

what are the methods usually employed to inflame the minds of a people wholly rude and ignorant. They are neither pamphlets nor newspapers; but contrivances far more destructive than either. They are, at first, secret whispers and insinuations; quietly, but assiduously circulated among the unthinking multitude; afterwards, more bold, avowed, and animated appeals to their prejudices; and, at last, inflammatory discourses and unqualified declamations, addressed, *viva voce*, to crowds of discontented persons, who swallow every extravagance of the impassioned orator with greediness, repeat it with confidence, and communicate it from one to another, without reflexion, without discrimination, or any regard to truth. But people who are accustomed to read, are more capable of sober reasoning, and more disposed to reflect. If they are to be duped and inflamed, it is certain that much greater talents, at least, and much more art must be employed. And, if experience is to be our guide in this subject, it seems to assure us, that hardly any talents, or any arts are sufficient for this purpose.

So far, therefore, as political attachments are concerned, we are authorised to conclude, that public and general information is, in the highest degree, advantageous. It renders men patient of the inconveniences which they suffer under governments that have reached only a moderate degree of excellence; it is the only means of discovering the superiority of those which approach nearest to perfection; and, in all cases, it removes one of the most formidable instruments of faction.

It cannot be denied, however, that many politicians and legislators have discovered an unaccountable antipathy to the diffusion of knowledge. But whatever may have been their reasons for adopting this jealous policy; it must be observed, that those who have adopted it, have seldom been illustrious characters; and all tyrants and usurpers range themselves in this number. On the contrary, those who have been at the head of regular, long-established, and enlightened governments, have ever appeared to consider the instruction of the people as highly advantageous. It is well known that the Roman government, whether Republican or Imperial, was always favourable to the civilization of mankind. Among the English monarchs, Alfred the Great paid the utmost attention to the instruction of his people; and his example was followed by all those among his successors, who have been distinguished either for the greatness of their deeds, or the liberality of their minds. The great number of Colleges and Universities, established a few centuries ago, in all parts of Europe, sufficiently demonstrates, that, even under absolute governments, when they are permanently established, and regularly administered, the sovereigns have found the greatest advantages to be connected with the diffusion of knowledge. And, with respect to the British government, we have already seen, that the principal security for the hope of its permanence, must be, its being well understood. To command the respect of its subjects, it requires only to be known; and, to secure permanent respect, demands that it should be known.

It must appear surprising that any suspicion should ever have arisen, that Religion might suffer from the diffusion of knowledge. It is cer-