

Princes as were remarkable for their Ambition and Wealth; and as soon as they had extracted as much from them as they could, they always found some Pretence or other for setting up a Countryman of their own, under whose Protection they might enjoy the Riches derived to them, in this Manner, from other Nations, until such Time as the House of *Austria* became so powerful, as to put an End to these Sort of Practices, by assuming a new Kind of Influence, which though it left the Appearance of Election, secured an Hereditary Descent of the Imperial Dignity in their Family.

I am very far from blaming this Disposition in the *German* Princes, because it was founded on a Spirit of true Patriotism, by which they converted all Things to the Service of their Country; in which they sought, by all the Methods possible, to fix the Power and Riches of *Europe*: A Principle from which they have never hitherto varied, farther than the Vicissitudes natural to sublunary Things have rendered it necessary; and in these Variations, they have shewn such Prudence, such Firmness, and such Warmth of publick Spirit, as is not only extremely commendable, but worthy also of Imitation; that is, not to Disguise my Thoughts, it ought to put other Nations on acting upon the like Principles, that they may preserve and promote their own Happiness. It was from this Motive, that in the thirteenth Century, several free Cities in *Germany*, by leaguering themselves together, created that surprizing Republick, intituled the *Teutonic Hanse*, by which they engrossed all the Trade of *Europe*, for above two hundred Years, to themselves. It is indeed a great pity that we have not a clear and distinct History of this wonderful Association, which does more Honour to Commerce,