

the reduction of that corrupt influence, which is itself the perennial spring of all prodigality, and of all disorder; which loads us, more than millions of debt; which takes away vigour from our arms, wisdom from our councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most venerable parts of our constitution.

Sir, I assure you, very solemnly, and with a very clear conscience, that nothing in the world has led me to such an undertaking, but my zeal for the honour of this house, and the settled, habitual, systematic affection I bear to the cause, and to the principles of government.

I enter perfectly into the nature and consequences of my attempt; and I advance to it with a tremor that shakes me to the inmost fibre of my frame. I feel, that I engage in a business, in itself most ungracious, totally wide of the course of prudent conduct; and I really think, the most compleatly adverse that can be imagined, to the natural turn and temper of my own mind. I know, that all parsimony is of a quality approaching to unkindness; and that (on some person or other) every reform must operate as a sort of punishment. Indeed the whole class of the severe and restrictive virtues, are at a market almost too high for humanity. What is worse, there are very few of those virtues which are not capable of being imitated, and even outdone in many of their most striking effects, by the worst of vices. Malignity and envy will carve much more deeply, and finish much more sharply, in the work of retrenchment, than frugality and prudence. I do not, therefore, wonder that gentlemen have kept away from such a task, as well from good nature as from prudence. Private feeling might, indeed, be overborne by legislative reason; and a man of a long-sighted and strong-nerved
humanity,