

serving the authority of government entire, and in its utmost lawful force. To make government more easy, knowing that many would disturb it, from disaffection, or disgust, or mistaken notions of liberty, they thought it just to rule men by their interests if they could not by their virtues, and they had long been in the practice of procuring a majority in parliament, by the distribution of the numerous lucrative places and employments which our constitution leaves in the disposal of the Crown. Several believed that no other method was practicable, considering the nature of mankind, and our particular form of government.

But the third and popular party, was influenced by different principles. They looked indeed on the power of France in the same light with the two former, and were of the same opinion concerning the necessity of setting bounds to it. In the means of attaining this end they differed. Our situation they thought dictated a narrower, but a more natural, a safer, and a less expensive plan of politics, than that which had been adopted by the other party. We ought never to forget, said they, that we are an island: and that this circumstance so favorable both to our political and to our civil liberty, prescribes to us a conduct very different from that of every other nation. Our natural strength is a maritime strength, as trade is our natural employment; these must always go hand in hand, and they mutually support each other. But, if turning our back on our real interests, and abandoning our natural element, we enter that inextricable labyrinth of continental politics; if we make ourselves parties in every controversy; if we exhaust our wealth in purchasing the useless and precarious friendship of every petty prince or state; if we

waste the blood of our people in all the quarrels that may arise on the continent; so far from going in the right way to reduce France, that we attack her on the strong side, and only destroy ourselves by our ill judged efforts against the enemy. That we can have nothing to fear from the superiority of France on the continent, whilst we preserve our superiority at sea; that we can always cut the sinews of the enemies strength by destroying their traffic; that to fear an invasion from a power weak in its marine, is the idlest of all fears; that in case an invasion were possible, a well trained national militia, supplying by their zeal the defects of their discipline, would prove our best protection; that a standing army is in whatever shape dangerous to freedom; and that a government like ours, connected by its very essence with the liberty of the subject, can never be in want of the supports of despotic power. As little is parliamentary influence necessary. A government pleasing to the people, as every good government must be, can never be generally opposed; and men need no bribes to persuade them to their duty.

These notions so opposite in their extremes, might be reconciled in a medium, and used to temper each other. For as on one hand, it would be very absurd to take no sort of advantage of our insular situation, but to engage in all the business of the continent without reserve, and to plunge ourselves into real evils out of dread of possible mischiefs; so on the other hand to think ourselves wholly unconcerned in the fortunes of our neighbours on the continent, or to think of aiding them in any case, only by the way of diversion with our fleets, would be a way of proceeding still more extravagant