

their wit and learning; finding (God knows) too ample scope for all the ridicule they poured on it. From this source has broke out that impure torrent of unbelievers and atheists who are at this day the disgrace of human nature, and the instruments of God's signal vengeance on the nation that produced them. For seeing the impositions and mummeries that were practised among themselves, through contempt of these; through pride of reason unused to judge for itself; and, I fear, still more from the licentiousness of their lives, they were induced to esteem religion itself no more than imposition and mummery too.

Those in authority generally having little religion themselves, seemed to care but little how it was treated by others: *THEIR mountain*, they thought, *stood strong*. Not aware that government can have no safe foundation but on virtue: And virtue none but on piety.

However one step they took which brought on their ruin apace; and it is an instance above all I have mentioned yet,—indeed above most of what history records,—that God often makes the sins and follies of mankind their own avengers. Tempted by ambition, or envy of England's prosperity and glory, when unfortunate troubles arose between that country and her colonies, the Rulers of France rendered them incurable by aiding the Revolters with an armed force: Under no better pretence than that of being the defenders of civil liberty against acts of power, which, if allowed in the most aggravated degree that they were ever complained of, would not be *a drop of water in the bucket* against the enormous oppression that prevailed among themselves.

And is it possible (every man of reflection will be inclined to say)—Is it possible that the Ministers of an arbitrary King, who used to boast of their policy and foresight beyond others, should send his fleets and armies into the bosom of a country nurtured up in the most perfect freedom?—Send them (as they said) to fight for the liberties of others, and yet expect, that the officers and soldiers employed in such service would never inquire what liberty they enjoyed at home? Yes, thus blind were these mighty politicians;—these *wise men that gloried in their wisdom: Who said, by the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent: And I have removed the bounds of the people; and have robbed their treasure; and I have put down their inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: And as one gathereth eggs that*
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