thoſe honourable diſtinctions which we are accuſtomed to accord to merit, we from that moment annihilate every incitement to virtue, and cruſh all thoſe incentives which ſpur us on in the purſuit of fame.

Rational

Rational liberty, like every other good, conſiſts in a medium between two extremes; and can never be meant to extend in its ſignification to impoſſibilities. All it implies is an equal defence from cruelty and uſurpation; an equal protection of our lives and our reputation; and an equal ſecurity for the enjoyment of that property which our labours, our abilities, or our virtues have acquired. In this ſenſe it flouriſhes in theſe kingdoms, in its full extent; and in this ſenſe only can it be beneficial to mankind. Our conſtitution, being founded on the immutable principles of juſtice and wiſdom, is likely to defy, for many future ages, the aſſaults of malevolence and time—Like a tower, which ſtands upon a rock, it may deſpiſe the rage of contending elements. Whilſt Britons venerate freedom, and retain a love for their native land; it can never fall. But is an axiom univerſally admitted, that no human inſtitution can be totally devoid of blemiſh. We muſt, therefore, allow, that the government which approaches neareſt to perfection is the moſt entitled to our attachment and defence. Compounded as our conſtitution is of monarchy, ariſtocracy, and democracy, we have ſo happily blended them together, as to extract the ſweets from all. The admirable diſpoſition by which each principle, in its turn, continues to ſupport and control the other two, is a ſecret which we alone have diſcovered, and which has been the conſtant admiration of ſurrounding empires. The reſult of their collective powers has, for ſuch a length of time, ſhed

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on us its benign influence, that we are fully impreſſed with the conviction, that of all ſyſtems of polity which have ever been reduced to practice, our own is the beſt. Equally removed from the abuſes of deſpotic tyranny, and republican licentiouſneſs, we are neither agitated by civil commotions, nor appalled by ſanguinary decrees; but we ſail, with ſecurity, on the unruffled ſurface of happineſs and tranquillity. What but our government, and the ſagacity and prudence of the people, which have inſtructed them how to appreciate it, have advanced us to our preſent greatneſs? Neither peculiarly diſtinguiſhed for extent of domain, nor fruitfulneſs of ſoil, nor exuberance of population; ſtill we have gained the pre-eminence over other nations far more rich than ourſelves in natural reſources, and, in ſpite of their endeavours, have kept poſſeſſion of our political rank.—What but our government, and the good diſpoſitions of the people, have procured us theſe advantages? I do not appeal to the heart, but to the underſtanding. The Britiſh conſtitution is not the work of a day: it has ſtood the teſt of ages; and has ſhowered down innumerable bleſſings on thoſe who have lived under it. And ſhall we, merely for the ſake of novelty, deſtroy this venerable pile, and root up the foundation on which it is reared? Shall we abandon certainty for uncertainty? Shall we allow a band of ferocious robbers to legiſlate for us? Shall we deſert the fair manſion of truth, to wander in the boundleſs ſpace of ſpeculation? Shall we quit the

ſhore of happineſs and peace, to embrace our miſery and ruin?

As I have already obſerved, no government, which is framed by man, can be without imperfections. On trivial blemiſhes opinions are always ſo contradictory, that it is difficult to aſcertain, with any degree of certainty, what changes would promote melioration. In points of greater importance, the advantages and diſadvantages being more ſtriking, our reaſon is guided by more poſitive rules: and it certainly ſhould be the object of a legiſlator to remove every evident oppreſſion, and to render every branch of the conſtitution as complete as the nature of man will admit. When, however, any material alteration is to be accompliſhed, we muſt not act with raſhneſs. Every concurring circumſtance muſt be weighed with impartiality and deliberation; and, before we engage in the arduous and dangerous taſk of reform, we ſhould be fully convinced, that what is to be ſubſtituted in the place of what is to be annulled, will be competent to promote the advantages of the community. We cannot proceed too warily; for of all follies, that is the greateſt, which leads us to part with a real for an imaginary good. On theſe grounds, I ſhould object, at leaſt for the preſent, moſt unequivocally, to any alterations in the actual mode of repreſentation. This is not the moment for agitating ſo important a queſtion. At any period, I doubt whether it would produce ſalutary conſequences: at the preſent, I am perſuaded

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that it is pregnant with miſchief. Let the awful leſſon, which France has exhibited to the world, be a ſerious and eternal memento to ourſelves and to future generations, of the danger of commencing the ſubverſion of an antient government. Becauſe a few factious people are clamorous, and aſſure us that we groan under burdens which our feelings diſavow, are we to credit their aſſertions, and to run immediately to arms? Becauſe they tell us that liberty flouriſhes in France, and ſlavery in Britain, ſhall we liſten to ſuch baſe miſrepreſentations? No; men who have always known how to protect themſelves againſt the infringement of their rights, are not to be alarmed at ſuch idle rumours. I depend on the moderation and the good ſenſe of my countrymen, who, I am certain, will never allow themſelves to be deluded by the daring aſſertions of thoſe, who only ſtep forward at particular periods to diſplay the malignancy of their hearts, and who, after a ſhort and inglorious ſtruggle, are forced to retreat to the haunts of ignominy and vice. Men of this deſcription will be found in every country; but, in this, although, by their ſecret machinations, they may ſometimes be able to ruffle the ſurface of human affairs; I truſt, they will attempt, in vain, to raiſe a ſtorm. Born for the curſe of their fellow-creatures, it is only in times of commotion, that they venture on the ſtage to diſplay their deſtructive and malignant talents. The ſeeds of ſedition and diſſatisfaction are ſo rooted in their hearts, that were a government to be traced by the un-

erring hand of the Almighty, they would be impious enough to queſtion its perfection, and to expreſs their diſcontent.

" Nam ſemper in civitate, quîs opes nullæ ſunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt; vetera odere, nova exoptant; odio ſuarum rerum mutari omnia ſtudent; turba, atque ſeditionibus ſine cura aluntur: quoniam egeſtas facile habetur ſine damno."

Before, therefore, we deſire a reform in parliament, let us inſure ſome poſitive advantage. Before we ſubvert one ſyſtem, let us prepare another to replace it, and of ſuch a nature as to be worthy of incurring the riſk. Let us not firſt deſtroy, and leave what is to be erected or repaired to the hand of chance. But many, who have been very vociferous againſt the preſent mode of election, have ſtill had the candour to declare, that, notwithſtanding the palpable objections which crowd our ſyſtem of repreſentation, they would be at a loſs to deviſe a plan, in which defects, as numerous and ſtrong, would not obtain. What then are they cavilling for; and why not remain as we are? The principal object which ſhould be attended to in elections, is to inſure ſucceſs to thoſe, who are moſt entitled to the confidence and reſpect of their fellow citizens, and who are moſt likely to guard and to advance the intereſts of their country. We ſhould always deſire that the repreſentatives of the nation ſhould be diſtinguiſhed for their property, their integrity, and their talents; and, ſo long as we are aſſured that members of this

deſcription fit in the Houſe of Commons, it can be of little conſequence to the real welfare of the ſtate, whether they be the choice of five thouſand, or five hundred thouſand electors. Whilſt our laws are entruſted to the care of thoſe who are moſt intereſted in their preſervation, we need be under no alarm: for, it is not probable that, for the ſake of oppreſſing us, they ſhould ſubſcribe to meaſures which would be detrimental to themſelves in a ten-fold degree! Having more to loſe, they have more to dread from a ſubmiſſion to thoſe maxims, which would affect the liberty of the ſubject. But is not the Houſe of Commons filled with ſenators who rank under the above-mentioned claſſes? By what means could we inſure to ourſelves more reſpectable repreſentatives? Increaſe the number of electors, could they return better or more independent men? But it is ſaid to be a great grievance, that ſo many uſeful citizens ſhould be excluded from the choice of thoſe, to whom are conſigned the charge and defence of their moſt valuable privileges. And if you were to admit them, would not you increaſe the diſcontent of thoſe who were rejected? The truth is, the line muſt be drawn; where, is of little importance, ſo long as it inſures the election of thoſe who are worthy of ſo ſacred a truſt. Why, therefore, ſhould we deſire a change, from which no good can reſult, and which may be productive of numberleſs evils? Even at preſent, amongſt the loweſt deſcription of electors, how few are there who value the privilege of voting

beyond

beyond the price which they can obtain for their voice? It avails little, in their eyes, who is elected; but they regard him as the fitteſt man, who can afford to pay the beſt price. If it were poſſible to deprive them of this bait, they would never give themſelves the trouble of appearing to poll: a proof that it is not the privilege of ſaying yes or no, once in ſeven years, which they hold dear. Augment then the number of this claſs of voters, you only increaſe a waſte of money, which is injurious to their induſtry and morals, and, by opening a wider door to bribery and corruption, could only tend to bad purpoſes. And if you grant the privilege to one, why refuſe it to another? The rights of nature, it would be immediately aſſerted, are equal; and the beggar and the man of wealth have the ſame claims to notice. Muſt we then plant a dagger in the vitals of our conſtitution, by introducing univerſal ſuffrage? In antient times this experiment has been frequently reſorted to, and has never yet produced any thing, but civil commotions and general diſcontent.—Aſſertions have, indeed, been induſtriouſly circulated, that our degeneracy is evident; that we are willingly deſerting the pure principles of our conſtitution; and that we are making rapid ſtrides towards the maintenance of deſpotiſm. But egregious falſehoods cannot now miſlead us. We muſt firſt be informed in what inſtance parliament has departed from the true ſpirit of our government, and in what particular the power of the crown has been

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extended. Facts are the only arguments which, in a queſtion of ſuch delicacy and moment, can recommend themſelves to public attention.

I ſhall now take a review of the laſt campaign—

When the war firſt broke out between this country and France, the French had made conqueſts on every ſide. From the fatal moment, at which the Duke of Brunſwick had been prevailed on to withdraw his forces, ſucceſs had attended on their arms. The rapid advances which they made, without any reſiſtance, aſtoniſhed and alarmed all Europe; and the politics of that period are ſtill involved in a cloud of myſtery which the public eye cannot penetrate. That ſuch vaſt and important acquiſitions ſhould have been ceded to them, without contention; that one ſtrong place ſhould have been abandoned after another; and that the French ſhould have been ſuffered quietly to take poſſeſſion of them, appears to be ſo unaccountable a miſtake, that no one will pretend to juſtify or excuſe it. A general panic ſeems to have diffuſed itſelf through the retreating army, and the French were conſiderably elated and aſſiſted by the predilection which the inhabitants of their new conqueſts evinced for their levelling principles. They certainly are admirably fitted to delude the multitude, and it is flattering to human vanity to reduce a ſuperior to the common level. But when they began to operate, all the idle dreams of happineſs vaniſhed, and thoſe who had cheriſhed them, were left to deplore their blindneſs and folly.

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Thus, however, the French conquered without fighting: thus they obtained advantages, not from their own proweſs, but from the infatuation and ſupineneſs of their adverſaries. They marched into Nice; they over-ran the Netherlands; they took poſſeſſion of Franckfort and other ſtrong holds; they advanced into Holland, and threatened the deſtruction of the United Provinces. Such was, twelve months ago, the lamentable, the humiliating aſpect of Europe! It was ſucceſsfully invaded in different quarters by a band of ſavages, whoſe exertions were aided by the arts of civilization. But their triumphs were not deſtined to laſt, and their laurels faded almoſt as ſoon as they were gathered. When we acceded to the grand alliance which was formed in defence of juſtice and order, againſt the attacks of anarchy and guilt, the cauſe, from that moment, acquired vigour. The native ſpirit and perſeverance of Britons were regarded as an earneſt of ſucceſs. We imparted ſtrength to every arm, and confidence to every breaſt. And their reliance on us was not without reaſon; for, it muſt be remembered, that it was the intrepid bravery and glorious example of our countrymen which ſnatched Holland from the jaws of perdition, and gave the firſt turn to affairs. When the French once received a check, their diſcomfiture, in different parts, rapidly ſucceeded, and their retreat was the counterpart of their invaſion. They fled as precipitately as they had purſued, and the ſalvation of Europe was inſured. Shortly after this reverſe,

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we find them circumſcribed (Nice excepted) within their antient confines, and the allied armies, in their turn, acting offenſively. Several ſtrong and important places, on their frontiers, have been ſucceſſively yielded to us. If our advances into France have been very gradual, we muſt not be ſurpriſed; fortified towns cannot be taken without much time and labour. Our acquiſitions, on the whole, have been greater than we could expect, and the poſition of affairs on the continent has undergone a moſt aſtoniſhing and favourable change. But if we turn our eyes towards other parts of the world, a wide field of glory and triumph opens to view. In the Eaſt Indies, the French have been entirely diſpoſſeſſed of their territories: an event which muſt be productive of great advantages to this country; and, I hope, we ſhall, when the period of peace arrives, be ſufficiently on our guard to prevent their re-eſtabliſhment in that quarter of the globe. All the diſturbances which we have, for many years paſt, been ſubjected to, have ariſen at their inſtigation; and, although we at laſt terminated them with honour and ſucceſs, yet it was impoſſible to depend on the bleſſings of a permanent peace, whilſt the councils of the princes of the country were influenced and ſwayed by the evil diſpoſitions of an artful and reſtleſs people. In the Weſt Indies the proſpect is ſtill more flattering. Tobago has already ſubmitted to our arms. From our preſent footing in St. Domingo, we may rationally expect that the French part of that rich and

flouriſhing iſland will ſoon be annexed to the Britiſh Empire; and Martinico, Guadaloupe, and St. Lucia, muſt alſo fall under our domination. Thus will the colonial ſtrength of France be annihilated; a loſs which muſt ſtrike at the very root of her exiſtence as a commercial nation, and transfer half her power and riches into our hands. Our temporary poſſeſſion of Toulon enabled us, alſo, to reap many important and durable advantages. The navy of France never ſuſtained ſuch a fatal ſhock, and although ſome diſcontent has ariſen from the haſty manner in which it was evacuated, and which, indeed, prevented our triumph from being complete; yet, what we accompliſhed was more than we could have expected, in the ordinary courſe of things, from the aggregate efforts of a ten years' war. We have, to be ſure, in ſome inſtances met with failures and diſappointments; yet they are trivial in general, and may be eaſily repaired. Such is the picture of a campaign which, if not the moſt glorious, is certainly the moſt proſperous, which this country, or indeed any other, in modern times, ever experienced.

But people have been very much alarmed on account of the precarious iſſue of the war, and our ſuppoſed inability to ſupport the conteſt for any length of time. Every public calamity, which has ariſen in the courſe of the year, has been attributed to that ſource, and the artful inſinuations of malicious men have, in many inſtances, been too ſucceſsful.

When the commercial world, ſome months ago, ſuſtained ſuch a ſignal ſhock; when the depreſſion of credit, and the ſtagnation of trade, ſpread a general alarm; wretches immediately ſtarted up, and exclaimed; behold the pernicious conſequences of the war completing the ruin of our country! Thoſe who had been unfortunate lent a willing ear to their propagations, and ſeconded their ſentiments. Let us impartially examine how far they were conſiſtent with truth. The moment of the attack, no doubt, added terrours to the calamity, and it was a circumſtance, peculiarly unfortunate for the nation, that it ſo ſpeedily followed the commencement of hoſtilities: but are we, on that account, to attribute it entirely to that cauſe? An appeal to experience, which is certainly the ſafeſt criterion to judge by, will evince the contrary. A variety of remarkable events had combined, to render the ſituation of the commercial world extremely critical; and, even if we had not been involved in the war, the deranged ſtate of affairs on the continent muſt, at firſt, have been ſeverely felt. When France would no longer ſuffer us to remain at peace, another bitter and baneful ingredient was certainly added to the evil. A ſtate of warfare muſt always, undoubtedly, produce a bad effect on commerce. It muſt always confine the intercourſe between different countries, check the ſpirit of adventure, and occaſion a comparative ſcarcity of money. But is it to be hence inferred, that it will ſtrike at the root of all induſtry, and exhauſt the channels of all wealth? Surely

we have been engaged in wars more unpopular, more expenſive, and more diſaſtrous, in every point of view, than the preſent; yet did they ever threaten the annihilation of our trade? The war cannot, therefore, have been the ſole cauſe of thoſe unparalleled diſtreſſes. That it may have haſtened them, I admit; but, from the nature of the diſorder, its termination muſt have been calamitous, and the longer it was delayed the more violent and extenſive muſt have been its devaſtations. We muſt then ſeek for a more powerful momentum. The fact is, that the credit of the country had been ſtrained to a pitch which it was unable to ſupport. People, from a ſpirit of enterprize or gain, had been ſtimulated to graſp at projects which exceeded their competence, and had ventured to trade, in an unwarrantable degree, beyond their capitals. They were gradually betrayed into concerns, from which they could not extricate themſelves. A fictitious capital, raiſed by a forced circulation of paper, which muſt always engender diſtruſt, and prove ruinous in the end, was the artifice to which they were driven to delay the blow which they could not eſcape. This evil extended itſelf to an exceſs beyond all computation. Men perſuaded themſelves, that they were proſpering, becauſe the balance in their books was in their favour, and, enlarging their connections, they were eventually enticed into meaſures which defied the poſſibility of redemption. Deluded by their own devices, luxury and extravagance kept pace with their ideal riches,

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and the numbers who built on this ſlippery foundation, occaſioned a competition which reduced, in an injurious proportion, the fair profits of trade. This exuberance at laſt, however, indicated ſymptoms of decay: its natural effects began to appear, and when the paper was to be realized, the illuſion vaniſhed. Thoſe who had trafficked on this irrational plan, not having funds to ſupport their engagements, could not conſequently fulfil them; and when the chain, which united and upheld them, broke, exigency immediately ſprung up, and a general ſcene of confuſion enſued. When gentlemen of real property found thoſe, who were reputed to be ſo, falling on every ſide, an alarm was ſuddenly diffuſed; they knew not where the evil might ſtop; and, anxious to ſecure what remained in their poſſeſſion, it was inſtantly withdrawn from the caſualties of trade, and locked up till the ſtorm ſubſided. The natural conſequences were, that an artificial ſcarcity of money was created; confidence was deſtroyed; conſternation was excited; and the manufacturer, finding no demand for his goods, ceaſed to labour. Much embarraſſment might, no doubt, have been prevented, had the Bank ſtepped forward at this critical juncture, and granted a liberal ſupport to thoſe who were entitled to receive it. The advantages which accrued from the aſſociation of the country gentlemen in the north, inform us, how beneficially their more ſubſtantial aid might have been accorded. There can be no clearer proof of the juſtice and fair-

fairneſs of the above ſtatement, than the quick reverſion of affairs to their natural ſtate, the moment Parliament interpoſed, and offered relief. From the ſums which were applied for, it is evident, that pecuniary aſſiſtance was not much required. It was a deficiency of confidence which was moſt felt, and the moment that was reſtored, the clouds, which were hovering over the commercial hemiſphere, diſperſed; the channels of induſtry and wealth were again opened; and the face of things was entirely changed. Surely, this ſecond revolution, if not from good to better, at leaſt from bad to good, could not have been effected, if the war had been the ſole origin of the evil; for it is not poſſible that the effects could be removed by the duration of the cauſe. This is a fact which I need not endeavour to ſubſtantiate, by embelliſhing it with the flowers of rhetoric, or enforcing it by the ſtrength of argument: it is a ſelf-evident axiom, and he who can diſcredit it, muſt be determined to reſiſt every impreſſion of truth.

Though the ſudden check, which was given to our commercial intercourſe with France, was at firſt ſeverely felt, yet it has, in the end, proved fortunate. The merchants of that country had, already, been ruined, by the tyranny and injuſtice of the prevailing faction, who immediately ſupplanted them in trade, and entered into engagements to ſuch an aſtoniſhing amount, that their projects muſt have terminated in a bankruptcy, which would probably have ſhaken England to its very foundations.

tions. In another point of view, to counterbalance the temporary inconvenience, ſeveral ſolid advantages preſent themſelves. Although the balance of our trade with France was in our favour, yet the vaſt conſumption of French produce in this country, and the impolitic predilection which we uniformly diſplayed in favour of their ingenuity and faſhions, were, in many inſtances, prejudicial to our own manufactures. This paſſion has now entirely ſubſided, and we begin to believe that we can invent faſhions of our own. What was formerly procured from France, and we ſtill wiſh to poſſeſs, our own ingenuity muſt now ſupply; and thus, obliged to depend entirely on ourſelves, ſeveral new and uſeful manufactures will be gradually introduced. Whilſt the French foreign trade to the Levant, the Baltick, and other parts, is totally deſtroyed, we have every reaſon to expect that our own will become every day more proſperous; and our evident ſuperiority at ſea muſt enable us to preſerve thoſe advantages which our enemies have forfeited. The loſs of their fiſheries at Newfoundland is, alſo, an event by which we ſhall be conſiderable gainers. Many years of tranquillity muſt elapſe before the French can recover from the effects of their preſent diſſenſions; and, at the reſtoration of peace and order, we ſhall find them ſo relaxed by their exertions, that they will not be able to beſtow much attention on commercial regulations: they will have every thing to begin, and will hardly have the ability to carry on any manufactures, but

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ſuch as can be introduced into an infant country. Thus will all nations be obliged to repair to Great Britain for the productions of art: thus ſhall we ſupply with merchandize the whole continent of Europe, and become the emporium of the world.

We have alſo been loaded with reproaches by the ill-diſpoſed, for having, in a manner, obliged the Dutch to join the alliance. They alledge, that we only conſulted our own intereſt, and inveigled them into the ſnare. Had it not, it is affirmed, been for our interference, inſtead of being fettered with the expences of war, they might now be flouriſhing under the benign influence of peace. But, if we conſulted our own intereſt, it muſt be owned, that their's was not altogether neglected; for, from the political ſituation of affairs, the Dutch could not poſſibly have maintained their neutrality, and if they had not leagued with us, their country muſt ſhortly have become a department of France. The French had, by laying open the navigation of the Scheldt, already evinced their hoſtile diſpoſition. Did they not, in violation of the law of nations, and in contempt of a poſitive treaty,* forcibly ſail up that river to beſiege Antwerp; and, notwithſtanding the re-iterated remonſtrances of the Dutch againſt this ſcandalous and glaring infraction, did they not continue to ſet them at open defiance, and to declare their fixed determination to deprive them of an excluſive navigation? The riches and naval

* Treaty of Munſter.

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force of Holland were objects of too great an importance to be overlooked by the inordinate ambition of the French, and had it not been for our repreſentations they would have acquired them. The Dutch, however, it muſt be owned, are not very hearty in the cauſe, nor have they yielded us that aſſiſtance which, from their political rank, and their uſual energy, we had a right to expect. The diſpoſitions which have been alſo ſhewn by individuals, to enter into an illicit traffic, and to ſupply our enemies with articles which may enable them to proſecute the war with greater vigour, have reflected a diſgrace on the whole nation. When frequent inſtances occur of injuring our country for the ſake of private emolument, the proofs of degeneracy are evident, and one cannot help lamenting thoſe acts of perfidy and baſeneſs which degrade a powerful people. It is, however, better that the French ſhould be thus partially aſſiſted, than that they ſhould have the entire management and diſpoſal of their riches and naval ſtrength. Once maſters of the United Provinces, their power would be ſurpriſingly augmented. In all former wars, it has uniformly been regarded by ſtateſmen as a political maxim of the laſt importance, and from which we ſhould never depart, to maintain a ſtrict alliance with the United Provinces. Has Charles II. ever been forgiven for deſerting the cauſe of Holland, and aiding Louis XIV. to conquer it? Has he not always been accuſed of betraying the true intereſts of his country, and is it not ſuſpected, even to this

day, that he was biaſſed by motives which ought never to influence the conduct of a King? And is this, then, the moment to diſſolve an antient and advantageous alliance, and to diſregard what has hitherto been accounted an indiſpenſable duty?— Sophiſts may advance what they pleaſe; but I am ſatisfied, that they will never be able to convince men of integrity and ſenſe.

The management of the national purſe has ſupplied another ſource of cenſure; and much obloquy has been thrown on the Miniſter for being prodigal of the public money. But thoſe, who bring forward theſe accuſations, do not conſider, that when we are once involved in a war, it is true policy to make the moſt vigorous exertions. A parſimonious conduct always proves the moſt expenſive in the end. When our eſtabliſhment is too confined, it is impoſſible to accompliſh any thing of moment. Our hands are always fettered; we muſt adopt a ſyſtem of defence; the war is unneceſſarily protracted; whilſt it laſts we loſe our glory; and when the period of peace arrives, not being able to command terms, we are obliged to ſubmit to inſult and diſgrace. Yet they ſay, admitting all this, why ſhould we ſubſidiſe Hanover and the Prince of Heſſe, and enter into a treaty with the King of Sardinia, by which we bind ourſelves, whilſt the war continues, to pay him annually 200,000l. to maintain his own army, and to defend his own country. My anſwer is this: When we find ourſelves implicated in a war like

the preſent, we muſt view circumſtances through a comprehenſive medium. We muſt not only attend to objects which relate immediately to ourſelves; but we muſt extend our thoughts to more remote conſiderations. We muſt calculate, what is moſt likely to prove beneficial and injurious to the general cauſe, and endeavour to aſcertain the ultimate reſult. If, after ſuch an inveſtigation, it appear more to our advantage to employ foreign troops than our own, why ſhould we heſitate? or, if it be evidently of importance to us, that any particular State ſhould be defended, which cannot bear the extraordinary charges of war, why ſhould not we ſtep forward with pecuniary aſſiſtance?— Such is preciſely our preſent caſe. We are obliged to furniſh a certain quota of troops for foreign ſervice, and we find it leſs expenſive to hire them elſewhere than to employ our own. It is alſo evidently of conſequence to the general cauſe, that the Sardinian dominions, which are the key of Italy, ſhould be defended. The King is not ſufficently opulent, and we aſſiſt him. What would be the conſequences, if we were to withdraw our ſupport? Italy would be immediately overrun, and the French, by ſeizing on the vaſt treaſures which it contains, would acquire freſh reſources for carrying on the war. Neither the temples which are dedicated to religion, nor the venerable remains of antiquity, would be reſpected by theſe modern barbarians; nothing would be ſpared by their avarice and brutality.

If then, the expenſes of the year have been great, let us recollect the wonderful exertions which we have made. In no period of our hiſtory can an inſtance be adduced, by which it will appear, that we have armed ſo conſiderable a force in ſo ſhort a time. Owing to the diſlike which we have, very naturally and very properly, imbibed to a ſtanding army, our military force, in times of peace, has always been inconſiderable. Thus when a war firſt breaks out, the difficulty of procuring men is always great. Having a fleet to man and an army to levy, the ſupply has generally been found ſo inadequate to the demand, that ſome time muſt neceſſarily expire, before we are empowered to avail ourſelves of our reſources, and to truſt to our ſtrength. The celerity with which we have procured men, at this particular juncture, has ariſen from a variety of incidents, but from none more, than from the vigilance and activity of our government.

Whilſt, however, I beſtow praiſe where praiſe is due, I ſhould deviate very widely from that impartiality which I have taken for my guide, did I allow what is cenſurable to paſs unnoticed.

In the department of the Admiralty, there certainly has been ſome ſtrange neglect and miſmanagement. When complaints proceed both from the enemies and the friends of Adminiſtration, I cannot conceive that they are altogether groundleſs. With ſuch a ſuperiority of naval ſtrength as we now poſſeſs, we certainly are enabled to attend to

every

every thing, and even admitting that it is neceſſary to maintain a ſtrong armament for the defence of our coaſt, ſtill we have a ſufficiency to ſpare, and to diſperſe to other quarters. It is ſaid, that we have above a hundred ſhips of war at Portſmouth, completely equipped. They ſurely might be much better employed. Is ſuch a vaſt force neceſſary to defeat an invaſion, which, I am perſuaded, was never intended? Mad as the French are, they have ſtill too much prudence left, to make ſo deſperate an attempt. They may talk of it to alarm us; but they will do no more. I will, however, allow, that an enemy ſhould never be deſpiſed, and that, conſidering the various contingencies of war, whatever is within the line of poſſibility ſhould be guarded againſt. But, becauſe we ſhould not expoſe ourſelves to riſks indiſcretely, is it to be hence inferred, that half the Navy of Britain ſhould remain in port? Cannot we ſpare a few ſhips to protect our trade, and to prevent the French from infeſting our channel, and inſulting our flag? We ſhould always have a ſquadron cruiſing near our coaſts. Let it conſiſt of ſeven or eight ſhips of the line, and a few frigates; and the moment it returned let it be replaced by another of the ſame force. We ſhould then overawe our enemies, and they would be neither ſo adventurous nor ſo ſucceſsful. All aſſertions are comparative, and when it is recollected how the French Navy is crippled, it has certainly been allowed to accompliſh too much. With ſuch a ſuperiority of naval force as

we

we have, ſcarcely a French ſhip ſhould be ſuffered to float on the ſeas. As far as regards our officers and ſailors, every effort has been made which can redound to their honour, and which is conſiſtent with the native ſpirit and heroiſm of Britons. When equal, we always have, and, I truſt, we ever ſhall overcome the French! Every action which has been hitherto fought, has tended to confirm this long-eſtabliſhed opinion. I therefore lament, that engagements have been ſo rare, and that theſe gallant men have not had more frequent opportunities of diſplaying their magnanimity and courage.

The affairs of the ordnance likewiſe afford a very fair ſubject for animadverſion. They have been conducted in a very negligent manner, and our failures on the continent have proceeded almoſt entirely from our own blindneſs and inattention. The Noble Duke, who is placed at the head of that important office, has, no doubt, the intereſt of his country at heart; but he appears to be ſwayed by motives which ought to be totally unknown to a Miniſter. Profuſeneſs in articles of expenſe, and frugality in thoſe points where little can be ſaved, are a plan, which a perſon who has the management of important and extenſive operations, ſhould never adopt. In times of peace, we ought always to make preparations for war. We have then more leiſure, and can better afford the expenſe; nor ſhould we then be aſhamed to ſhew our arſenal, becauſe it contains no arms. Deciſion

alſo

alſo is a requiſite ingredient in the character of a politician, and is generally the forerunner of good fortune. We ſhould not reſolve haſtily; but when determinations are once made, the execution of them ſhould be prompt and vigourous. A frequent change of meaſures occaſions not only a loſs of time; but it damps the ardour of troops, and endangers ſucceſs.

Dimidium facti, qui cæpit, habet.

But, although we have met with diſappointments, they have not been ſo conſiderable but what they may be eaſily repaired. Adverſity is the ſchool of wiſdom, and the time of difficulty and danger is the period for a great nation to diſplay its firmneſs: and, it is to be hoped, that we ſhall profit, in our future operations, by the experience of what is paſſed.

As for peace, it is, at leaſt for the preſent, quite out of the queſtion; for, as it is impoſſible to obtain it on honourable terms, no good citizen can deſire it. Before we can expect peace, the French muſt be either ſubdued, or they muſt abandon thoſe infernal principles, by which they are actuated, and ſubmit to a rational government. Have they not decreed, that they will enter into no compact with any nation whatever, unleſs, by a preliminary article, it ſhall conſent to cede to them, whatever conqueſt it has made? And is this, then, to be the indemnification which we are to receive for the loſs of ſo much blood and treaſure?

treaſure? Are we to allow ourſelves to be dictated to by theſe barbarians, and as if every nerve were relaxed, and every reſource exhauſted, are we to withdraw from the conteſt, covered with ignominy and contempt? No;—if we are to fall, let us fall like men, defending a good cauſe, and acting up to the principles of Engliſhmen, who have ever preferred death to diſgrace. But if they were to relax, and to offer to treat with us on more equal terms, ſhould we be mad enough to liſten to them? If we were to commence a negotiation, and to conclude a peace, what ſecurity could we have for its duration? Could we rely with any confidence on the profeſſions of a people, who have egregiouſly departed from the law of nations; who have relinquiſhed every ſentiment of honour; who are no longer awed by a ſenſe of religion; who have trampled on the moſt ſacred obligations; who deſpiſe juſtice and mercy; who live by murder, rapine, cruelty, and confiſcation; and who have attempted to grace, with the venerable name of liberty, the blackeſt and moſt odious tyranny which ever perſecuted and degraded the human race?

If, therefore, we can have no ſecurity for the duration of peace, or the fulfilment of thoſe engagements which the French might enter into, it ſurely is neither our intereſt nor our duty to attend to any overtures whatever. We can place no dependence on the acts or the aſſurances of a faction, whoſe reign may terminate to-morrow. If we, truſting

truſting to their faith, were to ſlacken in our exertions, who can pretend to ſay that they would not avail themſelves of our inactivity and credulity? If the combined armies were to diſperſe, would they diſband their troops, or diſmantle their towns! If we were to accede to terms of accommodation, could we venture to diſarm? When a nation has avowedly diſpenſed with the moſt ſolemn treaties, and flagrantly forfeited all pretenſions to good faith, we cannot act too cautiouſly. Shall we then be frightened into peace, whilſt we have ſuch a fleet equipped, and ſuch a numerous and well-appointed army in cantonments, by the chimerical boaſts and haughty menaces of a band of daring conſpirators? Shall we, after ſuch vigorous and toilſome preparations, allow our enemies a reſpite by according them a truce? Shall we, merely to gratify them, deprive ourſelves of the advantages we have acquired, and ingloriouſly evacuate, not only our own conqueſts, but renounce all pretenſions to the reſtoration of thoſe places which they have gained from our Allies? As, in the event of peace, we ſhould be afraid to diſarm, we may as well employ that force which we are obliged to maintain. By acting otherwiſe, we ſhould only augment our own calamities, by bereaving ourſelves of the power of annoying our enemies.

Let us then continue to fight, till, at leaſt, there is a proſpect of cloſing the hoſtile ſcene with ſafety and ſucceſs. Anarchy and Atheiſm cannot flouriſh

for ever. Enthuſiaſm may perſuade men to ſuffer numberleſs hardſhips, and to brave every difficulty for a certain time; but what is erected on the baſis of diſorder cannot be ſtable, and common ſenſe muſt, in the end, triumph over mad ſpeculation. No time can conſolidate what is the offſpring of folly and vice, and the votaries of guilt muſt, at laſt, retire from the ſtage, and yield to the influence of juſtice and truth. True philoſophy muſt ſome day return, and, taking pity on the miſeries of mankind, will expand its protecting wings over their heads. I already think that I perceive ſome gleam of returning reaſon. The people begin to ſee through the mummery of a government which has deluded them ſo long. They feel, that they do not enjoy that happineſs which was promiſed them. They know, that every thing is overruled by force; that fear is the main ſpring of the machine; and that they groan under the moſt abject ſlavery. They perceive, that the ſyſtem which governs them is a compound of artifice and cruelty; that it is built on pernicious and fugitive principles; and that it muſt, ſooner or later, mortify with diſeaſe. The period is, perhaps, approaching faſt, when this averſion, which they are contracting by degrees, ſhall break out with an impetuoſity which no efforts can reſiſt: and we may then ſee their government diſſolved, as ſpeedily as it was framed. The rich without influence; the manufacturer without employ; the poor without bread; theſe are dreadful, but convincing arguments. Fooliſh miſguided people! How will you

repent when your reaſon returns! With what anguiſh will you review the ſituation, to which you have degraded your country, when you are reviſited by the ſober hours of reflection!—— With what ſenſations of horrour and grief will you recollect the catalogue of your inexpiable crimes! Whichever way you turn your eyes, the wrecks of your former happineſs will be diſplayed. When you reckon up the irreparable loſſes which your country has ſuſtained, how will you curſe that moment when the intoxication began: how will you lament that infatuation which alienated you from your duty! Bleſſed with ſo many natural advantages, you have ſcorned the gifts of God, and voluntarily embraced your ruin. You have optionally ſeceded from virtue, and allowed a plenary courſe to proſcription and ſlaughter. Count the number of citizens you have murdered in cold blood. Enumerate the thouſands of your countrymen who, by the chance of war, or by the hand of the executioner, have prematurely paid the debt of nature. Think, that your commerce is annihilated; that your cities are deſtroyed; that your manufactures are no more; that the arts and ſciences are fallen to decay; and what imports you ſtill more, that, as a people, you have for ever forfeited all title to eſteem and reſpect. How have you ſunk in the ſcale of nations!

Non, mihi ſi linguæ centum ſint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox, omnes ſcelerum comprendere formas,
Omnia pœnarum percurrere nomina poſſim.

O Injuſtice! theſe are thy trophies!

But notwithſtanding the manifold and horrid crimes which have defiled France, independently of every other conſideration, the common motives of humanity muſt induce us to deſire a ceſſation of their preſent afflictions. This deſirable object can only be effected by a total dereliction of their preſent maxims, and a return to an orderly government. What that government ſhould be, I ſhall not pretend to determine; but, I think I may, without much riſk, aſſert, that, if they remain united as one people, it cannot be republican. We, however, never wiſhed to conquer opinions by the ſword, and it is of little conſequence to us, what polity they inſtitute, provided they afford a ſecurity for the good faith of treaties and the obſervance of general laws.

Till a government is eſtabliſhed which holds out theſe advantages, and is likely to endure, we can entertain no hopes of peace.

The proſpect which we have before us is, however, much more flattering than it was ſome months ago. In the Weſt Indies we have made ſeveral important and brilliant acquiſitions, and, I think, we may fairly expect to receive, in a ſhort time, a confirmation of our ſucceſſes, and an account of the total expulſion of the French from thoſe parts. To that quarter we muſt turn our eyes for an indemnification of the expenſes of the war. Let us well conſider, the value of thoſe rich iſlands; of what importance they are to this country in her commercial capacity; and let us be

careful,

careful, when the period of peace arrives, not to loſe by treaty, what we have gained by arms. In the Eaſt Indies we have no longer an enemy to dread. Our ſucceſſes at Corſica are nearly completed: and on the continent of Europe, we have aſſembled an army, commanded by ſkilful and experienced generals, and compoſed of ſoldiers, who, convinced of the neceſſity and juſtice of the cauſe for which they are contending, are fired with the nobleſt ardour, and are emulous to diſplay their heroiſm. The internal parts of France are torn by civil commotions; their councils are diſtracted; and they begin to diſcover, that they have almoſt dried up thoſe ſources which, formerly, ſo plenteouſly ſupplied their laviſh extravagance.

Thus, I conceive, we have no reaſon to deſpond. The burdens of the year have been but little felt, and, indeed, in a political point of view, unleſs the war is protracted beyond all bounds of probability, it will be the moſt advantageous and lucrative, in which we were ever engaged. What France has loſt, we ſhall have acquired: we ſhall no longer have any rival to contend with, and the reſtoration of tranquillity will be ſhortly ſucceeded by a harveſt of proſperity and wealth.

But even if, inſtead of ſucceeding, we had been foiled in every undertaking: if the poſture of our affairs were ever ſo deplorable; ſtill I ſhould applaud the part which we are acting, and ſtill peace and ſubmiſſion would be ſpurned at by Britons. This, as I have already obſerved, is a war of neceſ-

ſity.

ſity. We did not enter into it from motives of ambition; we did not wiſh to extend our conqueſts, or to enſlave ſurrounding nations; but we found ourſelves in danger; our exertions were required; and we were obliged to contend pro aris et focis. The queſtion was not, what we might gain by war; but what we muſt have loſt by peace. It was requiſite that we ſhould guard our hearts againſt the inſinuating poiſon of falſe principles; and, as we could no longer retain the friendſhip, that we ſhould vigouroufly reſiſt the enmity of France. We armed for the defence of our liberty and our laws. Theſe were advantages worthy of a conflict; worthy of arouſing a flame of generous reſentment in the breaſt of our countrymen. What! could Britons be expected to ſtand like daſtards, and tamely to look on, whilſt the French were aſſaulting the palladium of their rights? Could we be ſuppoſed to remain inactive, whilſt every thing which we have been accuſtomed to venerate was at ſtake? Were we, to avert a war, to reſign our independence as a nation, and our individual happineſs and ſecurity? Inſtead of teſtifying our readineſs and our ability to defend ourſelves, and to fulfil our moſt ſacred duties, was it to be imagined, that we ſhould, without a ſtruggle, retreat from the field, covered with eternal infamy? We had, it is true, long proſpered under peace; we had familiarized ourſelves with its bleſſings; and we wiſhed to preſerve a continuance of them; but, when all our hopes proved fruitleſs, and all our

meaſures

meaſures abortive; when provocation was unjuſtifiably heaped on provocation, our conduct would have been, in the higheſt degree, diſhonourable and criminal, had we ſuffered them to paſs with impunity.

From the preſent ſituation of affairs we certainly are warranted to augur ſucceſs. Much, indeed, muſt depend on our being united, and on our firm belief that the intereſts of the government can never be ſeparated from thoſe of the people. Let us conſider, that we are not only fighting for ourſelves, but for future generations; and that it is our duty to conſign, unimpaired to our children, what our anceſtors have tranſmitted to us. Let us, therefore, exert every nerve, and oppoſe our enemies with an impenetrable phalanx of Britiſh courage and virtue. Let us recollect that we are contending for our exiſtence and our liberties; and that whilſt we inſure the enjoyment of thoſe important objects, whatever mortifications and diſcomfitures may afflict us in other reſpects, we gain our principal point. Let us alſo acknowledge the truth of this maxim, that it is worth running the riſk of ſacrificing a part, to preſerve the whole.

FINIS.

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