

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07590241 5

The  
Gordon Lester Ford  
Collection  
Presented by his Sons  
Worthington Chauncy Ford  
and  
Paul Leicester Ford  
to the  
New York Public Library.

CK  
Burke







Burke









161

# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE CAUSE

OF THE PRESENT

# DISCONTENTS.

[Price Two Shillings and Six Pence.]



No 5

16

# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE CAUSE

OF THE PRESENT

# DISCONTENTS.

*By Edmund Burke Esq: Member  
of Parliament for Wexford.*

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

THE THIRD EDITION.



L O N D O N,

Printed for J. DODSLEY, in PALL-MALL,  
MDCCLXX.

211

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
155699  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.  
1899.

---

---

THOUGHTS  
ON  
THE CAUSE  
OF THE PRESENT  
DISCONTENTS.

---

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

B

be

## 2 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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



### THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS. 3

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

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

B 2

Nobody,

#### 4 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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

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

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

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

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

## 6 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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

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

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

## 8 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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

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

Upon

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

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

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

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



## THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS. 11

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

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

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

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

Revolution,

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

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

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

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

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

To

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C

Prince.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* Sentiments of an honest Man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D

render

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

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

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

If



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 38 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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

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

It

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 42 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

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



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

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

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

The popular election of magistrates, and popular disposition of rewards and honours, is one of the first advantages of a free State. Without it, or something equivalent to it, perhaps the people cannot long enjoy the substance of freedom; certainly none of the vivifying energy of good Government. The frame of our Commonwealth did not admit of such an actual election: but it provided as well, and (while the spirit of the constitution is preserved) better for all the effects of it than by the method of suffrage in any democratic State whatsoever. It had always, until of late, been held the first duty of Parliament, *to refuse to support Government, until power was in the hands of persons who were acceptable to the people, or while factions predominated in the Court in which the nation had no confidence.* Thus all the good effects of popular election were supposed to be secured to us, without the mischiefs attending on perpetual intrigue, and a distinct canvass for every particular office throughout the body of the people. This was the most noble and refined part of our constitution. The people, by their representatives and grandees, were intrusted with a deliberative power in making laws; the King with the control of his negative. The King was intrusted with the deliberative choice and the election to office; the people had the negative in a Parliamentary refusal to support. Formerly this power of controul was what kept Ministers in  
awe

awe of Parliaments, and Parliaments in reverence with the people. If the use of this power of controul on the system and persons of Administration is gone, every thing is lost, Parliament and all. We may assure ourselves, that if Parliament will tamely see evil men take possession of all the strong-holds of their country, and allow them time and means to fortify themselves, under a pretence of giving them a fair trial, and upon a hope of discovering, whether they will not be reformed by power, and whether their measures will not be better than their morals; such a Parliament will give countenance to their measures also, whatever that Parliament may pretend, and whatever those measures may be.

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

Before men are put forward into the great trusts of the State, they ought by their conduct to have obtained such a degree of estimation in their country, as may be some sort of pledge and security to the publick, that they will not abuse those trusts. It is no mean security for a proper use of power, that a man has shewn by the general tenor of his actions, that the affection,  
the

46 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
the good opinion, the confidence, of his fellow  
citizens have been among the principal objects  
of his life; and that he has owed none of the  
gradations of his power or fortune to a settled  
contempt, or, occasional forfeiture of their  
esteem.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E

But

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

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

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



ciples. Until the matter is decided, the country will remain in its present confusion. For while a system of Administration is attempted, entirely repugnant to the genius of the people, and not conformable to the plan of their Government, every thing must necessarily be disordered for a time, until this system destroys the constitution, or the constitution gets the better of this system.

There is, in my opinion, a peculiar venom and malignity in this political distemper beyond any that I have heard or read of. In former times the projectors of arbitrary Government attacked only the liberties of their country; a design surely mischievous enough to have satisfied a mind of the most unruly ambition. But a system unfavourable to freedom may be so formed, as considerably to exalt the grandeur of the State; and men may find in the pride and splendor of that prosperity some sort of consolation for the loss of their solid privileges. Indeed the increase of the power of the State has often been urged by artful men, as a pretext for some abridgement of the public liberty. But the scheme of the junto under consideration, not only strikes a palsy into every nerve of our free constitution, but in the same degree benumbs and stupifies the whole executive power; rendering Government in all its grand operations languid, uncertain, ineffective; making Ministers fearful of attempting, and incapable of executing, any useful plan of domestic arrangement, or of foreign politicks. It tends to produce neither

52 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
the security of a free Government, nor the  
energy of a Monarchy that is absolute. Ac-  
cordingly the Crown has dwindled away, in  
proportion to the unnatural and turgid growth  
of this excrescence on the Court.

The interior Ministry are sensible, that war is  
a situation which sets in its full light the value  
of the hearts of a people; and they well know,  
that the beginning of the importance of the  
people must be the end of theirs. For this  
reason they discover upon all occasions the utmost  
fear of every thing, which by possibility may  
lead to such an event. I do not mean that they  
manifest any of that pious fear which is back-  
ward to commit the safety of the country to  
the dubious experiment of war. Such a fear,  
being the tender sensation of virtue, excited, as  
it is regulated, by reason, frequently shews itself  
in a seasonable boldness, which keeps danger at  
a distance, by seeming to despise it. Their fear  
betrays to the first glance of the eye, its true  
cause, and its real object. Foreign powers, con-  
fident in the knowledge of their character, have  
not scrupled to violate the most solemn treaties;  
and, in defiance of them, to make conquests in  
the midst of a general peace, and in the heart  
of Europe. Such was the conquest of Corsica,  
by the professed enemies of the freedom of  
mankind, in defiance of those who were formerly  
its professed defenders. We have had just  
claims upon the same powers; rights which  
ought to have been sacred to them as well as to  
us, as they had their origin in our lenity and  
generosity

generosity towards France and Spain in the day of their great humiliation. Such I call the ransom of Manilla, and the demand on France for the East India prisoners. But these powers put a just confidence in their resource of the *double Cabinet*. These demands (one of them at least) are hastening fast towards an acquittal by prescription. Oblivion begins to spread her cobwebs over all our spirited remonstrances. Some of the most valuable branches of our trade are also on the point of perishing from the same cause. I do not mean those branches which bear without the hand of the vine-dresser; I mean those which the policy of treaties had formerly secured to us; I mean to mark and distinguish the trade of Portugal, the loss of which, and the power of the Cabal, have one and the same æra.

If, by any chance, the Ministers who stand before the curtain possess or affect any spirit, it makes little or no impression. Foreign Courts and Ministers, who were among the first to discover and to profit by this invention of the *double Cabinet*, attend very little to their remonstrances. They know that those shadows of Ministers have nothing to do in the ultimate disposal of things. Jealousies and animosities are sedulously nourished in the outward Administration, and have been even considered as a *causa sine qua non* in its constitution: thence foreign Courts have a certainty, that nothing can be done by common counsel in this nation. If one of those Ministers officially takes up a

54 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
business with spirit, it serves only the better to  
signalize the meanness of the rest, and the dis-  
cord of them all. His colleagues in office are in  
haste to shake him off, and to disclaim the  
whole of his proceedings. Of this nature was  
that astonishing transaction, in which Lord  
Rochford, our Ambassador at Paris, remon-  
strated against the attempt upon Corsica, in  
consequence of a direct authority from Lord  
Shelburne. This remonstrance the French  
Minister treated with the contempt that was  
natural; as he was assured, from the Ambassa-  
dor of his Court to ours, that these orders of  
Lord Shelburne were not supported by the rest  
of the (I had like to have said British) Admi-  
nistration. Lord Rochford, a man of spirit,  
could not endure this situation. The conse-  
quences were, however, curious. He returns  
from Paris, and comes home full of anger.  
Lord Shelburne, who gave the orders, is oblig-  
ed to give up the seals. Lord Rochford, who  
obeyed these orders, receives them. He goes,  
however, into another department of the same  
office, that he might not be obliged officially to  
acquiesce in one situation under what he had  
officially remonstrated against in another. At  
Paris, the Duke of Choiseul considered this  
office arrangement as a compliment to him:  
here it was spoke of as an attention to the de-  
licacy of Lord Rochford. But whether the  
compliment was to one or both, to this nation  
it was the same. By this transaction the con-  
dition of our Court lay exposed in all its naked-  
ness,

ness. Our office correspondence has lost all pretence to authenticity; British policy is brought into derision in those nations, that a while ago trembled at the power of our arms, whilst they looked up with confidence to the equity, firmness, and candour, which shone in all our negotiations. I represent this matter exactly in the light in which it has been universally received.

Such has been the aspect of our foreign politics, under the influence of a *double Cabinet*. With such an arrangement at Court, it is impossible it should have been otherwise. Nor is it possible that this scheme should have a better effect upon the government of our dependencies, the first, the dearest, and most delicate objects, of the interior policy of this empire. The Colonies know, that Administration is separated from the Court, divided within itself, and detested by the nation. The *double Cabinet* has, in both the parts of it, shewn the most malignant dispositions towards them, without being able to do them the smallest mischief.

They are convinced, by sufficient experience, that no plan, either of lenity or rigour, can be pursued with uniformity and perseverance. Therefore they turn their eyes entirely from Great Britain, where they have neither dependence on friendship, nor apprehension from enmity. They look to themselves, and their own arrangements. They grow every day into alienation from this country; and whilst they are becoming disconnected with our Government,

56 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
we have not the consolation to find, that they  
are even friendly in their new independence,  
Nothing can equal the futility, the weakness,  
the rashness, the timidity, the perpetual con-  
tradiction, in the management of our affairs in  
that part of the world. A volume might be  
written on this melancholy subject; but it were  
better to leave it entirely to the reflexions of the  
reader himself than not to treat it in the extent it  
deserves.

In what manner our domestic œconomy is  
affected by this system, it is needless to ex-  
plain. It is the perpetual subject of their own  
complaints.

The Court Party resolve the whole into  
faction. Having said something before upon  
this subject, I shall only observe here, that  
when they give this account of the preva-  
lence of faction, they present no very favourable  
aspect of the confidence of the people in their  
own Government. They may be assured, that  
however they amuse themselves with a variety  
of projects for substituting something else in  
the place of that great and only foundation of  
Government, the confidence of the people, every  
attempt will but make their condition worse.  
When men imagine that their food is only a  
cover for poison, and when they neither love  
nor trust the hand that serves it, it is not the  
name of the roast beef of Old England, that will  
persuade them to sit down to the table that is  
spread for them. When the people conceive  
that laws, and tribunals, and even popular  
assemblies,

assemblies, are perverted from the ends of their institution, they find in those names of degenerated establishments only new motives to discontent. Those bodies, which, when full of life and beauty, lay in their arms, and were their joy and comfort, when dead and putrid, become but the more loathsome from remembrance of former endearments. A sullen gloom, and furious disorder, prevail by fits; the nation loses its relish for peace and prosperity, as it did in that season of fullness which opened our troubles in the time of Charles the First. A species of men to whom a state of order would become a sentence of obscurity, are nourished into a dangerous magnitude by the heat of intestine disturbances; and it is no wonder that, by a sort of sinister piety, they cherish, in their turn, the disorders which are the parents of all their consequence. Superficial observers consider such persons as the cause of the public uneasiness, when, in truth, they are nothing more than the effect of it. Good men look upon this distracted scene with sorrow and indignation. Their hands are tied behind them. They are despoiled of all the power which might enable them to reconcile the strength of Government with the rights of the people. They stand in a most distressing alternative. But in the election among evils they hope better things from temporary confusion, than from established servitude. In the mean time, the voice of law is not to be heard. Fierce licentiousness begets violent restraints, The military arm is the sole reliance;

reliance; and then, call your constitution what you please, it is the sword that governs. The civil power, like every other that calls in the aid of an ally stronger than itself, perishes by the assistance it receives. But the contrivers of this scheme of Government will not trust solely to the military power; because they are cunning men. Their restless and crooked spirit drives them to rake in the dirt of every kind of expedient. Unable to rule the multitude, they endeavour to raise divisions amongst them. One mob is hired to destroy another; a procedure which at once encourages the boldness of the populace, and justly increases their discontent. Men become pensioners of state on account of their abilities in the array of riot, and the discipline of confusion. Government is put under the disgraceful necessity of protecting from the severity of the laws that very licentiousness, which the laws had been before violated to repress. Every thing partakes of the original disorder. Anarchy predominates without freedom, and servitude without submission or subordination. These are the consequences inevitable to our public peace, from the scheme of rendering the executory Government at once odious and feeble; of freeing Administration from the constitutional and salutary controul of Parliament, and inventing for it a *new controul*, unknown to the constitution, an *interior Cabinet*; which brings the whole body of Government into confusion and contempt.

After



After having stated, as shortly as I am able, the effects of this system on our foreign affairs, on the policy of our Government with regard to our dependencies, and on the interior œconomy of the Commonwealth; there remains only, in this part of my design, to say something of the grand principle which first recommended this system at Court. The pretence was, to prevent the King from being enslaved by a faction, and made a prisoner in his closet. This scheme might have been expected to answer at least its own end, and to indemnify the King, in his personal capacity, for all the confusion into which it has thrown his Government. But has it in reality answered this purpose? I am sure, if it had, every affectionate subject would have one motive for enduring with patience all the evils which attend it.

In order to come at the truth in this matter, it may not be amiss to consider it somewhat in detail. I speak here of the King, and not of the Crown; the interests of which we have already touched. Independent of that greatness which a King possesses merely by being a representative of the national dignity, the things in which he may have an individual interest seem to be these: wealth accumulated; wealth spent in magnificence, pleasure, or beneficence; personal respect and attention; and above all, private ease and repose of mind. These compose the inventory of prosperous circumstances, whether they regard a Prince or a subject; their enjoyments

60 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
enjoyments differing only in the scale upon which  
they are formed.

Suppose then we were to ask, whether the King has been richer than his predecessors in accumulated wealth, since the establishment of the plan of Favouritism? I believe it will be found that the picture of royal indigence which our Court has presented until this year, has been truly humiliating. Nor has it been relieved from this unseemly distress, but by means which have hazarded the affection of the people, and shaken their confidence in Parliament. If the public treasures had been exhausted in magnificence and splendour, this distress would have been accounted for, and in some measure justified. Nothing would be more unworthy of this nation, than with a mean and mechanical rule, to mete out the splendour of the Crown. Indeed I have found very few persons disposed to so ungenerous a procedure. But the generality of people, it must be confessed, do feel a good deal mortified, when they compare the wants of the Court with its expences. They do not behold the cause of this distress in any part of the apparatus of Royal magnificence. In all this, they see nothing but the operations of parsimony, attended with all the consequences of profusion. Nothing expended, nothing saved. Their wonder is increased by their knowledge, that besides the revenue settled on his Majesty's Civil List to the amount of 800,000*l.* a year, he has a farther aid, from a large pension list, near 90,000*l.* a year, in Ireland; from the produce

duce of the Dutchy of Lancaster (which we are told has been greatly improved); from the revenue of the Dutchy of Cornwall; from the American quit-rents; from the four and a half *per cent.* duty in the Leeward Islands; this last worth to be sure considerably more than 40,000 *l.* a year. The whole is certainly not much short of a million annually.

These are revenues within the knowledge and cognizance of our national Councils. We have no direct right to examine into the receipts from his Majesty's German Dominions, and the Bishoprick of Osnabrug. This is unquestionably true. But that which is not within the province of Parliament, is yet within the sphere of every man's own reflexion. If a foreign Prince resided amongst us, the state of his revenues could not fail of becoming the subject of our speculation. Filled with an anxious concern for whatever regards the welfare of our Sovereign, it is impossible, in considering the miserable circumstances into which he has been brought, that this obvious topick should be entirely passed over. There is an opinion universal, that these revenues produce something not inconsiderable, clear of all charges and establishments. This produce the people do not believe to be hoarded, nor perceive to be spent. It is accounted for in the only manner it can, by supposing that it is drawn away, for the support of that Court Faction, which, whilst it distresses the nation, impoverishes the Prince in every one of his resources. I once more caution  
the

the reader, that I do not urge this consideration concerning the foreign revenue, as if I supposed we had a direct right to examine into the expenditure of any part of it; but solely for the purpose of shewing how little this system of Favouritism has been advantageous to the Monarch himself; which, without magnificence, has sunk him into a state of unnatural poverty; at the same time that he possessed every means of affluence, from ample revenues, both in this country, and in other parts of his dominions.

Has this system provided better for the treatment becoming his high and sacred character, and secured the King from those disgusts attached to the necessity of employing men who are not personally agreeable? This is a topick upon which for many reasons I could wish to be silent; but the pretence of securing against such causes of uneasiness, is the corner-stone of the Court Party. It has however so happened, that if I were to fix upon any one point, in which this system has been more particularly and shamefully blameable, the effects which it has produced would justify me in choosing for that point its tendency to degrade the personal dignity of the Sovereign, and to expose him to a thousand contradictions and mortifications. It is but too evident in what manner these projectors of Royal greatness have fulfilled all their magnificent promises. Without recapitulating all the circumstances of the reign, every one of which is more or less a melancholy proof of the

truth of what I have advanced, let us consider the language of the Court but a few years ago, concerning most of the persons now in the external Administration: let me ask, whether any enemy to the personal feelings of the Sovereign, could possibly contrive a keener instrument of mortification, and degradation of all dignity, than almost every part and member of the present arrangement? nor, in the whole course of our history, has any compliance with the will of the people ever been known to extort from any Prince a greater contradiction to all his own declared affections and dislikes than that which is now adopted, in direct opposition to every thing the people approve and desire.

An opinion prevails, that greatness has been more than once advised to submit to certain condescensions towards individuals, which have been denied to the entreaties of a nation. For the meanest and most dependent instrument of this system knows, that there are hours when its existence may depend upon his adherence to it; and he takes his advantage accordingly. Indeed it is a law of nature, that whoever is necessary to what we have made our object, is sure in some way, or in some time or other, to become our master. All this however is submitted to, in order to avoid that monstrous evil of governing in concurrence with the opinion of the people. For it seems to be laid down as a maxim, that a King has some sort of interest in giving uneasiness to his subjects: that all who are pleasing to them, are to be of course disagreeable

64 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF disagreeable to him: that as soon as the persons who are odious at Court are known to be odious to the people, it is snatched at as a lucky occasion of showering down upon them all kinds of emoluments and honours. None are considered as well-wishers to the Crown, but those who advise to some unpopular course of action; none capable of serving it, but those who are obliged to call at every instant upon all its power for the safety of their lives. None are supposed to be fit priests in the temple of Government, but the persons who are compelled to fly into it for sanctuary. Such is the effect of this refined project; such is ever the result of all the contrivances which are used to free men from the servitude of their reason, and from the necessity of ordering their affairs according to their evident interests. These contrivances oblige them to run into a real and ruinous servitude, in order to avoid a supposed restraint that might be attended with advantage.

If therefore this system has so ill answered its own grand pretence of saving the King from the necessity of employing persons disagreeable to him, has it given more peace and tranquillity to his Majesty's private hours? No, most certainly. The father of his people cannot possibly enjoy repose, while his family is in such a state of distraction. Then what has the Crown or the King profited by all this fine-wrought scheme? Is he more rich, or more splendid, or more powerful, or more at his ease, by so many labours and contrivances? Have they not beg-  
gared

gared his Exchequer, tarnished the splendor of his Court, sunk his dignity, galled his feelings, discomposed the whole order and happiness of his private life?

It will be very hard, I believe, to state in what respect the King has profited by that Faction which presumptuously choose to call themselves *his friends*.

If particular men had grown into an attachment, by the distinguished honour of the society of their Sovereign; and, by being the partakers of his amusements, came sometimes to prefer the gratification of his personal inclinations to the support of his high character, the thing would be very natural, and it would be excusable enough. But the pleasant part of the story is, that these *King's friends* have no more ground for usurping such a title, than a resident freeholder in Cumberland or in Cornwall. They are only known to their Sovereign by kissing his hand, for the offices, pensions, and grants, into which they have deceived his benignity. May no storm ever come, which will put the firmness of their attachment to the proof; and which, in the midst of confusions, and terrors, and sufferings, may demonstrate the eternal difference between a true and severe friend to the Monarchy, and a slippery sycophant of the Court! *Quantum infido scurræ distabit amicus.*

So far I have considered the effect of the Court system, chiefly as it operates upon the executive Government, on the temper of the people, and on the happiness of the Sovereign. It remains,

F

that

66 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
that we should consider, with a little attention,  
its operation upon Parliament.

Parliament was indeed the great object of all these politicks, the end at which they aimed, as well as the instrument by which they were to operate. But, before Parliament could be made subservient to a system, by which it was to be degraded from the dignity of a national council, into a mere member of the Court, it must be greatly changed from its original character.

In speaking of this body, I have my eye chiefly on the House of Commons. I hope I shall be indulged in a few observations on the nature and character of that assembly; not with regard to its *legal form and power*, but to its *spirit*, and to the purposes it is meant to answer in the constitution.

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be *no part of the standing Government of this country*. It was considered as a *controul*, issuing *immediately* from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of Government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the Crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped that, being of a middle nature between subject and Government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer  
interest



interest every thing that concerned the people, than the other remoter and more permanent parts of Legislature.

Whatever alterations time and the necessary accommodation of business may have introduced, this character can never be sustained, unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more natural and tolerable, that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical phrensy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be an House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of that House from the people, which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The King is the representative of the people; so are the Lords; so are the Judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the Commons; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and although Government certainly is an institution of Divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristic distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of Government, and in all forms. The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the

express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a controul *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a controul *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service; having no stronger weapon than its Mace, and no better officer than its Serjeant at Arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executive and judicial magistracy; an anxious care of public money, an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint: these seem to be the true characteristics of an House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, and a petitioning nation; an House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair; in the utmost harmony with Ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account; who, in all disputes between the people and Administration, presume against the people; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to enquire into the provocations to them; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an Assembly may be a  
great,

great, wise, awful Senate; but it is not to any popular purpose an House of Commons. This change from an immediate state of procuration and delegation to a course of acting as from original power, is the way in which all the popular magistracies in the world have been perverted from their purposes. It is indeed their greatest and sometimes their incurable corruption. For there is a material distinction between that corruption by which particular points are carried against reason, (this is a thing which cannot be prevented by human wisdom, and is of less consequence) and the corruption of the principle itself. For then the evil is not accidental, but settled. The distemper becomes the natural habit.

For my part, I shall be compelled to conclude the principle of Parliament to be totally corrupted, and therefore its ends entirely defeated, when I see two symptoms: first, a rule of indiscriminate support to all Ministers; because this destroys the very end of Parliament as a controul, and is a general previous sanction to misgovernment: and secondly, the setting up any claims adverse to the right of free election; for this tends to subvert the legal authority by which the House of Commons sits.

I know that, since the Revolution, along with many dangerous, many useful powers of Government have been weakened. It is absolutely necessary to have frequent recourse to the Legislature. Parliaments must therefore sit every year, and for great part of the year. The dreadful disorders of frequent elections have also

70 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
necessitated a septennial instead of a triennial  
duration. These circumstances, I mean the  
constant habit of authority, and the unfre-  
quency of elections, have tended very much  
to draw the House of Commons towards the  
character of a standing Senate. It is a disorder  
which has arisen from the cure of greater dis-  
orders; it has arisen from the extreme difficulty  
of reconciling liberty under a monarchical Go-  
vernment, with external strength and with  
internal tranquillity.

It is very clear that we cannot free ourselves  
entirely from this great inconvenience; but I  
would not increase an evil, because I was not  
able to remove it; and because it was not in my  
power to keep the House of Commons reli-  
giously true to its first principles, I would not  
argue for carrying it to a total oblivion of them.  
This has been the great scheme of power in our  
time. They who will not conform their conduct  
to the public good, and cannot support it by the  
prerogative of the Crown, have adopted a new  
plan. They have totally abandoned the shattered  
and old-fashioned fortrefs of prerogative, and  
made a lodgement in the strong hold of Parlia-  
ment itself. If they have any evil design to  
which there is no ordinary legal power com-  
mensurate, they bring it into Parliament. In  
Parliament the whole is executed from the be-  
ginning to the end. In Parliament the power of  
obtaining their object is absolute; and the safety  
in the proceeding perfect; no rules to confine,  
no after reckonings to terrify. Parliament  
cannot

cannot with any great propriety punish others, for things in which they themselves have been accomplices. Thus the controul of Parliament upon the executory power is lost; because Parliament is made to partake in every considerable act of Government. *Impeachment, that great guardian of the purity of the Constitution, is in danger of being lost, even to the idea of it.*

By this plan several important ends are answered to the Cabal. If the authority of Parliament supports itself, the credit of every act of Government which they contrive, is saved; but if the act be so very odious that the whole strength of Parliament is insufficient to recommend it, then Parliament is itself discredited; and this discredit increases more and more that indifference to the constitution, which it is the constant aim of its enemies, by their abuse of Parliamentary powers, to render general among the people. Whenever Parliament is persuaded to assume the offices of executive Government, it will lose all the confidence, love, and veneration, which it has ever enjoyed whilst it was supposed the *corrective and controul* of the acting powers of the State. This would be the event, though its conduct in such a perversion of its functions should be tolerably just and moderate; but if it should be iniquitous, violent, full of passion, and full of faction, it would be considered as the most intolerable of all the modes of tyranny.

For a considerable time this separation of the representatives from their constituents went on with a silent progress; and had those, who con-

ducted the plan for their total separation, been persons of temper and abilities any way equal to the magnitude of their design, the success would have been infallible: but by their precipitancy they have laid it open in all its nakedness; the nation is alarmed at it; and the event may not be pleasant to the contrivers of the scheme. In the last session, the corps called the *King's friends* made an hardy attempt all at once, *to alter the right of election itself*; to put it into the power of the House of Commons to disable any person disagreeable to them from sitting in Parliament, without any other rule than their own pleasure; to make incapacities, either general for descriptions of men, or particular for individuals; and to take into their body, persons who avowedly had never been chosen by the majority of legal electors, nor agreeably to any known rule of law.

The arguments upon which this claim was founded and combated, are not my business here. Never has a subject been more amply and more learnedly handled, nor upon one side in my opinion more satisfactorily; they who are not convinced by what is already written would not receive conviction *though one arose from the dead*.

I too have thought on this subject: but my purpose here, is only to consider it as a part of the favourite project of Government; to observe on the motives which led to it; and to trace its political consequences.

A violent rage for the punishment of Mr. Wilkes was the pretence of the whole. This gentleman, by setting himself strongly in opposition

sition to the Court Cabal, had become at once an object of their persecution, and of the popular favour. The hatred of the Court Party pursuing, and the countenance of the people protecting him, it very soon became not at all a question on the man, but a trial of strength between the two parties. The advantage of the victory in this particular contest was the present, but not the only, nor by any means the principal, object. Its operation upon the character of the House of Commons was the great point in view. The point to be gained by the Cabal was this; that a precedent should be established, tending to shew, *That the favour of the People was not so sure a road as the favour of the Court even to popular honours and popular trusts.* A strenuous resistance to every appearance of lawless power; a spirit of independence carried to some degree of enthusiasm; an inquisitive character to discover, and a bold one to display, every corruption and every error of Government; these are the qualities which recommend a man to a seat in the House of Commons, in open and merely popular elections. An indolent and submissive disposition; a disposition to think charitably of all the actions of men in power, and to live in a mutual intercourse of favours with them; an inclination rather to countenance a strong use of authority, than to bear any sort of licentiousness on the part of the people; these are unfavourable qualities in an open election for Members of Parliament.

The instinct which carries the people towards the choice of the former, is justified by reason; because

74 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
because a man of such a character, even in its  
exorbitancies, does not directly contradict the  
purposes of a trust, the end of which is a controul  
on power. The latter character, even when it is  
not in its extreme, will execute this trust but very  
imperfectly ; and, if deviating to the least excess,  
will certainly frustrate instead of forwarding the  
purposes of a controul on Government. But  
when the House of Commons was to be new  
modelled, this principle was not only to be  
changed, but reversed. Whilst any errors com-  
mitted in support of power were left to the law,  
with every advantage of favourable construction,  
of mitigation, and finally of pardon ; all excesses  
on the side of liberty, or in pursuit of popular  
favour, or in defence of popular rights and pri-  
vileges, were not only to be punished by the  
rigour of the known law, but by a *discretionary*  
proceeding which brought on *the loss of the popu-  
lar object itself*. Popularity was to be rendered,  
if not directly penal, at least highly dangerous.  
The favour of the people might lead even to a  
disqualification of representing them. Their  
odium might become, strained through the me-  
dium of two or three constructions, the means of  
sitting as the trustee of all that was dear to them.  
This is punishing the offence in the offending  
part. Until this time, the opinion of the people,  
through the power of an Assembly, still in some  
sort popular, led to the greatest honours and  
emoluments in the gift of the Crown. Now the  
principle is reversed ; and the favour of the  
Court is the only sure way of obtaining and  
holding



holding those honours which ought to be in the disposal of the people.

It signifies very little how this matter may be quibbled away. Example, the only argument of effect in civil life, demonstrates the truth of my proposition. Nothing can alter my opinion concerning the pernicious tendency of this example, until I see some man for his indiscretion in the support of power, for his violent and intemperate fervility, rendered incapable of sitting in Parliament. For as it now stands, the fault of overstraining popular qualities, and, irregularly if you please, asserting popular privileges, has led to disqualification; the opposite fault never has produced the slightest punishment. Resistance to power, has shut the door of the House of Commons to one man; obsequiousness and fervility, to none.

Not that I would encourage popular disorder, or any disorder. But I would leave such offences to the law, to be punished in measure and proportion. The laws of this country are for the most part constituted, and wisely so, for the general ends of Government, rather than for the preservation of our particular liberties. Whatever therefore is done in support of liberty, by persons not in public trust, or not acting merely in that trust, is liable to be more or less out of the ordinary course of the law; and the law itself is sufficient to animadvert upon it with great severity. Nothing indeed can hinder that severe letter from crushing us, except the temperaments it may receive from a trial by jury. But  
if

76 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
if the habit prevails of *going beyond the law*, and superseding this judicature, of carrying offences, real or supposed, into the legislative bodies, who shall establish themselves into *courts of criminal equity* (so the *Star Chamber* has been called by Lord Bacon), all the evils of the *Star Chamber* are revived. A large and liberal construction in ascertaining offences, and a discretionary power in punishing them, is the idea of *criminal equity*; which is in truth a monster in Jurisprudence. It signifies nothing whether a court for this purpose be a Committee of Council, or an House of Commons, or an House of Lords; the liberty of the subject will be equally subverted by it. The true end and purpose of that House of Parliament which entertains such a jurisdiction will be destroyed by it.

I will not believe, what no other man living believes, that Mr. Wilkes was punished for the indecency of his publications, or the impiety of his ransacked closet. If he had fallen in a common slaughter of libellers and blasphemers, I could well believe that nothing more was meant than was pretended. But when I see that, for years together, full as impious, and perhaps more dangerous writings to religion and virtue and order, have not been punished, nor their authors discountenanced; that the most audacious libels on Royal Majesty have passed without notice; that the most treasonable invectives against the laws, liberties, and constitution of the country, have not met with the slightest animadversion; I must consider this as a shocking and shameless pretence.

Never

Never did an envenomed scurrility against every thing sacred and civil, public and private, rage through the kingdom with such a furious and unbridled licence. All this while the peace of the nation must be shaken, to ruin one libeller, and to tear from the populace a single favourite.

Nor is it that vice merely skulks in an obscure and contemptible impunity. Does not the publick behold with indignation, persons not only generally scandalous in their lives, but the identical persons who, by their society, their instruction, their example, their encouragement, have drawn this man into the very faults which have furnished the Cabal with a pretence for his persecution, loaded with every kind of favour, honour and distinction which a Court can bestow? Add but the crime of servility (the *fædum crimen servitutis*) to every other crime, and the whole mass is immediately transmuted into virtue, and becomes the just subject of reward and honour. When therefore I reflect upon this method pursued by the Cabal in distributing rewards and punishments, I must conclude that Mr. Wilkes is the object of persecution, not on account of what he has done in common with others who are the objects of reward, but for that in which he differs from many of them: that he is pursued for the spirited dispositions which are blended with his vices; for his unconquerable firmness, for his resolute, indefatigable, strenuous resistance against oppression.

In this case, therefore, it was not the man that was to be punished, nor his faults that were to be discoun-

78 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
discountenanced. Opposition to acts of power was to be marked by a kind of civil proscription. The popularity which should arise from such an opposition was to be shewn unable to protect it. The qualities by which court is made to the people, were to render every fault inexpiable, and every error irretrievable. The qualities by which court is made to power, were to cover and to sanctify every thing. He that will have a sure and honourable seat in the House of Commons, must take care how he adventures to cultivate popular qualities; otherwise he may remember the old maxim, *Breves et infastos populi Romani amores*. If, therefore, a pursuit of popularity expose a man to greater dangers than a disposition to fervility, the principle which is the life and soul of popular elections will perish out of the constitution.

It behoves the people of England to consider how the House of Commons under the operation of these examples must of necessity be constituted. On the side of the Court will be, all honours, offices, emoluments; every sort of personal gratification to avarice or vanity; and, what is of more moment to most gentlemen, the means of growing, by innumerable petty services to individuals, into a spreading interest in their country. On the other hand, let us suppose a person unconnected with the Court, and in opposition to its system. For his own person, no office, or emolument, or title; no promotion, ecclesiastical, or civil, or military, or naval, for children, or  
brothers,

brothers, or kindred. In vain an expiring interest in a borough calls for offices, or small livings, for the children of mayors, and aldermen, and capital burgessees. His Court rival has them all. He can do an infinite number of acts of generosity and kindness, and even of public spirit. He can procure indemnity from quarters. He can procure advantages in trade. He can get pardons for offences. He can obtain a thousand favours, and avert a thousand evils. He may, while he betrays every valuable interest of the kingdom, be a benefactor, a patron, a father, a guardian angel, to his borough. The unfortunate independent member has nothing to offer but harsh refusal, or pitiful excuse, or despondent representation of an hopeless interest. Except from his private fortune, in which he may be equalled, perhaps exceeded, by his Court competitor, he has no way of shewing any one good quality, or of making a single friend. In the House, he votes for ever in a dispirited minority. If he speaks, the doors are locked. A body of loquacious place-men go out to tell the world, that all he aims at, is to get into office. If he has not the talent of elocution, which is the case of many as wise and knowing men as any in the House, he is liable to all these inconveniences, without the eclat which attends upon any tolerably successful exertion of eloquence. Can we conceive a more discouraging post of duty than this? Strip it of the poor reward of popularity; suffer even the excesses committed in  
 defence

86 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
defence of the popular interest, to become a  
ground for the majority of that House to form a  
disqualification out of the line of the law, and at  
their pleasure, attended not only with the loss of  
the franchise, but with every kind of personal  
disgrace.—If this shall happen, the people of this  
kingdom may be assured that they cannot be  
firmly or faithfully served by any man. It is  
out of the nature of men and things that they  
should; and their presumption will be equal to  
their folly, if they expect it. The power of the  
people, within the laws, must shew itself sufficient  
to protect every representative in the animated  
performance of his duty, or that duty cannot  
be performed. The House of Commons can  
never be a controul on other parts of Govern-  
ment unless they are controuled themselves by  
their constituents; and unless these constituents  
possess some right in the choice of that House,  
which it is not in the power of that House to  
take away. If they suffer this power of arbi-  
trary incapacitation to stand, they have utterly  
perverted every other power of the House of  
Commons. The late proceeding, I will not say,  
*is* contrary to law; it *must* be so; for the power  
which is claimed cannot, by any possibility, be  
a legal power in any limited member of Go-  
vernment.

The power which they claim, of declaring  
incapacities, would not be above the just claims of  
a final judicature, if they had not laid it down as  
a leading principle, that they had no rule in the  
exercise of this claim, but their own *discretion*.

Not

Not one of their abettors has ever undertaken to assign the principle of unfitness, the species or degree of delinquency, on which the House of Commons will expel, nor the mode of proceeding upon it, nor the evidence upon which it is established. The direct consequence of which is, that the first franchise of an Englishman, and that on which all the rest vitally depend, is to be forfeited for some offence which no man knows, and which is to be proved by no known rule whatsoever of legal evidence. This is so anomalous to our whole constitution, that I will venture to say, the most trivial right which the subject claims, never was, nor can be, forfeited in such a manner.

The whole of their usurpation is established upon this method of arguing. We do not *make* laws. No; we do not contend for this power. We only *declare* law; and, as we are a tribunal both competent and supreme, what we declare to be law becomes law, although it should not have been so before. Thus the circumstance of having no *appeal* from their jurisdiction is made to imply that they have no *rule* in the exercise of it; the judgement does not derive its validity from its conformity to the law; but preposterously the law is made to attend on the judgement; and the rule of the judgement is no other than the *occasional will of the House*. An arbitrary discretion leads, legality follows; which is just the very nature and description of a legislative act.

This claim in their hands was no barren theory. It was pursued into its utmost consequences; and

G

a dangerous

a dangerous principle has begot a correspondent practice. A systematic spirit has been shewn upon both sides. The electors of Middlesex chose a person whom the House of Commons had voted incapable; and the House of Commons has taken in a member whom the electors of Middlesex had not chosen. By a construction on that legislative power which had been assumed, they declared that the true legal sense of the county was contained in the minority, on that occasion; and might, on a resistance to a vote of incapacity, be contained in any minority.

When any construction of law goes against the spirit of the privilege it was meant to support, it is a vicious construction. It is material to us to be represented really and *bona fide*, and not in forms, in types, and shadows, and fictions of law. The right of election was not established merely as a *matter of form*, to satisfy some method and rule of technical reasoning; it was not a principle which might substitute a *Titius* or a *Maevius*, a *John Doe* or *Richard Roe*, in the place of a man specially chosen; not a principle which was just as well satisfied with one man as with another. It is a right, the effect of which is to give to the people, that man, and *that man only*, whom by their voices, actually, not constructively given, they declare that they know, esteem, love, and trust. This right is a matter within their own power of judging and feeling; not an *ens rationis* and creature of law: nor can those devices, by which any thing else is substituted in the place of such an actual choice,

answer



answer in the least degree the end of representation.

I know that the courts of law have made as strained constructions in other cases. Such is the construction in common recoveries. The method of construction which in that case gives to the persons in remainder, for their security and representative, the door-keeper, cryer, or sweeper of the Court, or some other shadowy being without substance or effect, is a fiction of a very coarse texture. This was however suffered, by the acquiescence of the whole kingdom, for ages; because the evasion of the old statute of Westminster, which authorised perpetuities, had more sense and utility than the law which was evaded. But an attempt to turn the right of election into such a farce and mockery as a fictitious fine and recovery, will, I hope, have another fate; because the laws which give it are infinitely dear to us, and the evasion is infinitely contemptible.

The people indeed have been told, that this power of discretionary disqualification is vested in hands that they may trust, and who will be sure not to abuse it to their prejudice. Until I find something in this argument differing from that on which every mode of despotism has been defended, I shall not be inclined to pay it any great compliment. The people are satisfied to trust themselves with the exercise of their own privileges, and do not desire this kind intervention of the House of Commons to free them from the burthen. They are certainly in the right. They ought not to trust the House of Commons with a

power over their franchises: because the constitution, which placed two other coordinate powers to controul it, reposed no such confidence in that body. It were a folly well deserving servitude for its punishment, to be full of confidence where the laws are full of distrust; and to give to an House of Commons, arrogating to its sole resolution the most harsh and odious part of legislative authority, that degree of submission which is due only to the Legislature itself.

When the House of Commons, in an endeavour to obtain new advantages at the expence of the other orders of the State, for the benefit of the *Commons at large*, have pursued strong measures; if it were not just, it was at least natural, that the constituents should connive at all their proceedings; because we were ourselves ultimately to profit. But when this submission is urged to us, in a contest between the representatives and ourselves, and where nothing can be put into their scale which is not taken from ours, they fancy us to be children when they tell us they are our representatives, our own flesh and blood, and that all the stripes they give us are for our good. The very desire of that body to have such a trust contrary to law reposed in them, shews that they are not worthy of it. They certainly will abuse it; because all men possessed of an uncontrouled discretionary power leading to the aggrandisement and profit of their own body have always abused it: and I see no particular sanctity in our times, that is at all likely, by a  
miraculous

miraculous operation, to overrule the course of nature.

But we must purposely shut our eyes, if we consider this matter merely as a contest between the House of Commons and the Electors. The true contest is between the Electors of the kingdom and the Crown; the Crown acting by an instrumental House of Commons. It is precisely the same, whether the Ministers of the Crown can disqualify by a dependent House of Commons, or by a dependent court of *Star Chamber*, or by a dependent court of King's Bench. If once Members of Parliament can be practically convinced, that they do not depend on the affection or opinion of the people for their political being; they will give themselves over, without even an appearance of reserve, to the influence of the Court.

Indeed, a Parliament unconnected with the people, is essential to a Ministry unconnected with the people; and therefore those who saw through what mighty difficulties the interior Ministry waded, and the exterior were dragged, in this business, will conceive of what prodigious importance, the new corps of *King's men* held this principle of occasional and personal incapacitation, to the whole body of their design.

When the House of Commons was thus made to consider itself as the "master of its constituents, there wanted but one thing to secure that House against all possible future deviation towards popularity; an *unlimited* fund of money to be laid out according to the pleasure of the Court.

To compleat the scheme of bringing our Court to a resemblance to the neighbouring Monarchies, it was necessary, in effect, to destroy those appropriations of revenue, which seem to limit the property, as the other laws had done the powers, of the Crown. An opportunity for this purpose was taken, upon an application to Parliament for payment of the debts of the Civil List; which in 1769 had amounted to 513,000 *l.* Such application had been made upon former occasions; but to do it in the former manner would by no means answer the present purpose.

Whenever the Crown had come to the Commons to desire a supply for the discharging of debts due on the Civil List; it was always asked and granted with one of the three following qualifications; sometimes with all of them. Either it was stated, that the revenue had been diverted from its purposes by Parliament: or that those duties had fallen short of the sum for which they were given by Parliament, and that the intention of the Legislature had not been fulfilled: or that the money required to discharge the Civil List Debt, was to be raised chargeable on the Civil List duties. In the reign of Queen Anne, the Crown was found in debt. The lessening and granting away some part of her revenue by Parliament was alledged as the cause of that debt, and pleaded as an equitable ground, such it certainly was, for discharging it. It does not appear that the duties which were then applied to the ordinary Government produced clear above 580,000 *l.* a year; because, when they were afterwards granted to  
George

George the First, 120,000 *l.* was added, to complete the whole to 700,000 *l.* a year. Indeed it was then asserted, and, I have no doubt, truly, that for many years the net produce did not amount to above 550,000 *l.* The Queen's extraordinary charges were besides very considerable; equal, at least, to any we have known in our time. The application to Parliament was not for an absolute grant of money; but to empower the Queen to raise it by borrowing upon the Civil List funds.

The Civil List debt was twice paid in the reign of George the First. The money was granted upon the same plan which had been followed in the reign of Queen Anne. The Civil List revenues were then mortgaged for the sum to be raised, and stood charged with the ransom of their own deliverance.

George the Second received an addition to his Civil List. Duties were granted for the purpose of raising 800,000 *l.* a year. It was not until he had reigned nineteen years, and after the last rebellion, that he called upon Parliament for a discharge of the Civil List debt. The extraordinary charges brought on by the rebellion, account fully for the necessities of the Crown. However, the extraordinary charges of Government were not thought a ground fit to be relied on.

A deficiency of the Civil List duties for several years before, was stated as the principal, if not the sole, ground on which an application to Parliament could be justified. About this time the

## §§ THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF

produce of these duties had fallen pretty low ; and even upon an average of the whole reign they never produced 800,000*l.* a year clear to the Treasury.

That Prince reigned fourteen years afterwards : not only no new demands were made ; but with so much good order were his revenues and expences regulated, that, although many parts of the establishment of the Court were upon a larger and more liberal scale than they have been since, there was a considerable sum in hand, on his decease, amounting to about 170,000*l.* applicable to the service of the Civil List of his present Majesty. So that, if this Reign commenced with a greater charge than usual, there was enough, and more than enough, abundantly to supply all the extraordinary expence. That the Civil List should have been exceeded in the two former reigns, especially in the reign of George the First, was not at all surprizing. His revenue was but 700,000*l.* annually ; if it ever produced so much clear. The prodigious and dangerous disaffection to the very being of the establishment, and the cause of a Pretender then powerfully abetted from abroad, produced many demands of an extraordinary nature both abroad and at home. Much management and great expences were necessary. But the throne of no Prince has stood upon more unshaken foundations than that of his present Majesty.

To have exceeded the sum given for the Civil List, and to have incurred a debt without special authority of Parliament, was, *prima facie*, a criminal

minal act: as such, Ministers ought naturally rather to have withdrawn it from the inspection, than to have exposed it to the scrutiny, of Parliament. Certainly they ought, of themselves, officiously to have come armed with every sort of argument, which, by explaining, could excuse, a matter in itself of presumptive guilt. But the terrors of the House of Commons are no longer for Ministers.

On the other hand, the peculiar character of the House of Commons, as trustee of the public purse, would have led them to call with a punctilious solicitude for every public account, and to have examined into them with the most rigorous accuracy.

The capital use of an account is, that the reality of the charge, the reason of incurring it, and the justice and necessity of discharging it, should all appear antecedent to the payment. No man ever pays first, and calls for his account afterwards; because he would thereby let out of his hands the principal, and indeed only effectual, means of compelling a full and fair one. But, in national business, there is an additional reason for a previous production of every account. It is a check, perhaps the only one, upon a corrupt and prodigal use of public money. An account after payment is to no rational purpose an account. However, the House of Commons thought all these to be antiquated principles; they were of opinion, that the most Parliamentary way of proceeding was, to pay first what the Court thought proper to demand, and to take its chance for

90 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
for an examination into accounts at some time of  
greater leisure.

The nation had settled 800,000*l.* a year on the Crown, as sufficient for the support of its dignity, upon the estimate of its own Ministers. When Ministers came to Parliament, and said that this allowance had not been sufficient for the purpose, and that they had incurred a debt of 500,000*l.* would it not have been natural for Parliament first to have asked, how, and by what means, their appropriated allowance came to be insufficient? Would it not have favoured of some attention to justice, to have seen in what periods of Administration this debt had been originally incurred? that they might discover, and, if need were, animadvert on the persons who were found the most culpable? To put their hands upon such articles of expenditure as they thought improper or excessive, and to secure, in future, against such misapplication or exceeding? Accounts for any other purposes are but a matter of curiosity, and no genuine Parliamentary object. All the accounts which could answer any Parliamentary were refused, or postponed by previous questions. Every idea of prevention was rejected, as conveying an improper suspicion of the Ministers of the Crown.

When every leading account had been refused, many others were granted with sufficient facility.

But with great candour also, the House was informed, that hardly any of them could be ready until the next session; some of them perhaps not so soon. But, in order firmly to establish the precedent



precedent of *payment previous to account*, and to form it into a settled rule of the House, the god in the machine was brought down, nothing less than the wonder-working *Law of Parliament*. It was alledged, that it is the law of Parliament, when any demand comes from the Crown, that the House must go immediately into the Committee of Supply; in which Committee it was allowed, that the production and examination of accounts would be quite proper and regular. It was therefore carried, that they should go into the Committee without delay, and without accounts, in order to examine with great order and regularity things that could not possibly come before them. After this stroke of orderly and Parliamentary wit and humour, they went into the Committee; and very generously voted the payment.

There was a circumstance in that debate too remarkable to be overlooked. This debt of the Civil List was all along argued upon the same footing as a debt of the State, contracted upon national authority. Its payment was urged as equally pressing upon the public faith and honour: and when the whole year's account was stated, in what is called *The Budget*, the Ministry valued themselves on the payment of so much public debt, just as if they had discharged 500,000*l.* of navy or exchequer bills. Though, in truth, their payment, from the Sinking Fund, of debt which was never contracted by Parliamentary authority, was, to all intents and purposes, so much debt incurred. But such is the present notion of public credit,

92 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF credit, and payment of debt. No wonder that it produces such effects.

Nor was the House at all more attentive to a provident security against future, than it had been to a vindictive retrospect to past, mismanagements. I should have thought indeed that a Ministerial promise, during their own continuance in office, might have been given, though this would have been but a poor security for the publick. Mr. Pelham gave such an assurance, and he kept his word. But nothing was capable of extorting from our Ministers any thing which had the least resemblance to a promise of confining the expences of the Civil List within the limits which had been settled by Parliament. This reserve of theirs I look upon to be equivalent to the clearest declaration, that they were resolved upon a contrary course.

However, to put the matter beyond all doubt, in the Speech from the Throne, after thanking Parliament for the relief so liberally granted, the Ministers inform the two Houses, that they will *endeavour* to confine the expences of the Civil Government — within what limits think you? those which the law had prescribed? Not in the least — “such limits as the “*honour of the Crown* can possibly admit.”

Thus they established an *arbitrary* standard for that dignity which Parliament had defined and limited to a *legal* standard. They gave themselves, under the lax and indeterminate idea of the *honour of the Crown*, a full loose for all manner of dissipation, and all manner of corruption. This arbitrary standard they were not afraid to hold out

out to both Houses ; while an idle and unoperative Act of Parliament, estimating the dignity of the Crown at 800,000 *l.* and confining it to that sum, adds to the number of obsolete statutes which load the shelves of libraries without any sort of advantage to the people.

After this proceeding, I suppose that no man can be so weak as to think that the Crown is limited to any settled allowance whatsoever. For if the Ministry has 800,000 *l.* a year by the law of the land ; and if by the law of Parliament all the debts which exceed it are to be paid previous to the production of any account ; I presume that this is equivalent to an income with no other limits than the abilities of the subject and the moderation of the Court ; that is to say, it is such an income as is possessed by every absolute Monarch in Europe. It amounts, as a person of great ability said in the debate, to an unlimited power of drawing upon the Sinking Fund. Its effect on the public credit of this kingdom must be obvious ; for in vain is the Sinking Fund the great buttress of all the rest, if it be in the power of the Ministry to resort to it for the payment of any debts which they may choose to incur, under the name of the Civil List, and through the medium of a Committee, which thinks itself obliged by law to vote supplies without any other account than that of the mere existence of the debt.

Five hundred thousand pounds is a serious sum. But it is nothing to the prolific principle upon which the sum was voted ; a principle that may be well called, *the fruitful mother of an hundred more.*

94 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
*more.* Neither is the damage to public credit of very great consequence, when compared with that which results to public morals and to the safety of the constitution, from the exhaustless mine of corruption opened by the precedent, and to be wrought by the principle, of the late payment of the debts of the Civil List. The power of discretionary disqualification by one law of Parliament, and the necessity of paying every debt of the Civil List by another law of Parliament, if suffered to pass unnoticed, must establish such a fund of rewards and terrors as will make Parliament the best appendage and support of arbitrary power that ever was invented by the wit of man. This is felt. The quarrel is begun between the Representatives and the People. The Court faction have at length committed them.

In such a strait the wisest may well be perplexed, and the boldest staggered. The circumstances are in a great measure new. We have hardly any landmarks from the wisdom of our ancestors, to guide us. At best we can only follow the spirit of their proceeding in other cases. I know the diligence with which my observations on our public disorders have been made; I am very sure of the integrity of the motives on which they are published: I cannot be equally confident in any plan for the absolute cure of those disorders, or for their certain future prevention. My aim is to bring this matter into more public discussion. Let the sagacity of others work upon it. It is not uncommon for medical writers to describe

describe histories of diseases very accurately, on whose cure they can say but very little.

The first ideas which generally suggest themselves, for the cure of Parliamentary disorders, are, to shorten the duration of Parliaments; and to disqualify all, or a great number of placemen, from a seat in the House of Commons. Whatever efficacy there may be in those remedies, I am sure in the present state of things it is impossible to apply them. A restoration of the right of free election is a preliminary indispensable to every other reformation. What alterations ought afterwards to be made in the constitution, is a matter of deep and difficult research.

If I wrote merely to please the popular palate, it would indeed be as little troublesome to me as to another, to extol these remedies, so famous in speculation, but to which their greatest admirers have never attempted seriously to resort in practice. I confess then, that I have no sort of reliance upon either a Triennial Parliament, or a Place-bill. With regard to the former, perhaps it might rather serve to counteract, than to promote the ends that are proposed by it. To say nothing of the horrible disorders among the people attending frequent elections, I should be fearful of committing, every three years, the independent gentlemen of the country into a contest with the Treasury. It is easy to see which of the contending parties would be ruined first. Whoever has taken a careful view of public proceedings, so as to endeavour to ground his speculations on his experience, must have observed how prodigiously  
greater

96 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
greater the power of Ministry is in the first and last  
session of a Parliament, than it is in the intermediate  
period, when Members sit a little firm on their  
seats. The persons of the greatest Parliamentary  
experience, with whom I have conversed, did  
constantly, in canvassing the fate of questions,  
allow something to the Court-side, upon account  
of the elections depending or imminent. The evil  
complained of, if it exists in the present state of  
things, would hardly be removed by a triennial  
Parliament: for, unless the influence of Govern-  
ment in elections can be entirely taken away, the  
more frequently they return, the more they will  
harrass private independence; the more generally  
men will be compelled to fly to the settled,  
systematic interest of Government, and to the re-  
sources of a boundless Civil List. Certainly some-  
thing may be done, and ought to be done,  
towards lessening that influence in elections;  
and this will be necessary upon a plan either of  
longer or shorter duration of Parliament. But  
nothing can so perfectly remove the evil, as not  
to render such contentions, too frequently re-  
peated, utterly ruinous, first to independence of  
fortune, and then to independence of spirit. As  
I am only giving an opinion on this point, and  
not at all debating it in an adverse line, I hope I  
may be excused in another observation. With  
great truth I may aver, that I never remember to  
have talked on this subject with any man much  
conversant with public business, who considered  
short Parliaments as a real improvement of the  
constitution. Gentlemen, warm in a popular  
cause,

cause, are ready enough to attribute all the declarations of such persons to corrupt motives. But the habit of affairs, if, on one hand, it tends to corrupt the mind, furnishes it, on the other, with the means of better information. The authority of such persons will always have some weight. It may stand upon a par with the speculations of those who are less practised in business; and who, with perhaps purer intentions, have not so effectual means of judging. It is, besides, an effect of vulgar and puerile malignity to imagine, that every Statesman is of course corrupt; and that his opinion, upon every constitutional point, is solely formed upon some sinister interest.

The next favourite remedy is a Place-bill. The same principle guides in both; I mean, the opinion which is entertained by many, of the infallibility of laws and regulations, in the cure of public distempers. Without being as unreasonably doubtful as many are unwisely confident, I will only say, that this also is a matter very well worthy of serious and mature reflexion. It is not easy to foresee, what the effect would be, of disconnecting with Parliament, the greatest part of those who hold civil employments, and of such mighty and important bodies as the military and naval establishments. It were better, perhaps, that they should have a corrupt interest in the forms of the constitution, than that they should have none at all. This is a question altogether different from the disqualification of a particular description of Revenue Officers from seats in Parliament; or, perhaps, of all the lower sorts of them from

H

votes

98 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
votes in elections. In the former case, only  
the few are affected; in the latter, only the incon-  
siderable. But a great official, a great pro-  
fessional, a great military and naval interest, all  
necessarily comprehending many people of the  
first weight, ability, wealth, and spirit, has been  
gradually formed in the kingdom. These new  
interests must be let into a share of representa-  
tion, else possibly they may be inclined to destroy  
those institutions of which they are not permitted  
to partake. This is not a thing to be trifled with;  
nor is it every well-meaning man, that is fit to  
put his hands to it. Many other serious confi-  
derations occur. I do not open them here,  
because they are not directly to my purpose;  
proposing only to give the reader some taste of  
the difficulties that attend all capital changes in  
the constitution; just to hint the uncertainty, to  
say no worse, of preventing the Court, as long as  
it has the means of influence abundantly in its  
power, of applying that influence to Parliament;  
and perhaps, if the public method were precluded,  
of doing it in some worse and more dangerous  
method. Underhand and oblique ways would  
be studied. The science of evasion, already tole-  
rably understood, would then be brought to the  
greatest perfection. It is no inconsiderable part of  
wisdom, to know how much of an evil ought to  
be tolerated; lest, by attempting a degree of  
purity impracticable in degenerate times and  
manners, instead of cutting off the subsisting ill  
practices, new corruptions might be produced  
for the concealment and security of the old. It  
were



were better, undoubtedly, that no influence at all could affect the mind of a Member of Parliament. But of all modes of influence, in my opinion, a place under the Government is the least disgraceful to the man who holds it, and by far the most safe to the country. I would not shut out that sort of influence which is open and visible, which is connected with the dignity and the service of the State, when it is not in my power to prevent the influence of contracts, of subscriptions, of direct bribery, and those innumerable methods of clandestine corruption, which are abundantly in the hands of the Court, and which will be applied as long as these means of corruption, and the disposition to be corrupted, have existence amongst us. Our constitution stands on a nice equipoise, with steep precipices, and deep waters upon all sides of it. In removing it from a dangerous leaning towards one side, there may be a risque of oversetting it on the other. Every project of a material change in a Government so complicated as ours, combined at the same time with external circumstances still more complicated, is a matter full of difficulties; in which a considerate man will not be too ready to decide; a prudent man too ready to undertake; or an honest man too ready to promise. They do not respect the publick nor themselves, who engage for more, than they are sure that they ought to attempt, or that they are able to perform. These are my sentiments, weak perhaps, but honest and unbiaſſed; and submitted entirely to the opinion of grave men, well affected

100 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
to the constitution of their country, and of ex-  
perience in what may best promote or hurt it.

Indeed, in the situation in which we stand, with an immense revenue, an enormous debt, mighty establishments, Government itself a great banker and a great merchant, I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the Representatives, but *the interposition of the body of the people itself*, whenever it shall appear, by some flagrant and notorious act, by some capital innovation, that these Representatives are going to over-leap the fences of the law, and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy. But, if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be used; to be used then only, when it is evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles.

The distempers of Monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress, in the last century; in this, the distempers of Parliament. It is not in Parliament alone that the remedy for Parliamentary disorders can be completed; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in Government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their Representatives. Standards, for judging more systematically upon their conduct, ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured.

By

By such means something may be done. By such means it may appear who those are, that, by an indiscriminate support of all Administrations, have totally banished all integrity and confidence out of public proceedings; have confounded the best men with the worst; and weakened and dissolved, instead of strengthening and compacting, the general frame of Government. If any person is more concerned for government and order, than for the liberties of his country; even he is equally concerned to put an end to this course of indiscriminate support. It is this blind and undistinguishing support, that feeds the spring of those very disorders, by which he is frightened into the arms of the faction which contains in itself the source of all disorders, by enfeebling all the visible and regular authority of the State. The distemper is increased by his injudicious and preposterous endeavours, or pretences, for the cure of it.

An exterior Administration, chosen for its impotency, or after it is chosen purposely rendered impotent, in order to be rendered subservient, will not be obeyed. The laws themselves will not be respected, when those who execute them are despised; and they will be despised, when their power is not immediate from the Crown, or natural in the kingdom. Never were Ministers better supported in Parliament. Parliamentary support comes and goes with office, totally regardless of the man, or the merit. Is Government strengthened? It grows weaker and weaker. The popular torrent gains upon

102 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
upon it every hour. Let us learn from our ex-  
perience. It is not support that is wanting to  
Government, but reformation. When Ministry  
rests upon public opinion, it is not indeed built  
upon a rock of adamant; it has, however, some  
stability. But when it stands upon private  
humour, its structure is of stubble, and its foun-  
dation is on quicksand. I repeat it again—  
He that supports every Administration, subverts  
all Government. The reason is this. The whole  
business in which a Court usually takes an interest  
goes on at present equally well, in whatever  
hands, whether high or low, wise or foolish,  
scandalous or reputable; there is nothing there-  
fore to hold it firm to any one body of men,  
or to any one consistent scheme of politicks.  
Nothing interposes, to prevent the full opera-  
tion of all the caprices and all the passions of a  
Court upon the servants of the publick. The  
system of Administration is open to continual  
shocks and changes, upon the principles of the  
meanest cabal, and the most contemptible in-  
trigue. Nothing can be solid and permanent.  
All good men at length fly with horreur from  
such a service. Men of rank and ability, with  
the spirit which ought to animate such men  
in a free state, while they decline the juris-  
diction of dark cabal on their actions and their  
fortunes, will, for both, chearfully put them-  
selves upon their country. They will trust an  
inquisitive and distinguishing Parliament; be-  
cause it does enquire, and does distinguish. If  
they act well, they know, that in such a Par-  
liament, they will be supported against any  
intrigue;

intrigue; if they act ill, they know that no intrigue can protect them. This situation, however awful, is honourable. But in one hour, and in the self-same Assembly, without any assigned or assignable cause, to be precipitated from the highest authority to the most marked neglect, possibly into the greatest peril of life and reputation, is a situation full of danger, and destitute of honour. It will be shunned equally by every man of prudence, and every man of spirit.

Such are the consequences of the division of the Court from the Administration; and of the division of public men among themselves. By the former of these, lawful Government is undone; by the latter, all opposition to lawless power is rendered impotent. Government may in a great measure be restored, if any considerable bodies of men have honesty and resolution enough never to accept Administration, unless this garrison of *King's men*, which is stationed, as in a citadel, to controul and enslave it, be entirely broken and disbanded, and every work they have thrown up be leveled with the ground. The disposition of public men to keep this corps together, and to act under it, or to co-operate with it, is a touchstone by which every Administration ought in future to be tried. There has not been one which has not sufficiently experienced the utter incompatibility of that Faction with the public peace, and with all the ends of good Government: since, if they opposed it, they soon lost every power of serving the Crown; if they submitted to it, they

lost all the esteem of their country. Until Ministers give to the publick a full proof of their entire alienation from that system, however plausible their pretences, we may be sure they are more intent on the emoluments than the duties of office. If they refuse to give this proof, we know of what stuff they are made. In this particular, it ought to be the electors business to look to their Representatives. The electors ought to esteem it no less culpable in their Member to give a single vote in Parliament to such an Administration, than to take an office under it; to endure it, than to act in it. The notorious infidelity and versatility of Members of Parliament in their opinions of men and things ought in a particular manner to be considered by the electors in the enquiry which is recommended to them. This is one of the principal holdings of that destructive system, which has endeavoured to unhinge all the virtuous, honourable, and useful connexions in the kingdom.

This Cabal has, with great success, propagated a doctrine which serves for a colour to those acts of treachery; and whilst it receives any degree of countenance, it will be utterly senseless to look for a vigorous opposition to the Court Party. The doctrine is this: That all political connexions are in their nature factious, and as such ought to be dissipated and destroyed; and that the rule for forming Administrations is mere personal ability, rated by the judgement of this Cabal upon it, and taken by draught from every division and denomination of public men. This decree

was solemnly promulgated by the head of the Court corps, the Earl of Bute himself, in a speech which he made, in the year 1766, against the then Administration, the only Administration which he has ever been known directly and publicly to oppose.

It is indeed in no way wonderful, that such persons should make such declarations. That Connexion and Faction are equivalent terms, is an opinion which has been carefully inculcated at all times by unconstitutional Statesmen. The reason is evident. Whilst men are linked together, they easily and speedily communicate the alarm of any evil design. They are enabled to fathom it with common counsel, and to oppose it with united strength. Whereas, when they lie dispersed, without concert, order, or discipline, communication is uncertain, counsel difficult, and resistance impracticable. Where men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habitudes and dispositions by joint efforts in business; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest, subsisting among them; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy. In a connexion, the most inconsiderable man, by adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unserviceable to the publick. No man, who is not inflamed by vain-glory into enthusiasm, can flatter himself that his single, unsupported, desultory, unsystematic

106 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
matic endeavours are of power to defeat the subtle  
designs and united Cabals of ambitious citizens.  
When bad men combine, the good must associate;  
else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice  
in a contemptible struggle.

It is not enough, in a situation of trust in the  
commonwealth, that a man means well to his  
country; it is not enough that in his single person  
he never did an evil act, but always voted accord-  
ing to his conscience, and even harangued against  
every design which he apprehended to be preju-  
dicial to the interests of his country. This innox-  
ious and ineffectual character, that seems formed  
upon a plan of apology and disculpation, falls  
miserably short of the mark of public duty. That  
duty demands and requires, that what is right  
should not only be made known, but made pre-  
valent; that what is evil should not only be  
detected, but defeated. When the public man  
omits to put himself in a situation of doing his  
duty with effect, it is an omission that frustrates  
the purposes of his trust almost as much as if he  
had formally betrayed it. It is surely no very  
rational account of a man's life, that he has always  
acted right; but has taken special care, to act in  
such a manner that his endeavours could not  
possibly be productive of any consequence.

I do not wonder that the behaviour of many  
parties should have made persons of tender and  
scrupulous virtue somewhat out of humour with  
all sorts of connexion in politicks. I admit that  
people frequently acquire in such confederacies  
a narrow, bigoted, and proscriptive spirit; that  
they



they are apt to sink the idea of the general good in this circumscribed and partial interest. But, where duty renders a critical situation a necessary one, it is our business to keep free from the evils attendant upon it; and not to fly from the situation itself. If a fortress is seated in an unwholesome air, an officer of the garrison is obliged to be attentive to his health, but he must not desert his station. Every profession, not excepting the glorious one of a soldier, or the sacred one of a priest, is liable to its own particular vices; which, however, form no argument against those ways of life; nor are the vices themselves inevitable to every individual in those professions. Of such a nature are connexions in politics; essentially necessary for the full performance of our public duty, accidentally liable to degenerate into faction. Commonwealths are made of families, free commonwealths of parties also; and we may as well affirm, that our natural regards and ties of blood tend inevitably to make men bad citizens, as that the bonds of our party weaken those by which we are held to our country.

Some legislators went so far as to make neutrality in party a crime against the State. I do not know whether this might not have been rather to overstrain the principle. Certain it is, the best patriots in the greatest commonwealths have always commended and promoted such connexions. *Idem sentire de republica*, was with them a principal ground of friendship and attachment; nor do I know any other capable of forming firmer, dearer, more pleasing, more honourable, and  
more

108 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
more virtuous habitudes. The Romans carried  
this principle a great way. Even the holding of  
offices together, the disposition of which arose  
from chance not selection, gave rise to a relation,  
which continued for life. It was called *ne-  
cessitudo sortis*; and it was looked upon with a  
sacred reverence. Breaches of any of these kinds  
of civil relation were considered as acts of the  
most distinguished turpitude. The whole people  
was distributed into political societies, in which  
they acted in support of such interests in the  
State as they severally affected. For it was then  
thought no crime, to endeavour by every honest  
means to advance to superiority and power those  
of your own sentiments and opinions. This wise  
people was far from imagining that those con-  
nexions had no tie, and obliged to no duty;  
but that men might quit them without shame,  
upon every call of interest. They believed  
private honour to be the great foundation of  
public trust; that friendship was no mean step  
towards patriotism; that he who, in the com-  
mon intercourse of life, shewed he regarded  
somebody besides himself, when he came to act  
in a public situation, might probably consult  
some other interest than his own. Never may  
we become *plus sages que les sages*, as the French  
comedian has happily expressed it, wiser than all  
the wise and good men who have lived before us.  
It was their wish, to see public and private  
virtues, not dissonant and jarring, and mutually  
destructive, but harmoniously combined, grow-  
ing out of one another in a noble and orderly  
gradation,

gradation, reciprocally supporting and supported. In one of the most fortunate periods of our history this country was governed by a *connexion*; I mean, the great connexion of Whigs in the reign of Q. Anne. They were complimented upon the principle of this connexion by a poet who was in high esteem with them. Addison, who knew their sentiments, could not praise them for what they considered as no proper subject of commendation. As a poet who knew his business, he could not applaud them for a thing which in general estimation was not highly reputable. Addressing himself to Britain,

*Thy favourites grow not up by fortune's sport,  
Or from the crimes or follies of a court.  
On the firm basis of desert they rise,  
From long-try'd faith, and friendship's holy ties.*

The Whigs of those days believed that the only proper method of rising into power was through hard essays of practised friendship and experimented fidelity. At that time it was not imagined, that patriotism was a bloody idol, which required the sacrifice of children and parents, or dearest connexions in private life, and of all the virtues that rise from those relations. They were not of that ingenious paradoxical morality, to imagine that a spirit of moderation was properly shewn in patiently bearing the sufferings of your friends; or that disinterestedness was clearly manifested at the expence of other peoples fortune. They believed that no men could act with effect, who did not act in concert; that

110 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
that no men could act in concert, who did not  
act with confidence; and that no men could act  
with confidence, who were not bound together  
by common opinions, common affections, and  
common interests.

These wise men, for such I must call Lord  
Sunderland, Lord Godolphin, Lord Sommers,  
and Lord Marlborough, were too well principled  
in these maxims upon which the whole fabrick of  
public strength is built, to be blown off their  
ground by the breath of every childish talker.  
They were not afraid that they should be called  
an ambitious Junto; or that their resolution to  
stand or fall together should, by placemen, be in-  
terpreted into a scuffle for places.

Party is a body of men united, for promoting  
by their joint endeavours the national interest,  
upon some particular principle in which they are  
all agreed. For my part, I find it impossible to  
conceive, that any one believes in his own poli-  
ticks, or thinks them to be of any weight, who  
refuses to adopt the means of having them re-  
duced into practice. It is the business of the  
speculative philosopher to mark the proper ends  
of Government. It is the business of the poli-  
tician, who is the philosopher in action, to find  
out proper means towards those ends, and to  
employ them with effect. Therefore every  
honourable connexion will avow it as their first  
purpose, to pursue every just method to put the  
men who hold their opinions into such a condition  
as may enable them to carry their common plans  
into execution, with all the power and authority  
of

of the State. As this power is attached to certain situations, it is their duty to contend for these situations. Without a proscription of others, they are bound to give to their own party the preference in all things; and by no means, for private considerations, to accept any offers of power in which the whole body is not included; nor to suffer themselves to be led, or to be controuled, or to be over-balanced, in office or in council, by those who contradict the very fundamental principles on which their party is formed, and even those upon which every fair connexion must stand. Such a generous contention for power, on such manly and honourable maxims, will easily be distinguished from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument. The very stile of such persons will serve to discriminate them from those numberless impostors, who have deluded the ignorant with professions incompatible with human practice, and have afterwards incensed them by practices below the level of vulgar rectitude.

It is an advantage to all narrow wisdom and narrow morals, that their maxims have a plausible air; and, on a cursory view, appear equal to first principles. They are light and portable. They are as current as copper coin; and about as valuable. They serve equally the first capacities and the lowest; and they are, at least, as useful to the worst men as the best. Of this stamp is the cant of *Not men, but measures*; a sort of charm, by which many people get loose from every honourable engagement. When I see a man acting  
this

112 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
this desultory and disconnected part, with as  
much detriment to his own fortune as prejudice  
to the cause of any party, I am not persuaded  
that he is right; but I am ready to believe he  
is in earnest. I respect virtue in all its situ-  
ations; even when it is found in the unfuitable  
company of weakness. I lament to see qualities,  
rare and valuable, squandered away without any  
public utility. But when a gentleman with great  
visible emoluments abandons the party in which  
he has long acted, and tells you, it is because he  
proceeds upon his own judgement; that he acts  
on the merits of the several measures as they  
arise; and that he is obliged to follow his own  
conscience, and not that of others; he gives rea-  
sons which it is impossible to controvert, and  
discovers a character which it is impossible to  
mistake. What shall we think of him who  
never differed from a certain set of men until  
the moment they lost their power, and who  
never agreed with them in a single instance after-  
wards? Would not such a coincidence of interest  
and opinion be rather fortunate? Would it not  
be an extraordinary cast upon the dice, that a  
man's connexions should degenerate into faction,  
precisely at the critical moment when they  
lose their power, or he accepts a place? When  
people desert their connexions, the desertion is  
a manifest *fact*, upon which a direct simple  
issue lies, triable by plain men. Whether a  
*measure* of Government be right or wrong, is *no*  
*matter of fact*, but a mere affair of opinion, on  
which men may, as they do, dispute and  
wrangle

wrangle without end. But whether the individual *thinks* the measure right or wrong, is a point at still a greater distance from the reach of all human decision. It is therefore very convenient to politicians, not to put the judgment of their conduct on overt-acts, cognizable in any ordinary court, but upon such matter as can be triable only in that secret tribunal, where they are sure of being heard with favour, or where at worst the sentence will be only private whipping.

I believe the reader would wish to find no substance in a doctrine which has a tendency to destroy all test of character as deduced from conduct. He will therefore excuse my adding something more, towards the further clearing up a point, which the great convenience of obscurity to dishonesty has been able to cover with some degree of darkness and doubt.

In order to throw an odium on political connexion, these politicians suppose it a necessary incident to it, that you are blindly to follow the opinions of your party, when in direct opposition to your own clear ideas; a degree of servitude that no worthy man could bear the thought of submitting to; and such as, I believe, no connexions (except some Court Factions) ever could be so senselessly tyrannical as to impose. Men thinking freely, will, in particular instances, think differently. But still, as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great *leading general principles in Govern-*

114 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
*ment*, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political company if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our Court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disagreement will naturally be rare; it will be only enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord, or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity and steadiness in connexion. How men can proceed without any connexion at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible. Of what sort of materials must that man be made, how must he be tempered and put together, who can sit whole years in Parliament, with five hundred and fifty of his fellow citizens, amidst the storm of such tempestuous passions, in the sharp conflict of so many wits, and tempers, and characters, in the agitation of such mighty questions, in the discussion of such vast and ponderous interests, without seeing any one sort of men, whose character, conduct, or disposition, would lead him to associate himself with them, to aid  
and



and be aided in any one system of public utility?

I remember an old scholastic aphorism, which says, "that the man who lives wholly detached from others, must be either an angel or a devil." When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the mean time we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones. It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigour and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen. To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected: in the one, to be placable; in the other, immoveable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded, that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious; and rather to run the risque of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame, and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

There is, however, a time for all things. It is not every conjuncture which calls with equal

116 THOUGHTS ON THE CAUSE OF  
force upon the activity of honest men; but critical exigences now and then arise; and I am mistaken, if this be not one of them. Men will see the necessity of honest combination; but they may see it when it is too late. They may embody, when it will be ruinous to themselves, and of no advantage to the country; when, for want of such a timely union as may enable them to oppose in favour of the laws, with the laws on their side, they may, at length, find themselves under the necessity of conspiring, instead of consulting. The law, for which they stand, may become a weapon in the hands of its bitterest enemies; and they will be cast, at length, into that miserable alternative, between slavery and civil confusion, which no good man can look upon without horror; an alternative in which it is impossible he should take either part, with a conscience perfectly at repose. To keep that situation of guilt and remorse at the utmost distance, is, therefore, our first obligation. Early activity may prevent late and fruitless violence. As yet we work in the light. The scheme of the enemies of public tranquillity has disarranged, it has not destroyed us.

If the reader believes that there really exists such a Faction as I have described; a Faction ruling by the private inclinations of a Court, against the general sense of the people; and that this Faction, whilst it pursues a scheme for undermining all the foundations of our freedom, weakens (for the present at least) all the powers of executory Government, rendering us abroad contemptible,

temptible, and at home distracted; he will believe also, that nothing but a firm combination of public men against this body, and that, too, supported by the hearty concurrence of the people at large, can possibly get the better of it. The people will see the necessity of restoring public men to an attention to the public opinion, and of restoring the constitution to its original principles. Above all, they will endeavour to keep the House of Commons from assuming a character which does not belong to it. They will endeavour to keep that House, for its existence, for its powers, and its privileges, as independent of every other, and as dependent upon themselves, as possible. This servitude is to an House of Commons (like obedience to the Divine law) "perfect freedom." For if they once quit this natural, rational, and liberal obedience, having deserted the only proper foundation of their power, they must seek a support in an abject and unnatural dependence somewhere else. When, through the medium of this just connexion with their constituents, the genuine dignity of the House of Commons is restored, it will begin to think of casting from it, with scorn, as badges of servility, all the false ornaments of illegal power, with which it has been, for some time, disgraced. It will begin to think of its old office of **CONTRoul**. It will not suffer, that last of evils, to predominate in the country; men without popular confidence, public opinion, natural connexion, or mutual trust, invested with all the powers of Government.

When

When they have learned this lesson themselves, they will be willing and able to teach the Court, that it is the true interest of the Prince to have but one Administration; and that one composed of those who recommend themselves to their Sovereign through the opinion of their country, and not by their obsequiousness to a favourite. Such men will serve their Sovereign with affection and fidelity; because his choice of them, upon such principles, is a compliment to their virtue. They will be able to serve him effectually; because they will add the weight of the country to the force of the executory power. They will be able to serve their King with dignity; because they will never abuse his name to the gratification of their private spleen or avarice. This, with allowances for human frailty, may probably be the general character of a Ministry, which thinks itself accountable to the House of Commons; when the House of Commons thinks itself accountable to its constituents. If other ideas should prevail, things must remain in their present confusion; until they are hurried into all the rage of civil violence; or until they sink into the dead repose of despotism.

T H E E N D.















SEP 25 1941



