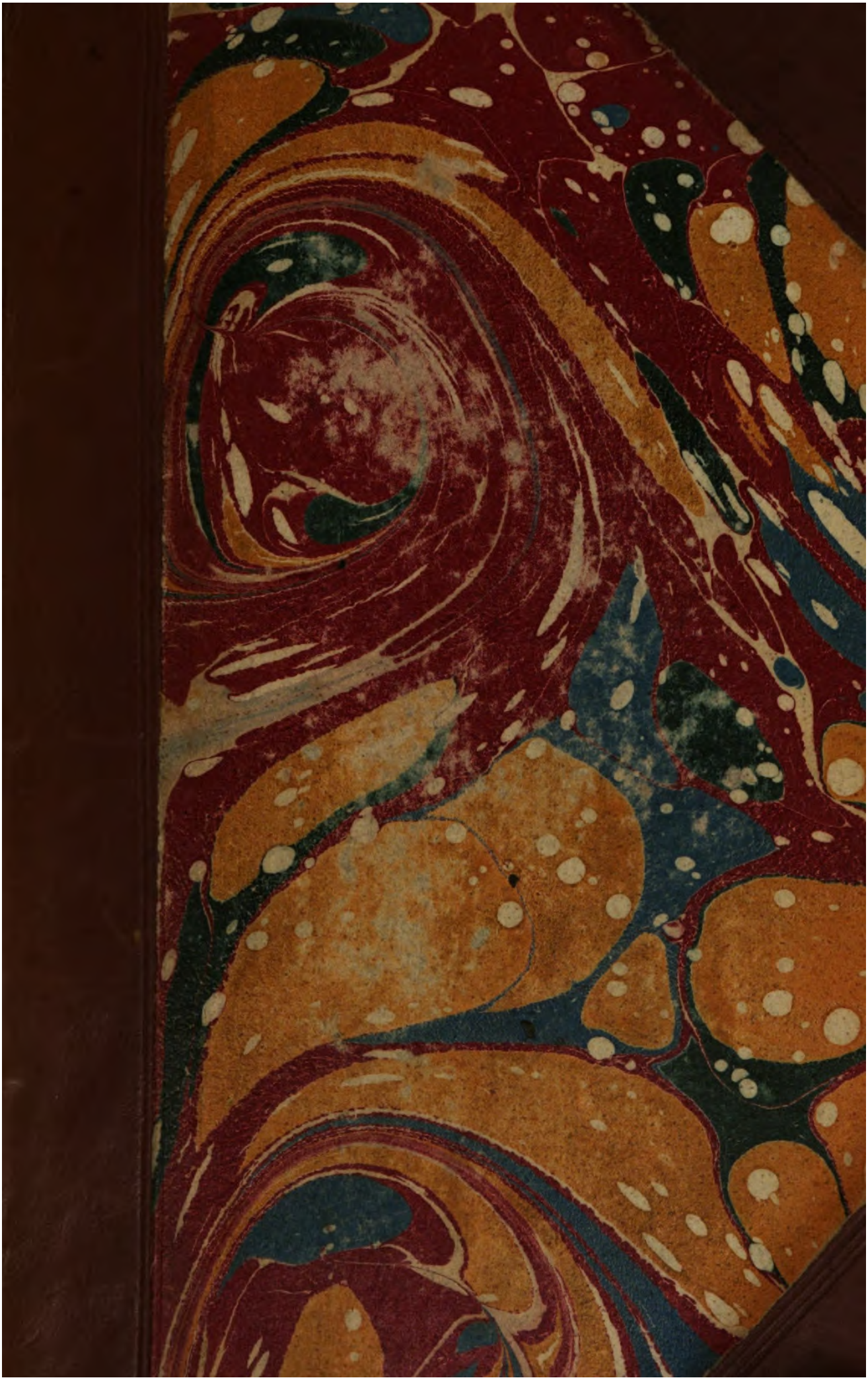

THE

DANGER

OF THE

POLITICAL BALANCE

OF

EUROPE,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE KING OF SWEDEN,

BY THE

Rt. Hon. LORD MOUNTMORRES.

Opininionum commenta delet Dies, veritatis judicia confirmat— CIC.

LONDON:

Printed for E. JEFFERY, PALL MALL.

M.DCC.XC.

TO

Lord Viſcount TORRINGTON.

&c. &c. &c.

PERMIT me, my Lord, to addreſs a tranſlation of the Danger of the Political Balance of Europe to your

Lordſhip—and to hope that you will accept it as a tribute of private friendſhip, and as a mark of juſt regard and eſteem, from a well-wiſher to his country.

Examples of men who enter voluntarily and gratuitouſly into diplomatic employment are rare: neither

are

are there many inſtances to be found of foreign miniſters who diſcharge the duties of their offices with laborious application, unwearied diligence, private credit, and general ſatisfaction, in the countries from whence they are delegated, and to which they are deputed.

In conſidering your Lordſhip in that deſcription of foreign miniſters, I ſhall aſſuredly adopt an opinion from my own belief and conviction, from my obſervations during your long and conſtant reſidence at Bruſſels.—A general remark ought not to create particular offence: our embaſſies have not al-

ways

ways been filled with able men, which I have often regretted, in different parts of Europe.—The extent and ſphere of compliment is limited, to men who conſider it as one of the privileges of rank and independence to ſpeak the truth——Faithful copies of the portraits of Sir William Temple and the

Count D'Avaux, it is true, are not eaſily found; but a great country requires able miniſters in foreign departments.

I have the honor to be,

Your Lordſhip's obedient,

Humble ſervant,

MOUNTMORRES.

London,
July 10, 1790.

PRELIMINARY.

THE ſpirit of the firſt works frequently evaporates in tranſlations; as the eſſence of ether is often loſt, when poured from one vial into another.——The Tranſlator offers this work in an Engliſh dreſs, with a diffident hand,

to

to the impartial tribunal of the Public—If he ſhall have ſucceeded in repreſenting the genius and capacity, which pervade the treatiſe on the Danger of the Political Balance of Power, he conceives that he ſhall have given ſatisfaction to the intelligent, information to the political, and amuſement to the many.

In

In this work, the rapid progreſs of Ruſſia, in ſomewhat more than half a century, from civilization to preponderance in the general ſyſtem — the dethronement of Peter the Third— the acceſſion of Catherine— the ſubjection of Courland— the appointment of a King of Poland, the nominee of Ruſſia — the partition and

diſ-

diſmemberment of that country — the Leonine convention with Frederick the Great, and with Auſtria—the Turkiſh wars—the policy of the Czarina — the intereſts of Denmark—the conſtitution, the character, the revolution, and preſent ſtate of Sweden — above all, the agitation of the great queſtion, of the conſequences of

the

the ſubjection of Turkey, and the eſtabliſhment of Ruſſia in the Mediterranean, and its importance to the maritime powers, are moſt happily diſplayed.

The idea of any ſtate obtaining a general aſcendant, may, or may not, be a chimera; but human affairs revolve in the ſame circle; what

what has happened, may happen again; and novelty is but forgetfulneſs. Hiſtory would be the amuſement of children, and not the inſtruction of men, if the paſt did not prepare us for future events, and guide us through political mazes, with antecedent information.

The

The Ruſſian troops have appeared with the greateſt effects in the wars of Europe; Sweden and Ruſſia have, at different periods, experienced their obſtinacy in the battles of Pultowa, and of Kunerſdorff.

With Ruſſia we have had connections, treaties, and alliances, ſince the firſt intercourſe

courſe with that country, in the time of Edward the Sixth. In a political view, little advantage has flowed from that connection; perhaps the only inſtance where ſhe appeared on the political theatre in our favour, was at the cloſe of the ſucceſſion war, in 1747, when a body of Ruſſian troops were on their march to counteract the ef-

fects

fects of German diſcipline in the French troops, and the victories of Saxe, and Lowendhal, in Flanders.

Our trade with Ruſſia for naval ſtores, according to this work, produces a million of unfavourable balance againſt this country. By more accurate accounts from

our own Cuſtom - Houſe books, eight hundred and twenty thouſand pounds*.— Conjecture and accuracy combine to form a total, which it will be our policy to leſſen, by producing theſe articles among ourſelves. Contrary to that policy which obtained, with regard to

* Chalmers.

Ireland,

Ireland, in 1750, which cannot be here enlarged upon: the ſeed, the acorn of this great meaſure, has been planted in Ireland this laſt ſeſſion, by a law to encourage the export of Iriſh ſail cloth, a meaſure hitherto diſcountenanced here, though it was recommended to the Britiſh Parliament, at

the beginning of this century, by Lord Somers *.

Prejudices there are, no doubt, againſt noble, and againſt royal, authors—envy exacts a compromiſe from men in exalted ſtations; flattering miſconception and ſelf-love have eſtabliſhed

* Lords' Journal, vol. XVII. p. 485.

an

an opinion, that men who are above the reſt of mankind in ſome, ſhould be lower than the reſt of their ſpecies in other, reſpects;—but fortuitous advantages do not alter the real character—fame and reputation are prizes which may be allotted to any deſcription of men; and we muſt admire thoſe who quit exalted ſta-

tions

tions to enter into the common lift, who ſtart in the popular race, and labour to gain the prize, by ſurpaſſing mankind in the beaten tracks, and the common high roads of life.

Of royal authors the catalogue is ſmall, though ſplendid inſtances occur in the annals of literature—The

arm

arm which wielded the moſt ſucceſsful ſword, directed a pen with ſimilar abilities :— the Commentaries of Cæſar were dictated by the ſame ſpirit with which he fought. If an enlightened period was poſſeſſed of a ſage whoſe divine genius ranged through the immenſity of ſpace, revealed the myſteries of nature, and gave to time and

to

to motion mathematical laws, the annals of the thirteenth century, the age of obſcurity and darkneſs, record the ſcience of Alphonſus the Wiſe, king of Arragon, the author of the Tables which bear his name; who cultivated philoſophy and the abſtract ſciences upon a throne. — If Frederick the Great appeared the foremoſt

character

character on the theatre of Europe, it is well known that he has eternized his fame in a posthumous work, dedicated to candour and to truth:—the prince who has surprised Europe with the eclat of his victories, with the courage of the twelfth Charles, without his temerity, will not lose reputation, upon an attentive perusal of

this

this work; and the Public muſt be pleaſed with the production of a monarch, who appears to bring the genius of his great predeceſſor to appear once more upon the ſtage, and to revive the glories of Guſtavus Adolphus.

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DANGER

OF THE

POLITICAL BALANCE

OF

EUROPE.

CHAP. I.

Introduction. — Ruſſian Politicks before the Reign of Catherine the Second.

A KINGDOM, almoſt unknown in Europe during the laſt century, and gradually aggrandized at the expence of all her neighbours, whoſe civilization contributed only to make conqueſts, has menaced,

for forty years the political balance of power: — Sweden, Poland, Turkey, Pruſſia, and Germany, have experienced the effects of her enterpriſing ſpirit; — all the courts of Europe had experienced her inſolence before that tragedy, to which Catherine the Second, owed her elevation to the throne.

Since that period, from the Caſpian ſea, to the ſtreights of Gibraltar, there is no country of which Ruſſia has not diſturbed the tranquillity, or alarmed the precau-

tion:

tion: — every year has produced new designs, which arose evidently from one general plan, and their execution has found no other obstacle, than that which has arisen from the revenues of that empire, which were often stretched so far, as to need a temporary repose from the abuse of power, and the prodigality of government: but their exhausted revenues, have not created the security of other states; for, the hand of power, tired with the exertions of open violence, prepared for them a war not less dangerous, a war of negotiations:

ceaſing to become the prey of the ſword, they had ſtill to encounter her artifices, her intrigues, and negotiations; the interior of that empire, preſented a theatre of diviſions, of trouble, and diſorders, of which the ſprings and machines were fabricated at Peterſburg; at length, after having excited power againſt power, and intereſt againſt intereſt, in the neighbouring ſtates, the Empreſs of Ruſſia predominated alone in that vaſt anarchy, dictated laws through her Ambaſſadors, and

prevented

prevented all the combinations of resistance.

This portrait is engraved, from a faithful representation of the last twenty years history of the North, and of the Levant.—Europe has seen at one time, the Ottoman Porte menaced with an invasion, of which Asia herself, could not limit the consequences; her tributaries corrupted, her allies bribed, or intimidated, the Crimea enslaved, Sweden under the yoke of a faction, subservient to Russia, faction discomfited

without being altogether ſubdued, and reviving by the ſame protection which has plunged that kingdom, into a univerſal decline; Poland equally puniſhed from the defects of her conſtitution, devoured by Ruſſian troops, enſlaved, diſmembered, treated in every light as a Ruſſian province; Courland reduced to the loweſt ſtate; the Council of Denmark governed by the ſame influence; Pruſſia inſulated in the midſt of two vaſt empires, whoſe maſqued batteries could play, on the firſt alarm, upon the great Protector of

the

the Germanic liberties; the reſt of Europe, tranquil and indifferent, acting the part of a ſpectator, but not that of an arbiter.

In this criſis, the Ottoman Porte tired of buying peace with vaſt conceſſions, which enabled her enemies to compel her to make farther purchaſes, was rouſed from her lethargy, and her example awakened other powers, who participated ſecretly in her juſt reſentment; each of them, was anxious, and engaged in the hope, or apprehenſion, of what

they had to gain, or to loſe in this conflict, in which a moiety of Europe was engaged; and from Italy, to the verge of the Baltic, this great queſtion was diſcuſſed: —*what would be the conſequence of a war, which would ſpread its baneful effects, in limitting the overbearing power of Ruſſia?* — Where facts ſpeak, a chain of reaſoning is uſeleſs: hiſtory is here alone the torch of precaution — from the operation of the ſame cauſes, the ſame effects are produced; the events which have paſſed, prepare us for thoſe which are to come;

and

and hence the ſolution of the problem of the conſequences of the preſent war, demands the examination, of this original queſtion:— *what have been the permanent principles of the Ruſſian Court, and their effects upon the reign of the Second Catherine?*

To reſolve this queſtion, we muſt reject the ſophiſms of inconſiderate politicians, and the allegations of manifeſtos; truth here repoſes upon public notoriety.— Let us examine the chain of conſequences; the examination will

lead

lead us to conclusions, upon the due stability of the balance of power, which must affect these powers, who are most inattentive to their own interests.

In the period of the middle of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, those who had heard of the name of Russia, annexed no other idea to it, than that which is connected with a description of Tartars and of Cossacks;—but when a man of more energy than genius, formed to govern more by the impulse of his passions,

than

than by the ſlow empire of reaſon, a ſucceſsful warrior and a tyrannic legiſlator, had raiſed up this vaſt Coloſſus, which had been buried in a barbarous obſcurity, they ſprung at once, to a ſtation of preponderance, and of power before Europe could well recognize their character.

This new empire entered rapidly into the general ſyſtem, and immediately announced their predominating deſigns, with forces, proportioned to their extenſive ambition:—at their head appeared

a deſ-

a deſpot, abſolute maſter of the eighth part of the habitable globe, of opulent mines, of a hundred provinces, whoſe natives were inured to all extremities of rigors of climate, of hunger, of want; warlike from the ſavage habits of their laws; diſciplined by the ſevere preſſure of deſpotiſm; inſenſible of fear as they were inſenſible of miſery; obſtinate in combat; ſtrangers to fear and to deſertion; calculated for conqueſt and deſtruction, more than for defenſive war; and ſubſtituting fanaticiſm, for emulation and patriotiſm:—

 ſuch

ſuch were the people whom Peter the Great collected from the north of Europe, and from the northern limits of Germany, when he founded the capital of his empire at Peterſburg.

From that period the views, and exertions, of Ruſſia were enlarged; they were no longer bounded by incurſions into the Aſiatic countries: miſtreſs of a marine in the Baltic, her influence was an intereſting concern to all the maritime powers; her numerous and warlike armies

could

could eaſily invade Poland, Sweden, Denmark; deſolate that part of thoſe ſtates which ſhould oppoſe her, and ſecond the efforts of their enemies: from thence iſſues the neceſſary influence of the Court of Peterſburg among the ſouthern, and weſtern powers, who may engage in the hoſtilities of the North, or of Germany; aſſuredly the moſt penetrating politician could hardly believe, at the peace of Newſtadt, in 1721, that twenty-five years afterwards, a king of France ſhould give the daughter of the

firſt Peter, the title of the Mediatreſs of Europe, that a Ruſſian army, ſhould approach the Rhine at the requiſition of England, and that, in the ſubſequent wars, the Ruſſians ſhould pillage the capital of Brandenburg.

From the ſame cauſes the alliance of this court, was ſolicited according to exigencies: the other extremity of Europe ambitioned her alliance, and there were few political intereſts in which Ruſſia might not engage, ſince they weighed ſo conſiderably in the

political

political ſyſtem of the neighbouring ſtates, and in the general balance of Europe.

To theſe they united the advantage of being ſeldom liable to act upon the defenſive, to find weak ſtates placed as feeble barriers between them, and the neighbouring powers, ſtates either poor or divided: by evading the laws of nations, ſhe could maſter theſe obſtacles, and carry on her operations at a great diſtance from home.

Her

Her forces, her poſition, promiſed an aſcendant in negotiations, and her ſecurity gave a hardy boldneſs, in her arrangements with other ſtates: treaties became ſubordinate to her intereſts, her allies were changed every ten years, and no court formed the ſame coalition, of haughtineſs, and of artifice.

The laſt years of the firſt Elizabeth, ſubſtantiated that danger with which the liberties of Germany, and of the whole North, were menaced; an alliance which

resembled a conspiracy, was secretly formed by the Czarina, and the houses of Austria and Saxony, against the King of Prussia; France engaged in this confederacy, and penetrated into the western, while Russia invaded the northern, parts of Germany: — governed by the same faction, which annihilated the royal authority, and which shed the blood of the most illustrious of her families, Sweden, straying from her true interests, united herself with her natural enemies, and attacked Prussian Pomerania; while

Russia

Ruſſia invaded that kingdom.—It would be eaſy to foretel what would have been the conſequences, had they not been prevented by the genius of that hero whom they aſpired to ſubdue, and by the event which placed the third Peter, on the throne of his Aunt.

CHAP. II.

History of Peter the Third — and of Prince Iwan — Accession of Catherine the Second.

THIS Prince, who for some time, was only known in Europe, through the medium of the calumnies of his assassins — this Prince, born and educated in Germany, had all the inclinations of his native country, and a contempt for his new subjects. — Master of Holstein, a member consequently

conſequently of the German Empire, he added weight to the Ruſſian Crown, interfered in the German ſyſtem, in his own perſonal right, and fortified his influence with new alliances with the northern powers. Happily, this proſpect did not inſpire him with ambition; he was influenced only by a juſt reſentment againſt Denmark, and by his friendſhip for Frederick the Great. Policy, leagued with his moderation. For, the ruinous war which Elizabeth waged againſt

the King of Pruſſia, had coſt her three hundred thouſand men, and above thirty millions of roubles.

Though the third Peter, had no other title to public eſteem than that of ſaving a Prince, upon whoſe preſervation the maintenance of the political equilibre depended, his memory ſhould be regarded, and eſteemed. In ſome venal writings, the productions of fanciful hiſtorians, his attachment to the King of Pruſſia was ridiculed as the effect of enthuſiaſm,

and

and the puerile love of emulation: —but aſſuredly an enthuſiaſm for, and admiration of, the qualities of a man, who wrought ſuch prodigies of wiſdom and intrepidity, was very excuſable—and the heroiſm of friendſhip, is a rare quality amongſt kings.

This profound reſpect, and regard, for Frederick the Great, demonſtrated judgement and ſenſibility in the third Peter; the enemies of Pruſſia, at Peterſburg, had ſignalized themſelves, by the perſecution of the young Czar,

during the reign of Elizabeth.—This Prince had accordingly counteracted their meaſures, and his ſubſequent conduct, in ſupporting the King of Pruſſia, was perfectly conſiſtent.—This laſt monarch, was now in danger; the new Engliſh miniſter (Lord Bute) threatened him with deſertion, and his ſafety ſeemed to depend on his Turkiſh negotiations, on the capricious motions, of the Khan of the Tartars.—Let us ſee in what terms, the hero ſo renowned for his knowledge of the human character, has appreciated

the

the friendſhip, and generoſity of the third Peter.

" The King had cultivated the
" friendſhip of the Great Duke,
" when he was only ſovereign of
" Holſtein; and by a grateful
" ſenſibility, rare amongſt men,
" ſtill more uncommon amongſt
" princes, this Prince had pre-
" ſerved a grateful heart, of
" which he had even given
" proofs, in the ſeven years war;
" for, it was he that principally
" contributed to the retreat of
" the Mareſchal Apraxin, when
" he had worſted General Le-
wald,

" wald, and had retired towards
" Poland. — During theſe trou-
" bles, the Prince declined going
" to council, of which he was a
" member, that he might not
" participate in the meaſures,
" which he diſapproved, againſt
" Pruſſia. — The King did not
" keep up the ordinary inter-
" courſe of politicians with this
" Prince, but acted with that
" cordiality which friendſhip re-
" quires, and which forms its
" moſt amiable appendage; — the
" virtues of Peter, were an ex-
" ception to the rules of politi-
" cians,

" cians, happy would it have
" been, if they had made an ex-
" ception for him."

Such was the teſtimony, rendered to the memory of Peter the Third, twenty-five years after his cataſtrophe, by the firſt, and the moſt penetrating genius, with the coolneſs of age, and the calm of reflection, in a poſthumous work dedicated to juſtice, and to truth; the illuſtrious author could not be ſuppoſed, to paint the character of the late Emperor of Ruſſia, from the illuſions of friendſhip; and,

were

were ſuch a ſuppoſition poſſible, he would be contradicted by the well known authenticated, teſtimonies and hiſtories of that unfortunate Monarch.

The firſt misfortune of this Prince was to be adopted by Elizabeth, to mount one day

Sur ce Throne gliſſant, dont vingt Rois deſcendirent—

The ſecond, to have been led from Holſtein, to become a ſlave at Elizabeth's court; and his wife was the third misfortune. His Imperial Aunt, obtained the crown

by

by a revolution ſtained with injuſtice, and was always in dread of a counter-revolution; her nephew was a priſoner of ſtate. The cabinet was barred, and its councils were concealed; all intercourſe was ſuſpected with him; his German ſervants were deprived of the comforts of his converſation, and their attachment was a principle of diſgrace; ſurrounded by enemies, the right of approach was only given to ſpies, obſervers, and betrayers of his converſation—his matrimonial miſunderſtanding left the Prince without

domeſtic

domeſtic conſolation, and reviewing ſome troops at Orienabaum, became his only recreation.

His complaints gave riſe to an intrigue, which ſerves to lead us through the mazes of thoſe deplorable events, which ultimately deprived the Emperor of his ſcepter, and of his life.

The Chancellor Beſtuchef, the great confidant of Elizabeth, was the Grand Duke's avowed enemy; his inſolence in contriving morti-

mortifications, made him tremble at the prospect of a new reign; he formed the project of substituting the Prince Paul, son of Catherine the Second, under her regency, in the place of Peter the Third. Bestuchef presupposed the success of his plot, from a multitude of groundless calumnies against the Grand Duke, and the favourable reception of Elizabeth; and lastly, upon the intention of Catherine to deprive her husband of the crown, and to appropriate the regency to herself. It would be presumptuous to advance,

vance, that this Princeſs was concerned in this plot—but aſſuredly Beſtuchef muſt have believed it, for, he never would have encountered her reſiſtance. Elizabeth, doubtful at firſt, reſumed a more dignified conduct, and ſupported her nephew againſt the Chancellor; and an incautious expreſſion of the Empreſs Elizabeth is ſtill cited, "I know my nephew," ſaid ſhe one day, to the ſlanderers of the Prince, "I have nothing to fear "from a good heart, I am not "ſo well acquainted with my "niece."

Beſtu-

Beſtuchef, afterwards diſgraced by Elizabeth, was excepted out of the amneſty, upon the acceſſion of the third Peter; but upon the indulgence of Catherine, he was recalled from exile.

The preceding facts, which repoſe upon the authority of authentic hiſtorians, deſcribe the firſt clouds of that tempeſt, in which the third Peter was involved; prudence could alone preſerve him from the rocks, and breakers through which he paſſed; —but amongſt his other virtues,

he found one, namely, confidence, which caufed his deftruction.

Notwithftanding the reproaches juftly caft upon that monarch, from the excefs of his good qualities, fpite of the blame with which he is attacked, upon the unfortunate career of his debaucheries, and of the flanders which hatred and remorfe have attached to his memory, few princes have began to reign with more wifdom; his firft public actions expiated the defects of many preceding years,

and

and they had only ſix months duration.

Siberia, and the ſtate priſons, were filled with diſtinguiſhed captives, victims of the favourites, and miniſters of Elizabeth—the Emperor redreſſed their wrongs—the illuſtrious Munich was recalled, and reinſtated — Biron, Leſtock, and ſome of whom had offended him in the late reign, were reſtored to liberty, by a prince who extended his clemency to the inſolent favourites of his Aunt—the firſt qualities of his government were juſtice and clemency—and

his magnanimity to ſome Pruſſian officers, whom the fortune of war had deprived of liberty, and who groaned in extreme ſervitude, is too well known to be recorded.

The commencement of his reign promiſed zeal for promoting order, and diſcovered application, vigilance, and activity—he was early at the ſenate, at the different offices, and ſet an example of induſtry, by his ſuperintendance in various departments: the firſt Peter was his model, and his plans formed the chart of his

 legiſla-

legiſlation — to him Ruſſia owes the wiſeſt ordinances, which have decorated that government.

Not ſatisfied with limiting the deſpotiſm of his officers, he abridged his own power, by abolifhing the ſecret council of chancery, a ſtate inquiſition, which, upon the leaſt ſuſpicion, impriſoned, tortured, or executed, natives, and ſtrangers. He was a warm friend to toleration; and he framed that memorable decree, which enfranchiſed the nobles from compulſive ſervice, and per-

mitted them to travel, without the royal permiſſion.

Precipitation, it is true, accompanied ſome of theſe ſalutary innovations; particularly thoſe relating to the clergy. The ſecularization of Monks, was adopted from the deſign of Peter the Great. The Emperor ſecured to the regular clergy competent ſtipends, from their immence revenues; and with the ſurplus he founded ſchools, and military hoſpitals.—Reaſon and policy approved theſe meaſures, and the reforma-

reformation of ſuperſtitious worſhip; but theſe haſty changes ſhocked the cuſtoms and manners of the country; the ſtrong hand of the firſt Peter could ſcarcely have effected their execution; but the Emperor accelerated theſe reforms, without reflecting, that they gave pretext to the deſigning, to render his government unpopular.

The regiments of Iſmailoff and Preobrazinſki, formed a body of guards, in barracks in Peterſburg, licentious and ill diſciplined, their

want of ſubordination enervated their loyalty; and in former revolutions, they were ſold to the higheſt purchaſer. Peter the Third conceived, that a rigorous diſcipline would ſecure their obedience, and prevent the diſorders of a body ſo badly organized, he introduced the Pruſſian diſcipline, modelled them after his Holſtein guards, and ſecured order by ſeverity: had this diſcipline been firmly eſtabliſhed, their fidelity would have been ſecured; corruption is difficult in a corps inured to the daily detail of their

duty;

duty; but the reformation was of neceſſity entruſted to German, in preference to Ruſſian, officers. Theſe ſtrangers were conſidered as uſurpers; their favour became the object of ridicule, and the national troops were inſtigated to revolt, by the ignorant pride of being offended, at foreign inſtruction.

When we reflect, that many of theſe wiſe regulations were in that ſhort period of ſix months, which put a period to the reign

of

of their author, we are affected by pity, and with horror.

Some of these innovations, deserved public gratitude, others, the reproach of precipitation—though a sovereign despot, this Prince excelled in acts of bounty, and of justice. His enterprises against Denmark, were more natural, and less pernicious, than the war against Prussia, fostered by the personal hatred of Elizabeth, and her minister. The private life of Peter, it is true, was disfigured by the excesses of the

table,

table, which ultimately might have rendered him contemptible; but where is the king, or the individual, whose infirmities are not relieved by some good qualities?—Does not equity hold the balance, of good, and of bad qualities?—If the virtues and defects of the Emperor were weighed, who is there could justify his dethronement, and his death? Is the least equality visible, between the discontents he produced, and his unfortunate exit. A warm friend, a good father, an indulgent husband, but too easy, too confident,

and

and too open to thoſe traitors, upon whom his favours were laviſhed; at the end of ſix months, he experienced a fate, which ten years ſtained with crimes, and with tyranny, could have ſcarcely juſtified.

His unchangeable ſecurity, annihilates all thoſe imputations which have burthened his memory; a conſpiracy was ſecretly projected, of which he rejected the leaſt ſuſpicion.—the loyal, trembled for his ſafety—clandeſtine aſſemblies directed by the partizans

tizans of the Empreſs, and their deſigns upon the Crown. The Prince George of Holſtein, and other clear-ſighted men, perceived his danger—confidential emiſſaries daily aggravated the conduct of Peter, poiſoned the public diſcourſe, and prepared the way for a revolution:—the Emperor alone remained fearleſs — ſolicited by diſcoveries, he rejected them as calumnies. Amongſt thoſe who wiſhed to awaken him from his lethargy, was the King of Pruſſia. That wiſe, and penetrating monarch, has preſerved an abridge-

ment

ment of the letter, and the Emperor's anſwer; and both caſt a great light upon the true cauſe of this revolution.

" The friendſhip of Frederick
" the Second, his eſteem, as
" well as gratitude, his opinion
" of the excellent qualities of the
" third Peter, induced him to
" write, and to reveal theſe myſ-
" teries. He requeſted that his
" coronation might take place at
" Moſcow, and that his perſon
" might thereby be rendered ſa-
" cred, in the eyes of the nation.

" He

"He mentioned the revolutions, "in Ruſſia, ſince the reign of "Peter the Great; but touched "them lightly, and finiſhed with "conjuring that the Emperor "would take proper precautions "for his perſonal ſafety."

This letter made no impreſſion upon the Emperor—he anſwered it in theſe terms: "Touching "the intereſt you expreſs for my "ſafety, I requeſt you will reſt "contented. I am called the "father of my ſoldiers — they "prefer a male to a female go-

"vernment:

" vernment: I walk alone con-
" ſtantly, in Peterſburg—if any
" miſchief is meditated, it would
" have been effected long ſince;
" but I am a general benefactor,
" I repoſe myſelf on the protec-
" tion of Heaven, truſting to that,
" I have nothing to fear."

Notwithſtanding this anſwer, the King of Pruſſia continued to inform Peter the Third of his danger. Meſſieurs Goltz and Schewrin has orders to converſe with him on this ſubject, in their audiences; but it was to no pur-

poſe

poſe that they told him, that while the cuſtoms of Ruſſia prevailed, the Sovereign could not take too many precautions :—at laſt the king told them, "My "friends, ſay no more upon that "diſagreeable ſubject."

Aſſuredly this was the language of candour, and it proves how averſe the Emperor was to any of theſe bad deſigns, which were attributed to him, to colour the fatal conſpiracy againſt his freedom, and his life. They knew but little of the human heart,

and ſtill leſs of an open character, which never diſguiſed his thoughts, who do not find in the tranquillity of his conſcience, the ſecret of his ſecurity.—Had Peter deſigned to impriſon his wife, and his ſucceſſor, her ſon, he could have watched all the motions of their partizans; he would have liſtened to the ſuſpicions of his faithful ſervants, the admonitions of his friend, the Pruſſian monarch; the council he liſtened to, with ſuch attention, would have produced explanation, and not that ſimple

anſwer,

anſwer, "I am a general bene-
"factor, and therefore I have
"nothing to fear."

It is remarkable, that the firſt deſign, was to adopt the before-mentioned project of the Chancellor Beſtuchef, which was to declare the young Duke to be Emperor, under the regency of his mother: this ſcheme was not a new plan of the Czarina's partizans; and the conſideration of its forming the baſe of a new plot againſt the Emperor, ſhewed it had long been in contemplation, and was an art-

ful contrivance — they could not prevent his ſucceſſion; but they intended to dethrone him, by a continuation of the ſame machinations.

This ſyſtem, however, had the objections of a minority; and if a regency would have been ſhaken upon the firſt popular diſcontent, and upon his majority, the government of the Empreſs would terminate — and who could not anſwer that ſhe might not experience the fate of her huſband. It was, therefore, reſolved to de-

throne

throne the father and the ſon, and to conſummate their ambitious views, by placing this uncertain crown upon the head of the Empreſs.

Never was there a bolder project; but fortune favoured their audaciouſneſs. Peter was on the wing for Holſtein, and the conſpirators choſe the period of his abſence, to poſſeſs the capital. Had this ſucceeded, Ruſſia would have had two ſovereigns, in Germany and in Peterſburg, with all the convulſions attendant upon

divided ſway. While the Czar lived, Catherine could not expect a tranquil moment—but it ſeems trivial circumſtances accelerated the execution, aggravated the cataſtrophe, and ſecured ſucceſs.

To his laſt day, even to his laſt hour, Peter preſerved his magnanimous, fatal ſecurity, and confidence; his Ruſſian guards were corrupted by Orlof, and Rozamouſki; Catherine was miſtreſs of the Capital, and his officers were ſeduced by ſlanders againſt their ſovereign. Already had the

conſpi-

conſpirators impiouſly counteract-
ed their fidelity, by ſwearing and
binding themſelves in the moſt
ſolemn manner, to commit high
treaſon—and the Archbiſhop of
Novogorod, that fanatic incen-
diary, whom the clemency of
Peter had pardoned, preſided in
the ſolemnization of this cere-
mony, under the auſpices of the
Empreſs. At length the Empe-
ror's friends were arreſted, and
the people were deceived by art-
ful reports, that the Prince had
died by a fall from his horſe, be-

fore Peter ſuſpected the enterprize at Peterſburg.

He was then at the Orienabaum. Spite of the baſeneſs and ſervile infidelity of many nobles, of military and civil officers, he had ſtill ſome reſolute friends:—the Chancellor of Woronzof, the virtuous Mareſchal Munich, and his faithful Holſtein troops—affairs were not yet deſperate—the intrepid Munich counciled Peter to march directly to Peterſburg, at the head of his German troops:—"I ſhall precede you," ſaid the generous

generous veteran, " and my dead " body ſhall be a rampart to " your ſacred perſon." Poſſibly ſuch a reſolution would have cruſhed the conſpirators; — the ſame ſervile ſpirit which had proſtrated the nobles, the people, and the ſoldiery, would have reduced them to their lawful ſovereign, marching to vindicate his crown with his ſword, and with the abilities of Munich.

But alas! irreſolution ſuperſeded courage; not that Peter wanted ſpirit, but he was diſtract-

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ed by diſcordant councils—in his train were emiſſaries of the Empreſs, bathing the hands of this Prince with deceitful tears, affecting to repreſent the dangers he incurred, and inviting him to the Empreſs, and deprecating reſiſtance. This perfidy accompliſhed what treachery had commenced; and thus Peter, ſurrounded by traitors, was entangled in their ſnares, and a prey to uncertainty, when every moment was precious, and called for deciſion.

Europe

Europe, and poſterity, will never forget the cruel fate of this monarch, in the flower of his age—dragged into captivity, and expiring in the ferocious hands of his wife, and his own confidents. The humane compaſſionated his misfortunes; and none that were inſenſible of his ſufferings, ſave only thoſe from whom he had a claim to ſuccour, and to conſolation.

On the contrary, outrages of every kind were offered to him: by delivering himſelf up volun-

tarily

tarily to her, who, during fourteen years, had the honour to be the partner of his bed, it ſeemed he was protected, by all that is moſt ſacred amongſt men. His perſon, committed to the diſcretion of the Empreſs, became a depoſit, upon which it was no longer permited to form attacks—it neither belonged to his enemies, by the rights of war, nor by that of the laws; and from the moment Peter had ſurrendered, without being compulſion, every abode of Catherine ſhould have been an inviolable aſylum for him:—alas!

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this illuſion, by which he had been dazzled, was of a ſhort duration.

He had been defamed by a manifeſto of June the twenty-eighth ;—hardly arrived at Peterhof, he became a priſoner, and felt the humiliation of being ſecretly viſited by Count Panin, that frivolous and verſatile miniſter, loaded with praiſes by hireling gazetteers—that Panin, who had dared to dictate to his maſter, and benefactor, to a ſovereign, who was a priſoner, an act of abdication,

dication, and of dishonour; an act conceived in the most humiliating expressions — that Panin, at fine, who forced the descendant of Peter the First, to take his oath in the presence of the Almighty, and renounce his crown, to sign with his own hand such a monument of audaciousness, and infamy.

Notwithstanding this abdication, which served as a new title for preserving his life, and liberty, the Emperor, that very night, was confined in the castle

of

of Robſcha. Whilſt her huſband entered this tomb, the Empreſs ſurpriſed Peterſburg, with the noiſe and buſtle of a triumphal entry.

But this pageant was not ſufficient, to ſtifle the ſenſibility of the multitude; diſloyalty, in a vaſt number of them, was rapidly ſucceeded by remorſe, and by compaſſion. The people, who are always good, when left to their natural impulſe, were ſhocked at hearing that their ſovereign had juſt paſſed from a throne, into the

the horrors of an eternal prison. The soldiery manifested their emotions, every one was affected by the remembrance of Peter's virtues, and his faults were forgotten, as the displeasure hourly increased; the Empress was threatened with a frightful reverse..... But let us draw a veil over this melancholy scene, which put an end to his inquietudes; let us not repeat, that the seventh day of his captivity, Peter the Third was no more; that he contended for his unhappy life, with the ferocious courtiers who penetrated into

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the fortreſs; that the ſcreams of his convulſive agonies were heard; that two days after, ſome ſtrangers ſaw the walls ſtained with the Emperor's blood; and that one of the principal performers in this tragedy, had been purſued for years, by the idea of his expiring ſovereign, and exhibited a ſhocking ſpectacle in Peterſburg, of remorſe, and of inſanity.

At the firſt news of this cataſtrophe, Europe, though habituated to the bloody revolutions, which, for forty years, gave maſ-

ters to Ruſſia, ſhewed leſs ſurpriſe, than compaſſion: public opinion was favourable to the victim. In order to colour the ſacrifice, fictitious reports were circulated; ſiniſter projects were imputed to Peter the Third, againſt which, the Empreſs ſhould have guarded herſelf;—" For," according to the remark of a celebrated writer, " nothing is ſo " eaſy as to ſuppoſe crimes in " thoſe, who are already purſued, " by the hatred of a victorious " party.

This

This is not the time to anticipate the revelations of Hiſtory; but there is no impropriety in preſenting beforehand the juſtice of them, by obſerving how ridiculous thoſe pretences were, with which the perſecutors of Peter the Third, amuſed the credulity of the people.

In the manifeſto of June the 28th, this Prince is accuſed *of having ſhaken the foundations of the Greek church, of the eſtabliſhed religion; and of having given room to apprehend that another would be*

introduced in its ſtead: the moſt frantic fanaticiſm could only have dictated ſuch a charge. Peter had been tolerant; he authoriſed a Lutheran chapel at Orienabaum, for the uſe of his German troops; ſurly it cannot be pretended, that he ſhould have compelled his ſoldiers, from Holſtein, to follow, like himſelf, the rites and liturgy of the Greek church. His toleration was the conſequence of the progreſs of reaſon, of the example of all the wiſe Princes of his time. When Joſeph the Second had granted the Proteſtant congre-

gations

gations in his dominions, the liberty of worſhip; none of his relations thought of contending with him for the Empire, under pretence that he ſhook the prevailing faith. This faith has no affinity with ſecularizing monaſteries, or diminiſhing the number of images, which the vulgar had worſhipped. Theſe reformations belong to religious diſcipline, and are not attempts againſt the dogmas of the eſtabliſhed religion. Is it for the intereſt of the god of peace and juſtice, to dethrone, to impriſon, to put to death, the le-

gitimate chief of the ſtate? In fine, was it conſiſtent for the tolerant Catherine, to render herſelf the interpreter, the avenger of ſome zealots' reſentment, to ſacrifice the duties of affinity, and of the throne to popular fanaticiſm?

The ſecond grievance, alledged in the manifeſto, is not leſs ludicrous. It is pretended that the glory of Ruſſia has been, as it were, *trampled upon by the peace, lately concluded with its greateſt enemy.* Neither the Ruſſian go-

vernment, nor the nation, had the leaſt reaſon to look upon the King of Pruſſia as their greateſt enemy; the two powers had no grounds of diſpute—Elizabeth's perſonal rancour, and the artifices of a perverſe miniſter, who had been juſtly puniſhed, had occaſioned the war; there would have been glory in putting an end to it, rather than in perſiſting in ſpilling human blood, and waſting the treaſures of the ſtate, when her intereſts were not concerned: had not this truth been almoſt ſelf-evident, Catherine herſelf would

not have made it clear, by her ſubſequent conduct to this Prince, who had been raſhly called the greateſt enemy to *Ruſſia*.

It is plain, then, that theſe reproaches are only evaſions contrived by thoſe, who are ſorry for having no legitimate excuſe. No ſovereign could be, for four and twenty hours, ſure of his crown, if it depended on accuſations of that kind. It is true, that to theſe frivolous allegations, more ſerious ones were added by artful rumours, particularly of a plot

formed

formed by the Emperor, againſt Catherine's liberty, and that of her ſon. But had this, and other ſimilar deſigns exiſted, why were they not expoſed in this accuſatory manifeſto? Why were not theſe legitimate complaints given, as a plea to juſtify ſuch violent meaſures? Why has recourſe been had to the danger of orthodoxy, to the peace with Pruſſia? Why have the dangers of religion, and the peace with Pruſſia been ſtarted, when it was poſſible to gain the good opinions of the people, by diſcloſing a conſpiracy

both

both againſt the partner of the throne, and his ſucceſſor? If, at the moment of fixing the public opinion, theſe chimerical attempts had been unnoticed, is it not probable, that they were contrived afterwards, in order to ſilence the clamours of the public?

Beſides, many notorious facts deſtroy theſe aſſertions, of which no admiſſible proof has ever been produced. It is known, that at the time of ſetting out for Holſtein, Peter had named the Empreſs regent during his abſence.

Who

Who can believe, that he thus trusted the government of his capital, the administration of his empire, to a Princess whom he intended to arrest? It would be an idle task to expatiate upon these irreconcileable ideas.

But in the fortress of Schlusselbourg, Peter, as was reported, had an apartment constructed seemingly for an illustrious person, who was reported to be the Empress. The fact is certain, that an apartment was constructed, but the inference is erroneous.

There

There is an anecdote which unravels this myſterious incident; the learned and accurate Buſching, upon his return from Ruſſia, had publiſhed this ſecret; he had been apprized of it by General Korff, who had accompanied Peter III. to Schluſſelbourg; particular informations have confirmed the truth, and diſcovered ſome circumſtances of this ſtory, which we ſhall here tranſcribe.

In March, 1762, Peter III., accompanied by General Korff, and Mr. Goudewitz, repaired, incognito,

cognito, to Schlusselbourg, where Elizabeth, in 1756, had caused the unfortunate Prince Iwan to be transferred, who had a right to the throne, by the Empress Ann, Duchess of Courland, his Aunt.

He was proclaimed Emperor in 1740, when in his cradle; he was deposed by Elizabeth in 1741; he was imprisoned and assassinated in 1764. Peter was affected at seeing the manner in which this prisoner was treated: an arched room, twenty feet

square,

ſquare, formed his habitation; a truckle bed, with a table and a few chairs, were all his furniture; hardly a faint light pervaded this ſorrowful dwelling; by degrees, the Prince was weaned of moſt of the comforts beſtowed upon him, before the former years of his captivity. In his converſation with the Emperor, he inveighed againſt the Grand Duke and his conſort, ſtyling them the uſurpers of his crown. "I ſhall re-" gain it," added he, "and will" have them both beheaded." Peter, leſs affected by this diſ-

courſe,

courſe, than the deplorable condition of the Prince, whoſe ſenſes were affected, and bore in every reſpect a ſtamp of imbecility, aſſured him that the Grand Duke did not bear him any ill will, and would be much concerned at his ſituation, if he were apprized of it.—" I approach his " perſon very often," added he, " and if you wiſh for an alleviation of your impriſonment, I " promiſe to obtain it for you." The Prince anſwered, with a ſigh, that " one day he had been " permitted to come down into

" the

" the inner court of the fortreſs,
" he had looked at the ſky, and
" breathed a pure air; it is,"
added he, " the moſt raviſhing
" pleaſure I have ever enjoyed;
" and if the Grand Duke be not
" an enemy to me, tell him, I
" pray you, that I beg he would
" grant it to me very often."
Peter could not help melting into
tears, and from that moment re-
ſolved to ſet Iwan at liberty: ſuch
was likewiſe the ſentiment of
Prince George of Holſtein, the
Emperor's uncle; but the inſa-
nity of the priſoner having been
proved,

proved, Peter determind to have a convenient houſe built in the fortreſs for him, with a terrace, that he might take a walk every day. Whilſt that building was conſtructing, Iwan was transferred to Kexholm, at the other extremity of the lake Ladoga. Three weeks after, the Emperor was dethroned; and as if this were a conſequence of the fear with which the new building, at Schluſſelbourg, had inſpired his enemies, he periſhed a victim of his humane and generous ſentiments.

Iwan ſurvived him only two years: a new myſterious tragedy put an end, on the 5th of July, 1764, to the alarms which this Prince, though fettered, had created. It is well known that he had been aſſaſſinated by his own guards; and that after ſuch a crime, the only blood ſpilt upon a ſcaffold at Peterſburg, was that of Lieutenant-general Mirovitch, who had been arraigned for attempting to defend the life of a grand nephew to Peter the Great.

Such were the auſpices under which the new Empreſs began to reign—the circumſtances of her elevation determined her eagerneſs for glory. She was conſcious ſhe ſhould keep the Ruſſians conſtantly employed, fix their attention upon enterprizes and conqueſts, and foreign ſway; to ſtrengthen her power at home.

It has been mentioned, that the depoſition of Peter, and the Empreſs's manifeſto, were ſolely founded upon his plans and connections with Pruſſia; but theſe,

truly patriotic plans, though previouſly condemned by her, have all been executed by Catherine II.; and it is to them this Princeſs is indebted for the moſt ſolid part of her glory. On the other ſide, upon the Emperor's aſhes, was laid the foundation of a cloſe connection with the King of Pruſſia, who before had been declared the natural enemy of Ruſſia.

Uncertain of the meaſures Frederick the Great would take, being afraid leſt he ſhould employ againſt herſelf the corps that,

under Mr. de Czernichef, had joined the Pruſſians, ſhe haſtily recalled her troops; but they remained inactive; and as ſoon as the Empreſs had ſecured her authority, ſhe adopted Peter the Third's policy, ſoothed Pruſſia, and ſoon attached herſelf to her, by a defenſive alliance.

Peter had done ſo through principle; Catherine did it in order to prepare enterprizes conformable to her genius and ſituation, to the ambition of the minions who ſurrounded her perſon: having form-

ed the plan of impoſing her laws upon her neighbours, it was important for her to keep fair with the power that could aſſiſt them. Denmark was almoſt gained over, Sweden was governed by a faction corrupted by Ruſſia; Poland was deprived of the moſt ſolemn act of ſovereignty, that of electing a king; in fine, Courland did no longer exiſt, but to be a prey to the caprice of the councils of Peterſburg.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Usurpation of the Duchy of Courland.

THE Duchy of Courland and Semi-gallia, abounding in corn, rich from its naval stores, containing fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants, governed by a warlike nobility, possessing on the Baltic two advantageous ports, forms, by its situation, an important barrier between the new

dominions of the Ruſſian empire, Pruſſia, and Poland. Since the Swedes have loſt Livonia, Courland, in time of war, becomes neceſſary to ſupply them with proviſions. In that reſpect, the neighbourhood of Peterſburg muſt be very dangerous to Courland, which is thereby rendered exceedingly uſeful to Ruſſia, in caſes of neceſſity. It has been, for theſe fifty years, treated like a Moſcovite province; but the affronts have been multiplied, and the yoke made heavier under the reign of Catherine II.

When

When ſhe ſeized upon the reigns of government, the Prince Charles of Saxony, the ſecond ſon of Auguſt III., poſſeſſed Courland. He had in his favour the free choice of the ſtates, the free homage of the nobility, the ſolemn inveſtiture of the king, and the republic of Poland, of which Courland is a fief. Having been inſtalled in 1759, and acknowledged by all the powers, he united every right of lawful poſſeſſion.

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This poſſeſſion did not prevent the Empreſs of Ruſſia, in 1762, affixing her ſeal upon the property of the domain of Courland, and exerciſing a poſitive act of ſovereignty. She wanted a Duke of her own creation, and devoted to her intereſts—to whom did ſhe give the preference?—to that Erneſt John Biren, declared guilty of high treaſon by Elizabeth, baniſhed to Siberia, dead in law, and ſo ſentenced by a decree of the ſtates of Courland. Though recalled, it is true, ſince Elizabeth's death, his degradation did

no

no longer permit her to promote him again to an elective ſovereignty, which, even in its origin, had never been lawful; for, Biren had evaded the perſonal homage he owed the republic of Poland, and the neglect of which made his inveſtiture void.

If, however, Biren's pretenſions were leſs warrantable, there exiſted only one competent judge of it, the Sovereign. It belonged to Poland to decide upon her vaſſal's reclamation; Auguſt the Third was ſo moderate as to refer this

exami-

examination to the Empreſs's decision.

Inſtead of uſing negotiations, the Empreſs forced the inclination of the inhabitants of Courland from the arbitration of their legitimate ſovereign from Poland, the Lord Paramount of this fief. At firſt emiſſaries attempted to corrupt the loyalty of the nobles, and to ſtir them up againſt the Duke Charles. The expedients having failed, ſtrange outrages were tried —the Duke lived at Mittau; he was expelled from that place.—

The

The moſt attrocious indignities, preceded ſuch a violation of the right of nations, of the right of ſovereigns, of reſpect, and decency. M. de Simolin, a native of Courland, and then miniſter of the Ruſſian cabinet, and of its tyranny, at Mittau, formed the plan of famiſhing the Prince Charles, and he put it into execution; he began with ſeizing and ſequeſtering the revenues of the demeſnes; aftewards, the archives were carried away; at length, Ruſſian guards cloſed the magazines of wood, of ſtraw, and of

oats,

oats, the brewhouſe, cellars, ſtore-houſes, fountains, and even the poultry yard of his Royal Highneſs. This execution of a new kind was followed by acts equally outrageous:—Biren was then introduced into Mittau, and inſtalled by M. de Simolin's ſoldiers. That agent of the Czarina treated the magiſtrates of Mittau, the States, the King of Poland's deputies, like his ſervants:— but the Prince Charles perſiſted to remain in Courland; Count Brown, Governor of Livonia, ſent him orders that he ſhould *leave the country,*

for,

for, ſuch was the Empreſs's pleaſure. This haughty command was effected, in ſpite of the lawful ſovereign ſtill reſiſting to the laſt; and thus was treated, in his own dominions, in the preſence of an independent nation, a Prince, the ſon and vaſſal to the King of Poland, an ally of Ruſſia.

Of that former encroachment upon the liberties of Courland, and the rights of Poland, the compleat reduction of the Duchy was the conſequence. Ten thouſand Ruſſians, after forcing them

them to receive a king, elected at Petersburg, compelled them to secure Ernest John Biren's son, the investiture of Courland. Peter, the new Duke, was permitted to preserve his dignity, but on condition that he should submit to the orders, and yield to the Extorsions of the Empress's minions:—the first employments of Courland were conferred upon their creatures, and claims were silenced; those were dismissed, who could not be seduced; those were seduced, who, through an apparent good charac-

ter,

ter, were likely to form an oppo-
ſition. Among the latter, was
the Chamberlain Howen, diſtin-
guiſhed for his capacity and cou-
rage; having defended, at Warſaw,
the rights of his native country
againſt the Ruſſian deſpotiſm, he
was ſeized, carried off, and ſent
to Siberia; and he was under the
neceſſity of chooſing either the
ſacrifice of his patriotiſm, or that
of his liberty: but he ſtooped to
wear the common chain, govern-
ed Courland in the name of the
Empreſs, and was promoted to the
dignity of Bourgrave. Marſhal

Klopman, his predeceſſor in authority, had adopted the ſame condeſcenſion. Under the influence of thoſe tools of the Empreſs, the Duke's authority has been, in fact, annihilated — the ſuffrages of the ſtates have been bought publicly — vexations of every kind, alienations, political robberies, have been legalized. At the voice of the Ruſſian miniſter at Mittau, Courland narrowed her limits, ſuffered her own ſubjects, reclaimed as Ruſſians, to be carried away, ſubjected her policy to the reſcripts of the

Empreſs's councils. More than once, the Duke, reduced to the title of his principality, ſaw himſelf forced to buy its preſervation. Every murmur he riſked, was anſwered by a menace; *and the menace was* immediately followed by an extortion. At laſt, fatigued with ſo expenſive a tutelage, he ſought for protectors leſs exacting—The Empreſs had treated him like a rebel. Prudence had ſuggeſted to him an eſcape; he took refuge at Berlin; ſecured part of his treaſure there, and meditated a plan of abdication.

At the firſt indication of ſuch a deſign, which was in favour of one of the Princes of Virtemberg, engaged in the ſervice of Pruſſia, as it was imagined, the Empreſs addreſſed a ſtrong admonition to the States of Courland, and threatened them with her indignation, if they preſumed to concur in this opinion. Thus, after having deſpoiled the reigning Duke of his authority, ſhe inſiſted he ſhould keep the ſhadow of it—ſhe forbade Courland to uſe her ſovereign right of chooſing a ſucceſſor to the Duchy. Thus Ruſſia declared

to

to all Europe, that ſhe had no reſpect, no regard, due by ſovereigns to their mutual independence; that for her ſake, all thoſe rights ſhould be effaced which are the baſis of ſociety; that ſhe laid an undeniable claim to the dictatorſhip over ſuch ſtates as were placed by Providence in her neighbourhood.

Courland, inſenſible from fear or corruption, had ſuffered this outrage — the Duke returned to Mittau—the criſis was favourable to men, rouſed by a juſt ſenſe of

public injury—the court of Berlin ſtill perceives the effect of Ruſſian influence in Courland, which extends to the frontiers of Poland. The true intereſt of this country would have aided her deſigns, if ſhe had power to aid her with ſucceſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Affairs of Poland—Nomination of Staniſlaus the Third by Ruſſia.

THE Empreſs had hardly dethroned one ſovereign, before ſhe undertook to create another in Poland. At the death of Auguſtus the Third, probably the court of Peterſburg did not comprehend all the ſchemes at firſt view which were neceſſary to carry this plan into execution,

but which were produced and diſcloſed by degrees. The preſent policy proceeded no farther than to reduce Sweden to inactivity, and thereby to exerciſe a deciſive influence, to form and to excite factions one againſt the other, and to facilitate that work of Count Panin, the northern league, which might certainly have inſured to Ruſſia a ſupremacy over all the adjoining countries.

The concurrence of Pruſſia was neceſſary for the completion of this plan; it was the intereſt

of

of that king to detach Ruſſia from Vienna—he was adverſe to the Houſe of Saxony, and to their pretenſions to Poland. Since the peace, he had ſkilfully engaged the Empreſs and Count Panin in his intereſts, and had negotiated a treaty at Peterſburg. Catherine, determined to have the aſcendant in Poland, formed an alliance with Pruſſia, to counterbalance the Saxon, Auſtrian, and French oppoſition. In January, 1764, the two courts ſigned a defenſive alliance. Frederick himſelf informs us, that

they

they engaged to prevent the Crown becoming hereditary in Poland; to name a Piaſt or Protector, namely, Staniſlaus Poniatouſki, Stolnick or governor of Lithuania, to protect the Diſſidents, or in juſter terms, to arm them againſt the Commonwealth.

The court of Peterſburg was the party principally intereſted in this plan, to whom the advantage would belong—Pruſſia had only a collateral intereſt, namely, that of favouring the deſign of her ally.

The

The force and energy of the beſt hiſtorian cannot deſcribe the execution and the horrible conſequences of this enterprize; they are the diſgrace of this century—the moſt unprincipled politician could hardly premeditate a ſyſtem of violence and oppreſſion ſimilar to that under which Poland has groaned for ten ſucceſſive years.

Waving the criminations of partizans, events of public notoriety afford the moſt ample teſtimony.

To

To exclude all foreign candidates from an elective ſovereignty, was a glaring violation of the conſtitution of an independant country, which could alone claim the diſpoſition of its crown; but the ſole fiat of Ruſſia ſuperſeded every other conſideration; and a foreign Prince, who might have force or ability to defend the republic, could not be convenient for the deſigns of Ruſſia.

A ſovereign who ſhould be her nominee, and not the choice of his countrymen, was neceſſary—

A Rad-

A Radzivil, a Potocki—any noble poſſeſſed of reputation, of independance, would not have become a royal pageant, dependant upon a foreign Prince.

The King which ſhe wanted, was one of a mild and flexible character; inſulated, unconnected, without any relation or alliance with any other power in Europe—the legality of whoſe election ſhould render him obnoxious to the people, to a hoſt of enemies, and conſequently

forced

forced to rely upon that power and protection to which he had owed his elevation.

All these qualifications appeared in the character of Stanislaus the Third — a good disposition, improved by education, those amiable qualities which ingratiate individuals, and gain general regard and esteem. His poverty, his youth, his connections with Russia, the marked favour of the Empress, would have prevented his succession to this painful pre-eminence. This election could

never

never be due to free ſuffrages; but to a violation of national privileges. This prince, it is preſumed, hoped to regain public affection by time; but Ruſſian policy created a laſting alienation.

Upon the convention of the Diet, ten thouſand Ruſſians entered Warſaw, while the Pruſſians menaced the frontiers of the Republic. The diſtricts which choſe members, were filled by ſoldiers, who compelled the nomination of Ruſſian partizans — the capital was ſoon ſurrounded

by

by Coſſacks, who inveſted the Diet—their chamber was attacked — one of their members was arreſted, and attacked, ſword in hand, in this ſanctuary of ſovereign power, in the preſence of the Preſident or Marechale of the Diet, who left the aſſembly with the emblem of his office, accompanied by many illuſtrious ſenators, and other patriotic members, proteſting againſt theſe violations of the laws of nations, and the liberty of Poland. Retiring into the provinces, they were followed by the Ruſſians, who ſeized ſome

who

who refiſted, proſcribed others, and declared Prince Radzivil an enemy to his country—theſe deſpotic proceedings were followed by breaches and innovations in the conſtitution. The four regiments of guards, under the King's authority, united with the Ruſſian troops to interrupt the freedom of election—this tumultuous aſſembly, influenced by fear, elected and crowned Staniſlaus. Exile or ſubmiſſion was the lot of his opponents, while Ruſſia meditated new outrages.

It cannot be denied, that in many antecedent interregnums, recommendations, power, the violence of party, had favoured one or the other of the candidates; but a military force, and foreign troops, had never, before this, created a king in a free country, in the midſt of his equals—of the lawful electors—of a nation thus influenced in her choice; nor could Voltaire, or other flatterers, juſtify this proceeding by precedent. —all former elections had been as peaceable as could be ſuppoſed, where numerous, independent,

and ſanguine partizans were convened—tranſitory tumults are not civil wars. Thus Henry of Valois, Ladiſlas the Fourth, Caſimir, and Sobieſki, had been elected. In diviſions, or in double returns, or conteſted elections, as in the caſes of Stephen Battori, Sigiſmond the Third, the Emperor Maximilian, a Poloneſe party had given the law—public liberty was not undermined, and troops never entered the diſtrict of election; no competitor had forced a nomination by his armies, though they might have afterwards ſup-

ported his election. Charles the Twelfth had, it is true, dethroned a King of Poland by war; but Auguſtus had provoked the indignation of the Alexander of the North. The active partizan of the Czar loſt his crown by the fortune of that war, in which his imprudence had engaged the republic.

Ruſſia was the firſt to give the example of a forced, and of a warlike military election: ſhe did not confine herſelf to countenance a free choice, but ſhe influenced

fluenced the preliminary ſteps, and prefaced her proceedings by forcing thoſe places, which choſe members, to return her partizans —theſe preparatory ſcenes were viewed in their true light by many foreign miniſters, repreſentatives of ancient allies, who retired from a country they could no longer conſider as free under a military protectorate.

Sectaries and Diſſenters, a numerous body, were excluded, under the Saxon Kings, from places of truſt and employments in the

ſtate; but the tolerating ſpirit of the republic, the mildeſt perhaps in Europe, gave them more freedom than in any other country; even in thoſe where philoſophy is moſt predominant. When Ruſſia had excited their diſcontent, they had two hundred churches, beſide places of private worſhip; they poſſeſſed governments, regiments, and military rank; moſt of the ſubalterns were non-conformiſts; their toleration was greater than that of the Diſſenters in England, in Holland, in France, and even Ruſſia herſelf. Politi-

cal

cal dignities, it is true, were reſerved to the eſtabliſhed religion; but every other deſcription of civil liberty was theirs—the republic was ever ready to redreſs their particular and accidental grievances

Of grievances, of which few had complained, Ruſſia formed the materials of diſcontent. The Staroſte, and the General Grabouſki, two brothers, who were Diſſenters, were bribed, and prevailed upon to diſplay their grievances: they claimed the rights of

the treaties of Velau and Oliva, where Ruſſia was not concerned as a contracting, or an acceding, party; but ſhe arrogated the right of a guarantee; while Sweden, to whom this right really belonged, was ſilent. The treaty of Moſcow was falſely quoted, no ſtipulations having been created thereby in favour of the Diſſenters. At laſt the Diet, in 1766, heard their complaints, and redreſſed them, and reſtored ſuch rights as juſtice, law, and reaſonable toleration, allowed; but rejected ſuch as the common order eſta-

bliſhed in all countries had forbidden; the legal barriers were left between the eſtabliſhed religion and the tolerated ſects, and excluded the ſectaries from all political dignities.

Few ſtates are governed by other regulations; of all other Princes, the Empreſs was the leaſt qualified to demand their repeal: in her ſtates Diſſenters never entered into her councils, or adminiſtration, or had ever mounted the throne. Had the third Peter effected ſuch an innovation,

vation, the apologiſts of the Empreſs, the writers of her manifeſtos, would have proclaimed the danger of the church, and of orthodoxy, as they did that of the pecuniary intereſts of the Monks.— This philoſophical toleration, for which they inflamed Poland, did not prevent the ſchiſmatic Greeks, under Ruſſian influence, to maſſacre a hundred thouſand men, of a different perſuaſion, for which no Ruſſian officer was queſtioned. Many Greeks and Latins, who were pillaged of their all, were ſeen in the Poliſh provinces, without

out the leaſt effort of Ruſſia to redreſs their grievances.

Theſe remarks would hardly have taken place, had it not been for the number of violences in Poland, under the colour of toleration; but the plan was formed to oppreſs the republic, to protect a faction, and to maintain a ſtanding Ruſſian army. The policy of the court extended its baneful influence ſtill farther; the equal rights of the Diſſenters once eſtabliſhed, a Diſſenter might occupy the throne, under the auſpices

ſpices of Ruſſia and of her troops, which could level all difficulties. The Greek religion was intereſted in the deſigns againſt the republic, and their influence, in the eaſtern and ſouthern provinces ſecured.

The moderate reſolutions of the Diet, in 1766, were conſidered as acts of rebellion at Peterſburg — From that moment the Prince Repnin, the ambaſſador at Warſaw, became Viceroy of the republic; the Diſſenters

were

were armed, and invoked public protection, while, united with the Ruſſian troops, they betrayed the country.

But the deſign of defending them openly, with the undecided declarations of the King of Pruſſia, were not ſufficient for the rapid execution of their deſigns. The King of Poland murmured at the rigorous tutelage of himſelf, his family, and his party. To give ſome energy to the national aſſemblies, they had abo-

liſhed

lifhed the Liberum Veto*, and fome other wife regulations, which gave umbrage to Ruffia.

In confequence of this, the Ruffian dictator, under the modeft name of an Ambaffador, oppofed artfully to the King, the nominee of the Empref, the members who had been exiled for their oppofition to his election. Various

* A curious account of this power, which refembled the tribunitial power in the Roman State, is to be found in Mr. Coxe's Northern Tour.

intrigues

intrigues ſuceeded in 1765; and in 1767, conciliations were propoſed; and it was with the olive branch in his hand, Prince Repnin prepared a poiſon for the Commonwealth.

By artful intrigues among the moſt diſcontented of the citizens, the Ruſſian Ambaſſador formed the aſſociation at Radom, where the malecontents aſſembled in 1767, when the Catholicks and ſome nobles were gained by promiſes of ſatisfying their grievances; and it is an authenticated fact,

that

that he proceeded ſo far as to aſſure ſome of them, that the King ſhould be dethroned.

The Prince Radzivil, who had been exiled as the moſt active opponent of Ruſſia, became the pillar of this new confederacy; he was named Preſident of the aſſociation; but, under pretence of an eſcort, he became, in fact, a priſoner of State.

The Confederacy itſelf, ſurrounded by Ruſſian troops, experienced the ſame fate:—at this

period, he enjoined the convention of a Diet at Warſaw, for the redreſs of their grievances; and mixing deriſion with violence, he procured an embaſſy to the Empreſs, to thank her for her maternal care. The Confederates perceived in vain the nets in which they were entangled.

This memorable Diet opened in 1767;—the Ruſſian troops had dictated the choice of many of their members;—the Grand Cup Bearer of the Crown had been impriſoned at Pologna, and the

republic appeared like a conquered ſtate. One of the members, who had courage to exclaim againſt their proceedings, was ſeized in the ſtreet; the Poles, ſo formidable hitherto to Ruſſia, were beſieged by their ſoldiery in their own ſenate houſe, and the legiſlators were invited to ſanction the orders of a Ruſſian plenipotentiary.

Among theſe decrees of Prince Repnin, one was, to admit the Schiſmatick Greeks and Diſſenters into political dignities, which would

would annihilate the independence of Poland, and convert it into a Ruſſian province.

Soltyk, Biſhop of Cracovie, a man worthy of ancient Rome, having animated the courage of the Diet, and ſpoken loudly againſt theſe proceedings, was ſeized in his bed; while the Biſhop of Kiovie, and the Count of Cracovie, Rewuſki, and his ſon, underwent the ſame fate, and were baniſhed to Siberia. Warſaw was treated like a city taken by aſſault —thus were all Prince Repnin's

decrees paſt, and thus did he pacify the Republic.

" So many acts of ſovereignty," ſays the King of Pruſſia, " exer-
" ciſed in the dominions of the
" Republic, by a foreign power,
" at length affected the public
" mind;" ſome Poles, whom deſpair had aſſembled in the Ukrain, gave the ſignal; the confederation of Bar was formed, which daily increaſed, and oppoſed the tyranny of Ruſſia. Unhappily this increaſing reſiſtance was but faintly, if at all, ſupported by any

foreign

foreign court, which enabled the Ruſſians to complete their work. For ſome time ſucceſſes were balanced; but the Confederates being left to themſelves, and fickle and unſteady in their plans and operations, were of no other uſe than to increaſe the barbarity of the Ruſſian generals. One of them, Colonel Drewitz, ordered his priſoners' hands to be cut off, before they were executed. Monaſteries, churches, neither age nor ſex, were ſpared; no aſylum was inviolate; the eſtates and properties of the Confederates,

and of many others in Poland, were plundered, without diſtinction of ranks, or the rules of war in civilized countries; many priſoners of rank were exiled, and periſhed for want in the deſerts of Siberia.

In the midſt of theſe horrors, the Ottoman Port had declared ſhe would reſiſt encroachments upon her territory, and aſſiſt an old and uſeful ally, and prevent the torrent which inundated Poland from overflowing her poſſeſſions.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Influence of the Ruſſian Court in Denmark.

THIS rupture occupied not only Ruſſia, but the courts of Berlin and Vienna. The Empreſs had condemned the northern courts to inactivity; in the name of the ſenate, ſhe governed Sweden; Denmark was influenced by her Ambaſſadors.

She had reaſon to fear that the latter would avail herſelf of this criſis, to form alliances to ſupport her ancient, undecided claim to the Duchy of Sleſwick. Frederick the Fifth was ſtill living. The Empreſs ſent her privy counſellor Saldern to the Daniſh court, whoſe manners and whoſe haughtineſs were analogous to the character of his country.

He diſplayed at Copenhagen the ſame haughtineſs which even the King of Pruſſia had complain-

ed

ed of at Berlin. The King of Denmark ſoon found that a Ruſſian influence prevailed in the choice of his miniſters and generals, and he concluded his miſſion by the propoſition of an amicable arrangement of an exchange for the Duchy of Sleſwick.

Frederick the Fifth died before this treaty was concluded: Saldern afterwards appeared as a tutor to the new king; he prevailed upon him to travel, againſt the opinion of his miniſters, and the wiſhes of the nation. Saldern,

and

and Philoſophoff, his ſubſequent colleague, became the arbiters and directors of the councils of Denmark; of the ſchemes, the political, and even private, affairs of the Daniſh monarch. Their dictatorſhip was abſolute and uncontroled, and conſequently highly unpopular. In 1767, they prevailed with the king to ſign the proviſional treaty for the Duchy of Sleſwick, and their power might have been as durable as it was conſiderable, had it not been ſuddenly limited by that revolution which put a period to

the

the adminiſtration of Rantzaw and Struenſee.

Seeing Ruſſia weakened by the Turkiſh war, obliged to keep thirty thouſand men in pay to guard Poland; her finances exhauſted, and apprehenſive of internal commotions; Struenſee attempted to conciliate Denmark with Sweden, the affairs of which latter he would no longer embroil: and to found in the North a political balance againſt the ambition of Ruſſia; but the deſtiny of this country got the better. The unfortuate

fortunate Struenſee's ſchemes periſhed along with him, and Denmark felt the yoke once more; ſhe joined again the train of Ruſſia, and made a compact which forced her to interfere in all the diſputes of that power, that is to ſay, to defend her whenever her attempts upon the liberty of the North ſhould be reſiſted. From Poland, from the Porte, the Empreſs had nothing to dread, but negotiations, or rather intrigues; and no real aſſiſtance of a power of the firſt order, or of the court of Vienna. This laſt court did

not

not look with an indifferent eye upon the aſcendancy of Ruſſia. The rapid progreſs of her ſchemes, and of her arms, alarmed the Divan, and with much more reaſon than the neighbouring powers. The Houſe of Auſtria felt the danger of ſeeing near her frontiers a power accuſtomed to reſpect no boundaries. The Ottoman Porte being once cruſhed, Poland ſubdued, and the Danube poſſeſſed by the Ruſſians, this ſtorm muſt needs envelope Hungary and the bordering provinces. Even the King of Pruſſia, though

an

an ally to Ruſſia, was apprehenſive leſt, in proceſs of time, ſhe would attempt to give her laws to himſelf, as well as to Poland: at this period of common danger, he conciliated the court of Vienna: a fact worthy of the greateſt attention, the certainty of which is eſtabliſhed by Frederick the Second himſelf, and from which, in this preſent juncture, the North, and all Germany, may derive much light. The greateſt genius which ever ſat upon a throne, and one of the moſt penetrating ſtateſmen, (Prince Kaunitz)

nitz) ſaw the neceſſity of putting an end to the ambitious ſchemes of Ruſſia, which, however, ſhe reſumed, and had almoſt accompliſhed without interruption.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Partition of Poland.

THE diſmemberment of Poland was the reſult of this conflict, of intereſts and negotiations. All the blame muſt fall upon that power, whoſe ambition, kindling that of her neighbours, forced them, upon pain of a general war, to ſubſcribe to that injuſtice, the diſgrace of our age—To ſubſcribe, we ſay, for not only the

preten-

pretenſions and violences of the Court of Peterſburg, did no longer allow proper means for their termination; but the Empreſs herſelf was the firſt who juſtified this ſcandalous partition.—In that reſpect, opinion has long varied; but Frederick the Second has thrown a ray of light upon it, in that immortal work, which may be conſidered as his laſt teſtament, wherein he has depoſited a recital of his faults with ſo much candour, and of his exploits with ſo much modeſty.

" The Empreſs of Ruſſia," ſays this great man, " being ir-
" ritated that any other troops
" than her own ſhould give law
" to Poland *, ſaid to the Prince
" Henry, that if the Court of
" Vienna intended to diſmember
" Poland, other neighbouring
" powers had a right to do the
" ſame. . . . . Count Solms,
" the Pruſſian Envoy, was charg-
" ed to diſcover whether there
" was any ſolid meaning in theſe

* The King of Pruſſia here alludes to the ſequeſtration of the county of Zips by ſome Auſtrian troops.

" expreſ-

" expreſſions which the Empreſs
" had dropped; or if they had
" been uttered in a moment of
" humour and tranſitory paſſion.
" Count Panin was rather averſe
" to that diſmemberment, but the
" Empreſs entertained the flatter-
" ing idea of extending, without
" danger, the limits of her domi-
" nions. Her minions and ſome
" of her miniſters ſupported her
" opinions. This reſolution was
" preſented to the King of Pruſ-
" ſia, as an expedient contrived
" to indemnify him for the ſub-
" ſidies he had paid to Ruſſia."

This Leonine convention met, however, with great difficulties from the Ruſſians; they would not part either with Moldavia or Valachia, which they had poſſeſſed—the court of Vienna never would have aſſented to that uſurpation.—The King of Pruſſia riſqued all the danger, the Empreſs had all the advantages, of this partition. The Czarina's miniſters wore out the time in ſubtlety and procraſtination, in order to abſorb the whole profit of this enterprize: at length the firmneſs of two of the contracting courts

checked

checked her inflexible rapacity, and in February, 1772, the treaty was concluded, in a leſs iniquitous proportion of joint injuſtice.

We ſhall not dwell upon this ſcandalous period of our hiſtory, or the infringement of ſocial rights — the contempt of all remonſtrances — the dreadful menaces — the outrages of every kind — by the help of which, the ratification of this uſurpation was extorted from the Diet of Poland. — The Ruſſian Ambaſſador acted the principal part in that ſcene;

he alone conducted the plan. The degree of arrogance in thoſe diplomatic oppreſſors may be eaſily conceived, after, by a letter from Mr. Saldern, to Count Oginſki, Grand-General of Lithuania, the 21ſt of June, 1771, the Ruſſian Envoy wrote to this magnat, one of the firſt perſonages in Poland, " The Ambaſſador repeats to you " the orders of his ſovereign, " that you ſhould repair to War- " ſaw, if ever you ſhould wiſh " to deſerve her protection: " ſhould you neglect this intima- " tion, you will feel the conſe-

" quence :

" quence: — I need not have re-
" courſe to threats."

During theſe unprecedented violences, ſome Ruſſian Emiſſaries, and ſome hireling gazetteers, complimental apologiſts, and venal writers, flatterers who were reciprocally flattered, repreſented the Poles as a troop of fanaticks, and a gang of rebels. The Empreſs's manifeſtos themſelves were replete with ſuch epithets—In one of her letters to Voltaire, ſhe calls thoſe confederates whom her generals had plundered, maſ-

ſacred, or exiled to Siberia, the mutineers of Poland. Voltaire, delighted with theſe philoſophical conqueſts, invented a new language of adulation; he ſtyled Catherine the Second, the northern ſtar, and he became the high prieſt of her temple; a hundred penſioned authors repeated this fulſome adulation in Germany, and at Paris.

The republic, whoſe frontiers were deſtroyed, her demeſnes loſt, the citizens ſlain or proſcribed, had no other expectation left,

left, but to ſee a ſeal put to the annihilation of her independence. She was compelled to refer the examination of her conqueror's projects to a delegation, where a venal and corrupt man preſided, whoſe peculation had been diſcovered by the Diet, when ſhe had recovered her liberty. Two diſtinct acts were carried by the contracting powers; the firſt, to ſanction the diſmemberment; the ſecond, to fix the form of her government. Notwithſtanding her melancholy ſituation, and the peremptory orders ſent to the Diet,

only

only fifty-five Nuncios, against fifty-four, assented to the partition; nearly one half of the representatives of the equestrian order were absent or removed. As for the plan of a new constitution, it adopted all the defects of the old government of Poland, introduced pernicious novelties, and deprived the legislature of the power of correcting its own laws. By the most destructive of these new institutions, the interpretation of the laws, and almost the whole exercise of the executive power, were united in a permanent

manent council, whoſe ſuperintendance laſted near two years. This council, thus conſtituted, conſtantly aſſembled, neceſſarily predominated over the general council, which met only ſix weeks in a twelvemonth.

Such an organization of the government neceſſarily facilitated foreign influence; for it was much eaſier to corrupt a body which conſiſted of few members, than ſuch an aſſembly as the Diet. Ruſſia deemed this ſpecies of conſtitution to be ſubſervient to her

deſign

deſigns and intereſts, and ſhe propoſed and ſupported it with her whole ſtrength; while the republick, for different reaſons, gave it a ſtrenuous oppoſition.

The king himſelf, ſupported by a majority of the Diet, rejected theſe inſidious decrees, which were artfully called reformations. A whole year of intrigues, of bribery, and of threats and menaces, was neceſſary to ſurmount theſe difficulties, and to overcome this laſt reſiſtance.

Theſe meaſures were revived in the following year, and took place in 1776. When they were propoſed to the Diet, in order to complete and ratify this revolution, in the beginning of that year, Staniſlaus Potocki, the Nuncio, or repreſentative of Lublin, ſpeaking before this regenerated aſſembly, which profeſſed an intention to reſtore Poland to her rank amongſt the powers of Europe, thus deſcribed that Diet in 1776: "This Diet," ſaid he, "violated the moſt ſacred national rights; every free and "indepen-

" independent Pole ſaw himſelf
" expelled from that place, which
" ſhould have been regarded as
" the ſanctuary of liberty — the
" ſenate houſe was ſurrounded
" by ſoldiers, and acceſs was
" denied to every virtuous, pa-
" triotic, and public-ſpirited
" member of the Diet."

The act of the 15th of March, 1775, which conſtituted the permanent Council, and all the new laws, (it ſhould be remembered) were ſigned only by the Ruſſian miniſter: the Envoys of the two

other

other contracting powers have never ratified these institutions, although their concurrence and signature were necessary; and the republic gave positive instructions to that effect to the delegation which was empowered to treat with them; but Russia considered this as a meer matter of form, and passed by this neglect and fundamental nullity in their proceedings.

She not only compelled Poland to accede to this treaty, so ruinous to herself, and so advantageous

to

to Ruſſia, but ſhe impoſed the yoke of her own perpetual guarranty upon all the new laws, whether they had a reference to police, revenue, or conſtitutional arrangement, which was proclaimed with drums and trumpets at the gates of Warſaw. This was the laſt mortal ſtroke to this expiring commonwealth; —from henceforward, the name of Poland was eraſed from the catalogue of nations; ſhe was no longer, it is true, plundered by her protectors, or invaded by her auxiliaries; but the Ruſſian Ambaſſador

baſſador became the Viceroy of Poland, his creatures were the exclusive members of the Permanent Council, his troops garriſoned her fortreſſes, and a ſeries of ſervile Diets introduced that lethargy which generally accompanies the loſs of liberty.

Europe, from this period, conſidered Poland as a vaſſal of the Empreſs, until the day of retribution arrived;—a ſecret diſcontent announced its approach—the diſpoſition of the country, and the Turkiſh war, accelerated her

emancipation. The Republic ſaw with indignation, her ſouthern provinces ſwarming with Ruſſian troops, burthened by their magazines, infeſted by their foraging and recruiting parties, treated as tributaries, and ſubjected to all the horrors of the war between Ruſſia and Turkey. When the Diet was aſſembled, a powerful ſovereign * addreſſed a celebrated memorial to them, which gave light and information to their

* Frederick William, the prefent King of Pruſſia.

councils,

councils, and ſtimulated the energy of their proceedings. The reſult of his generous efforts and laudable exertions will form a brilliant page in the annals of the eighteenth century.

CHAP. VII.

Turkiſh Wars — Oriental Syſtem of Ruſſia.

THE events which we have related, are only the firſt links of that chain with which Ruſſia had deſigned to bind Europe; but her ſyſtem extended farther. The fidelity of the Ottoman Porte to fulfil her engagements with Poland, broached deſigns which were meditated in the time of

Peter

Peter the Great; designs conformable to the character of the Empreſs.

Her troops, in purſuit of the Poliſh confederates at Bar, did not pay more reſpect to the Ottoman, than to the territories of Poland; they pillaged the city of Balta, in Moldavia. Upon demands of reparation, the Ruſſians replied by a repetition of the ſame outrages in various parts of the Turkiſh dominions, which were the aſylum of the Poles. This was a violation of treaties, and of

the laws of nations; the treaty of Pruth forbid that military tyranny which they exercifed in Poland; as foon as the vigilant and enlighted policy of the Duke de Choifeul had decided the opinion of the Porte, or, as they themfelves had been roufed by the infractions of the treaties of Carlowitz, of Pruth, and of Conftantinople, her declaration of war was confined to the neceffity of guarding her frontiers. Having guarranteed the republic of Poland in the entire poffeffion of her dminions, fhe was intereffted to prevent her

difmem-

diſmemberment. Would to Heaven that other European courts had the ſame reſpect for, and the ſame firmneſs and courage to maintain their engagements.

Fortune, however, ſeconded injuſtice; the boldneſs and brutal, but firm, courage of her ſoldiers, gave advantages to the Ruſſians, in ſpite of the inexperience and awkwardneſs of her officers. The valour of the Turks became ineffectual, by the continual change of their commanders, by the whimſical projects of ſome of their of-

ficers, which counteracted general ſyſtems; and the want of ſubordination, worſe even than cowardice in an army; by that corruption of the enemy which pervaded the Divan, and by that puſillanimity which was the aſſociate of Muſtapha the Third upon the Turkiſh throne.

After ſeveral defeats, the Porte ſigned, in 1774, the treaty of Kainardick, a monument of her weakneſs, an indication of her ſupineneſs, and the herald of future misfortunes. This was the

baſe

baſe upon which Ruſſia raiſed the ſuperſtructure of future deſigns; this was the inſtrument with which, as the clearſighted foreſaw, the Empreſs would break that ſceptre which ſhe had intended to depreſs: from this period Europe, alarmed, or exaggerating the declamations of the paraſites of the Empreſs, conſidered the Ottoman Empire at the eve of deſtruction.

This opinion was formed by vulgar minds, who have ſufficient underſtanding to connect cauſes

and

and effects, without any allowances for the changes wrought by chance, and by circumſtances in human affairs, to confound neceſſity with accident, and bring political ſyſtems into the compaſs of conjecture and imagination.

But men, whom theſe idle ſpeculations did not influence, ſaw Ruſſia in a ſituation not leſs exhauſted and enfeebled than her enemies: from the confeſſion of Mareſchal Munich himſelf, the laſt war but one, with Turky, had coſt Ruſſia two hundred and

fifty

fifty thouſand men;—imagination is amazed at the number of her ſoldiers which periſhed in Poland, in Tartary, on the Nieſter, on the Danube, and in the Archipelago, from 1768 to 1774. Pugatſcheff maſſacred one hundred thouſand, the plague deſtroyed eight hundred thouſand men: in 1771 four hundred thouſand Calmucks, perſecuted by Ruſſia, emigrated into Aſſia: theſe loſſes were repeated in a deſert, which counts only twenty inhabitants for a ſquare of three miles; where all the ſoldiers are preſſed; where a ſol-

a ſoldier is taken from a proportion of thirty-five inhabitants: ſome thouſand Greeks, forced, or enticed from their country, by inſidious promiſes, ſome foreign colonies, abortive almoſt in their birth, a collection of vagabonds and adventurers, who found their only refuge in Ruſſia, could not compenſate this deſtructive depopulation:—true it is, that ſwarms of Coſſacks and Calmucks, tribes more barbarous than their names, could hardly be regretted; but to loſe and to poſeſs is a contradiction; nor would generations

be

be produced with the facility with which manifeſtos and tables of population are framed or forged in newſpapers; it is alſo true, that uſurpations in Poland, and conqueſts in Turkey increaſe the number of her ſlaves; but aſſuredly Ruſſia cannot ſupply her loſſes and her depopulation, by the conqueſts of her neighbours.

The finances, public credit, the fleet, the magazines, all felt the general loſs; ruinous ſchemes, paper money, profuſely increaſed, announced the want of reſources;

it

it was evident that the Empreſs, in the midſt of her victories and bombaſt, had earneſtly ſolicited peace through the mediation of Mr. Murray, the Engliſh Reſident at Conſtantinople, and of Mr. De Zegelin, the Pruſſian Miniſter. It was well known that that brilliant expedition to the Archipelago, which aſtoniſhed Europe, had only produced vaſt expence, devaſtation in Greece, a victory due to Engliſh Experience, to the abilities of Elphinſtone, Dugdale, and the Piemonteſe Count Maſin; but no conqueſts

queſts were retained, no advantage, equal to the expence: prodigality of public money was accompanied with private waſte, with magnificence, with largeſſes almoſt incredible: the empire, thus decorated with dazzling ſplendour, could ſcarcely depend upon two fifths of the revenues of England; and her circulation, her commerce, or her public riches, were far from ſuſtaining theſe amazing enterprizes.

The campaign of 1774 was preceded by ſickneſs and deſertion

tion in the exhauſted army of Romanzoff, who was ſaved by the timidity of the Grand Vizir, and his want of knowledge to profit by his advantages. An adventurer, a Coſſack, had propagated the ſpirit of revolt, which had penetrated as far as Moſcow, and proved the danger to which a bold man, leſs cruel, and more ſagacious, might reduce an empire in the ſeaſon of foreign warfare.

From all theſe obſervations, penetrating politicians foreſaw, that

that in the intoxication of victory, Ruſſia knew no bounds; but that the exceſs of her proſperity would produce a limitation.

After the peace of Kainargik, the deſigns of diſmembering the Ottoman empire were diſcloſed. The Empreſs, exalted by her favourites, by writers, who excited her enthuſiaſm to emancipate Greece, and to reign at Conſtantinople, perceiving the delicacy of her ſituation, and informed of the revolutions which had dethroned ſo many of her predeceſ-

ſors, imagined ſhe could elevate her reputation, and build her ſecurity upon the foundations of a new empire at the Boſphorus. Allegorical prints, engraved at Peterſburg, repreſented this Princeſs trampling upon the ſtandard of Mahomet, and repairing the ruins of Greece. Medals were ſtruck with the repreſentation of the Labarum* :—all the arts, and all the talents of Ruſſia, excited this idolatry, and ſtimulated the

* The Standard of Conſtantine, adopted by the Turks, was thus called.

deſign

design of the destruction of the Ottoman empire in Europe. Partitioning treaties were the offspring of legions of mercenary writers.

By the treaty of Kainargik, the two powers had acknowledged the Crimea to be *free and independent*; they reciprocally engaged not to enter into any intrigues, nor any projects, to interrupt the mutual harmony; but the Court of Petersburg emulated the example of the Roman emperors, who sent generals into Gaul, or into Ar-

menia, to proclaim their manifeſtos by the ſound of the trumpet. Poland exhauſted, could not oppoſe her decrees; in ſubtracting or miſleading the Tartars from their dependence upon the Porte, they contrived to keep them in their own ſubordination—they acquired harbours and fortreſſes on the Euxine—a Khan, devoted to their intereſts, governed thoſe regions, ſo famous in the dreams of mythology—arſenals, docks, and fortifications, were erected upon theſe frontiers, with batteries and citadels. This Imperial Coloſſus

placed

placed one foot on Cherſon, and the other in Kamſchatka. Sahim Gueray, a docile chieftain, overlooked the nets with which he was encircled—gratitude and intereſt attached him to the Empreſs; his election was forced, like that of Poland, with the ſame views, and the ſame intentions.

This chief, the avowed partizan of Ruſſia, who had ſacrificed the national intereſts to the ambition of the Czarina, excited general diſcontent. In 1777 he was deprived of his military com-

mand, and thirty thouſand indignant Tartars choſe a ſucceſſor. Neither his rights nor his powers, ſecured under a Ruſſian guaranty, could keep him within neutral bounds; his troops advanced to pacify the Crimea, as they had heretofore pacified Poland. This diſtrict, declared independent by a treaty, atteſted in the moſt ſolemn manner, was attacked by a Ruſſian army, who reſtord the Khan who had been diſpoſſeſſed. His competitor ſought an aſylum at Conſtantinople, ſolicited ſuccours, and offered to the Porte

that

that appendage which ſhe had loſt. The example of Ruſſia would have encouraged the Grand Seignior to interfere in this diſpute, and to protect a chief freely and legally elected: but the faith of treaties, and the dictates of prudence, reſtrained the Divan; they refuſed an audience to the Tartar deputies, and they confined themſelves to repreſentations. But though the Ruſſians remained maſters of the country, and kept their acquiſitions, the Porte had the weakneſs to acqui-

eſce in the re-eſtabliſhment of a chief protected by the Empreſs.

Theſe pacific views, this imprudent conceſſion, emboldened Ruſſia; at the ſame inſtant ſhe ſtarted new difficulties, and propoſed a treaty of commerce, the principles of which revealed her intentions. Though this treaty was the diſgrace of the empire, and though an inſurrection had put Conſtantinople in danger, the ſame councils, the ſame inconſiderate moderation governed Turkey; and in 1779, ſhe ſigned an additional

additional convention preſented to her as the ſeal of an eternal reconciliation.

Theſe ſacrifices, it was eaſy to foretel, would produce no more than a momentary truce, and that new diſputes would ſpring from this ſource. That policy muſt be condemned which avoids a war by thoſe conceſſions which aſſure to adverſaries a ſtill greater facility of hoſtile operations.

The

The Porte had a new danger to encounter, while the Empreſs had hopes of a new ally. Whether it was the effect of an inconſtancy peculiar to the cabinet of Peterſburg, or by the operation of ſome connections with the Houſe of Auſtria, her treaty with the King of Pruſſia had expired. The court of Vienna had forgot her old fears and her ancient principles; eight years before, ſhe would not ſuffer the Ruſſians to extend their influence in Moldavia, nor allow them to approach her frontiers, nor paſs the Danube

nube and give laws to Turkey. The Empreſs Queen, and Prince Kaunitz, influenced by theſe maxims, entered into a negotiation with the Porte *: but the death of Maria-Thereſa introduced new ſyſtems; diſtruſt was changed into reciprocal confidence. Before this period, the peace of Teſchen had been concluded under the mediation of Catherine the Second. A myſterious inter-

* The King of Pruſſia's Memoirs relate the alarm created in the court of Vienna, by the ambition of Ruſſia at this time.

view

view between that Princeſs and the Emperor had taken place, which had united intereſts ſo apparently diſcordant. A ſecret treaty confirmed the fears of Europe, and engaged the general attention touching thoſe projects upon which this formidable aſſociation was grounded. Such was the criſis in which the Empreſs, in 1782, invaded the Crimea.

Sahim Gueray, the mercenary and felonious inſtrument of the Ruſſian policy, abdicated his dignity: but did he ſurrender it to his

his conſtituents? No; he ſold it to the Empreſs: he ſold that ſovereignty to which he had no claim. This elected chief ſold his maſters and his electors; but this ceſſion was ridiculous. If the King of Poland had ſold his throne, would the reſt of Europe ratify the bargain? Immediately a Ruſſian army plundered thoſe provinces which were rendered free in 1777, ſubjected them to her laws, and an apologiſing manifeſto followed the invaſion.

When

When Tamerlane, Attila, and Nadir Shaw, ſubjected their neighbours, equity was a ſlight obſtacle; without ſcruples, and without chicane, they exerciſed their powers; nor did ſhame colour or maſque their injuſtice. In our days we are told, that politeneſs, humanity, and philoſophy, violate treaties, diſmember ſtates, ſpread diſcord, and legitimate uſurpations. Poland abuſes her liberty: ſlavery, it is ſaid, ſhould relieve her from anarchy. Are diſſentions excited in Sweden, publick liberty becomes the pretext.

text.—Ignorant countries, like the Crimea, ſhould be poliſhed by force of arms.

In her apologiſing manifeſto, the Empreſs announced, that ſhe had loſt the product of her victories, if Sahim Gueray did not remain under her protection:—that was to ſay, that ſhe had conſecrated the independence of the Tartars, and the freedom of their elections, ſo long as thoſe franchiſes were ſubſervient to her intereſts. By a parity of reaſon, the Porte could uſurp the ſove-

reign

reign authority of this diſtrict; thus the independence of the Crimea, unconditionally eſtabliſhed in 1774, conſiſted in receiving the law from either of thoſe powers, whenever one of them ſhould deem it expedient to diſpoſe of her ſovereignty. According to this manifeſto, it was the love of order and public tranquillity, which, with the Divine aſſiſtance, had introduced the Ruſſian arms into the Crimea; which had exerciſed a tyrannical ſway, diſpoſed of the ſovereignty, appeaſed

revolts,

revolts, and given a ſupremacy over the ſovereign himſelf.

All theſe meaſures were *dictated ſolely* by the imperial regard for *humanity*, grounded upon a *conviction*, that Tartars could not appreciate the *value* of *independence*. Laſtly, by the right of ancient *conqueſt*, which had been annihilated by the treaty of 1774, and by the only method of enſuring the bleſſings of a *laſting* and permanent peace.

By the extenſion of ſuch arguments, the Czarina had a right to the poſſeſſion of Turkey. The *ennui* of debates, the care of tranquillity, the ſecurity of good neighbourhood, would have given ſimilar poſſeſſory claims to Ruſſia in the ſurrounding provinces. Georgia, Moldavia, as well as the Crimea, would furniſh ſubjects of mutual diſcord. Step by ſtep, this progreſſive argument would reach Egypt, and every province connected with, and tributary to, the Porte, which might, from thoſe circumſtances,

create

create alarms and inquietudes; ſo that, from a chain of reaſoning, it might be ultimately, and juſtly, inferred, that nothing but the univerſal ſubjection of Turkey could enſure a ſolid and permanent pacification.

Upon the intelligence of this enterprize, the Porte, ſuſpended between ſurpriſe and indignation, prepared a formidable reſiſtance— If a patriotic policy had had its due influence, ſhe would have reguarded her ſafety, her juſt reſentment, and popular tumults;

ſhe would have rigged her ſquadrons and ſtruck her tents — a powerful influence, preſcribed by moderation at leaſt, delayed thoſe enterprizes which true policy enjoined: doubts of diſaſters were artfully infuſed, the operations of the Emperor were magnified, the auxiliary of Ruſſia ready to act in concert with a hundred thouſand men. Theſe temporiſing councils prevailed over motives of ſelf-defence; and although Conſtantinople, taken in forty-nine days, by Mahomet the Second, had remained defenceleſs

ſince

ſince that period, and without any barrier towards the Black Sea, a convention ſigned in January 1784, authoriſed the uſurpation of the Crimea and of Couban, but upon articles which were infringed with the ſame facility with which they had been framed.

Georgia and Cabartas ſoon afterwards experienced the ſame fate; the Prince Heraclius was bribed; Egypt was inflamed by the intrigues of Ruſſia: everywhere, particularly in Moldavia and Wallachia, in the Archipela-

go, her consuls were incendiaries employed to corrupt the vassals of the Porte, and to excite insurrections. Since the treaty of 1774, two of these emissaries had been punished, and the Empress regarded their punishment as an infraction of the laws of nations. In the midst of peace, some Greeks were taken away by force; if Russian ships entered the Propontis, it was by false representations of the number and tonnage of those vessels; every day gave rise to some vexatious pretensions, and they proceeded to

enter

enter into the ſecret councils of the Divan, to interfere in her adminiſtration, to influence the choice, and to exact the diſmiſſion of public officers.

The obſerver of theſe differences, ſo difficult to terminate, after multiplied treaties and conventions, muſt neceſſarily aſk what would be the iſſue of this war of increaſing grievances and conventions, each of which has generated new encroachments and new troubles? The demands of Ruſſia increaſed in proportion to

the condeſcenſion or heſitation of the Divan. The opinions of Europe were divided upon the conſequences of this criſis, when ſhe ſaw the ſecond Catherine realiſe the fable of Seſoſtris, departing with inconvenient pomp from the frozen plains of Ingria, to diſplay her powers on the embouchures of the rivers on the Black Sea, to penetrate into new conqueſts deſolated ſince their ſubmiſſion, with a dazzling and impoſing proceſſion; and received on the banks of the Nieper by a King of Poland, in the Tauride by the Emperor of

Germany,

Germany, and marching with a convoy of forty thouſand men, to take poſſeſſion of a Muſſulman country, under the eyes of the ſucceſſor of the Khaliphs. While this Princeſs diſplayed an Oriental magnificence before a people, whom, in her laſt manifeſto, ſhe had called an aſylum of freebooters —while the Greek deſcription of the road to Bizantium appeared upon the gateway at Cherſon; ſhe diſquieted the Turks by new diplomatic hoſtilities.

This

This pageant, this oſtentation, at length rouſed the lion from his ſlumber. The Empreſs was ſcarcely returned to Peterſburg, before her envoy was impriſoned in the ſeven towers, the Black Sea was covered with ſhips, the Turkiſh troops were marching through a territory, which had recently re-echoed her triumphal acclamations.

Political events, and the ſilent revolutions which were ſecretly operating in many parts of Europe, ſeemed to favour a reſolution,

tion, which was juſt and deciſive. Moſt cabinets were tired of the Ruſſian haughtineſs, or diſturbed by her projects; and her intimacy with Auſtria could not leſſen this anxiety. Penetration could not reject the ſurmiſe, that a ſecret jealouſy ſubſiſted between the two courts, and that the Emperor, an enlightened prince, having the choice of vicinity, would prefer the exhauſted Turks in his alliances, to the Ruſſians, whoſe preponderance was every where converted into a ſovereign influence. Since the peace of Belgrade,

the

the good intelligence between Vienna and the Porte, was not interrupted. The Turks respected the misfortunes of Maria Theresa; nor did they profit by the embarrassments of 1740, nor those of the seven-years war.—Some light clouds were seen to interrupt this harmony:—the Divan had dispersed them with moderation: the Bosnian limits were amicably arranged, and the districts of Buckovine were ceded by Turkey with unexpected facility.

From

From theſe circumſtances it was ſuppoſed that the court of Vienna would act, at leaſt, the part of a ſimple auxiliary, if ſhe did not repreſent the character of a dignified neutrality.

Though the principal, and oldeſt, ally of Turkey was occupied by internal troubles, indeciſive in her political ſyſtem, and could only relieve her by negociations, many other ſtates offered ſecret ſervices. The Empreſs had cooled the attachment of England by a conduct, which in London was

called

called ingratitude. Detached from Pruſſia, ſhe had promiſed her guarrantee for the Bavarian exchange; and Berlin conſidered the court of Peterſburg as the Emperor's aſſociate. Poland, meditating revenge, conſidered the Turks as their guardians; and laſtly, Sweden had equal intereſts to defend, to render her guarantee, ſo often ſlighted, reſpectable, and to reſume, after twenty years interval, her equilibre in the North.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Conſtitution—Ruſſian Influence in Sweden—Affairs of Finland.

THIS ſtate was the moſt aggrieved by Ruſſia; the power which deprived her of ſo many provinces in the beginning, governed her by a corrupt and deſpotic influence in the ſequel of this century. The conduct of Charles the Twelfth, the pride, and the misfortune of Sweden,

had

had produced a revolution in the government, in which the paſt only was conſidered, without any regard to future evils. Experience of evils often affects nations too much to allow them to weigh and to examine their remedial proviſions, the inconveniencies of which are often long concealed, till futurity diſcovers their fatal conſequences.

The impetuous diſcontent of Sweden, or of ſome demagogues, deſtroyed the balance of the component parts of her conſtitution.

In

In the receſs of her diets, the power lodged in the ſenate controlled the royal authority; the nomination and qualification of ſenators were given, with the whole legiſlative power, to the ſtates. The executive power was ſubjected to a body, each member of which might be diſmiſſed by the ſtates; and the judicial power was veſted in their committees. During their ſeſſions, the complete executive power was veſted in a ſecret commiſſion of the ſtates, without limit or balance, in a body of ſeven, perhaps

eight, hundred men. The royal authority was confined to mere representation; the King could not dismiss an impertinent servant; and, in Mr. Sheridan's words, "he appeared only as a "state pageant, decorated for ho-"lidays and courtly festivals*."

This

* Mr. Sheridan (the son of the late Manager of the Dublin theatre, who has exemplified his theory in the education of his children, and to whose valuable labours the translator is happy to advert) was secretary to Sir John Goodrick, when the revolution, which he has recorded, took place in 1774. He was afterwards Secretary

This conſtitution favoured all the defects, all the diſorders of internal policy, and all the ſchemes of foreign adverſaries; and conſequently, by the treaty of Newſtadt, in 1721, the Czar became its guarantee.

Experience is the ſureſt teſt of government: principles may be

tary at War in Ireland, but he was diſmiſſed in 1789, after the great queſtion of the Regency was decided, with a penſion of 800l. The appointment of his ſucceſſor was ſo oddly contrived, as to loſe, inſtead of acquiring parliamentary influence in Ireland.

condemned when attended with pernicious effects. What was the portrait of Sweden in 1772? General weakneſs, ſhameful neglect in all her departments; an inconſiderate war in 1757, unſkillfully, diſhonourably conducted; the love of glory ſubdued by the ſpirit of intrigue, and the welfare of the ſtate by a criminal ſelfiſhneſs: places conferred, and powers torn from their monarch by a faction; all was venal; each ſuffrage, and each majority, the objects of mercantile calculation. "Corruption was ſo tranſcen-

"dant,"

" dant," ſays Frederick the Great, " that at one time a " French, and at another a Ruſ- " ſian, faction prevailed, while " the national party never pre- " dominated."

Ruſſia played the principal part in this ſcene of confuſion; meditating the arbitration of the Swediſh government, no opportunity was loſt to profit by the general anarchy; and her fancy decided, in 1750, the conteſted bounds of Finland.

Ruſſia, allied with France and Auſtria, from the diſlike of Elizabeth to the King of Pruſſia, produced that demolition in 1756 of the feeble remnant of royal authority, as the firſt fruits of that combination, accompanied with mortifying inſults to the King and Queen: and laſtly, that war in 1756, where Sweden followed as a vaſſal in proceſſion, without intereſt, reaſon, or juſtice, and ſaw her brave legions ſacrificed to the frivolity of her government.

Intrigues

Intrigues and bribes at Stockholm were doubled ſince the acceſſion of the ſecond Catherine: the predominance of the party of the Bonnets was ſecured; ſhe dictated all their reſolutions; and while ſhe laboured to introduce anarchy into Poland, ſhe confirmed and ratified it in Sweden. Nothing remained except the dethronement of the King; when the intrepidity of Guſtavus the Third prevented this laſt attempt, reſtored the empire of the laws, circumſcribed that liberty which conſiſted only in the ſale of pub-

lic welfare, and baniſhed for ever that deſpotiſm of corruption under which ſhe had ſo long been afflicted.

The Empreſs had engaged the King of Pruſſia in a convention, to guaranty the Swediſh government as eſtabliſhed by the treaty of Newſtadt in 1721. From thence we may eſtimate her ſurpriſe at this revolution.—" Anger and vengeance," ſays Frederick the Second, " would have " had an immediate operation, " had not the Turks firmly re-

ſiſted

" ſifted the hard and imperious
" terms of peace which ſhe had
" propoſed. . . . . The King of
" Sweden, aware of the danger
" by which he was menaced,
" laboured a conciliation with
" Denmark, that he might be
" engaged with a ſingle adver-
" ſary."

Here we have the moſt revered, and the moſt deciſive evidence of the deſigns of the Empreſs againſt Sweden: after this, it is no leſs true than it is aſtoniſhing, that in a reply, contained in a libel,

bel, avowed by the cabinet of Peterſburg, entitled, " *Obſerva-* " *tions and Hiſtorical Ecclairciſſe-* " *ments*," ſtudiouſly circulated in Finland, effrontery could miſre-preſent theſe precautions of Guſtavus, againſt the joint animoſity of Denmark and Ruſſia, under the idea of a voluntary and fanciful aggreſſion, which the leaſt menace from Ruſſia would have prevented.

Aſſuredly Ruſſia was not then in a formidable ſtate — Had the King of Sweden profited by her loſſes,

loſſes, the abſence, ſickneſs, and miſery of her troops, the terror and indications of revolt, upon the near approach of Pugatſcheff, he had nothing to fear; ſave only an abuſive and ſophiſtical manifeſto from the Ruſſian miniſters.

This Prince was governed by other maxims: he ſaved the Empreſs from new dangers; and public notoriety will prove a chain of ſolicitude, to maintain harmony and good underſtanding between the two courts.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding this determination, the Ruſſian intrigues increaſed, the ſlighteſt pretexts for diſcontent were magnified in Sweden by miſrepreſentation; emiſſaries were found in her provinces, to inflame the people by falſe inſinuations.

Since the peace of Abo, Ruſſia had ſecretly laboured to detach Finland from Sweden: beſide this enterprize, dictated by her ruling principle of uſurpation, the vaſt projects of the Czarina induced her to prevent the efforts

of

of Sweden to aſſiſt her ally, and to attack Ruſſia in a vulnerable place. At one time, ſhe fomented the ſpirit of revolt, at another, ſhe promiſed the Finlanders independency. The Baron Sprengporten, loaded with the favours of the King of Sweden, and inveſted with great employments in Finland, with every mark of confidence and bounty, was gained by the offers of the Empreſs, and had no ſcruples to betray his king, his country, and the moſt ſacred obligations.

A Ruſſian officer, under the pretext of curioſity, had, in 1786, viſited the poſts of Finland, reconnoitred thoſe which might be attacked, and endeavoured to ſound and to corrupt the principles of the inhabitants.

This clandeſtine war engaged the unceaſing vigilance of the Swediſh King: of the ſecret deſigns of Ruſſia he could not doubt; but the moment of open reſiſtance was not come; and danger was concealed, leſt the king-

kingdom ſhould be involved in a premature rupture.

At length the Porte was rouſed from its lethargy.—To indicate the aggreſſor would be idle:—aſſuredly, tired with the hoſtilities of ten years, ſhe was not obliged to attend the viſit of the Ruſſians at the gates of Conſtantinople.—Their treaty with Sweden, in 1759, enabled them to ſolicit ſuccours.—The intereſt and engagements of Guſtavus concurred with their deſire.

Ruſſia

Ruſſia immediately reſolved to cripple Sweden, by thoſe meaſures which had ruined Poland, enſlaved the Crimea, and ſubjected Courland. The embers of the flame in 1772 were revived—the Count Roſamouſki reſumed the part of his predeceſſors as miniſter of the Empreſs—every engine was employed to excite a faction againſt the King—the Ruſſian Envoy's conduct was moſt indiſcreet—public ſeduction was evident in his words and actions—in the capital, and under the King's eyes, no Ambaſſador ever

braved

braved ſo audaciouſly the reſpect due to ſovereigns, the rights of hoſpitality, and the duties of his function. The Count Roſamouſki had forgot diſcretion; his declarations were outrages, appeals to the people againſt their ſovereign:—bold and inſidious, theſe hoſtile notes infuſed rancor and gall into the hearts of too many. —The government did not forget in this conjuncture what was due to public tranquillity and the laws of nations.—The king declined to acknowledge his powers as a miniſter, and compelled him to

abandon the theatre of his intrigues.

The Empreſs not only juſtified, but complained of the diſmiſſion of her miniſter: — Europe was ſhocked at the conduct of the court of Peterſburg, which treated ſelf-defence as a proof of hoſtility.—Neither reſpect for kings, nor prudence, nor conciliation, formed any part of her conduct; even peace was announced with inſulting language.

When

When victory had abandoned her arms, artifice ſucceeded; her agents tampered with the officers of the Finland troops—the moſt deſpotic court in the univerſe reſounded the word liberty in the ears of the Swediſh ſubjects: ſome of whom forgot their allegiance to their King and country, deſerted them in the hour of danger, and entered into a traiterous correſpondence.—A terrible example, an awful leſſon, for thoſe ſtates whoſe deſtiny placed their intereſts in oppoſition to the deſigns of Ruſſia.

CHAP. IX.

Negotiations of England and Pruſſia with the Czarina — Intereſts of the Maritime Powers — The Importance of the Eſtabliſhment of Ruſſia, as a Naval Power, in the Mediterranean.

THE inflexible pride of that court prevailed at the moment of the burſting of a ſtorm; when Poland was ready to break her chains, and Pruſſia to ſecond her laudable deſigns; when the cabi-

nets

nets of Potſdam and of London engaged in the ſame intereſt: all mediation was ſcornfully rejected; ſhe received the offer of the Swediſh King, to reconcile her to the Porte, with diſdain; which compelled him to the neceſſity of defenſive meaſures, and the completion of his engagements with Turkey.

The mediation of England was equally rejected without regard to their alliance, to paſt ſervice, or the ſlight ties by which they were allied. The Engliſh pride

and liberality were ſhocked with ſtratagems, with diſdain, with hoſtile intimations, from a court which owed her eternal obligations. The expedition to the Archipelago was ſolely to be aſcribed to Engliſh aid and aſſiſtance, and to them the glory of it ſhould be aſcribed: the diſabled fleet of the Empreſs harboured, repaired, and victualled by England, could never have cleared the Channel without the ſkill of Britiſh pilots; nor would they have burned the Turkiſh fleet, had it not been for the ability of the firſt of the ma-

ritime

ritime powers. If England enabled the Ruſſian flag to appear without diſhonour before the Dardanelles, and zealouſly befriended her negotiations, what was her acknowledgement? A deſertion when England was almoſt overpowered by her enemies, that armed neutrality which deprived them of thoſe mariners they procured from the Baltic, which enabled Holland to carry on an illicit trade, which ſpeciouſly gave the title of the protectreſs of marine freedom to the Empreſs, but which, in reality, was a mortal

wound to the importance of England.

The Engliſh capitals and traders are the great reſource of the Ruſſian commerce, the vital principles of her tardy circulation; though the balance of trade is a loſs of near one million annually to England, though Engliſh ſhips conſtitute the half of the veſſels which arrive annually at Cronſtadt, the Empreſs has procraſtinated the renewal of their commercial treaty:—eluding the

ſolicitations of the Engliſh cabinet, promiſing much and terminating nothing, the negotiation has languiſhed, and the effects of their projected arrangements are as humiliating as they are ridiculous.

The new allies of England invited the Empreſs to reflect upon the propoſed joint arbitration of Great Britain and Pruſſia. The ſucceſſor of Frederick the Great, ambitious more of the title of a peacemaker than of a conqueror, held the balance with a firm and

impartial

impartial hand, and propoſed an amicable adjuſtment.—His reign daily acquired, without the eclat of war, that reputation, which wiſe and able meaſures, the wiſdom of councils, the moderation and juſt management of power, never fail to beſtow. The King of Pruſſia had diſcovered a mine of miſchief formed in Poland, by Ruſſian emiſſaries, equally dangerous to Pruſſia, as well as to Turkey.—An excluſive alliance, was projected between that republic and Ruſſia; by the energy of his declarations, and the con-

viction

viction of his resolution, the court of Berlin warded off this stroke, and gave new life to Poland. Whether the Russian ministers were blinded by the facility and possibility of a great event, or whether Catherine, intoxicated by success, consulted more her favourites than her interest, she rejected, with disdain, the idea of mediation; she braved all risques, and the moderation of the King of Prussia solely prevented a formidable alliance of five powers against Russia.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Conclusion — General Remarks — Summary of this Work *.

SUCH are the historical features of the present time, of which all Europe is a witness. Her Kings have viewed perhaps with too

* This conclusive chapter is, perhaps, the most valuable part of this work. A short and comprehensive account of the political interests of the different states in Europe

too much prudence, the progreſs of this enterpriſing policy, by which the laws of nations have been

rope is much wanted: and it is very extraordinary, that, at the preſent criſis, an able pamphlet has not appeared upon Continental affairs, nor upon the part which this country might act as the arbiter of Europe.

According to what, I believe, may be conſidered as the moſt authentic compilation of parliamentary debates, before they were regularly publiſhed in newſpapers, in 1773-4, I mean the debates in the Lilliputian club, where the names of the principal ſpeakers are traveſtied

been annulled, the faith of treaties has diſappeared, and the abuſe of power has legitimated uſurpation.

This

tied in the Gentleman's Magazine; the principal debates in the days of Sir Robert Walpole turned upon foreign treaties and Continental intereſts.

This Chapter reſembles that ſhort, but excellent, abridgement of the ſtate of Europe, by Sir William Temple, in 1673, preſented to the Duke of Ormond by that great man at the end of his ſecond embaſſy, in anſwer to his ſhort queſtion, "What was neceſſary to be done?"—or what part this country ſhould take at that criſis

It

This vaſt empire, which, for twenty years, has ſpread terror, corruption, deſpotiſm, and war, embraces

It were much to be deſired that ſome able man, in the diplomatic line, would favour the public with ſome chart of the preſent ſchemes, alliances, connections, and intereſts, of the Continent—I ſay the public, becauſe, notwithſtanding ſome new doctrines, publicity is the vital principle of a free country; information and intelligence can alone animate their exertions, and direct their energy. It is very eaſy to talk of committing lives and fortunes; but mankind muſt be perſuaded that they are in the right, before they can be prevailed upon to engage with

embraces all varieties of climate, and comprehends every ſpecies of reſource. Seas inacceſſible to European

with zeal and patriotiſm in foreign wars: blinfolded exertions are childiſh and contemptible.

For ſuch a character as Sir William Temple, we ſhall look in vain, while our embaſſies are beſtowed merely from parliamentary intereſt, or rendered commodious for men who cannot live conveniently at home. This great man was patronized by the Duke of Ormond, in conſequence of his exertions in the Iriſh parliament after the reſtoration, where, as repreſentative of the county of Carlow, he

ropean fleets; deſerts or enſlaved countries are her frontiers: hitherto, impreſſions upon her territory

he appeared as the firſt ſpeaker, and the ableſt member, of that aſſembly. Some time ago I was much diſappointed in my application to the nobleman who inherits his name and virtues, for ſome early memorials of Sir William Temple, as this part of his life has not been dwelt upon by any of his biographers; and theſe anecdotes to which I allude, were collected, with ſome materials, for a parliamentary hiſtory of Ireland to the revolution, in which I have been for ſome time engaged. This work I intend to form upon Mr. Hatſell's plan, and to render it enter-

ritory have been haſtily deemed impracticable. While her adverſaries remain upon the defenſive, ſwarms of undiſciplined ſavages emigrate from their habitations, and deſtroy extenſive countries in a campaign. Pruſſia and Poland ſtill bleed from thoſe

taining by ſome memoirs of the Duke of Ormond, from papers communicated to me by a particular friend, the heir of that illuſtrious nobleman, to whom I have the honour of being nearly allied: and I ſhall leave it to my country, if I may hope that a ſufficient period is allotted to me to accompliſh ſo laborious an undertaking.

ravages,

ravages, when troops which are mowed down without being ſubdued, are animated by pillage, by fanaticiſm, or by the ambition of their ſovereign, who in loſing ſoldiers, only loſes ſlaves ; — woe to thoſe ſtates which border upon this deſtructive power !

Peace muſt be purchaſed by ſacrifices, or ſecured by a preparation commenſurate to the danger. Ruſſia menaces at the ſame time, Turkey, the North, and Germany : the reduction of one, would accelerate the conqueſt of

the others. Solitary resistance is vain, against an empire which can produce soldiers, like grains of sand, whose policy has no other principles than those of interest, and whose bold maxims correspond with that fortune, which has so long favoured their projects.

By the schemes she has executed in Poland, that republic, and Courland, are warned of the danger which threatens them, if they should not seriously advert to timely provisions for their safety.

Before

Before the Ruſſian was united with the Auſtrian army, Frederick the Great was ſurpriſed at the rapidity of their progreſs; he had ſeen them penetrate into the heart of his ſtates, and lay Pruſſia under contribution, a country always expoſed to invaſion, while Poland and Courland are under Ruſſian influence. Ruſſia, as the auxiliary of the chief of the German empire, and aſſociated in his projects, can attack Pruſſia on the ſouth as well as the north, aid the Emperor by her diverſions,

and menace the liberty of Germany.

Sweden maintains her ſituation, thanks to the firmneſs and precaution of her king; but recent events reveal the ſecret of that ſlender thread upon which her tranquillity depends, and demonſtrates the neceſſity of a balance which may place the Empreſs in due bounds of limitation.

A ſimilar intereſt ſhould affect the politics of Denmark, if the memory of their abſurd rivality

with

with Sweden, and the prejudices of her miniſters, ſhould no longer faſcinate that country. Can ſhe not perceive that her alliance is an inſtrument which ſhe lends to Ruſſia to diſquiet her neighbours, and to tyrannize over the North? Is it not clear, that in lending her influence to weaken, or to cruſh the powers on the Baltic, ſhe will ultimately contribute to her own depreſſion? What would be her ſecurity, if the neighbouring powers ſhould be diſabled, or ſubdued by Ruſſia? Every thing conſpires to induce

Denmark to a mutual defenſive alliance, to maintain the equilibre, to counterbalance the preponderance of Ruſſia, to imitate that noble ſyſtem, the Germanic league, the rampart of weak ſtates againſt the power of a great empire.

The maritime and commercial ſtates, the South, Italy, and Venice, in particular, are affected by the ſame intereſts, and ſhould participate in the ſame apprehenſions. Should Ruſſia eſtabliſh her power in the Mediterranean, hu-

man

man foreſight cannot appreciate or comprehend the wide and vaſt effects of ſuch a revolution.

To all theſe, I ſhall ſubjoin the ſupereminent conſideration of the happineſs of Ruſſia herſelf, of her true glory, of her national intereſts, ſacrificed to the eclat of a tranſitory reign, whoſe trophies are ſtained with blood. That nation, which has ſurpriſed Europe with the rapidity of her civilization, ſhould endeavour to conſummate that great work; to which peace is eſſential. The natural

natural aptitude of that robuſt, flexible, and penetrating people, to repair the ravages of ſucceſſive wars, would facilitate this deſign. They yet want arts, manufactures, internal and foreign commerce, capitals, population; and her civilization does not extend beyond Moſcow. This cannot be the work of a ſovereign, engroſſed with ideas of territorial aggrandizement; nor of favourites trembling at her nod, at their future deſtiny, and providing aſylums in the neighbouring ſtates as refuges from deſpotiſm. This

great

great donation is reſerved to the nobility, to the nation itſelf, formed to give examples of virtue, which decorate humanity. It is alone by exerting her activity in the centre of the ſtate, that her wounds can be healed, and that ſhe can ſupport the inconvenient and gigantic extent of her empire.

The Ruſſians ſtill proudly remember that Prince who, unintentionally perhaps, prepared them for freedom, while they were civilized as ſlaves. Of all the plans and ſchemes of that great man, the

the moſt admirable, though the leaſt noticed, was that of abandoning two thirds of that vaſt empire to bears and to nature, to concenter the whole population in the provinces which are within a practicable diſtance of the capital, and to ſtrengthen his country by conſolidation. This policy is a ſatire upon the preſent reign; a policy aſſuredly adopted by the intelligent part of the community; they have too much good ſenſe not to lament, that all her powers have been turned againſt her genius and diſpoſition,

againſt her intereſt, and to ſee the deſtruction of her reſources, without the acquiſition of any ſolid advantage. Of what moment are vain and pompous conqueſts, which exiſt only in ſounds, in hymns, in Te Deums, and in feſtivals?*

May

* This ſentence has been extended by the Tranſlator—no other liberty has been taken in this Engliſh verſion, ſave only that of dividing it into Chapters, and adding a few notes. This Work has been authenticated to me, as the work of the King of Sweden, though it cannot be ſuppoſed that it was compiled without

aſſiſtance

May the ſucceſſor to this throne, that Prince, whom Europe has obſerved in his travels, accompanied with ſuch modeſty, an ex-

aſſiſtance, as the Poſthumous Works of Frederick the Great were reviſed by the Pruſſian Miniſter, Count Hertzberg. No pains have been ſpared to make the tranſlation and the printing as accurate as poſſible. It is to be hoped the Public will accept of apologies for any miſtake in a work undertaken in a period of indiſpoſition, and of political turbulence; which could not (the Public muſt ſuppoſe) be accompanied with pleaſant reflections, nor be altogether favourable to the literary purſuits of the Tranſlator.

ample of private virtues, and whoſe benign inclinations may heal the wounds of thoſe fruitleſs wars. May the Grand Duke be no longer guided by this abſurd, and romantic policy. May he ſubſtitute in the place of fallacious grandeur, that true greatneſs which reſults from the moderation of princes, and from the proſperity of their people.

FINIS.