

THE

MASONIC ESSAYIST.

*A Vindication of Masonry from a Charge of having given rise to the French Revolution.**Concluded from page 90.*

No more would the first dignities of the Church sanction by their presence and patronage a system of Deism, or any institution destructive of religion, than the heir apparent, and other Princes of the blood Royal, would assume the direction and support of a fraternity whose principles were hostile to the Government over which, in the course of nature, they may be called, as Sovereigns, to preside*.

I. M. remarks, with apparent exultation, "that the monster Egalité was Grand Master of Masons in France." If this be true, it is to be lamented, that he should have had the power of dissimulation, so to have concealed his principles, as to have imposed on good men, who certainly meant only to avail themselves of his dignity and his importance in the state, to give the greatest sanction to their laudable pursuits. But, say he were

Vile and false

"As where is that place whereinto foul things

"Some times intrude not?"

The misconduct of one member (however distinguished) in a society, can surely be no impeachment of its general tendency.

What follows in the Essay, about the scarfs of apprentice Masons, and the hat of a venerable master, must allude (if it mean any thing) to modes and customs peculiar to that country, as they are assuredly not known in our assemblies.

With respect to the obligation which I. M. mentions, of "laying aside all marks of distinction, such as stars, garters, ribbands, crosses, &c." before a brother is permitted to enter a lodge, (whence he sagely deduces the source of the French levelling system,) we know nothing of them.

He then goes on to say, "I must forget the marked protection which the new Legislature [of France] has afforded Freemason-

* A Mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers wherever he resides, and is never to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation, nor to behave himself undutifully to inferior magistrates: for as Masonry hath been always injured by war, bloodshed, and confusion, so ancient Kings and Princes have been much disposed to encourage the craftsmen because of their peaceableness and loyalty, whereby they practically answered the cavils of their adversaries, and promoted the honour of the fraternity, who ever flourished in time of peace. Constitutions, P. 52.