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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

LATE CONTESTS

IN THE

ROYAL SOCIETY,

BY

ANDREW KIPPIS, D.D.,

F. R. S. and S. A.

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OBSERVATIONS,  
&c.

**T**HE spirit of contention, which, for some years past, hath pervaded the British dominions, cannot fail to have made powerful impressions on the minds of the most calm and dispassionate men. With regard to public affairs, it has been carried to a height, which, whilst it must affect the most superficial and inattentive observers, will make the more speculative examiners into human events look forward, with trembling suspense, to the probable conse-

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quences

quences of the disputes by which the nation has been, or is hereafter likely to be, agitated. In matters, however, of a political nature, where the questions themselves are often difficult of determination, where the general welfare of the community is concerned, and where the ambition and interest of men of rank and ability are seeking for gratification, it is not surprising that the passions should be warmly engaged. The motives, both public and private, are, in such cases, too forcible not to awaken the ardour of the mind, and to produce a vehement contention.

But while the political world is always likely to be more or less the scene of altercation, the literary world might be expected to continue in a state of tranquillity and harmony. Or if this cannot be hoped for in every part of the literary world; if with respect to Theology, for instance, the real or supposed  
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importance of the objects discussed will almost unavoidably be productive of warm and eager debates ; yet in philosophical Societies, in bodies of men instituted for the promotion of natural knowledge, it might reasonably be presumed that nothing would occur but what was peaceful and gentle : and when any thing of a contrary spirit is found in such communities, it will sincerely be lamented by the true friends of science and learning.

Perhaps there never was an institution which, both from its own nature, and the rules on which it has been conducted, could better be calculated for the preservation of peace and order than that of the Royal Society. The total exclusion from it of whatever relates to religion and politics, cuts off two of the chief sources of dissent among men ; and this end is farther promoted by there being no distinction made, in the  
B 2 election

election of members, with regard to their civil or religious principles. What hath eminently contributed to the tranquillity of the Society, is its never having taken a part, or declared an opinion, in its corporate capacity, with respect to different systems of natural philosophy. Experiments have been produced before it, facts have been recited, papers have been read, and, if thought to contain something curious or useful, have been published; but no sanction is hereby given to any particular hypothesis, which is always left to stand or fall by its own merit.

By a conduct so wise and judicious in philosophical matters, and by the prudence of its regulations in other respects, the society hath been preserved in harmony, with very little intermission, from its first institution to the present time; and it has now subsisted, as a chartered body, more than a hundred-

dred-and-twenty years. Diversities of sentiment have, indeed, taken place among private members; and the papers, in which they record their different opinions, experiments and conclusions, if written with moderation, have been admitted into the "Transactions." But no disputes of consequence have happened that have affected the body in general, excepting in one or two instances which will hereafter be mentioned; and in these cases the business of the ordinary meetings was in no degree interrupted.

This, for so long a period, having been the State of the Royal Society, it must have been matter of surprize and concern to great numbers to hear of the dissentions which have lately arisen in that learned body. Whilst these dissentions must peculiarly interest those who have the honour of belonging to the Society, they cannot be objects of



indifference to the world in general, and especially to such persons as are well-wishers to the prosperity of science and literature. Accordingly, it is not surprising that eager enquiries have been made into the causes and circumstances of the late divisions and debates: nor have attempts been wanting to gratify in this respect the public curiosity. Whether the accounts which have appeared have been written with due moderation and impartiality, the Author of the present Tract does not here determine. He thinks there is room for a farther discussion of the subject, and for setting some points in a fuller light than hath yet been done. Being himself a Fellow of the Royal Society, and sincerely anxious for its honour and prosperity, he believed that he could not employ the leisure of a few weeks better than in drawing up such a state of things as accords with the conscientious dictates of his own mind, and may tend,  
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at the same time, to promote the restoration of peace and harmony.

In the prosecution of this design, the Facts that have lately occurred will first be related without any comment; and then particular observations will be made upon them, taking them, for the most part, in the order in which they happened.

At a Council of the Royal Society, holden on Thursday the 20th of November, 1783, the President, Mr. Isaac Hawkins Browne, Mr. Frere, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Holford, Mr. Hooper, Dr. Maskelyne, Mr. Maty, Mr. Planta, Mr. Stephens, Dr. Watson, and Mr. Wegg, being present, it was resolved, with two dissentient votes, “ That it is the opinion of the Council, that it would be for the benefit of the Society, that the business of the Foreign Secretary be done by a person constantly residing in London.”

In consequence of this resolution, Dr. Hutton, Mathematical Professor at Woolwich, who was the Foreign Secretary, resigned that office, on Thursday the 27th of November, to the Society at large, in the following Terms ;

Mr. President,

“ I have now had the honour to serve  
 “ the Royal Society, in the capacity of  
 “ Foreign Secretary, for several years,  
 “ having been elected to that office in  
 “ the beginning of your own Presi-  
 “ dency : and I should still have no  
 “ objection, but esteem it an honour to  
 “ serve the Society in any thing in  
 “ which I can ever be useful. But,  
 “ understanding, Sir, that the circum-  
 “ stance of my residence, for a great  
 “ part of my time, at the distance of  
 “ nine miles from town, has occasioned,  
 “ or has been imagined to have occa-  
 “ sioned, some difficulty or inconveni-  
 “ ences, I therefore beg leave to return

‡

“ thanks

“ thanks for all favours, and to give  
 “ notice that I wish to resign that of-  
 “ fice.”

On Thursday the 11th of December, being the next ordinary meeting of the Society after the anniversary for the election of the President, Council, and Officers, a motion was made by Mr. Poore, and seconded by Mr. Maty, “ That thanks should be given to Dr. Hutton for the services he had done the Society in the office of their Foreign Secretary, during the time he had held it.” Upon this motion, a previous question was proposed, “ Whether the main question of returning thanks should be put to the vote or not ;” and on the ballot, it was carried in the affirmative, by thirty-three balls to twenty-eight. The main question being then put, was likewise carried in the affirmative, by thirty balls against twenty-five. Accordingly, the  
 Presi-

President, by virtue of his office, returned thanks to Dr. Hutton, in the terms of the motion.

A meeting of the new Council was holden on Wednesday the 17th of December. At this meeting there were present of the old Council, the President, Mr. Brown, Mr. Frere, Mr. Maty, and Mr. Planta; and of the new Council, Mr. Astle, Mr. Duane, Dr. Garden, Sir William Hamilton, Lord Palmerston, Earl Spencer, and Mr. Henry Watson. What had passed at the former Council, and in the Society, relative to Dr. Hutton, was upon this occasion stated by Sir Joseph Banks to the gentlemen assembled; and Mr. Maty at the same time produced, from Dr. Hutton, a written Defence of his Conduct as Foreign Secretary. After some deliberation, one of the new Council framed the following resolution:

tion: “ That it is the opinion of this  
 “ Council, that the resolution of the  
 “ Council of the 20th of November last,  
 “ declaring it necessary that the Foreign  
 “ Secretary should reside in London,  
 “ was well founded, and ought to be  
 “ adhered to.” This resolution was  
 agreed to with one dissentient vote.

On the next day, being Thursday the  
 18th of December, the same Defence of  
 Dr. Hutton which had been laid before  
 the Council was produced by Dr. Horsley,  
 and read before the Society at large;  
 upon which a resolution was moved by  
 Governor Pownall, and seconded by Mr.  
 Glenie, “ That if Dr. Hutton hath been  
 “ in the opinion of any member of the  
 “ Society criminated, it is the opinion  
 “ of the Society that he hath fully jus-  
 “ tified himself.” This resolution was  
 carried by a majority of thirty, there be-  
 ing in favour of it forty-five balls, and  
 5  
 against

against it fifteen\*. Thus ended the transactions relative to the affair, in the year 1783.

\* In the "Appeal to the Fellows of the Royal Society, concerning the measures taken by Sir Joseph Banks their President to compel Dr. Hutton to resign the office of Secretary to the Society for their foreign correspondence," the words of Governor Pownall's motion are differently represented. They are there said to be as follows: "That, if any imputations of neglect of duty in the office of Secretary to the Royal Society for their foreign correspondence, have been cast by any persons on Dr. Hutton, it is the sense of the Society that those imputations are entirely effaced, and Dr. Hutton's conduct in that office perfectly cleared, and shewn to be free from blame, by his written Defence, and by what has been testified in the course of the debate concerning it." It is likewise asserted, in the Appeal, that the ballot was carried in Dr. Hutton's favour by forty-nine balls to fifteen. See the Appeal, p. 24, 25. The account given in the text is taken from the Journal Book of the Society.

In the "Authentic narrative of the dissentions and debates in the Royal Society," Governor Pownall's words are stated exactly as they are found in the Journal Book; but his motion is said to have been carried by forty-nine to fifteen. p. 20. On which side the mistake lies, I am not able to ascertain.

On

On the 8th of January, 1784, being the first meeting of the Society after the Christmas recess, a motion was made by Mr. Anguish, and seconded by the Honourable Mr. Cavendish, “ That this  
 “ Society do approve of Sir Joseph Banks  
 “ as their President, and mean to support  
 “ him in that office.” The previous question being put upon this resolution, the numbers for it were fifty-nine, against it a hundred and six ; after which the main question was carried by a hundred and nineteen to forty-two ; the majority, in support of the President, being seventy-seven.

On the same evening, a resolution was proposed by Lord Viscount Mahon, and unanimously agreed to, “ That it is the  
 “ opinion of this Society, that no mo-  
 “ tion be made out of the usual course  
 “ of business, at any ordinary meeting  
 “ of this Society, unless notice thereof  
 “ shall have been given at the meeting  
 “ next



“ next but one preceding it ; which  
 “ notice shall be entered on the minutes  
 “ of the meeting at which such notice  
 “ shall be given.”

On the 29th of January, a new statute was passed in Council, in addition to those which had formerly been enacted for regulating the ordinary meetings of the Society. The statute was as follows :

VI. “ That the meetings of the Socie-  
 “ ty may not be wasted by unprofitable  
 “ debates, contrary to the intent and  
 “ meaning of the fifth Section of this  
 “ Chapter; it is constituted, establish-  
 “ ed, and ordained, that every motion  
 “ or question, proposed to be balloted  
 “ for by the Society, shall be fairly  
 “ transcribed on paper, and being sign-  
 “ ed by six or more Fellows of the So-  
 “ ciety, it shall be by them delivered  
 “ to one of the Secretaries at a meeting  
 “ of

“ of the Society ; and shall thereupon be  
 “ read immediately after the declaration  
 “ of the presents on the table ; and af-  
 “ ter being marked by the Secretary  
 “ with the date of the day when deli-  
 “ vered, it shall be fixed up at the  
 “ common meeting room of the Society  
 “ at the next ordinary meeting ; and  
 “ on the meeting next following the  
 “ same it shall be put to the ballot,  
 “ unless those who have signed it agree  
 “ to withdraw it.

“ But nothing contained in this sta-  
 “ tute shall be construed to extend to  
 “ matters relative to elections, or the  
 “ ordinary business of the Society.”

The fifth Section of the eleventh Chapter of the Book of Statutes, mentioned in the above extract, ordains, that the business of the ordinary meetings of the Society shall be, to order and take account of philosophical experi-  
 ments

ments and observations; to read and hear letters, reports, and other papers, concerning philosophical matters; as also to view the productions of nature and art: and thereupon to consider what may be deduced from them, or any of them; and how far they, or any of them, may be improved for uses or discovery.

At the meeting of the Society on Thursday the 29th of January, Mr. Baron Maseres, in conformity to the resolution which had been agreed to on the 8th of the same month, gave notice that on the 12th of February he should make the following motion :

“ That as it appears to be the sense  
 “ of the Society, that Dr. Hutton, by  
 “ his written Defence, and by what has  
 “ been said in support of it, has entire-  
 “ ly refuted all the insinuations that had  
 “ been thrown out concerning his neg-  
 “ lect of the duties of Secretary for the  
 “ foreign

“ foreign correspondence, it be recom-  
 “ mended by the Society to their Presi-  
 “ dent and Council, to rescind the or-  
 “ der lately made, for preventing per-  
 “ sons residing out of London from  
 “ holding the said office, and to request  
 “ Dr. Hutton to resume it.”

Mr. Maseres being informed, at this time, by the President, of the new statute which had been passed by the Council in the morning, requiring the signature of six or more Fellows of the Society, the motion was immediately signed as follows : Francis Maseres. Nevil Maskelyne. Samuel Horsley. Edward Poore. William Brown. James Horsfall. George Shuckburg. Isaac Goffet. John Hyacinth de Magellan. William James. John Wilson. Thomas Brand Hollis.

On Thursday the 12th of February,  
 Mr. Baron Maseres moved his resolution,  
 C which

which was seconded by Dr. Horsley. Before the question was put, Dr. Watson, a Vice-President, and one of the most ancient, respectable, and learned members of the Society, presented the Council's statement of Dr. Hutton's conduct in his late office. This was done in conformity to a resolution which had passed that morning in Council, to the following purpose: "That leave be  
 " given, *salvo jure* to the Council, to  
 " any member thereof, to lay before  
 " the Society this evening a statement  
 " of the reasons proceeded upon in  
 " framing the resolution in consequence  
 " of which Dr. Hutton resigned his  
 " office of Foreign Secretary."

Upon the ballot for Mr. Masferes's motion, it was rejected by a majority of thirty-eight; the affirmative balls being forty-seven, the negative eighty-five.

On

On the same evening, notice was given of two other motions, to be considered on the 26th of February. These were,

I. “ That it would be highly indecent  
“ and improper, if the President of  
“ this Society should, in any future in-  
“ stance, solicit votes either for or  
“ against any person, duly recommend-  
“ ed by certificate as qualified to be  
“ made a Fellow of the Royal Society,  
“ on the evening of election.”

II. “ That it would be highly inde-  
“ cent and improper, if the President  
“ of this Society should hereafter, ei-  
“ ther in the election of candidates, or  
“ upon any other occasion, endeavour  
“ to avail himself of his situation, to  
“ influence the vote of any officer of the  
“ Society.”

These two motions, agreeably to the new statute, were delivered to the Se-  
C 2 cretary

cretary in writing, and signed by nine gentlemen; Samuel Horsley, Nevil Mafkelyne, William James, Henry Maty, Charles Hutton, John Hyacinth de Magellan, Francis Maferes, Thomas Brand Hollis, Richard Paul Jodrell.

When, on the 26th of February, the preceding motions came to be considered, the first of them was rejected by a majority of eighty-eight; the affirmative balls being twenty-seven, and the negative a hundred and fifteen. To the second question an amendment was prefixed by Lord Mulgrave, which made the whole run as follows:

*‘ Though it does not appear to this Society, that the present or any former President has availed himself of his situation to influence the vote of any officer of this Society, it is now necessary to declare, “ That it would be highly “ indecent and improper, if the Prefi-  
“ dent*

“ dent of this Society should hereafter,  
 “ either in the election of candidates, or  
 “ upon any other occasion, endeavour  
 “ to avail himself of his situation, to  
 “ influence the vote of any officer of  
 “ the Society.”

Upon putting this motion, it was re-  
 jected, like the former, by a great ma-  
 jority; the affirmatives being twenty-  
 three, and the negatives a hundred-and-  
 two.

On Thursday the 25th of March, Mr.  
 Maty resigned his office as one of the  
 Secretaries to the Royal Society; and  
 upon the declaration of the vacancy,  
 two gentlemen offered themselves as  
 candidates to succeed him, Dr. Hutton  
 and Dr. Blagden. The election took  
 place on Wednesday the 5th of May,  
 when Dr. Blagden was chosen by a  
 majority of a hundred; the balls in  
 his favour being a hundred-and-thirty-



nine, and thirty-nine for Dr. Hutton. At the same time, Dr. Blagden was elected one of the Council of the Society, in the room of Mr. Duane, who had resigned.

Such is the State of Facts as taken from the Journal Book of the Royal Society, the Minutes of the Council, and other authentic information ; and I have related them without any reference to the various circumstances with which they were accompanied, that they first may be seen by the reader in one view. It appears, upon the face of them, that the President and Council were dissatisfied with the manner in which the business of the foreign correspondence had been conducted ; that the method they adopted of expressing their dissatisfaction occasioned Dr. Hutton's resignation ; that his being obliged to quit his office was resented by many of his Friends ; that public thanks were re-  
turned

turned to him for the services he had performed; that the attempt to get him restored to the station he had left did not meet with success; that he was equally unsuccessful as a candidate for the Secretariſhip vacated by Mr. Maty; that it was determined by the Society to ſupport Sir Joſeph Banks in the chair; and that the motions tending to criminate his conduct were rejected by great majorities. But ſuch a general ſurvey of the matter will afford a very inſufficient light into the late debates, unleſs I enter into a more particular diſcuſſion of the events by which they were excited. However, before I proceed to this buſineſs, it may not be improper to ſay ſomething concerning the ſtate of my own mind at the beginning of the conteſt. With the Preſident I had no degree of connection, and ſcarcely what can be called a perſonal acquaintance; having never ſpoken to him but once or twice in my life, and then only

upon official occasions. In two or three of the instances wherein candidates for the Fellowship of the Royal Society had either been rejected on the ballot, or had their names withdrawn, I was by no means satisfied with his interposition, having been warmly solicitous for the election of the gentlemen who had not the good fortune to be successful. I had, likewise, an idea, though I have since found it to be a mistaken one, that, in a literary application which was made to him for some information I wanted, he had not treated me with respect. From these circumstances, my prejudices did not run in Sir Joseph Banks's favour. Besides this, it was represented to me, that his behaviour had, in several cases, been arbitrary and violent, and that it had particularly been so with regard to Dr. Hutton. It was, therefore, with a full persuasion of the President's having been not a little blameable, that I attended

the meeting of the Society on the 11th of December. But, notwithstanding this was the state of my mind, I should have acted very unworthily, if I had been influenced in my conduct by any other dictates than those of reason and conviction. The only views of a candid and liberal man ought to be to promote the welfare of the Society independently of personal considerations and partialities; and in claiming this praise to myself, I claim nothing peculiar; nothing but what I must suppose to be the object of all my brethren, however different may have been the opinions they have formed, or the parts they have sustained in the late divisions.

The grand circumstance in the contest, and which led to all the other events, being the affair of Dr. Hutton, this will require to be first considered.

In the year 1727, a Mr. Robert Keck left a legacy of five hundred pounds to  
the

the Royal Society, with a direction that the money should be laid out, and the profits bestowed on some one of the Fellows, who should be appointed to carry on a foreign correspondence. The money having accordingly been laid out, produces twenty pounds a year, being all the salary of the office. Mr. Keck's legacy was bequeathed to the President, Council, and Fellows of the Society. But though the Fellows are mentioned in the will, they have never, as a body, concerned themselves in the appointment of the Secretary for the foreign correspondence, that business having always been transacted by the President and Council only. Indeed, the office not being created by charter, was not subject to the same regulations which take place with regard to the two Home Secretaries, who, though usually continued in their stations, are subject to an annual re-election. The President and Council, in thus taking upon them,  
from

from the beginning, the appointment and direction of the Foreign Secretari-ship, did not act without advice. Sir John Fortescue, one of the most eminent lawyers of the time, having been consulted upon the occasion, gave it as his opinion, that the management of the foreign correspondence being vested in the President and Council, they must therefore appoint the Foreign Secretary. In consequence of this original regulation, the office has been very little known. Several of the Fellows of the Society might not be acquainted with it at all, and others might be ignorant that it was held by Dr. Hutton.

It was on the 14th of January, 1779, that the Doctor was unanimously chosen, by the President and Council, to be the Secretary for carrying on the foreign correspondence; and it seems to be generally agreed that he was principally indebted for the appointment to the  
interest

interest and favour of Sir Joseph Banks. In other respects Sir Joseph appears to have been friendly to Dr. Hutton. He supported him, if I mistake not, when he was a candidate for one of the Home Secretariats, at the time that Mr. Maty was elected; and it was possibly to make some slight compensation to him for the disappointment he had then met with, that he was constituted the Foreign Secretary. We are farther informed, that in a case where some injury was attempted to be done to Dr. Hutton at the Board of Longitude, the President resisted it warmly, generously espoused his cause, and rendered him an essential service. These instances of regard will not, indeed, apologise for Sir Joseph Banks's conduct, if he afterwards treated the Doctor with injustice. They deserve, nevertheless, to be mentioned, as clearly shewing, that to whatever causes the subsequent disagreement between these two gentlemen may be ascribed,

ascribed, there did not originally subsist in the mind of the President a dislike to Dr. Hutton, but, on the contrary, a desire to serve him as far as lay in his power.

The duties of the Foreign Secretary, as settled in the year 1757, are as follows :

First, That he transmit to foreigners notice of their election into the Society.

Secondly, That he return thanks, when directed by the President or Vice-president, for books or other communications from foreigners.

Thirdly, That he answer letters from abroad, and write to such foreigners as the President or Vice-president shall direct.

Fourthly, That he enter, for the use of the Society, in a book, a list of such letters as he shall so write, with their dates, and copies of such as the President or Vice-president shall direct.

And



And, Fifthly, That he translate such papers as shall be referred to him for that purpose.

These were the regulations that stood upon the books of the Council, at the time in which Dr. Hutton entered upon his appointment. It appears, however, to be understood, that, on account of the smallness of the salary annexed to the office, a compliance with the whole of these rules was not expected. Accordingly, the doctor did not write any letters to foreigners; but he was not censured by the President and Council for this omission. The only thing required of him was the translation of papers; and the management of the correspondence with foreigners was left to the Home Secretaries.

Thus matters continued till the beginning of the year 1782, when it was resolved by the President and Council

to alter the establishment of the foreign secretariship, or rather to reduce it more strictly to its original destination. To this they were determined by a conviction, that the emolument of the office was by no means adequate to the whole of the duty annexed to it, and by the complaints which were made by foreigners, that their letters to the society remained unanswered, and their donations unacknowledged. These complaints are asserted to have been frequent and clamorous: but it is to be remembered that they could not hitherto be in any degree chargeable on Dr. Hutton. To prevent, however, such complaints in future, and to retrieve the character and honour of the Royal Society, the Council appointed a Committee to consider of the best methods of effecting that purpose. The Committee met upon the business, and on the 7th of February 1782, reported, that they had agreed on the following regulations:

lations : first, that the Foreign Secretary transmit to all foreigners, who may be elected into the Society, notice of their election.

Secondly, That he return thanks for books and all other presents from foreigners, whenever such thanks are ordered by the Society; that for his information, the Clerk, under the inspection of the Senior Secretary, enter in a book all the presents given to the Society; and that this book be laid before each Council, as a check for the regular performance of this duty.

Thirdly, That he answer all letters transmitted to the Society by foreigners, and write such other letters to foreigners as the President or Council shall direct; that he lay such answers and letters before the Council for their approbation; and that, on their being approved of, he enter them into a book to be provided

ed for that purpose, and dispatch the originals. A fourth article was added, relative to the translation of papers, but which no longer made this matter a part of the duty or business of the Foreign Secretary.

The Council having agreed to the regulations prepared by the Committee, they were laid before Dr. Hutton, on the 21st of March 1782, who desired time to consider whether the place would be acceptable to him on the conditions which were now specified. His request was granted, and on the 25th of April, he signified his acceptance of the office of Foreign Secretary, on the terms proposed by the Council.

From this time, then, the duty of the correspondence abroad lay particularly on Dr. Hutton, who was to conduct it in exact conformity to the three regulations which he had agreed to obey.

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It might, therefore, have been expected that henceforwards no uneasiness would arise with regard to the transactions of the Royal Society with foreigners. But, to whatever causes it was owing, this just and reasonable expectation was not answered. During the summer of 1783, fresh complaints were received of neglect in the manner of carrying on the business of the foreign correspondence. These complaints alarmed the Council, and occasioned the enquiry which was followed by the resolution of the 20th of November, above related. By far the majority of the Council seemed inclined to vacate the office immediately; but the remonstrances of Dr. Maskelyne and Mr. Maty, and a regard for Dr. Hutton's character, induced them to adopt what to them appeared the more moderate measure of declaring, that it would be for the benefit of the Society, that the duty of the Foreign Secretary should be transacted  
by

by a person constantly residing in London. During the examination of the affair, it was urged by Dr. Maskelyne, who was supported in the proposal by Mr. Maty, that Dr. Hutton ought to be heard in his own defence. This will be thought by many to have been a reasonable request, and I must declare myself to be of the same opinion. The President and Council were of a different sentiment; and it is an act of justice to them to mention the motives by which I have been assured they were actuated. They were undoubtedly persuaded that there had been deficiencies in the discharge of the duties of the foreign Secretariship, and did not think that the matter was likely to be remedied so long as the office continued in Dr. Hutton's possession. Having, at the same time, a due sense of the general excellence of the doctor's character, and of his great abilities in more important respects, they were willing, by

the resolutions they adopted, to afford him an opportunity of quietly giving up his appointment. This they apprehended would prevent discussions and altercations, which could not fail to be on both sides extremely disagreeable. If Dr. Hutton had accordingly determined to resign his office to the Council, the affair would not have been publicly known. Even great numbers of the members of the Royal Society might have been unacquainted with it, or, at least, might not have entertained any degree of suspicion that the doctor had been criminated with regard to his transactions as Foreign Secretary. As he found that his holding the place was not acceptable to the President and Council, perhaps he would have acted a more dignified part in peaceably retiring from a situation in which he had not been so happy as to give satisfaction, and the emolument of which was too trifling to be an object of attention.

A different

A different line of conduct was pursued by Dr. Hutton, and no doubt on such grounds as appeared to him to be satisfactory. He might think it an act of justice to his own character, not to sit down tamely under the mark of disapprobation he had really, though covertly received, but to bring the affair into open view. Instead, therefore, of resigning his appointment to the President and Council, by whom it had been conferred upon him, and who alone had uniformly transacted all matters in which the foreign Secretariship is concerned, he made his resignation to the Society at large, in the words before related. Whether he acted wisely in this respect, might possibly admit of some deliberation.

When, on the 11th of December, 1783, Mr. Poore made his motion for thanks being given to Dr. Hutton, on account of his services as Foreign Secre-



tary, the resolution was objected to, on the part of the President, from the consideration, that, if the doctor had been ever so punctual and meritorious in the discharge of his duty, the Society at large, could not know that this was the case, and, therefore, could not with propriety pass a vote in his favour. Sir Joseph Banks, at the same time, proposed, that a committee should be appointed, to enquire into the merits of Dr. Hutton's conduct in his office, before he received the Society's approbation. It is acknowledged, on all hands, that this was a reasonable proposal; and yet it was passed over in silence. It has been said, that the President appeared very ready to let the measure drop; but I do not recollect on what circumstance such a surmise is grounded. Perhaps, the silence of Sir Joseph's friends might proceed from an idea that the whole affair of the foreign Secretariship was a matter which belonged to the Council,

and

and consequently that it did not properly fall under the consideration of the Society in general. On the other hand, the advocates for Dr. Hutton were equally backward in supporting the proposal. That they were not eager for it is certain; and Dr. Horsley afterwards assigned a very offensive reason why he should have opposed the appointment of a committee. To whatever the neglect of complying with the proposition was owing, impartiality will confess, that it had all the appearance of fairness and candour, on the part of the President; and it is to be lamented that it did not take effect, as, perhaps, the disagreeable events which have since happened, might in that case have been prevented.

The view of the Society, in voting thanks to Dr. Hutton, was probably to pay a general testimony of regard to an ingenious and worthy member. Votes

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of this kind are usual in most Societies, when any officer quits his situation; and they are not always the result of a particular enquiry into the exact conduct of the gentleman on whom the compliment is bestowed. Men of liberal and candid minds are willing to be as polite as possible, and to suppose the best in cases of this nature. It was urged by Dr. Horsley, that unless specific accusations were brought against Dr. Hutton, the general merit of his scientific character ought to be the only circumstance which should influence the ballot. It is evident from the vote of thanks being carried only by a majority of five, that many fellows of the Society were of a different opinion. If the sole question had been concerning the merit of Dr. Hutton as a man of science, every ball would have appeared in his favour.

Dr. Hutton did not rest satisfied with having obtained the thanks of the Society

ciety for his services as Foreign Secretary. Upon the ground of these thanks, he was encouraged to bring the question of his conduct in that office before the new council, which had been elected on the first of December. But it has been seen that he was as unsuccessful with the new Council, as he had been with the old. Notwithstanding all that was alleged in his written defence, and all that Mr. Maty could urge in support of his friend, every other member present persisted in maintaining the resolution of the former Council.

The different effect which Dr. Hutton's defence had at the meeting of the Society, on the 18th of December, from what it had produced the day before in the Council, is apparent from the success of Governor Pownall's motion. Whilst the Council, with only one dissentient vote, remained unsatisfied with the doctor's vindication, it was  
carried

carried in the Society, by a majority of forty-five to fifteen, that he had fully justified himself. Resolutions so discordant must appear surprizing to many of my readers. Whether all who agreed to Governor Pownall's motion, were perfectly competent to the determination of the whole question, I do not take upon me to decide. There can be no doubt but that the generality present acted from the conviction of their own minds, in consequence of the evidence which was produced in Dr. Hutton's favour, and to which the Council had not then thought proper to give any specific answer. Perhaps, too, some of the members, besides their desire of paying a tribute of respect to the doctor, might be influenced by a view to the general peace of the Society, hoping, that here the matter would so far be brought to a conclusion as to be no longer the subject of public debates.

Dr.

Dr. Hutton's Defence, stated as it was, without any thing material being alledged in opposition to it, could not but appear deserving of consideration. That it may not be injured by an abstract, I shall give the whole of it in his own words.

Dr. HUTTON'S DEFENCE.

“ AS to the duties of the second  
 “ agreement made Feb. 1782, I have  
 “ regularly fulfilled them all, as far as  
 “ there was ever any occasion offered, by  
 “ returning thanks for all foreign pre-  
 “ sents received, and prepared answers  
 “ to all the letters I have received, and  
 “ sent them to be laid before Council  
 “ too, according to article three of the  
 “ agreement. And the reason why no  
 “ answers were entered in a book as re-  
 “ ferred by that article is as follows.  
 “ In the first place then I never received  
 “ any but three letters. I know of no  
 “ more, and these were given to me by  
 “ the

“ the Clerk, who said he had them from  
 “ the Secretary to deliver to me. Now  
 “ the first two of these three were given  
 “ me at the same time, being as it were  
 “ but one letter, written at the same  
 “ time and by the same party: it was  
 “ from the College of Cambridge in  
 “ the American States, consisting of two  
 “ parts; the one part was only to return  
 “ thanks to the Royal Society, for a  
 “ present of the Astronomer Royal’s  
 “ printed book of Observations, and the  
 “ other part was to announce a paper  
 “ of Astronomical Observations sent at  
 “ the same time from the College to  
 “ the Society. Now as the first of  
 “ these two parts could require little or  
 “ no answer, I delayed answering them  
 “ till their paper of Observations should  
 “ pass the Society and Council, that I  
 “ might be able to inform the College  
 “ as to the fate of it, whether it was  
 “ to be printed or not; and I asked Dr.  
 “ Maskeline from time to time if it  
 “ had

“ had passed the Council, which as  
 “ soon as I knew of, and had provided  
 “ the means of transmitting my answer  
 “ to the College, through the hands  
 “ of a friend at New York (for we were  
 “ then at war with America) I prepared  
 “ my answer, and sent it by the Clerk  
 “ to be laid before Council for their  
 “ approbation, with the original letter,  
 “ to which it was an answer. The  
 “ Clerk accordingly delivered it to Mr.  
 “ Planta in Council, for that purpose,  
 “ but who, without laying my answer  
 “ before the Council, returned it to the  
 “ Clerk to give it me back again, saying  
 “ that it did not signify now, as he  
 “ himself had answered it. So much  
 “ then for the answer to the twin letter.  
 “ The only other letter that was given  
 “ to me was also by the Clerk, who  
 “ said he had it from the Secretary to  
 “ give me: I asked the Clerk if he  
 “ knew for what purpose it was deli-  
 “ vered to me, as it was only a letter to  
 “ announce



“ announce a present (from a Mr. Gaal,  
 “ or some such name) sent to the So-  
 “ ciety, and seemed only to require a  
 “ common letter of thanks, as in the  
 “ second article of the agreement; but  
 “ he said he knew not, as he was only  
 “ told to deliver it to me. I then asked  
 “ Mr. Planta about it, and he informed  
 “ me it only required a common letter  
 “ of thanks for the present, and which  
 “ letter of thanks I accordingly wrote  
 “ and sent like as all the rest, and which  
 “ therefore was not a letter to be en-  
 “ tered in a book, as by the third article  
 “ of agreement. Hence then it appears  
 “ there can be no answers appear as  
 “ entered in a book, since the only  
 “ (twin) one I was prevented from an-  
 “ swering, and my answer never laid  
 “ before the Council. I am therefore  
 “ not culpable of any breach of duty.  
 “ But even if something of this kind  
 “ had been the case—If I had been dila-  
 “ tory in some part, or if I had delayed

“ or neglected some answers to letters,  
“ &c. might I not have expected to have  
“ been reminded of it by the President,  
“ or by some person for him, to have  
“ quickened my application, or to have  
“ given me occasion to clear up the  
“ matter, that there might be no mis-  
“ understanding, before a vote of cen-  
“ sure should be passed on me, amount-  
“ ing to a discharge from my office,  
“ unheard, and without the knowledge  
“ of any suspicion, or of any neglect or  
“ offence given? And for this pur-  
“ pose the President had opportunities  
“ enough given him to speak to me  
“ about that or any other business, as I  
“ purposely have constantly attended at  
“ least every other public meeting of  
“ the Society, and very often every  
“ meeting, to the great neglect of my  
“ many other important concerns. And  
“ these frequent attendances in town,  
“ where I have commonly remained for  
“ three days each time I came, have  
“ obliged

“ obliged me to keep apartments in  
 “ town, the expences of which have  
 “ always cost me more than double the  
 “ salary I received for the discharge of  
 “ my office. But notwithstanding all  
 “ these opportunities, since the last  
 “ agreement in February 1782, the  
 “ President has never once opened his  
 “ mouth to me on the subject of my  
 “ office, nor ever sent me any message  
 “ concerning it.”

Before I proceed to make any remarks  
 on Dr. Hutton's Defence, I shall insert  
 an extract from the paper delivered to  
 the Society by Dr. Watson, in conse-  
 quence of the Council's permission, and  
 which, though not presented till the  
 12th of February, 1784, will most pro-  
 perly be taken notice of in this place.  
 The other circumstances contained in  
 the paper have either already been re-  
 lated, or will hereafter be mentioned.  
 The extract is as follows :

“ First,

“ First, That in the book ordered to  
 “ be kept for the information of the  
 “ Foreign Secretary, the presents re-  
 “ ceived from foreigners, since the com-  
 “ mencement of this new regulation,  
 “ amounting to about forty-five in num-  
 “ ber, had been regularly entered; that,  
 “ as to fifteen of them, there were mar-  
 “ ginal entries all of one date; that to  
 “ the other thirty there were no such  
 “ marginal notes. Upon enquiry, it  
 “ was indeed asserted that printed forms  
 “ had been dispatched for all the other  
 “ presents.

“ Secondly, Two letters were found  
 “ in the same book, which had been put  
 “ in there for Dr. Hutton; the one  
 “ from the Electoral Academy of Man-  
 “ heim, and the other from Mr. Bonnet  
 “ of Geneva, accompanying a present.  
 “ To neither of these letters was ever  
 “ any answer laid before the Council,  
 “ no copies of answers were found, nor  
 “ were there any memorandums upon

E

“ the

“ the letters of their having been an-  
 “ swered. It has since been found, that  
 “ the printed form of thanks had been  
 “ sent to Mr. Bonnet for his present,  
 “ but that no notice had ever been  
 “ taken of his letter ; and how much  
 “ that gentleman felt himself slighted by  
 “ this very cavalier treatment, will best  
 “ appear from an extract of a letter he  
 “ lately wrote to Dr. Turton.

“ Thirdly, Another letter was found  
 “ in the same book, signed de Gaull,  
 “ likewise accompanying a present. If  
 “ this letter was answered by a printed  
 “ form, which was possibly the case,  
 “ that was certainly an improper mode,  
 “ since at least the receipt of the letter  
 “ should have been acknowledged ; but  
 “ if a particular answer was written,  
 “ it was certainly never laid before the  
 “ Council, nor is there any copy of it  
 “ extant, both which were expressly re-  
 “ quired by the third article of the in-  
 “ structions.”

Upon a perusal of the preceding papers, it appears that Dr. Hutton's vindication of himself with regard to the two letters from Harvard College, at Cambridge in New England, was judged to be satisfactory by the President and Council; since his conduct in this respect makes no part of the general charge brought against him in the State of Facts delivered in to the Society.

It farther appears that the President and Council were not equally satisfied with what Dr. Hutton had alleged in his own Defence, with relation to the letter and present of Mons. de Gaul; because they still insist that the Doctor had not complied with the requisition contained in the third article of the instructions.

Besides the case of Mons. de Gaul, two other instances are mentioned, which seem to be of greater importance, the

letters and presents from the Electoral Academy of Manheim, and from Mr. Bonnet of Geneva. This gentleman was so much hurt at the apprehended want of attention and politeness with which he had been treated, as to complain of it in very strong terms.

In addition to these charges, it is apparent, from the first article of the above extract, that it was the opinion of the Council, that the duty of the foreign Secretariship, with regard to the making of the proper entries of thanks and answers to letters, had been executed in an irregular manner.

As some of the circumstances here specified, are not included in Dr. Hutton's defence; I shall have recourse to what hath been said upon the subject in other publications.

With regard to Mons. Bonnet, it is acknowledged, that Dr. Hutton did  
 5 write

write to that gentleman only a short and dry letter of thanks for his present. But in justification of this it is asserted, that in writing such a short and dry letter, he obeyed an order of Council, made ten years before, by which it was resolved, that all letters written in acknowledgment of the receipt of books presented to the Society, should be written according to a certain printed form, and should contain nothing more than the name of the book, and the time when it was received, with the thanks of the Society for the present\*.

But when Mr. Bonnet presented his works to the Royal Society, they were accompanied with a letter; and to his no answer was given. The neglect, however, turned out to be principally owing to Mr. Maty, who, in his speech made in the debate of the 12th of February, took the shame on himself.

\* Appeal to the Fellows of the Royal Society, p. 25.



Being engaged in a business which employed the greatest part of his attention, he carried away Mr. Bonnet's letter, and kept it for some months †. The Council could not be acquainted with this circumstance when the representation was drawn up, which was laid before the Society; and, at any rate, it is certain that there was just cause to complain that the duty of the Foreign Secretariship had not been discharged; to whomsoever the deficiency, in the peculiar case referred to, was found, at length, to be owing.

With respect to the fifteen letters of thanks, which were dispatched by Dr. Hutton in one day, the fact is acknowledged by him; but it is insisted upon that no blame belongs to him on that account. The manner of his doing the business, it is said, was to look, from time to time, into a certain book in

† Authentic Narrative, p. 102.

which

which the Clerk of the Society enters the minutes of the presents received from abroad, and from thence to extract the titles of the donors, their place of abode, and the proper manner of directing letters to them, and then to send them the letters of thanks. Dr. Hutton, it is asserted, did accordingly examine the minute book, from time to time, and did immediately make and send away letters of thanks to the donors for all the presents he had found to be there entered, whether many or few : so that, if there were fifteen letters sent away all at the same time, it was because he found the presents that occasioned them all entered in the said book at the same time\*.

In this justification of the Doctor, no notice is taken of one circumstance mentioned in the Council's State of Facts, which is, that out of forty-five

\* " Appeal," p. 26, 27.

resents received from foreigners, since the commencement of the new regulations, to thirty of them there were no marginal entries. It is not, however, doubted, but that the letters of thanks for these presents had been dispatched in due form.

The case of the Electoral Academy of Manheim is involved in no small degree of obscurity. It is remarkable that there is nothing said concerning it "in the " Appeal to the Fellows of the Royal " Society," though that tract is written specifically and solely in Dr. Hutton's vindication. The only mention which I any where find, on the part of the Doctor's advocates, of the affair of the Academy of Manheim, is in the following words, extracted from that speech of Mr. Maty's to which I have lately referred. " Now, Sir, for the fifth " letter ; it appears, by the note upon " it, *I believe* in your own hand-writ-  
" ing,"

“ing,” [*President*. “In my hand-  
 “writing, Sir, but that is two years  
 “ago.”] “No matter how long; it  
 “appears, I say, that it was kept till  
 “somebody should be found to under-  
 “take the meteorological correspond-  
 “ence proposed in it. That person is  
 “not found yet: but kept or not, Dr.  
 “Hutton never saw it: indeed, it was  
 “not even mentioned to either of the  
 “Councils, nor do I believe, though  
 “this I cannot affirm, that it was in  
 “the book when Dr. Hutton, who  
 “was dismissed the 18th of November,  
 “called at the house the 17th of Octo-  
 “ber, to see what business there was  
 “for him\*.” Whatever force there  
 may be in this defence, which if it had  
 been more perspicuous might, perhaps,  
 have been more forcible, or wherever  
 the blame lay, it is certain that the let-  
 ter of the Academy of Manheim, as  
 well as that of Mr. Bonnet, was not

\* “Authentic Narrative,” p. 102.

answered.

answered. Now it must be lamented that any instances have occurred in which neglect has been thrown upon eminent scientific institutions, or upon men of great philosophical and literary merit. The apprehension of having been treated with disregard or contempt by such an illustrious body as that of the Royal Society of London, cannot but be deeply felt. How much Mr. Bonnet was affected by it, is apparent in the following extract from the letter written by him to Dr. Turton.

Extract of Mr. BONNET'S Letter to  
Dr. TURTON.

*à Tenthod le 2° Juillet, 1784.*

“ VOTRE bonne lettre du 22°  
 “ d’Avril, mon très cher ami, m’ap-  
 “ prenoit la peine que vous aviez prise  
 “ de vous informer auprès du President  
 “ de la Societé Royale, si le Secetaire  
 “ avoit eu soin de s’acquitter auprès du  
 “ moi

“ moi de ses fonctions. Je vous re-  
 “ mercie fort de votre attention ami-  
 “ cale. J’ai, en effet, reçu une lettre  
 “ de ce Secretaire qui très sûrement ne  
 “ lui avoit pas beaucoup coûté à com-  
 “ poser : la voici. *La Societé Royale a*  
 “ *reçu le present de la collection complete*  
 “ *de vos oeuvres, et vous en remercie.*  
 “ *J’ai l’honneur d’être votre très humble,*  
 “ *Éc. Des appartemens de la Societé*  
 “ *Royale. Charles Hutton, S. R. S.*  
 “ Dites-moi, je vous prie, si c’est ainsi  
 “ qu’on devoit repondre à une lettre  
 “ telle que celle que j’avois adressé à  
 “ la Societé Royale pour accompagner  
 “ l’envoi de la 1<sup>re</sup> livraison. J’ai l’hon-  
 “ neur d’appartenir à bien dës acade-  
 “ mies, et je puis vous assurer que ja-  
 “ mais je n’ai reçu d’aucune des lettres  
 “ aussi laconiques et aussi seches que  
 “ celles que j’ai reçu de la Societé Roy-  
 “ ale. Je n’en infere autre chose finon,  
 “ que les Secretaires de cette compagnie  
 “ s’acquitent très nonchalemment et à  
 “ moins

“ moins de fraix possibles de leurs fonc-  
 “ tions auprès des membres étrangers,  
 “ et même des plus anciens, car il y a  
 “ actuellement quarante ans que j’ai  
 “ l’honneur d’être membre de la Société  
 “ Royale, et jamais je n’ai manqué de  
 “ lui faire hommage de mes produc-  
 “ tions. Vous eties donc très bien  
 “ fondé, mon bon ami, dans les repro-  
 “ ches que vous faifies à ce sujet au  
 “ President de la compagnie. Il fera  
 “ même très convenable que vous ne  
 “ negliges pas les occasions de frapper  
 “ sur le negligence des Secretaires et sur  
 “ la maniere dont ils s’acquittent de leur  
 “ office auprès des membres étrangers,  
 “ qu’ils traitent, comme vous le voyes,  
 “ bien cavalierement \*.”

It

\* Translation of Mr. BONNET’s Letter.

Tenthod, July 2d, 1783.

My dear Friend,

YOUR agreeable favour of the 22d of April, ap-  
 prized me of the trouble you had taken to inform  
 yourself, from the President of the Royal Society, whe-  
 ther their Foreign Secretary had performed his duty  
 “ towards

It hath been alleged, with regard to this complaint, " That Mr. Bonnet  
" is

towards me, in a proper manner. I thank you sincerely for this instance of your friendly attention. I have indeed received a letter from your Foreign Secretary, which certainly did not cost him much pains to compose, and here it is: " The Royal Society have  
" received the present of a complete collection of your  
" works, and return you their thanks. I have the  
" honour to be your very humble servant, &c. From  
" the apartments of the Royal Society. Charles  
" Hutton, F. R. S." Tell me, I beseech you, if it be *thus*, that a Secretary ought to reply to such a letter as I had addressed to the Royal Society, when I sent my first volume. I have the honour to be a member of many Academies, and I can assure you, that I never yet have received from any of them so very laconic a letter, and one so very dry, as that which I have received from your Royal Society. But I thence infer nothing more, than that your Foreign Secretary performs his duty to the foreign members, and even towards those of the oldest standing, in a very careless way; and with the least possible trouble to himself. I have now, for these forty years past, enjoyed the honour of being a foreign member, and have never once failed in paying to the Society the compliment I thought due of sending them all my publications.—You were, therefore, my good friend, very well authorised, in making the report you did, to  
the



“ is ignorant of our national character ;  
 “ that he is not aware in what con-  
 “ tempt the high-minded Englishman  
 “ holds that sort of reputation, which  
 “ is built on a vain reciprocation of  
 “ compliments between men of learn-  
 “ ing ; and that he is ignorant of the  
 “ rules of the Society, which allow no  
 “ larger thanks than those which Dr.  
 “ Hutton gave\*.” It is true that the  
 Royal Society gives no judgment either  
 upon the papers and inventions imme-  
 diately communicated to it, and pub-  
 lished in its own volume, or upon the  
 works, however valuable, which it re-  
 ceives as presents ; and in this respect  
 it acts with great wisdom. But not to  
 mention that, in the cases of the Elec-

the President on this subject ; nay, it will even be far-  
 ther *highly proper*, that you omit no suitable occasion of  
 remonstrating against the negligence of your Secretary,  
 and the manner in which he acquits himself of his duty  
 towards foreign members, who are treated, as you see,  
 very cavalierly.

\* “ Authentic Narrative,” p. 50.

toral Academy at Manheim, and of Monf. Bonnet, the intentions of the Council were not complied with, I shall beg leave, without meaning to convey the least censure on Dr. Hutton, who undoubtedly thought himself fully justified in what he did, to suggest, whether, besides sending the printed form, it may not sometimes be proper for the Foreign Secretary to write a few lines, in his own name, to eminent individuals, or learned public bodies, expressing his personal respect, and the pleasure he has in communicating the thanks of the Society. If thus he should occasionally go beyond what may be deemed the strict demands of duty, perhaps he would rather deserve applause than blame. It could not have been amiss to have paid a compliment to such a man as Monsieur Bonnet of Geneva, whose writings are so numerous and so excellent; who has spent a long and honourable life in the cause of  
science

science and literature ; and who has been forty years one of the foreign members of the Royal Society : nor would something of the like nature have been improper in the case of the Academy of Manheim. Any attentions of this kind, coming from the Foreign Secretary, would have been received with pleasure, as marks of private regard and esteem, without making the Royal Society give any opinion, as such, upon the works communicated. Foreigners, who are very exact and copious in these attentions, may expect them in return ; and the sturdiest Englishman may comply with them, so long as he does not violate the dictates of truth, in his letters of civility and politeness. This, I acknowledge, is an affair in which judgment and delicacy are required ; but it is not to be supposed that judgment and delicacy will ever be wanting in the Foreign Secretary to the Royal Society. If nothing more is thought or wished

to

to lie upon him than barely to send abroad some printed forms, to make marginal entries, and occasionally to write a letter in a prescribed mode, the business might as well be executed by the clerk. It surely cannot be undesirable that the Secretary for the foreign correspondence should maintain that communication with the learned philosophers of other countries, which shall give him to appear in the most respectable light.

There is one part of Dr. Hutton's Defence which is of considerable weight. It is that part where he asks why he was not reminded of his neglects by Sir Joseph Banks, and in which he asserts, that the President, since the last agreement in February, 1782, never once opened his mouth to him on the subject of his office, nor ever sent him any message concerning it. To this I am not able to give a satisfactory answer.

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It is, I suppose, allowed that the President never did make any private representations to Dr. Hutton, with regard to his manner of discharging the duties of the Foreign Secretariship. That Sir Joseph Banks was dissatisfied with the Doctor's conduct has been fully manifested; and it is farther understood, that he did not consider him as possessed of the qualifications that are most suitable for the employment: and yet, notwithstanding all this, he did not come to a particular explanation. Undoubtedly it would have been far better that he had done so: but those who understand human nature will not be greatly surpris'd at the President's behaviour. There is always a reluctance to enter upon unpleasant discussions, and men will continue a long time discontented with each other, before they will bring matters to an open complaint. However preferable it might be that lurking dislikes should be fairly expressed, and that things

things which occasion uneasiness should be brought to a crisis, so it is, and so it will be, that persons will delay the hour of exhortation, and by that means encrease the embarrassment they wished to avoid.

But if Sir Joseph Banks's conduct was not, in this instance, entirely defensible, neither do I think that Dr. Hutton can be wholly acquitted of blame. It appears to me that there was a deficiency of respect, in his having never waited upon the President at his own house. It is alleged, indeed, by the Doctor, that he came every fortnight, or oftener, to town; that he attended the meetings of the Society; and that there Sir Joseph Banks had sufficient opportunities of directing him concerning any matter of business. The truth of this cannot in the least be called in question. But whilst mankind stand in particular relations to each other, there are certain at-

tentions which may justly be expected, and a compliance with which is no violation of integrity, no diminution of honour, no departure from an independent spirit. It is undoubtedly right in the person who sustains somewhat of a subordinate station to pay that civility or deference to the superior one, which the nature of the office may reasonably demand. If Dr. Hutton did not choose to partake of the President's Breakfasts, he might have embraced some suitable occasion of calling upon him in Soho-Square, and of proposing to him any question that occurred relative to the concerns of the Foreign Secretariship. Such an intercourse might have been productive of a mutual confidence and satisfaction, and have been the means of rectifying mistakes and misapprehensions. It might, in particular, have tended to remove Sir Josph Banks's prejudices, if he had unjustly supposed that Dr. Hutton was either negligent in the  
per-

performance of his duty, or unequal to the appointment he had undertaken.

Upon the whole of the question with regard to the specific charges brought against Dr. Hutton, I am not surpris'd that wise and worthy men have formed different conclusions. It is a matter on which so much may be said on both sides, and with such a degree of plausibility, that persons of the best characters, and the most upright intentions, may be allowed to vary in their opinions. Some of the most respectable Fellows of the Royal Society, and whom I esteem it an honour to call my friends, have warmly embraced the cause of Dr. Hutton. Others equally respectable, and with whom I stand in the like habits of intimacy and connection, have thought that the President and Council were justifiable in their proceedings. In this diversity of sentiment there is ample cause for the exercise of candour and



moderation. With respect to the Council, there can be no doubt but that the gentlemen who composed it acted upon the most upright principles. They went on grounds which appeared to them to be well founded, and could have nothing in view but the honour and interest of the Society. Were we to suppose them to have been ever so much mistaken, it is still their discernment alone, and not their integrity, which can be called in question.

It has been the language of the publications which have appeared upon the subject of the present dispute, to charge every thing which has been done that was productive of Dr. Hutton's resignation on the despotism of the President. Were he as despotic as has been represented, it is not to be imagined that gentlemen of such eminence and characters as constituted the Council, would be the slaves of a single man. The resolution so  
much

much condemned was agreed to by all the members present, two only excepted. Could it be thought that they would give themselves up to the suggestions of Sir Joseph Banks, without exercising their own understandings, and their own power of determination? Such a supposition cannot be made consistently with candour and with justice. What is more extraordinary still, on the principle I am controverting, the affair of Dr. Hutton was revised by the new Council, and all the gentlemen who were assembled, with no more than one exception, confirmed the former resolution. Were *they*, too, disposed to surrender their reason and their will to the tyranny of the President? I am ashamed of mentioning suppositions of this kind. I shall not, on the present occasion, bring into discussion the names and characters of the members of either of the Councils. Not to mention the high rank of some of them, and the known

abilities and experience of others of them, their integrity and independence cannot be disputed. Besides this, it is to be remembered, that they acted upon oath ; that they had sworn to deal faithfully and honestly in all things belonging to the trust committed to them, during their employment in the capacity of counsellours. Need I ask, whether they could be capable of violating this sacred engagement, to gratify the pride or passion of any man whatever? The answer hath already been given in the feelings of every unprejudiced mind.

It may be added, with regard to the President, that it is allowed by those who are most displeas'd with him, that he is a man of integrity. Supposing him, therefore, to have been ever so greatly mistaken in his opinion and his treatment of Dr. Hutton, he acted from the real conviction of his own mind,  
and

and consequently could not be guilty of wanton and designed injustice.

That I may put an end to this unpleasant discussion with regard to the subject now in agitation, I shall here bring forward, though out of its chronological order, Mr. Baron Maseres's motion of the 12th of February, 1784, "that it be recommended by the Society to their President and Council to rescind the order for preventing persons residing out of London, from holding the office of Foreign Secretary, and to request Dr. Hutton to resume it." When the motion came to be considered, the Doctor had made an actual resignation of his Secretariship. Now, in this case, every Fellow of the Society had a right to take up the matter as a new question, and to deliberate, whether Dr. Hutton was, on the whole, the properest person for the office, and whether the appointment of him to it had been originally a wise and

judicious measure. The best qualification for discharging the business of the Foreign Secretary, I apprehend to be such an acquaintance with the ancient and modern languages, especially the Latin and the French, as will enable a man to write in them with ease and with elegance. But such a qualification, in its full perfection, is chiefly to be expected in those who have been brought up in classic schools, and who, in an university, or in some other institution of the like nature, have gone through the course of a strictly literary education. But, if I am not misinformed, this was not the case with regard to Dr. Hutton. Much to his own credit, by the strength of his genius, and the vigour of his mind, he hath burst through the bounds of every original disadvantage, and hath worthily raised himself to an honourable station in his country, and to great eminence in science. The accuracy and extent of his mathematical and philosophical

lofophical knowledge are undisputed ; his communications to the Royal Society have fspoken his praife ; and the paper by which he obtained Sir Godfrey Copley's medal, will for ever be recorded in the hiftory of literature. He has, too, I doubt not, applied himfelf to the acquisition of the ancient and modern languages : but fuch an application, if not begun in early life, is feldom attended with that facility of writing in them, which far inferior capacities, in different circumftances, may attain. It is no difparagement to Dr. Hutton, no detraction from his deferved reputation, that he might not be thought the propereft perfon for executing the bufinefs of the Foreign Secretarifhip. His fame is built on a nobler bafis than that of the ability of drawing up an elegant letter in Latin, in French, or any other tongue. This ability, in a fituation favourable to it, might be acquired by a thoufand people, who, in greater attainments,

tainments, would be unworthy to be compared with Dr. Hutton. The writer of the present tract, who hath laboured under disadvantages with respect to the knowledge of the modern languages, would not, for that reason, accept of the office of Foreign Secretary, were it unanimously offered to him: and yet he should be sorry if his reputation depended on so trivial a circumstance, and if he were not capable of greater things. Much more truly might this be asserted of Dr. Hutton, who is so much distinguished in the world of science. Let him, therefore, rest satisfied with the name he hath obtained by his nobler acquisitions in mathematics and philosophy.

*Hæ tibi erunt artes.*

These are the points in which he excels, and from these he will derive an undeniable claim to substantial honour and applause.

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I now return to the regular course of the late transactions. When Dr. Hutton, notwithstanding his ill success with the Council, had obtained the approbation of the Society at two meetings, and had been honoured by such a resolution as that proposed by Governor Pownall, many persons expected that he would have acquiesced in the testimonies which had been given in his favour. They did not suppose that he would wish to force himself upon the President and Council, in contradiction to their inclinations. From the known mildness of the Doctor's temper and character, it was thought that he would sit down contented with the laurels he had gained. But this did not comport with the sentiments and views of his more zealous friends. A direct, a long, and a formidable opposition to the President, appears to have been intended. This was evident from a speech of Dr. Horsley's on the 18th of December, in  
which



which he had declared, " That the So=  
 " ciety is now in circumstances which  
 " render debate necessary for its prefer=  
 " vation: that its chartered rights had  
 " been infringed—the freedom of elec=  
 " tions controlled—the business of the  
 " Committee of papers mismanaged:  
 " that he had charges to bring forward  
 " which might keep the Society in de=  
 " bate the whole winter; especially if  
 " upon every occasion of debate it was  
 " first to be debated whether the com=  
 " pany should debate or no—perhaps,  
 " beyond the winter—perhaps, till the  
 " season should return for the President  
 " to inculcate his annual admonition  
 " from the chair, which it was to be  
 " hoped would never be again, what it  
 " had too long been, a nugatory form—  
 " His admonition to the members to  
 " think of proper persons to be chosen  
 " into the Council, and to fill his own  
 " and the other offices \*."

\* " Authentic Narrative," p. 20, 21.

This

This high - minded speech, which foreboded such a long course of dissensions and disputes in the Royal Society, excited no small degree of alarm in the breasts of many of the peaceable members, who wished that the time of the ordinary meetings should be devoted only to philosophical purposes. I was myself particularly startled, when I heard it pronounced. Hitherto I had been attached to the cause of Dr. Hutton, and sincerely rejoiced in the testimonies of respect he had received; believing, at the same time, that after his obtaining them, nothing more would occur, to interrupt the general business of the Society. But upon hearing Dr. Horsley's declarations, I began to ask myself where the matter would end: and what part should be acted by one who had no other wish than to see the great objects of science and natural knowledge regularly and harmoniously pursued. I reflected that the causes must  
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be powerful indeed, which would justify the interruption, for the whole season or longer, of the valuable designs of the Society's ordinary meetings. Here, then, to allude to a phrase of the ever-memorable John Hales, of Eaton, when he renounced the doctrine of Calvin, I found myself obliged to bid good night to Dr. Horsley.

The prospect which now appeared of a continued scene of altercation and debate, induced the President to invite a number of gentlemen to his house, on the first of January 1784, for the purpose of considering what measures ought to be taken for preserving the peace of the Society. At this meeting I was not present. I understand that it was numerous, and that among the gentlemen who attended were many of the Society's oldest and most respectable members. An account was given them of the proceedings of the Council, in the affair  
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of Dr. Hutton, similar to that contained in the paper which was afterwards presented to the Society by Dr. Watson; and, upon deliberation, it was unanimously agreed to support Sir Joseph Banks in the office of President.

The result of the meeting was Mr. Anguish's motion on the 8th of January, which was carried, as we have seen, by a large majority. Into the debates occasioned by this motion, I shall not enter. A copious account of them, on one side of the question, has been laid before the public, and the readers will judge for themselves on the subject. That Mr. Anguish's motion was opposed by some gentlemen of distinguished eminence and character will readily be acknowledged; and, on the other hand, it was supported by other gentlemen, of equal eminence and character, as well as by the Society at large, who undoubtedly

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edly acted upon the principles of integrity and conviction.

Complaint hath been made that, during this and other debates, the friends of the President sometimes interrupted the speakers, by clamours for the question, and the clattering of sticks. To such interruptions, unless they be intended to prevent the introduction of improper personal remarks and reflections, I am a total enemy. When any resolution is to be considered, people should come together with a determination to give a fair and candid hearing to whatever may be alleged on both sides of the matter in agitation. That impatience of spirit, which is expressed by the clattering of sticks, is unworthy of liberal men, and of liberal societies. At the same time, I am of opinion, that it was right not to permit Dr. Horsley to prosecute his charges relative to the eight instances wherein candidates for  
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admission

admission into the Royal Society had not been successful. To have had the names and characters of gentlemen brought into question, would have been an indelicate and painful business. It is highly probable that it would have been not a little disagreeable to the unsuccessful candidates themselves, to hear that they had been the topics of public discussion and debate.

A resolution which was proposed by Sir Henry Englefield having been mentioned as being in some degree connected with the late transactions, I shall here give an account of it, though to me it appears that the connection it has with them is very inconsiderable. This gentleman, on the 15th of January, gave notice, that, on the 29th of the same month, he should make the following motion :

“ That it is the opinion of this Society, that the name of the person to  
 G 2 “ whom

“ whom Sir Godfrey Copley’s medal is  
 “ annually adjudged, ought to be pub-  
 “ lished at the head of the volume of  
 “ Transactions next ensuing such adjudi-  
 “ cation, together with the subject of  
 “ the dissertation for which the medal  
 “ was given : and that the Society does  
 “ hereby recommend to their President  
 “ and Council, forthwith to consider of  
 “ the proper form to be used in such  
 “ publication.”

When the question was brought for-  
 ward, on the 29th of January, it was  
 amended, with the consent of the mover,  
 as follows :

“ Resolved, that it is the opinion of  
 “ this Society, that it be recommended  
 “ to the President and Council, to con-  
 “ sider whether the name of the person,  
 “ to whom Sir Godfrey Copley’s medal  
 “ is annually adjudged, ought not to be  
 “ published in the volume of the Phi-  
 “ losophical Transactions ensuing such  
 “ adjudi-

“ adjudication, together with the sub-  
 “ ject of the dissertation for which the  
 “ medal was given : and, that, if they  
 “ should think proper to publish it,  
 “ they forthwith consider of the proper  
 “ form to be used in such publica-  
 “ tion.”

The motion, upon the ballot, was carried by a majority of twenty-six ; there being for it fifty votes, and against it twenty-four. That there should be any balls against a thing so reasonable in itself, can only be accounted for by this consideration, that it was regarded, by several members, as one of those regulations which belonged more properly to the Council than to the Society, and which ought to have originated with the former rather than with the latter. Indeed, if the matter had been suggested to any one of the Council, there can be no doubt but that it would have been readily adopted.



Having already spoken of the motion which came on next, for restoring Dr. Hutton to the place of Foreign Secretary, I shall only here observe, that, independently of the consideration whether the Doctor was, on the whole, the fittest person for the office, the point in question now, in a great measure, was, whether Sir Joseph Banks should be supported in the chair. Those, therefore, who had agreed to the opinion of the Society upon that head, could not be expected to vote for compelling the President and Council to rescind a resolution which they had so solemnly confirmed.

The motion of the 26th of February brings me to a matter in which Sir Joseph Banks's conduct hath been severely condemned, and that is, his interference in the election of candidates for the Fellowship of the Society. This was one of the charges which was thrown  
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out by Dr. Horsley on the 18th of December, and which was strongly urged by him in his famous speech of the 12th of February. The same point hath been insisted upon, with peculiar acrimony, in a distinct publication. It has been alleged that the actions of the President in this respect, have been absolutely unconstitutional; and the reasonings of his antagonists seem intended to prove, that he ought to be wholly passive in the choice of the Fellows. This, however, is an idea which cannot hastily be admitted. The President, from his situation, must naturally be considered as, in a particular manner, the guardian of the honour and interest of the Society. He must be deeply concerned in the question relative to the fitness or unfitness of the persons who are solicitous for becoming members of that learned body. This I should apprehend to have been the duty and the business of the Presidents of the Royal

Society from the first institution of it to the present day. In the early period of the Society, and, indeed, for nearly seventy years, no one was allowed to be proposed for election by the Fellows in general, till he had previously been approved of by the Council. This was the case in Sir Isaac Newton's time, and till the year 1730. Nor was that first of men, that glory of Great-Britain, and of human nature, totally exempt from partialities and prejudices in the exertion of his influence. He violently opposed the election of Mr. Whiston, though an eminent Mathematician and Philosopher; and even went so far as to say, that if that gentleman should be chosen a member, he would not continue President.

The mode of choosing the Fellows of the Royal Society, which was adopted in 1730, hath taken away from the President and Council the right they had of  
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preventing the name of any candidate from being hung up in the Meeting-room, who had not obtained their previous approbation. But in the surrender of this privilege, they did not, they could not mean to be entirely passive in the election of members. Though they may not have taken up the affair in a body, they could not avoid conversing with each other as occasions occurred, and enquiring into the talents and merits of the gentlemen proposed. I am persuaded that there never was a time in which the Presidents did not regard this matter as a peculiar object of their duty. Sure I am that this was the case with our late excellent President, Sir John Pringle. No one could be more anxious in his enquiry than he was into the characters and qualifications of candidates; and I well remember an instance, where a person, who had been recommended by very respectable names, was rejected, in consequence

sequence of the measures which Sir John had taken for that purpose.

The right, then, for the President to interfere, in some form or other, with respect to the choice of Fellows, cannot reasonably be disputed. The only questions, therefore, can be, with regard to the mode of interference, and the propriety with which the sollicitude for exclusions hath been exerted. And here it is that strong accusations have been brought against Sir Joseph Banks. What he is particularly charged with is, that, on the nights of elections, he hath solicited balls against candidates, or hath used such influence as has occasioned their names to be taken down, after they had been hung up in the Meeting-room of the Society. On this part of his conduct different opinions have been entertained by the most candid members. Mr. Anguish expressed his approbation of it, and he seemed to have  
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the concurrence of the majority of the Fellows who were present. For my own part, I scruple not to declare that I am of a contrary sentiment. I always preferred the more concealed method of interference which had been made use of by Sir John Pringle and former Presidents. There was, however, something honest and open, if not judicious, in Sir Joseph Banks's mode of proceeding; and I cannot think it deserves all that energy of complaint which it hath lately excited. I leave it to his own mature consideration, whether it may not be expedient to act more cautiously in future,

Another and more delicate question arises, concerning the propriety of the instances in which the President hath contributed to hinder the election of candidates. It will not, it cannot be expected that I should enter into a discussion of these cases. To do so would  
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be highly improper, and no prudent man would wish to hurt the feelings of respectable individuals, by bringing their names into print. However unworthily they may be thought to have been treated, however deserving they were of better success, they probably have no desire that their misfortune, if it be one, should become the object of public debate. I think they owe no thanks to the writers who have brought them forward to the notice of the world; and that nothing of this kind ought to have been done without their express permission. Whether that permission has been obtained, I am not competent to declare.

I have already mentioned that I was not pleased with the President's interposition, in two or three cases where my particular friends were concerned; nor did I put in a negative ball in any of the instances of exclusion which have  
afforded

afforded matter of so much complaint. Whatever part may have been taken by Sir Joseph Banks, I have always balloted according to the dictates of my own judgment; and where I had any connection with a candidate, have exerted what little interest I was possessed of warmly in his favour. No member is bound to concur in sentiment with the President, or to act in perfect conformity to his wishes. If he hath formed an unjust opinion concerning the qualifications of any gentleman who solicits admission into the society, those who are better acquainted with his merit will assert their own privilege of determination. A President, no doubt, as well as any other man, is liable to mistakes and prejudices; and where he happens to fall into them, they should be counteracted by a firmness accompanied with decency. But it does not hence follow, that his general character and conduct deserve to be impeached.

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Notwithstanding any accidental errors, he may still act with perfect integrity, with real ability, and with a sincere regard to the honour and prosperity of the Society: and all this I firmly believe to be the case with Sir Joseph Banks.

In the election of members, it is proper that the Royal Society should be somewhat jealous of its own dignity. This jealousy it has always maintained; and it has particularly been careful against encouraging those who may be suspected to have some selfish design, some view of recommending themselves by their F. R. S. so as to promote any private interest. Where, likewise, the situation of men is such, that there is no probability of their being serviceable by their attendance, their communications, their names, or in any other mode, a certain degree of caution has been exercised. It is the duty of the President to be watchful in these cases.

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The Royal society may be regarded as consisting of three sorts of persons. The first and most honourable are the real philosophers; those who apply themselves to the various objects of science, and enrich the Transactions by their communications. The second are the men of general literature, who, though, perhaps, no great adepts in experimental philosophy, whilst they derive reputation from belonging to a learned body, impart it in return, and may have it in their power to be useful in various important respects. The third sort are the nobility, and gentlemen of rank and fortune. Much complaint has been thrown out against the numerous introduction of these persons into the Society, and they have been treated with great contempt. But I do not perceive any sufficient reason for the warmth of language that has been used upon the occasion. When men of hereditary dignity and high station manifest a love  
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for science, and a desire to be enrolled among its friends, they should be encouraged in so laudable a disposition. They give as well as receive honour; and their contributions serve to carry on the valuable purposes of the Society. They stand forth as the patrons of philosophical knowledge, and have means of promoting it, which do not fall to the lot of common individuals. Though no discoverers themselves, they may bring discoverers to light, and assist them in the prosecution of their inventions and pursuits. I may add, too, that among the high names which are found in the catalogue of the Royal Society, there are men of cultivated understandings, of liberal minds, of scientific attainments; men, who, independently of their rank, would do honour to any literary institution whatever.

To return to the consideration of rejected candidates, it may be observed,  
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that their ill success is sometimes owing, in no small degree, to the neglect of those who signed their certificates. In one of the instances lately so much complained of, out of five recommenders, none of them attended on the day of ballot. This is a conduct which was highly blameable, if they were truly anxious in the cause of their friend. Such a conduct always raises suspicion in the minds of the members present, and has a considerable effect upon their manner of voting. Cases might be mentioned, in which gentlemen of the most respectable characters may charge their loss of election solely to circumstances of this kind. Such of the Fellows as were strangers to their persons and merit, have imagined that it was not intended that they should be zealously supported.

It may be added upon this subject, that if it should sometimes be found

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that a candidate has been hastily rejected, the matter is not without remedy. Two or three instances have not long since occurred, wherein persons, who formerly were unsuccessful upon the ballot, have again been proposed for election, and very honourably chosen. A case of the same kind now appears in the Society's Meeting-room, which I doubt not will have an equally honourable conclusion.

When the most has been made of the subject of exclusions, it cannot be proved that Sir Joseph Banks has not acted from a sincere regard to the welfare of the Society; and it is acknowledged by his severest enemies, that his interference hath in several respects been manifested where the candidates were improper objects of admission. If occasionally he may have fallen into mistakes, there are evidences of his readiness to correct them: and this position  
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I must ever maintain, that it is his right, and his duty, with regard to the illustrious and learned body over which he presides, to be zealous for its reputation and its interest in the choice of members.

The motion relative to the impropriety of the President's availing himself of his situation, to influence the vote of any officer of the Society, will not require much consideration. It originated in some words spoken by Sir Joseph Banks to Mr. Maty, expressive of his dissatisfaction at finding that gentleman usually in opposition to him. What were the precise words hath been the subject of altercation; but the matter is too trifling to merit a particular discussion. If every accidental expression, uttered, perhaps, in a moment of inadvertency, were to be severely scrutinized, most assuredly Sir Joseph Banks would not be found the only guilty

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person. Of how little consequence the motion was thought by the Society in general, is apparent from the manner in which it was rejected: and Mr. Planta, the Senior Secretary, stood up in his place, during the course of the debate, and declared, that he had not experienced the exercise of any undue influence on the part of the President.

With the motions to which negatives were put on the 26th of February, the divisions and contentions that had interrupted the proper business of the ordinary meetings of the Society ceased. The large majorities in favour of Sir Joseph Banks probably discouraged the minority from bringing forward the criminations against him, which had been threatened to be produced. These criminations, however, have been urged with peculiar severity from the press, and, therefore, cannot be passed over without notice.

One

One of the charges insisted upon against the President, is the formation of every Council since he hath sitten in the chair of the Society, and especially the formation of the last Council. On this head it is represented, that he has fixed upon persons who were unequal to the execution of the purposes for which they were chosen. But, upon the maturest deliberation, I cannot discern that the accusation brought against him on this head hath been supported by sufficient evidence. It seems to be the design of the charter, in ordering that ten of the Council should be changed every year, to provide, that the members, in some degree of succession, as circumstances may render it proper, should take their turn in conducting the affairs of the Society. In the choice of the gentlemen who are recommended for election, the points to which regard is to be had are the time during which they have been Fellows, their general ability, their scien-



tific knowledge, their capacity for business, and the probability of their attendance. It hath, likewise, been usual to fix upon two or three men of high rank, if they be either learned themselves, or are known to be patrons of literature. Such are the views on which, I apprehend, our Presidents have uniformly conducted themselves; and such I believe to have been the views of Sir Joseph Banks. In the variety of selection, which an attention to these different objects requires, as the Council cannot always consist of the same persons, there will necessarily be a diversity in the eminence of the members of which it is composed. But it doth not hence follow that any single Council hath been unequal to the faithful and able discharge of its duty. I will venture to assert that this hath never been the case. It would ill become me, on the present occasion, to bring forward the names of particular gentlemen, and  
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to make their characters and qualifications, the subject of discussion; though such a discussion, I doubt not, would redound highly to their honour. Let any impartial judge examine the lists of the Councils which have been chosen since Sir Joseph Banks was in the chair, and then say, whether they have not been men of enlarged understandings; men who do honour to the Society, and who were equal to the general business for the discharge of which they were appointed. Some of them, likewise, have always been men of distinguished knowledge in one branch of science or other. It may be allowed that every President, in selecting the proper persons to supply the annual vacancies, will have a little regard to private friendships and connections; and I never yet knew an instance in human life, and in the greatest integrity of disposition, where something of this kind did not, more or less,

take place. But this is a matter of trifling importance, provided unqualified objects are not pitched upon through the influence of partiality, and provided those be not passed over who have a peculiar claim to distinction. I confess that, in one case, Sir Joseph Banks was the means of a very near relation's being chosen into the Council, though he had been but a little while a Fellow of the Society. The gentleman was, indeed, a very respectable character, and otherwise not unfit for the appointment; but still the fixing upon him, when he had recently become a member, may be considered as a weakness in the President. It was, however, one of those infirmities which adhere so closely to the mind of man, and have such a mixture of amiableness in them, that the candid, I had almost said, the severe, will not be harsh in the condemnation of the fact.

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A point on which considerable stress is laid, is the capacity that is necessary for judging concerning the communications made to the Society; and it has been more than intimated, that such has lately been the constitution of the Councils, as to render it difficult to select out of them good committees of papers. But this is a representation of things with which I cannot by any means concur. In the first place, excepting with regard to some peculiarly abstruse subjects, it is no hard matter to form a right opinion concerning the general value of the philosophical observations and experiments which are produced at the Society's meetings. There are few members indeed, of whom it can be supposed that they are so ignorant, as to be incapable of determining whether a paper be ingenious, curious, or useful; whether, upon the whole, its merit be such, that it ought to have a place in the Transactions. Besides, an appeal  
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may be safely made to all who have examined the matter with impartiality, whether there ever was a Council, during Sir Joseph Banks's Presidency, in which there were not some persons who were well known to have devoted themselves to the different objects of science that came within the view of the Royal Society. Should it occasionally happen, though it can seldom happen, that there is not in the Council an able Mathematician, and should, at the same time, a profound communication of the mathematical kind require to be investigated, still the case is far from being without remedy. In the 12th chapter of the statutes of the Society, relative to the selection of papers, in order for publication, and to the conduct to be pursued by the Committee for that purpose, is the following regulation,

“ That the majority of the said Com-  
 “ mittee, present at any meeting thereof,  
 “ shall

“ shall be at liberty to call in to their  
 “ assistance, at that or any other subse-  
 “ quent meeting, any other members of  
 “ the Society, who are knowing and  
 “ well skilled in any particular branch  
 “ of science, that shall happen to be the  
 “ subject-matter of any paper, which  
 “ shall be then to come under their de-  
 “ liberation; and that the persons so  
 “ called in to assist, although not mem-  
 “ bers of the Committee, may give their  
 “ votes on all papers to be considered at  
 “ such meeting at which they shall be  
 “ desired to assist, in the same manner  
 “ as the members of the said Com-  
 “ mittee may do.”

From this law it is apparent, provid-  
 ed the gentlemen of the Council be in  
 any degree attentive to their duty, that  
 there cannot be the least danger of their  
 not being able to pass a competent judg-  
 ment upon any paper that is brought  
 before them, however intricate or pro-  
 found

found it may be in its own nature. If they have doubts in their minds, they can avail themselves of the best ability which the Society affords; and this, I am satisfied hath been done, on suitable occasions.

But that the question concerning the character of the Councils may finally be determined, let us ask what hath been their actual conduct since Sir Joseph Banks became President. Can any proofs of their incapacity be drawn from the papers which they have permitted to be published in the Philosophical Transactions? Are not the volumes for the last five years as valuable as they have been in preceding periods? Whoever looks into them must be sensible that they are full of rich and curious matter, and that they have by no means lost their reputation.

Nor can the judgment of the Councils be impeached in the assignments of Sir  
Godfrey

Godfrey Copley's medal; since it appears to have been bestowed, from time to time, on those who must be allowed to have been deserving of the honour. The persons who have received it from the hands of Sir Joseph Banks, are Mr. Vince, in 1780, for his investigation of the principles of progressive and rotatory motion; Mr. Kirwan, in 1781, for his experiments and observations on the specific gravities, and attractive powers of various saline substances; Mr. Herschel, in 1782, for having discovered a new planet; and, in 1783, Mr. Goodrick, for his discovery of the period of the alteration of light in the Star Algol; and Mr. Hutchins, for finding out and ascertaining the point of cold at which Mercury congeals. In these distributions there cannot be perceived the least shadow of predilection for those parts of natural knowledge in which the President is understood more particularly to excel. The majority of the papers are  
mathe-



mathematical and astronomical, and the other two are chemical. In the three former cases the judgment of the Astronomer Royal was undoubtedly taken; and in the latter such of the Committee probably took the lead as were most adequate to the business. In short, nothing appears, with regard to the assignments of Sir Godfrey Copley's medal, which argues a want either of integrity, ability, or impartiality, on the part of the President and his Councils.

It has been represented as a grievance that the Astronomer Royal was not chosen into the Council for 1784. No one can be more sensible of his great merit than I am, or more sincerely rejoice in every mark of esteem and honour which he receives. He is undoubtedly in himself highly qualified to be always a member of the Council; but it may deserve to be considered, whether there should not be something of  
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a rotation in matters of this kind. Were a few persons, however eminent, to be invariably appointed, besides that it would be a hindrance to that variety of election which the constitution of the Society seems to require, they might mistakenly be regarded as forming a sort of inquisition. As it would be exactly known who were to determine concerning the value of papers, such gentlemen would be looked upon with a suspicious and jealous eye, and those who did not meet with the success they expected, might be ready to entertain personal dislikes and animosities. It is an advantage to have the matter transacted in such a concealed way that persons cannot be absolutely sure who in particular were their judges.

With respect to the Council of the present year (1784), when I look over the list of gentlemen of whom it is composed, I am surprized at the indignity and contempt with which, in their corporate

porate capacity, they have been treated in the "History of the instances of exclusion from the Royal Society." I cannot, upon the most mature deliberation, perceive any just foundation for such treatment. There is not a person among them, who is not a man of sound general knowledge and understanding. Several of them are known to be proficient in particular parts of natural science. If there be not any one among them who has distinguished himself by his writings in mathematics and astronomy, it does not hence follow that there are none who are well acquainted with these subjects. I think that I could point out those of them who are qualified to give their opinions, with ability, on the merit of mathematical and astronomical papers; but I have laid it down as a rule, in this tract, to bring particular names into question as little as can possibly be done, consistently with the nature of my undertaking. On the whole, there  
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does not appear any great cause to blame the President in the formation of Councils. They have always been equal to the business for which they were appointed, and have transacted it in a manner that brings no reasonable impeachment on their characters. I am not, therefore, under the apprehensions which have been expressed, lest Sir Joseph Banks should disgrace the Society in his future recommendations.

The other charges which have been urged against the President, are of so little consequence that they will easily be dispatched. One of them relates to the manner in which the papers communicated to the Society have been brought forward. An irregularity is complained of on this head, but on what foundation is not very apparent. The order in which papers are read at the meetings of the Society is an affair that admits of a certain degree of diversity

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and latitude, and the power of directing it must exist somewhere. This power is usually and properly lodged with the President, and I do not know that it hath been exercised by him with any impropriety. However circumspect he may have been, there are always sanguine men who will think that they have reason to be dissatisfied. Some communications are of such a nature as not to demand immediate notice, whilst others, though not first sent in, require, on account of their being relative to more temporary objects, to be read as soon as possible. If a liberty of this kind had not been taken, Sir William Hamilton's admirable account of the earthquakes in Italy must have been deferred to another session.

A farther charge brought against Sir Joseph Banks is, that he hath lavished the money of the Society upon baubles. This assertion refers to two arm chairs,  
 purchased

purchased for great visitors, such as any of our own Royal Family, or any foreign sovereign prince, who might chance to be in England. The expence of the chairs was only twenty pounds, and the circumstances of the Society are not so low as to be injured by the payment of such a trifling sum. As to the expediency of the measure, it is scarcely a subject worthy of discussion. If any illustrious visitant should decline the honour provided for him, perhaps he would not, in so doing, detract from his own real dignity. On the other hand, to be ready to pay a testimony of attention and respect to such a personage, can reflect no disgrace on the Royal Society.

The last charge I shall mention, which is said to have been alleged against the President, though I do not recollect where or when it was produced, is, that books have been taken out of the library, without leave being first asked.

The thing, I am assured, hath very seldom been done, and only upon occasions that would justify the liberty. In these cases the President stands between the borrowers and the Society, and there is no evidence that any injury has been sustained. During the long vacation, it may happen that a gentleman who is engaged in some philosophical or literary pursuit, may stand in need of the use of a particular book; and yet, at that time, it would be impossible to comply with the customary form of request.

Having thus gone through the several criminations which have been urged against Sir Joseph Banks, the question will occur, on what grounds it hath so positively been asserted, by his antagonists, that he is totally unfit to continue at the head of the Royal Society. My readers cannot be insensible that this point hath been maintained with great  
vehemence.

vehemence. However, that the President is not so absolutely unworthy to remain in his office as hath lately been alleged, will, perhaps, appear from what has already been advanced. But it may be proper more particularly to enquire, whether he may not be possessed of some qualifications that do not wholly incapacitate him for supporting the dignity of the station which he now fills.

That he is not defective in point of family, fortune, and rank, will readily be admitted. In these respects he is equal to many, and superior to others, who have sustained the office before him. I am no idolizer of birth, riches, and titles; and no one can feel more strongly of how little value these things are, unless they be accompanied with the powers of the understanding, and the virtues of the mind. Nevertheless, the external advantages I have mentioned have their importance, when united



with more essential requisites. They enable a man to extend his usefulness far beyond what he could otherwise have done, and to execute purposes which persons, perhaps of superior abilities, but in lower stations, could not carry into effect.

It may, however, safely be asserted, that Sir Joseph Banks's qualifications are not confined to family, fortune, and rank. When he had finished the usual course of a classical and university education, he did not, as is commonly done by those who possess ample estates, betake himself to the enjoyments rather than to the labours of life. One of the first things he did, after quitting Oxford, was to cross the Atlantic, and to visit the Coasts of Newfoundland and Labradore. These places were not in themselves very inviting; but he was led to them by his zeal for knowledge, and especially by his attachment to botany

tany and natural history, to which he had applied his particular attention. In 1768, he engaged in a nobler expedition. This was to accompany Captain Cook, in his voyage to observe the Transit of Venus, to make discoveries in the South Seas, and, in fact, to circumnavigate the globe. Though botanical researches constituted a principal part of his plan, it was not to botanical researches only that his views were limited.

The knowledge of nature in general, and of the animal kingdom in particular, was enlarged by his enquiries, in conjunction with those of his friends who were connected with him, and indeed supported by him in the prosecution of the same laudable pursuits. The public is, likewise, indebted to him for descriptions of countries and people, their productions, manners, customs, religion, policy, and language. This

is the testimony given by Dr. Hawksworth; and how much that gentleman's relation of Captain Cook's first voyage round the world was enriched by Mr. Banks's communications and papers, is apparent from every part of the work. What a treasure he brought back with him in natural history is known to the curious in that department of science. When he returned to England, the labours and fatigues he had gone through, and the dangers to which he had been exposed, did not deter him from the design of accompanying Captain Cook ] in his second expedition. Some circumstances having prevented Mr. Banks from carrying this design into execution, he did not give himself up to an indolent life, but in a little time engaged in another voyage of discovery. The voyage I mean was that to the Western Isles, and to Iceland. In this navigation, Mr. Banks prosecuted his purposes of adding to  
scientific

scientific knowledge, as is evident from his publication of Van Troil. After that time, besides his other engagements, he assiduously employed himself in his grand botanical undertaking, which is conducted at great labour and expence, and which, when completed, will be the noblest work of the kind that hath appeared in any country.

The several circumstances I have mentioned, cannot certainly be considered as having been bad preparations for the honour Mr. Banks obtained of being chosen President of the Royal Society, on the resignation of Sir John Pringle. That these circumstances were regarded as matters deserving of esteem and distinction, appears from his having been elected without opposition. Besides what Sir Joseph Banks has done, in his private and personal capacity, towards the promotion of natural knowledge, it cannot, I believe, be denied, that,

that, since he hath filled the chair of the Society, he hath been assiduous in endeavouring to advance the ends of the institution. His house and his library are open to learned and philosophical men, and he is ready to give them his assistance in the accomplishment of their useful designs. Foreigners, as well as his own countrymen, are freely and liberally received by him, and he carries on an extensive correspondence with eminent men abroad. In short, his time, his attention, and his fortune, have been applied to the purposes of sustaining the dignity and utility of his station: and that he might not be interrupted in this laudable view, he has declined what to most men of rank and fortune is an object of ambition, and what he might easily have obtained, a seat in parliament.

But that it may with greater decision be determined, how far it is fit to dis-  
place

place the President, let it be considered whether the Society has, or has not, prospered, during his administration. That it has flourished, and that it hath been provided with a due assortment of valuable papers, may with the utmost truth be asserted. There have been times in which communications have been scarce, and they were not plentiful when Sir Joseph Banks first entered upon his office. But of late years there has been no reason to complain upon this head. In 1782, fifty-one papers were balloted for, of which forty-one were either unanimously approved or unanimously rejected. With regard to five of them, there was only the difference of a single voice, and upon the other five the balls were more equally divided. The account for 1783, will be found nearly the same; nor will that of the present year be less honourable. I have already appealed to the public concerning the value of the communications

cations which have appeared in the Transactions. These will speak for themselves, and enable every reader to determine whether the Society hath or hath not been in a state of prosperity during the Presidency of Sir Joseph Banks.

Sarcastic hints have been thrown out with respect to his sitting in the chair of Newton. Such reflections are of easy fabrication, and they have been made with an equally unjust severity on former Presidents. A Newton is not the produce of every age or country. A Newton only rises up in the world in the course of many centuries, to shew, perhaps, what it is to which the human mind may possibly attain. If it had been resolved, that the Chair of the Royal Society should never be filled till an equal to Sir Isaac Newton could be found to fit in it, it must have always been vacant, both before and since the time of that illustrious philosopher.

The language that hath been used, in the point I am speaking of, is childish and insignificant. The office of President may be worthily and usefully discharged, though it be not sustained by the greatest man to whom the universe has given birth. This will be apparent from a survey of the gentlemen who have possessed the Chair of the Society, from its first institution, as a chartered body, to the present day. The list of the Presidents is as follows: William Lord Viscount Brouncker, appointed in 1663; Sir Joseph Williamson, elected in 1677; Sir Christopher Wren, in 1680; Sir John Hoskins, in 1682; Sir Cyril Wyche, in 1683; Samuel Pepys, Esq. in 1684; John Earl of Carberry, in 1686; Thomas Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, in 1689; Sir Robert Southwell, in 1690; Charles Montagu, Esq. in 1695; John Lord Somers, in 1698; Sir Isaac Newton, in 1703; Sir Hans Sloane, in 1727; Martin Folkes, Esq.



Esq. in 1741; George Earl of Macclesfield, in 1752; James Earl of Morton, in 1764; James Burrow, Esq. in 1768; James West, Esq. in the same year; James Burrow, Esq. in 1772; Sir John Pringle, in the same year; and Joseph Banks, Esq. in 1778. Upon a perusal of this list, the names of several gentlemen will be perceived, who, however eminent they were in other respects, are little known in the history of Philosophical Science; and yet it doth not appear that they discharged unworthily the duties of the office to which they were chosen. It is no undue compliment to Sir Joseph Banks to say, that, with regard to his acquaintance with natural knowledge, and his munificence and success in promoting it, he is superior to some, and equal to others of the persons now mentioned. A President cannot be supposed to excel in every branch of Philosophy, nor is it always to be expected that he should be  
a pro-

a profound Mathematician. It is evident, from the preceding catalogue, that no such thing has been deemed essential by the members of the Royal Society. Sir Hans Sloane, who succeeded Sir Isaac Newton, was chiefly distinguished by his skill in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and other Presidents have had their particular departments of science, to which they were more eminently devoted. Men are endued with different talents, all of which are useful in their turn. This will be the case with the gentlemen who are appointed to preside over the Royal Society; and no reasonable fault can be found with them, provided they do not discountenance the studies and pursuits which are somewhat out of their own way. I am not sensible that any such charge can justly be brought against Sir Joseph Banks. Mathematical and Astronomical papers have been so far from being neglected during his administration,

tion, that, on the contrary, they occupy a due proportion, and constitute, as they will always deserve to constitute, a most honourable part of the Transactions. It ought to be no reflection upon any President, that he is not possessed of the specific and peculiar qualities of those by whom he has been preceded. My late excellent friend, Sir John Pringle, was admirable in the speeches which he made on the annual assignments of Sir Godfrey Copley's medal ; and I esteem it no small happiness of my life, that I have endeavoured to do justice to his character in this respect. But it is not needful, nor indeed would it be proper, that every President should be ambitious of distinguishing himself exactly in the same mode. Though Sir Joseph Banks may not aim at this particular point of honour, it doth not hence follow that he is disqualified for sustaining, with real reputation and utility, the high station he holds in the Royal Society. A censure, not very liberal, has been  
past

past upon the purity and elegance of his  
 stile. I suppose that he doth not pre-  
 tend to any extraordinary skill in the  
 little turns and niceties of composition.  
 These things are chiefly to be expected  
 from those who are in the habit of writ-  
 ing for the press; and yet they are not  
 always to be found even in such persons.  
 It is possible for a man to be a professed  
 scholar and author, to sit in the chair of  
 criticism, to assume the office of direct-  
 ing the taste and judgment of the pub-  
 lic, and, at the same time, to fall into  
 many inaccuracies of language. Never-  
 theless, I should be unwilling, even in  
 such a case, to condemn with severity.  
 In such a case, I would be thankful for  
 the instruction received; I would do  
 justice to the general learning of the  
 writer; I would testify to the vigour of  
 his mind; and I would applaud the free  
 and independent spirit with which he  
 delivered his opinions, though they  
 might not happen to coincide with the  
 dictates of my own understanding.

The temper of the President has been represented as greatly despotic. Whether it be so or not, I am unable to determine from personal knowledge. I do not find that a charge of this kind is brought against him by those who have it in their power to be better judges of the matter. He appears to be manly, liberal, and open in his behaviour to his acquaintance, and very persevering in his friendships. Those who have formed the closest intimacy with him have continued their connection, and maintained their esteem and regard. This was the case with Capt. Cook and Dr. Solander; and other instances might, I believe, be mentioned to the same purpose. The man who, for a course of years, and without diminution, preserves the affections of those friends who know him best, is not likely to have unpardonable faults of temper.

It

It is possible that Sir Joseph Banks may have assumed a firm tone in the execution of his duty as President of the Society, and have been free in his rebukes, where he apprehended that there was any occasion for them. If this hath been the case, it is not surprising that he should not be universally popular. That softness of mind which never adopts the language of reproof, will always be admired and loved, whilst the hand of discipline will be found, in some degree, uneasy, even to the worthiest persons.

If, however, we should make the supposition, that there is some warmth of temper in Sir Joseph Banks, and that he may have exerted it in instances where it would better have been avoided, all this, when accompanied with substantial merit, would by no means justify an attempt to deprive him of the chair of the Society. Other Presidents may have

had similar faults, without their having been esteemed deserving of so severe an inquisition. It would be needless to make the trite observation, "that human characters are not perfect." Mr. Whiston informs us, that Sir Isaac Newton, in his old age, could not bear contradiction; and that he was of a most fearful, cautious, and suspicious disposition.

But let us imagine the worst of the case; let us grant, for a moment, that Sir Joseph Banks's behaviour has been as criminal as is represented, does it hence follow that the conduct of his antagonists can be defended? Such an inference could not be drawn with truth and with justice. They ought not to have disturbed the ordinary meetings of the Society, and interrupted the progress of philosophical pursuits, but have reserved the contest for the annual day of election. That is the time in which  
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the points in debate should be brought forward, and in which it should be asserted, if the position can, with any sound appearance of reason, be maintained, that Sir Joseph Banks is no longer worthy to be President of the Royal Society.

It may not be amiss to enquire what was the conduct of our predecessors on a similar occasion. In the year 1710, a scheme was formed, and soon carried into execution, for the removal of the Society from Gresham College, where it had hitherto met, to Dr. Brown's house in Crane-court, Fleet-street, which was to be purchased for that purpose. The design was warmly supported by Sir Isaac Newton and his Council, with the exception of two dissentient voices. On the other hand, it was disagreeable to several of the Fellows, who, upon this occasion, loudly exclaimed against the measure, and charged Sir Isaac with be-

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having



having in an arbitrary and tyrannical manner. The terms that were used in the controversy are curious, and convey sentiments very similar to those which have been expressed in the late diffusions. In a pamphlet which was published by one of Sir Isaac Newton's opponents, he is said to have run up the authority of the chair, not once to any of the just and wise ends of his office; is represented as having violated his duty, in not seeing the Treasurer's accounts audited; is charged with having insulted the constitution of the Society; and is even accused of being much in arrear to his honour, and to his oath\*. Such was the manner in which the great Sir Isaac Newton was treated, for forming a design that was highly proper in itself, and which afterwards, I believe,

\* An Account of the late Proceedings in the Council of the Royal Society, in order to remove from Gresham College into Crane-court, in Fleet-street, p. 8, 9, 15, 19, 30.

was universally approved. But with all the severity exercised against him, the dissatisfied members never thought of making the Society's ordinary meetings the scene of altercation and debate. It was on St. Andrew's day that the Fellows were called upon to assert their rights, and to emancipate themselves from the tyranny under which they had suffered. The conclusion of the pamphlet on the subject is so striking, that the insertion of it will probably be acceptable to many of my readers.

“ But after all, Sir, perhaps you will  
 “ ask me what remedy the Society can  
 “ have against the Council for any thing  
 “ they have or may act, not only with-  
 “ out their consent, but expressly  
 “ against their opinion ; for refusing to  
 “ hear it, methinks, is equivalent to  
 “ that. To this, Sir, I might reply,  
 “ that I have said enough, if I have  
 “ convinced you, that the Council is

“ accountable to the Society for what  
 “ they act in the disposal and manage-  
 “ ment of their estate. If this be al-  
 “ lowed, it must also be allowed that  
 “ they are but trustees; and as such,  
 “ the law is open to relieve every breach  
 “ of trust they can be justly charged  
 “ with.

“ But if you think this remedy too  
 “ tedious, the Society hath another im-  
 “ mediately in their own power. All  
 “ the officers and near half the Council  
 “ are chosen annually: St. Andrew’s  
 “ day is at hand; if the Society be dis-  
 “ satisfied with the present Administra-  
 “ tion, let them choose a new ministry.  
 “ This cannot with any colour be com-  
 “ plained of: since they have enjoyed  
 “ an uninterrupted succession of elec-  
 “ tions for a long time. No injury nor  
 “ indignity will by this be offered to  
 “ them: but on the contrary, it will  
 “ be a means to clear their reputation.

“ It

“ It cannot be denied, that their dark  
 “ intimations, and undue reservedness,  
 “ have given just occasion to entertain  
 “ suspicions not very favourable towards  
 “ them. If the cause of these appear-  
 “ ances be no worse than the effects of  
 “ some indiscretions, the Society may  
 “ restore them with great honour the  
 “ next election. But if there be really  
 “ any sinister combinations, or bad de-  
 “ signs, to enslave the Society, and to  
 “ sacrifice it to their insolent resent-  
 “ ments, the Fellows will be neither  
 “ just to themselves nor the public, if  
 “ they neglect this opportunity of chu-  
 “ sing new officers. A new President,  
 “ new Treasurer, and a new Secretary,  
 “ with the assistance of an honourable  
 “ wise Council, will soon unravel all  
 “ the clue of the late intricate proceed-  
 “ ings: they will easily pursue them  
 “ through all the meanders of their dark  
 “ labyrinth, where they have secured  
 “ themselves so many years; and ex-  
 “ pose

“ pose them to the just indignation of  
“ the Society.

“ This, Sir, is an immediate remedy;  
“ and as such, I leave it to your confi-  
“ deration. If you think fit to com-  
“ municate these sentiments with any of  
“ the Fellows, you may use your own  
“ pleasure: I heartily wish the success  
“ according to the justice of their  
“ cause\*.

Whether these threatenings were at-  
tempted to be put into execution, I am  
not able to determine. If they were, it  
is certain that the attempt was wholly  
unsuccessful; for Sir Isaac Newton rose  
triumphant above all opposition, and  
continued, without interruption, Presi-  
dent of the Royal Society to the day of  
his death.

Whilst such charges of violence and  
despotism have been brought against Sir  
Joseph

\* Ibid. p. 30-32.

Joseph Banks, it is natural to ask, whether all his antagonists have maintained a becoming moderation. I shall not enter into minute enquiries in this respect: but two points have been suggested, in the late publications, which cannot be passed over without notice. One is, the idea which has been thrown out, for the dissatisfied members “to form into a firm and steady phalanx, to shut the doors of the Society entirely, and oppose all admissions whatever, till there is full assurance given that the outrages now complained of shall never be repeated\* ;” that is, till such concessions and retractations are made as are plainly contrary to the sentiments and resolutions of a vast majority of the Fellows. Surely a thought of this kind could not have been started by any person who was not improperly heated in the course of the controversy. Because certain gentlemen are displeased

\* History of Exclusions, p. 14.

with

with the President, and cannot obtain the submissions which they particularly demand, are they to unite together, to reject every candidate, however, entitled, by the most distinguished merit, to be unanimously chosen? No man of reflection can be insensible of the injustice and cruelty of such a method of proceeding. Is the resentment against Sir Joseph Banks to be poured out upon innocent and worthy objects? There is not a single person in the opposition who is capable of such a conduct. I repeat it, there is not a single person in the opposition who is capable of such a conduct: no, not Dr. Horsley or Mr. Maty, in all the warmth of their indignation against the President. It is impossible that, after a moment's consideration, they could act so unmanly and ungenerous a part. The threatening, therefore, can only be regarded as a matter hastily thrown out, in the heat of debate, and which could never seriously

seriously be intended to be carried into effect. If it were—but I will not indulge a supposition so incongruous to the feelings of every liberal mind.

Another thing which has been threatened, is the “Erection of a new Society, a real Academy of Sciences; in the country.” This is an idea on which many observations might be made; but I shall not give way to them on the present occasion. The scheme, I trust, will be well digested, before it is attempted to be put into execution; for it will undoubtedly require very mature deliberation. It may justly be presumed, that most of the gentlemen connected with the opposition, however displeased they may have been, in certain respects, with Sir Joseph Banks, will not easily be persuaded to take so extraordinary a step. They will permit me to bring to their recollection the

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manner



manner in which the Society acted in the differences of former times. In the year 1727, after the decease of Sir Isaac Newton, there was a violent contest with regard to the appointment of his successor, and the contest lay between the mathematical part of the Society, and those who were principally devoted to the study of natural history. The two candidates were Mr. Folkes and Sir Hans Sloane; the first at the head of the former party, and the other of the latter. The members came from every quarter of the kingdom to ballot. The victory was in favour of Sir Hans Sloane: but after the friends of each of these gentlemen had exerted themselves to the utmost on the side they had espoused, there was no farther dissension. They united together, as before, in their several departments, in promoting the objects of the Royal Society. After the interval of a year, Mr. Folkes was chosen of the Council, and continued such,

without interruption, till he was elected President, on the resignation of Sir Hans Sloane. The same moderation and good temper will, I doubt not, be adopted by much the greater number of the gentlemen who have appeared against Sir Joseph Banks in the late debates. Of this I am fully persuaded, from their known dispositions and characters. They have stood up firmly in the cause of Dr. Hutton, because they believed him to be injured. They have given their testimony in other respects, where they thought there was reason for complaint. Having done all this, and brought the matters in question to the decision of the Society, they will now either lay aside their resentments, or, at least, abstain from any such expression of them as shall afford room to future divisions. I trust, too, that they will give the Society the honour and benefit of their communications. May it not be hoped, that Dr. Hutton himself, when his present

sent feelings are subsided, will continue to maintain and assert his own glory, in that scientific way to which he is so eminently equal?

I cannot but express my wish that Mr. Maty could be induced to abate something of the warmth of his disposition. For his general integrity, and for the particular proof he hath displayed of it in a striking instance, by which he sacrificed his interests and prospects in life, he is greatly to be respected. Nor will the praise be denied him of abilities and learning. But certainly, in the exercise of his free and independent spirit, he might have preserved a greater moderation of temper. If, as is commonly understood, he is the principal author of the "History of the Exclusions," the violence of it cannot be approved; and the time will probably arrive, in which he himself will acknowledge, that the language of his indignation

dignation hath gone beyond all reasonable limits.

With regard to Dr. Horsley, though I have no personal disrespect to him, I think that it is doing service to the cause of learning, to hold out, somewhat particularly, the errors he hath fallen into in point of literary haughtiness. Few instances of it so striking can be produced, at least in the present century; and those which the Doctor hath afforded ought to be exhibited, as a caution to himself, and a warning to others. The manner which he assumed, during the late dissensions of the Royal Society, will not easily be forgotten. The impression will long remain, on the minds of the members, of the power of voice, and the energy of words, with which his denunciations were delivered. The high tone he adopted went beyond the usual custom of public debates. He undoubtedly proceeded much too far,

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when he asserted that the Committee proposed by Sir Joseph Banks to enquire into the affair of Dr. Hutton, would be a packed Jury, and when, though called to order, he still repeated, that it would be a packed Jury. Whatever constructions may have been attempted to be put upon this language, it is language highly to be condemned, and which cannot be remembered without indignation.

But it is the less extraordinary that Dr. Horsley should use offensive expressions before the Royal Society, where he stood up in behalf of a friend whom he supposed to have been ill treated, when we consider the lofty terms he has not been able to abstain from in his ecclesiastical capacity. I refer to his Charge, delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Albans. In the beginning of this charge, the difference between the opulent and dignified, and the labouring

bouring part of the Parochial Clergy, is displayed in a manner which could not avoid being painful to the feelings of his hearers. The latter are told, with a mixture, however, of compliment to their worth, that they are obliged to submit to a severe and constant toil in the practical branch of the profession, as the labour by which they have to earn their daily bread; that they have little opportunity for private study and solitary meditation; and that they are in circumstances unfriendly to literary improvement; whilst it belongs to the former, in consequence of their providential exemption from work of a harder kind, to stand forth the champions of the common faith, and the advocates of their order. Now, were this representation of things ever so just, what necessity was there for Dr. Horsley to hold out so mortifying a distinction, when he was addressing himself to none but beneficed and inferior clergy? I do

not recollect that the same distinction is so strongly insisted upon in any even of the numerous episcopal charges which have fallen within my observation. The most illustrious Prelates have avoided language which would make their brethren of a lower order too deeply to feel their inferiority. Dr. Horsley had no model before him of such language in the excellent Bishop to whom he has the honour of being Chaplain. Dr. Lowth, in whose eye genius and benevolence are finely blended, and whose pen is dictated by imagination, taste, and elegance, is an amiable pattern of the affability, condescension, and gentleness, which are the true ornaments of high station, and of distinguished abilities and learning.

I cannot forbear going something out of my way, to plead the cause of the beneficed and inferior clergy. They, it is supposed, are only qualified for a con-

stant attendance on the public ceremonies of external worship, or for the charitable and necessary business of instructing the people of the lower ranks in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ: and yet several of them have performed the most essential services to the general interests of religion and learning. Bingham, who deserved so well of the church by his "*Origines ecclesiasticæ*," never rose to be higher than a Parish Priest. Mr. Jackson gave most of his publications to the world when he was only Rector of Rossington, and never was advanced to any preferment that could be entitled a Dignity. The great Dr. Samuel Clarke produced all his valuable works whilst in the full exercise of parochial duties; nor did he ever become a Dignitary of the Church of England, unless his having been a Chaplain to Queen Anne is understood to confer that appellation. I mention not John Hales of Eaton, and Joseph



Mede; for though the provision that was made for them was very small, and inadequate to their merit, they had the advantages of a learned retirement.

Not to pursue instances of this kind, another thing deserves to be mentioned, which is, that with regard to those dignitaries of the church who have been the most illustrious for their writings in the cause of religion and literature, they were not raised to their high and opulent stations that they might have leisure for such productions, but had their honours and emoluments conferred upon them for the services they had done when they were only Parish Priests. John Boys, one of the Translators of the Bible, did not obtain a Prebend of Ely from the hands of Bishop Andrews, till he had gone through all his labours. Cave had published the greater number of his works before he was installed a Canon of Windsor. Castell had finish-  
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ed his "Lexicon Heptaglotton," when he became a Prebendary of Canterbury. Bishop Bull, whose name has been so much celebrated in the theological controversy in which Dr. Horsley hath taken a distinguished part, composed most of his learned productions, and among the rest, his Defence of the Nicene Faith, whilst he was Rector of Suddington St. Mary, in Gloucestershire, and amidst an uncommonly assiduous discharge of his pastoral functions. To come to our own times, Jortin, the glory of the church of England Divines in the present century, was not drawn out of obscurity till very late in life. All his valuable works, excepting those which were printed after his decease, were published when he had attained no higher a preferment than the living of St. Dunstan's in the East. Warburton was only Rector of Burnt Broughton in Lincolnshire, when he wrote his Alliance between Church

and State, a great part of his Divine Legation of Moses, and many of his other performances : and it was at Thurcaston in Leicestershire, that the Bishop of Worcester (Dr. Hurd) laid the foundation of his honours and his fame, in his beautiful Criticisms on Horace, and his admirable Dialogues. If I am not mistaken, the Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, which are beyond all praise, had appeared, before the author of them, the present Diocesan of London, had become a Prebendary of Durham. With regard to Dr. Horsley himself, he will not, I suppose, deny that he was known in the scientific world, when he was only minister of Newington Butts.

Instances of the like sort might be multiplied almost without end, and perhaps I have already been too large upon them ; but I feel for the respectable characters of the beneficed and inferior clergy, and am hurt when the distinctions

tions between them and their superiors are too pompously displayed. It is apparent, from what has been said, that some of them, without neglecting the cure of souls, may justly be ambitious of distinguishing themselves in a larger sphere, and of adding to the number of honourable advocates in the cause of truth, knowledge, taste, and virtue.

I must farther observe, that Dr. Horsley's high sense of his own dignity is too much displayed in the language of his publications. In his answer to Dr. Priestley, instead of saying, as usual, in the title page, "By Samuel Horsley, L. L. D. F. R. S. Archdeacon of St. Albans," it runs thus: "Letters from the Archdeacon of St. Albans, in reply to Dr. Priestley." In the Table of Contents prefixed to the book, I find the following expressions: "The Archdeacon of St. Albans declines a regular controversy with Dr. Priestley:" —

"A Re-

“ A Recapitulation of the Archdeacon’s  
 “ Charge : ” — “ The Archdeacon’s In-  
 “ terpretation of Clemens Romanus de-  
 “ fended : ” — “ The Difference of the  
 “ Ebionites and Nazarenes no singular  
 “ or new Opinion of the Archdeacon’s : ”  
 “ Dr. Priestley’s Arguments from Origen  
 “ and Eusebius not neglected in the  
 “ Archdeacon’s Charge : ” — “ Dr.  
 “ Priestley’s peculiar Sense of the Word  
 “ Personification not perceived either by  
 “ the Archdeacon or the Reviewer : ” —  
 “ The outline however of Dr. Priest-  
 “ ley’s work not misrepresented by the  
 “ Archdeacon : ” — “ The Archdeacon  
 “ abides by his assertion, that Dr.  
 “ Priestley hath misrepresented the Pla-  
 “ tonic Language : ” — “ The Archdea-  
 “ con’s Interpretation of the Platonists  
 “ rests not on his own conjecture, but  
 “ on the authority of Athenagoras : ” —  
 “ The Archdeacon’s Supposition, that  
 “ the first Ebionites worshipped Christ,  
 “ defended : ” — “ The Archdeacon takes  
 “ leave

“leave of the Controversy.” — After these specimens of Dr. Horsley’s fondness for the repetition of his title, I shall not search into the work itself, for other evidences of the dignitarian elevation of his mind. Indeed, I should probably not have gone thus far, had I not perceived, with displeasure, that some things which he hath said, concerning two of my most respectable and respected friends, may be construed as having the appearance of a persecuting tendency.

Whilst I have thought myself fully justified in making remarks upon Dr. Horsley, concerning matters wherein, as a public and literary man, he has fairly laid himself open to notice, I desire it may be understood, that my strictures upon him have no farther object. I do not call in question his integrity; I arraign not his motives, with regard to the cases in which he hath manifested  
the

the greatest warmth ; and I am sensible of his abilities and learning. I only wish that he would abate of his asperity, and learn to bear his faculties somewhat more meekly. In that case, the world will be ready to do justice to his talents ; and if he should think fit to remit of the ardour of his contest with the majority of the Royal Society, his future assistance in the prosecution of its pursuits will, no doubt, be gratefully accepted.

It is time for me to draw to a conclusion. I have often observed with concern, that scientific and literary men entertain so high an opinion of their own particular studies, as to view other studies, and the persons who are devoted to them, with some degree of contempt. But this is a disposition which ought not to be cherished by any candid and liberal mind. All the parts of knowledge and learning have their specific utility,

utility, and in their different degrees are entitled to estimation. Every one should pursue his own line of enquiry with ardour, without despising those who do not excel in the same attainments. It is only by a diversity in the application of the mental powers, that the great ends of human improvement can be answered, and no object be neglected which may tend to enlighten and to meliorate the world. It is acknowledged that there are certain branches of science which are more noble and excellent than others; and to the superior branches let proportionate praise and honour be given. The dignity and value of mathematical literature are such, that it would not be easy to do justice to the subject. Its glory, I am persuaded, will never be lost in this country. The communications arising from it will always be received with pleasure by the Royal Society, and the gentlemen who are eminent in it will continue to enrich



rich the Transactions as they have heretofore done.

Every man must be sensible of the ardent, the enquiring, the penetrating spirit of the times. The world is in agitation with respect to philosophical discoveries. The zeal with which they are pursued has already been productive of great effects, and will be productive of still greater effects in future. Britons in general, and the Royal Society in particular, will, I trust, never cease to be animated with the same Zeal. The members of that learned body will not spend their time, and lose their renown, in unprofitable debates. The present contests will subside, and the only ambition will be who shall most contribute to extend the bounds of science, to increase the powers of man over nature, and to promote the real honour of his country. This is the glory of the true Englishman, this the glory of the ge-

nuine Philosopher; and it is a glory infinitely superior to the completest victory in any personal dispute. In a career so illustrious, the writer of the present tract can be no competitor: but he shall deem himself happy, if, in attempting to compose differences, he shall chance to be of any use to the Society which hath done him the honour of enrolling him among its members. The consciousness of this attempt will be the sole reward of his undertaking.

F I N I S.

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