

since we have had any Laws for the Maintenance of the Poor, the Justices of Peace have had a Power of amending the Rates, and redressing any Complaints of the Inequality of such Assessments in Parishes; but 'tis of late only that they have assumed a Power of altering the Poor Rates without any Complaint at all, of putting in and striking out whom they pleased in an Election-Year, in order to disqualify some Persons who had a right to vote in Boroughs, and afford a Pretence to qualify others who had none, that so Members might be returned, who otherwise never would have been chosen, a Practice which if it once becomes general, (as no Iniquity does at once, though sure to become so, if it carries its Point, and passes with Impunity,) will put the Elections of all the Boroughs of *England*, where Scot and Lotmen have Votes, in the Power of Justices of the Peace, and be the utter Ruin of our Constitution. Every Body knows the dangerous Powers put into their Hands by the Riot-Act, and that which carries for its plausible Title, *An Act for indemnifying Persons, who have been guilty of Offences against the Laws, made for securing the Revenues of Customs and Excise, &c.* This Answer is already drawn out to a greater Length than I expected, and therefore I shall not offer to represent the Consequences of these, nor enumerate a great many Acts, which otherwise are very fit to be considered. But let any thinking Man reflect seriously on the prodigious Number of Penal Laws made, for the Security of the Government, or on other Accounts and Pretences. since the Revolution; and the multitude of Taxes that have been laid since that Time, upon Windows, upon all exciseable and other Commodities; and an enormous Accession of Power, and Influence over all Ranks and Orders of Men, by putting the Execution of all these into their Hands, hath accrued to the Justices of Peace; let