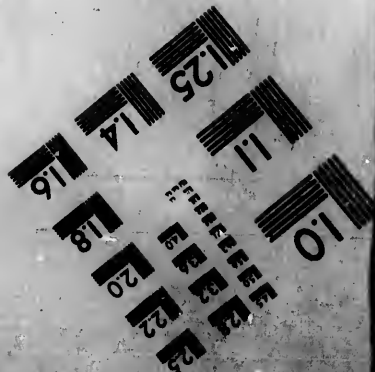
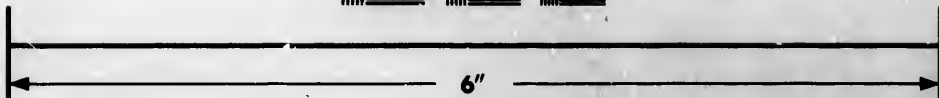
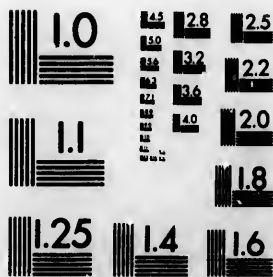


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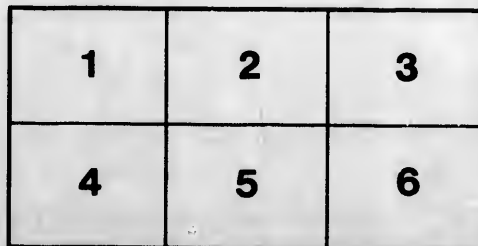
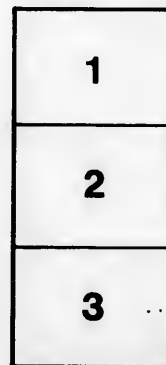
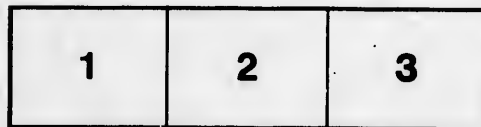
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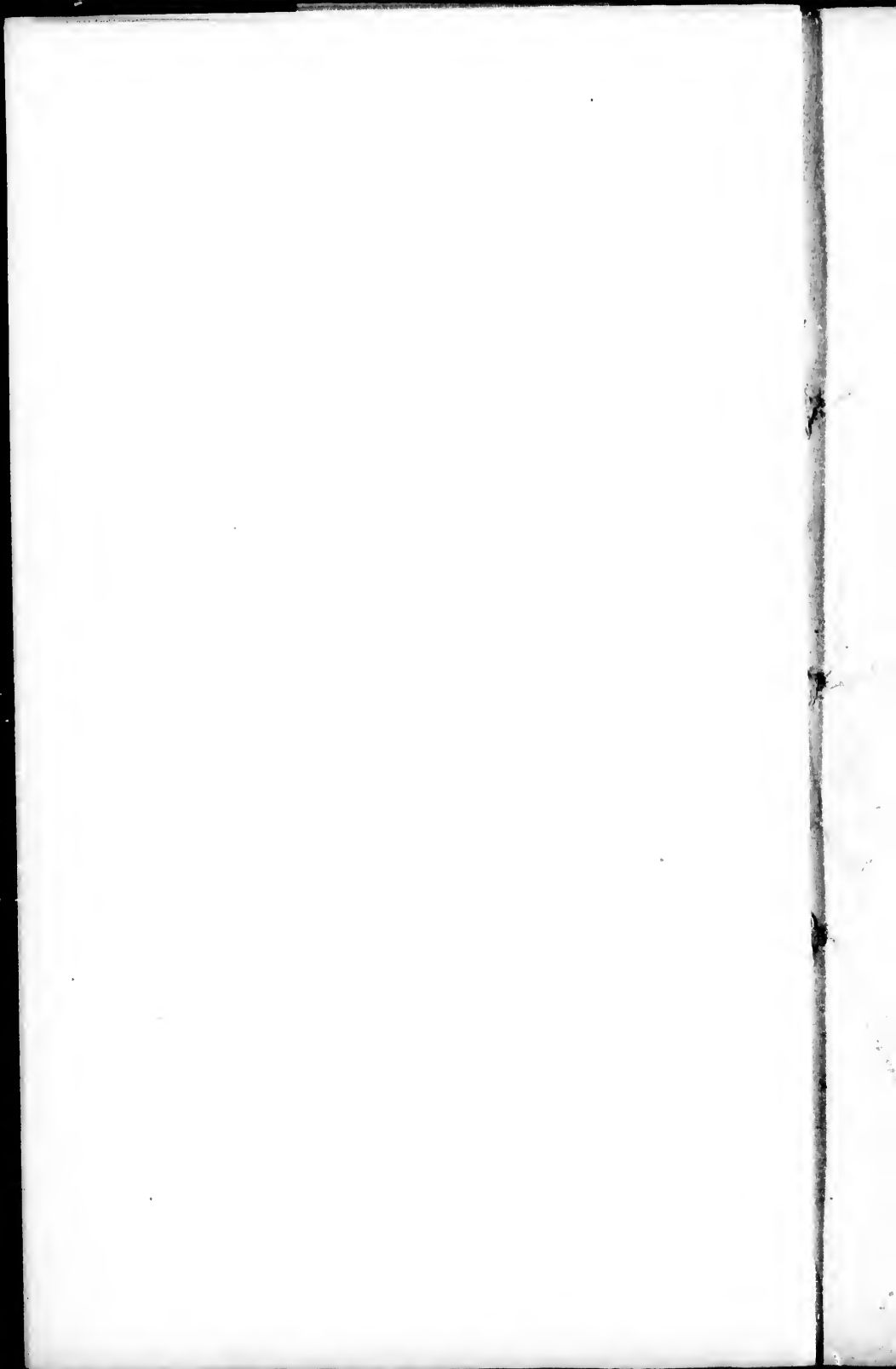
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ON THE

# PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL,

Upon the Trial of Lieutenant-General  
Sir JOHN MORDAUNT.

\*\*\*\*\*

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Sir JOHN MORAUNT,  
(As published by Authority.)

WITH  
An ANSWER to the Expedition against  
ROCHEFORT, fairly stated. In a  
LETTER to the Right Honorable the  
Author of the CANDID REFLECTIONS,  
&c.

To which is added,

AN APPENDIX.

Being a REPLY to the MONITOR of Saturday  
the 21st Instant.

---

By the AUTHOR of, The CANDID REFLECTIONS.

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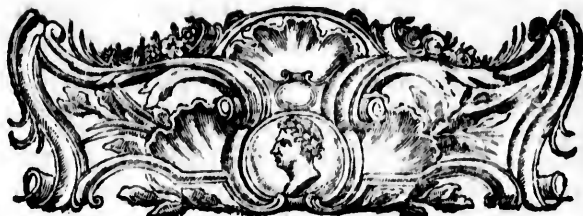
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A

# LETTER, &c.

S I R,



YOU will hardly accuse of impropriety this address to you, who have drawn it upon yourself, by making it an indispensable duty to me, to clear up certain mistakes into which I apprehend you have been betrayed, by that suspicion of party-spirit, to which so many of our political writers are but too justly liable.

B

It

It is so rare to meet with any who judge of things by the sole standard of truth, without respect to their connections with the influence or interest of particular persons in power, or wanting to be in power, that I do not in the least wonder at your confounding me with the croud; especially as my opinion happened to differ so much from your's : I will not say that of your party, because I will not allow myself the liberty you have taken with me, of pronouncing you regularly enlisted in one. The worst I will in return suppose of you is, your being carried down the stream of that popular prejudice, which may be called the error of the day.

Unfortunately, at this very crisis, when every true Englishman has the greatest reason to spurn all attempts at imposing on his understanding, or misleading his judgment by false information, or false reasoning, we see hardly any thing else practised; and what is stranger yet, the deceit welcomed by the deceived, even in points where their greatest interest is not to be deceived. Some are even so attached to their leaders in error, that  
any

any offer to deliver them from it, would receive no better thanks than those of the bear, who, on your taking the ring from his nose by which he is led, tears you to pieces for it.

But surely of all the ways of frustrating the representations of truth, none can be more effectual than to suppose them to come from so infected a quarter as that of one party, merely in opposition to another, where perhaps sounder judgment, and exact candor lead to an equal contempt of both.

Yet however, Sir, you may have mistaken the person on whom you fasten the imputation of that letter, you have thought fit to answer on the foot of that supposition; I own myself not a little obliged to you, for the opportunity of explaining my thoughts particularly on two points you mention.

The first, (page 12) relating to a board of enquiry on an officer, "who was judged, condemned, and ruined without any other trial." On which I shall only

B 2

say,

say, that it seems to me impossible for you to have a worse opinion of that procedure than it deserves, let who will have been the promoter of it : and that this I well remember, that if there was any doubt, and I believe there was very little, of that gentleman's innocence, before he was *in that manner* condemned ; there was none at all of it afterwards, no more than about the reason for which he was *so*.

The second, " as to the decency and " humanity of ridiculing a bed-ridden minister, &c." (p. 61) I can safely say, that not the warmest of his friends, nor the most implicit of his cluster of adherents, could more detest the nature of such an illiberal personality, than did many of those who had never over-admired him either as a patriot, a statesman, no nor even as an orator, nor saw any thing in him above a very common man, to whom certain strange conjunctures in these ridiculous times, had given a popularity, by which he had more than once been hoisted into power, after more than once giving as plain proofs as could be wished, of how much he deserved the one, and was qualified

qualified for the other. If in this opinion, however, they were in the wrong, purely for want of better judgment, even you yourself can only pity them.

But surely, Sir, it does not at all follow, that from one's thinking one person unequal to the taking charge of the British system, one should think another more fit for it, to whom, perhaps, even greater and juster exceptions might be made; and much less others, of whom a long and sad experience has pretty well settled the rate of opinion, and who nevertheless are probably still the predominant party at bottom.

The truth is, that in the mention of those party-cabals to which you allude, (p. 61.) I sincerely meant no preference of any, but an exclusion of them *all*: in the opinion, which you are most heartily welcome to treat with what contempt you please; that from none of them this country can very rationally hope its retrieval out of its present state of perdition. But explode this opinion as you may, at least you cannot but acquit it of flattery  
to

to present power, or even to *future*, when I ingenuously add, that I have no particular substitutes in view ; only, I presume in general, that this great nation cannot be so absolutely destitute of neutrals of birth, rank, influence and abilities, as not to afford a competent and a less exceptionable choice amongst them : at least, it will be one great merit, not to have been servilely enrolled in any party.

To one then fixed in a just contempt of *all* parties whatever, you will easily imagine that the treating him in quality of even the head of one, could not be a very acceptable compliment. As little would the concomitant title of right honorable, flatter one who knows so well to what sort of personages it is now so often given, as if with design to degrade it. That Englishman, whatever his condition may be, who sincerely and disinterestedly loves his country, is a character so much higher, by the heart at least, than those who dishonour or disserve it ; and is in these days so great a distinction, that he must have a wretched taste, indeed, who would envy them a worthlessness, that is no distinction

inction at all, unless a scandalous one in proportion to the exaltedness of the stations in which it is found. If this preamble should appear impertinent to others, at least it cannot so to you, whose mistake has made it necessary; and I now proceed to what my title-page promised, some further and supplemental considerations, occasioned by the publication of the proceedings of the court-martial.

The first point to be noticed, since it was the only one left unexamined by the board of enquiry, is the reason of Fort-Fouras being inaccessible to sea-ward, after so explicit a declaration as that of the pilot Thierry, that *he* could *carry* the Magnanime within half an English mile of it. It was then but natural to suppose, that since nothing was attempted against it, the pilot must have out-promised his power to perform; for which Sir Edward Hawke accounts very naturally in a part of his examination, that may very well, considering its consequence, admit a quotation here. (Page of the Proc. 108 and 109.)

“ On



“ On a proposal of laying a ship to  
 “ batter Fouras, the pilot of the Magna-  
 “ nime was examined to the place and  
 “ depth of water near it: elated with the  
 “ success of the 23d (again Aix) and fond  
 “ of the Magnanime, he said, at first, be-  
 “ fore captain Mordaunt, *he would carry*  
 “ *her in and destroy* the fort. As the de-  
 “ ponent (Sir E. H.) had attentively con-  
 “ sidered the shore, and was sensible that  
 “ the *Magnanime*, which drew more water  
 “ than some of our three-deck’d ships,  
 “ could not be brought *near* enough to  
 “ batter the fort, he gave the pilot’s *gasco-*  
 “ *nade* time to subside, and then asked him  
 “ if he could carry a sixty-gun ship in  
 “ against it: he answered, her metal was  
 “ not weighty enough, as there were twen-  
 “ ty-four pounders in the fort. He then  
 “ proposed to him to lighten the *Barfleur*  
 “ two feet (this second conversation was  
 “ upon quarter-deck, by the intervention  
 “ of a man well versed in such *French* as  
 “ those kind of people speak.) The pi-  
 “ lot seemed *some time* satisfied with this,  
 “ and in consequence the deponent (Sir E.  
 “ H.) prepared an order to vice-admiral  
 “ Knowles

" Knowles to lighten the *Barfleur* ; and in  
 " the mean time gave him a verbal order,  
 " who immediately went away to give  
 " the necessary directions, and to enquire  
 " into the practicability of the attempt.—  
 " The pilot now *recollected* himself, and  
 " declared that the *Barfleur*, *even thus*  
 " *lightened*, could not be brought *near*  
 " *enough*: that where she should come  
 " *nearest* at the top of high-water, on the  
 " ebb she must sink in the mud six feet  
 " or more, from which *he could not an-*  
 " *swer* whether she would *rise*. Upon  
 " *trial* afterwards, the *pilot* could not carry  
 " a *bombketch* within *random-shot* of the  
 " fort, as Mr. Knowles informed him, in  
 " whom, as being the second sea-officer  
 " in command, he apprehends he might  
 " safely confide for that information."

He, Sir E. H. added, (p. 10.) that this  
 same pilot, " upon examination at the  
 " council, appeared to be *very ignorant*  
 " of the *place*, and even at the attack of  
 " the fort of Aix he observes, that the  
 " *Magnauime* sewed in the mud, though  
 " *Thierry* was on board."

Thus is the non-attack of *Fouras* by sea solved in the very manner, which it was so obvious to bespeak it would : and as to the French seventy-four gun-ship running up the Charente, on which you lay such a stress, there is hardly a foremastman in the navy, but what can give a very satisfactory reason why she could not be followed, even if the subsequent one would not do ; that there was not a single pilot on board the fleet that would take charge of a twenty gun-ship in the chace up it. Page 84, of the proceedings you will see this point as fully explained, as the greatest punctiliousness of examination could require.

You will also see (from page 81, *proc.*) the question minutely answered, “ why “ the fleet did not come into the road “ sooner than the 23d, seeing they made “ the coast on the 20th ?” Concerning which, whatever your private opinion may be of vice-admiral Kn——, in general, which you are certainly as free to entertain as possible ; yet is it plain, that in this particular you have done him wrong,  
as

as well as Sir E. H. who, if either the fact or reasoning, on which you proceed, was true, must have been the compleatest driveller on earth, to have suffered his subaltern's management, or opinion, to have had any share in defeating so great a project as that, of which the maritime part of the execution was committed to himself, or to his choice of whom to trust in any branch of it. Did Sir E. H. complain of Mr. Kn-----? and if he did not, who can, without beginning at Sir Edward? whom even malice itself, never that I could yet learn, charged with being either coward or fool.

The procedure of the court-martial having then cleared up the only point that had been left dubious, the practicability of attacking Fouras by sea, all the other parts of it will fall so properly within the course of my reply to your several objections, that there will be no occasion for a separate discussion. And as to the unanimous and honorable acquittal of Sir John by a numerous Commission of officers appointed to try him, however natural it might be to challenge

a strong presumption from thence in his favor, I entirely wave that advantage, from a consciousness, that as their condemnation of him would not in the least have changed my opinion, founded as it was, on matters of fact and evidence; neither could his acquittal add to that most perfect certainty of his innocence, they had before established: a certainty that had not the least connection with my knowing there was such a person in the world, as the projector or patron of the expedition.

If that acquittal, however, should be unpopular, or, if there are still some, as in favour of that common sense, of which you so often, and so pathetically invoke the name, I hope there cannot be many, who can harbour the least doubt of Sir John's having fully done his duty, there is one reflection which cannot fail of comforting him. A false judgment can only "*dishonor*" those who make it, or those who are weak enough to be misled by it, without examination: nothing being so rash as the decisions of the ignorant, nor nothing so hard as to engage

engage them to retract them. Who does not every day see men persevere in an error, as if that was the best expedient to cover the shame of having been in one, or preferable to the glory which the wise always find in renouncing it, from a consciousness that, being but men, fallibility could not be half the reproach to them, that obstinacy must be?

But whoever condemns, or acquits him, most certainly there is no man in Britain, who ought to confess himself so deeply obliged to that commander, as the patron of the expedition himself, if he has a grain of that gratitude, with which it would be very unfair to suppose him unprovided. He must himself rejoice, that such a number of his countrymen were not so sillily sacrificed to an opinion of his, perhaps too lightly taken up; and which, himself being persuaded, he could hardly fail of persuading others to adopt, supported as it was by the irresistible powers of his oratory. But had the nation sustained so deep a loss, as was palpably prepared for it, and to so little purpose, even a sentiment of just compassion

passion would then probably have disposed many minds to examine into the nature and practicability of the project itself: minds now averse to that examination, from the excuse of doubt left them by the non-execution; a doubt, of which the partizans of the scheme do not fail to avail themselves, with those upon whom it can pass for one. Though, so tenacious of its object is the rage of prejudice, that had Sir John even been cut off, one half of his troops knocked on the head, and the other taken prisoners of war, which, or something like it, must in all human probability have been the case, I do not doubt but there would still have remained some, who would have kept on trumpeting the excellence of the plan, and have discovered in the execution that cause of its miscarriage, which your favorite, common sense, would have never thought of looking for, but in the project itself.

You produce, Sir, with great emphasis (page 10) the names of his M---, and the Privy-council, in support of the plan, against those who took the liberty of  
treating

treating it from the first, as a wild, chimerical, and absurd one. I know not what impressions they *may* make on you, but I readily suppose them such as they would make on every man of sense; impressions of the highest respect and veneration. But, I own, I think there is still an authority superior to theirs, in points where judgment and not obedience is concerned, and superior, because derived from God himself, and that is, one's own reason. The names of King and Council, at the same time they justly command the most submissive regard, do not challenge the attribute of infallibility, which even the Roman-Catholics begin to be heartily sick of allowing to their Popes. So far from it, they are often themselves most graciously pleased to lay before the Public, their motives and course of procedure, leaving every free Englishman to judge of them for himself. You, Sir, for example, are perfectly at liberty to think the intelligence that determined the resolution of the expedition, an admirable and compleat one. But will you grudge others the same liberty of thinking the contrary?

Others,



Others, with as good intentions to their country as yourself, though perhaps not with eyes so penetrating, might very innocently see nothing in it of particularity, or weight enough for the superstructure of such a plan upon it, as was offered and approved.

Of the memorial of the French forces I have already spoke in my first letter : you will hardly find in it such an absurdity as that of a private authority disputing preference with a public, in which I only mentioned the difference between the list furnished to the Council, and the common report and notion, under appeal to the reader's own judgment, which comes nearest to probability. Though, had the government even been egregiously in this matter imposed on by false accounts, it would not certainly have been the first time of its being so ; and as to the pilot Thierris deposition, I do not even take the advantage of its having proved a false one, because that could not be well foreknown, but by what appears of it previous to the resolution, however tolerable an one it may be from so very *ignorant*

*rant a person*, it seems rather too vague and inconclusive to have deserved the *whole* of that important resolution being rested upon it ; I say, the *whole*, for the intelligence furnished by Col. Cl-- may be pronounced precisely less than nothing, even taking into the account *all* that he *said* before the council of war, the board of enquiry, and the court-martial, put together. Can you, Sir, say that he ever so much as pretended to have personally explored the great and important point of all, the accessibility of Rochefort by sea, or to ascertain many other essentials necessary to be known, before the plan of attacking it could be so much as attempted to be carried into execution ? Yourself only affect to be arch upon the doubt of there being a ditch quite round the place or not, and to take it ill that the troops did not march up TO SEE whether Rochfort could be escaladed or not, where, N. B. IF it was not, there was no artillery that could give a chance to force it, or to oppose to that of the place. But, deign to ask yourself the question, was any thing known that ought indispensably to

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have been known, preliminary to such a measure as that of attacking Rochefort? and the answer of your own knowledge and judgment to that question, can hardly, if you will suffer your prejudice to give them fair play, be other than favorable to the resolution of not risking so fine a body of troops, on such light and defective information?

If a French officer should report to his court, that Newport on the Isle of Wight was an unfortified place, that a hundred or less regulars might carry by a coup-de-main; what would he in that say, that was not strictly true? And yet I fancy, that they would think twice before they attempted it with ten thousand men, could they even procure a pilot through the Needles, and had they nothing to dread from the superiority of our naval force; especially where the case of a surprize should be out of the question, as it was with respect to Rochefort. The place itself forms the least object; its relations and connections, such as the means of coming at it, of retreating in case of a repulse, and the probability of succours by  
the

the national force, being the capital points to be previously ascertained beyond a doubt ; nothing of which was in this case so much as pretended to be known. Or surely, sixteen ships of the line needed not to have been employed, in convoying transports upon an expedition, where even a bomb-ketch could not come within gun-shot of the forts at the mouth of the river. The city-barges, as somebody before me has humorously observed, might certainly have been at least as serviceable ; even frigates could not cover the debarkation, at the only spot where it could take place. It is indeed said, in a quotation of your's from the Report, (p. 41.) " that " the bomb-ketches might *annoy* the " troops, if there were any behind the " sand-hills." Perhaps they might ; not much, however, I fancy. But as to bomb-ketches covering a debarkation, I have no great conception of its being possible for them to be employed on such a service, but that may very well be owing to my ignorance of the military art ; and to the same ignorance do I impute my doubt about a couple of field pieces blowing up a sluice in half an hour, by which

the ditch was to vanish, (p. 54.) and can hardly yet believe, that the success of the expedition depended on so simple an operation.

You have asked, sir, some questions in the name of common sense ; permit me now to ask you one in the name of common candor. What could possibly be your drift in introducing two such *stories*, as that of the Marshal Senecteres being worn out with infirmities, and crying like a child, according to *your* French accounts ; and in that of its being understood on the coast, that both Rochefort and Rochelle would, in the course of a few days, fall into the hands of the English ; there being no possibility to reinforce them till the household-troops could arrive from Versailles, (postscript.) Is it possible, sir, that you can have seriously swallowed such gross illusions, or can hope to pass them, unless on the profoundest ignorance, or the most indolent acquiescence of non-examination ?

As to the Marshal, that he might be very infirm, even to the dotage of shedding  
tears

tears there is nothing incredible in that : the great duke of Marlborough himself, was precisely in that condition before he died. Nay, I grant it even possible, tho' assuredly barely so, that the court of France might be so ill-informed of this his disqualification, as to have trusted him with so important a command as that of the coast, in so critical a conjuncture as this of a threatened, and of what you would have to be considered as a very formidable, invasion. But is it to be believed, that since you allow there was a Marshal of France in or near Rochefort, that he had not officers and troops with him sufficient to conduct for him the necessary operations, and at least to put Rochefort into a posture of defence against a coup-de-main, which could not, if you believe colonel Cl-----, (you see I quote no unfavourable witness to you) take place, but by a sudden surprize ? All possibility of which being long enough over, any other method of attack was out of the question, since there was confessedly no artillery prepared ; and without it, our army must have made before it as silly a figure as a cock pitted without his gaffles. That such accounts  
then

then you might have, I do not doubt : there are as silly ones every day imported ; but surely nothing would equal the absurdity of grounding upon the like of these a plan of enterprize, except that of condemning on them the non-execution of one. As to any awe or terror to be struck by the mere name of a Marshal of France, I heartily agree with you, that nothing could be more ridiculous or shameful. We have had a Marshal, nay, a king of France in our prisons before now, and may again, but it must not be by such projections as you are pleased to defend, nor by such a spirit of party as now reigns, instead of the old British one, which seems so thoroughly extinguished.

Now as to the taking of Rochefort and Rochelle being given over by the French, as already in our possession, on the bare appearance of our armament, as you advance on the authority of a captain or master of a transport vessel ; not denying the existence of this curious piece of intelligence, let us examine the merit of it, and leave the pronouncing on it to every Englishman, who shall *dare* to make use of his own judgment and knowledge.

First, as to Rochefort, the practicability of the attempt without knowing *how* it lay, how to be come at, without artillery, without security of a retreat, without, in short, only every thing that was material to be known, has already been discussed.

But as to *Rochelle*, surely no falsity was ever more grossly palpable. There is hardly a man who knows any thing, but knows that this place, the last important fortress of liberty, and the Protestant religion in France, is so extremely well fortified by art and nature, that an army, by sea and land, of fifty or sixty thousand men, might *perhaps* promise to itself the reduction of it in the course of a campaign, if not in mean time relieved by the whole force of France. To believe then that they could tremble for such a place, where especially surprising it towards the sea, is from its situation impossible; and where the case of a surprize itself did not exist, is such a stretch of credulity, that one would hardly imagine there was a man capable of even feigning it. It may also here be observed, that strong as it was before, it received within  
these



these few years, a very considerable addition to its works, which cannot be unknown here, since it was in all the foreign gazettes.

As to the household-troops being ordered to hold themselves ready to march at a minute's warning, can any one from thence draw an inference of our armament having been an object of terror? Was such a disposition other than what might naturally be expected? Were a descent on the point of being made on any part of our coasts by the French, would not any forces at London have the same order, to be ready at all events, even if the coast was ever so well guarded? Must not then one be reduced to the most pitiful shift for argument, to infer from that disposition of the household troops, the French being frightened out of their senses?

In the mean time, it is precisely by such silly stories and idle reports as these, that many well-meaning, worthy people in the nation, are misled and abused; I mean those who are not in a way or  
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condition to examine for themselves. Thus it is, that many with the best of hearts towards their country, and even from that very goodness of heart, have been betrayed into the countenancing men and measures which, had the truth of things been known to them, they would have been the first to disapprove. But to whatever deception they may be liable, from any designing men or parties, they can never suspect it in those, who desire nothing so much of them, as that they would not trust any other's judgment or knowledge but their own, especially in points where it is so easy for themselves to obtain sufficient information. Many would not want more than would constitute them, if not consummate politicians, at least competent judges in matters, of which almost any Englishman should be ashamed to be thought ignorant, or blindly to pin his faith about them on others. Yet, as things stand, how few dare think for themselves? They are content with having their opinions ready chewed for them, as we are told of the Negus of Abyssinia, having his royal food chewed by an old woman,

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and chucked down his throat. With respect to certain personages, as well as to certain measures, how could the preferment and popularity of the one, or any approbation of the other be otherwise accounted for?

As to France again, what gross absurdities, what palpable falsities and even often contradictory ones, are not every day swallowed; if they but flatter either the popular humor, or favor any particular point of interest of designing men? Few seem to consider how pernicious such national mistakes are, or how indispensable a preliminary to the taking of just measures for reducing an enemy: it is to know his exact state of strength, as well as his weak side. The next point is, on that knowledge, neither to dread him so much as to let fear enervate councils or operations, nor to despise him so much as to let that contempt lead into false measures. Has this maxim, true as it is trite, ever been observed towards France? Let the public measures declare. Sometimes we are panic-struck at scarce the shadow of a danger from it, other times knocking our heads against the hard impenetrable

penetrable substance of one. For my own part, I neither think her so formidable as some represent her, nor so despicable as others do, nor that she is to be subdued, no, not even by the great force in fashion, of whole regiments of tropes, battalions of metaphors, or brigades of similies, though the man that should be at the head of them, were *heaven-born*.

Yet, Sir, you tax me, and surely very unjustly (p. 28) with entertaining a high opinion of the French wisdom and ability, and extolling them highly on every occasion. I presume there is no part of what I wrote on this subject that breathes a thought so foreign to me. The most that I ventured to say, only supposed, they could not well be thought such rank ideots as to omit, in their own defence, what nothing but idiotism itself could neglect, and that our troops would probably have stood wretched a chance to have trusted to the possibility of such a neglect. For anything further, yourself cannot think worse than I know of them. They are constitutionally and systematically the incendiaries of Europe, and in short as great enemies to its liberty as to their own.

Slaves themselves, with sense enough inwardly to feel the shame of being so, and which a poorly palliated exposition, cannot conceal from them, they think, however, to cover that shame by propagating their system of slavery, wherever their arms, cunning, or perfidy can pave their way for subdual or influence. Their chains they affect to cover with the flowers of eloquence, or with the laurels of war, or jingle them harmoniously, as if they were vain of them. From the whole drift of their politics, they have made it the interest of every nation in Europe, to contribute to their reduction; and yet, by their management and intrigues, at almost all the courts of it, they have easily prevailed over such ministers as we opposed to them, and given the foulest cause imaginable, a face painted with fair colours. The war now on foot was undoubtedly premeditated, at the very instant they were signing the peace with us at Aix-la-Chapelle; that peace in which we so tamely consented to give hostages! and as to their great wisdom it capitally consists in our folly. They have erected their system on the basis of our actual blunders, or the presumption of  
them,

them, from their knowledge of us, in which, to give us our due, we have seldom deceived their most sanguine expectations. Their military, its true, is more numerous than ours, which is not to be wondered at, under a constitution that is purely military, though their area of dominion is not proportionable to the force they keep up so much greater than ours, and certainly not so populous: The common men in their armies are very common men indeed; and far inferior in every respect to ours. The great stress of their force in war consists in their nobility, which still adheres to its original principle of institution for military service, and which to that powerful point of honor joins a more regular education and training in war, than most of our officers. I have counted on their military establishment amongst their lieutenant-generals, *Marechaue de Camp*, *Brigadiers d'Armeés*, *de Cavalerie*, and *de Dragons*, 15 Princes, 31 Dukes, 193 Marquesses, 139 Earls or Counts, 10 Viscounts, 78 Barons and Knights, independent of the untitled nobility, and of those that may be presumed to be in the subaltern commands. The examples of men of such rank, doubtless  
diffuse

diffuse great animation through the whole body of the army; and surely the employment of these noblemen in the service of their country, may without partiality to the French, be pronounced at least equal to the glorious amusements of ours in racing, cock-fighting, gaming, and carrying themselves and their country to market, &c. And yet, to an Englishman, these titles need be far from dazzling or awful. The lowest freeman is superior to the highest slave in point of intrinsic dignity. The first subject in France is but the first slave, let his chains be never so gaudily ornamented; and in that servile condition, there can never exist a true spirit, which is perhaps the reason they are forced to substitute a false one of honor they place in obeying a despotic master, and which should rather consist in spurning the yoke. To say then the truth, with all the advantages national liberty must give us over them, the greatest reproach that can be made to any administration is that of suffering the French to gain, or but to hope the least ascendant over us. Nor could that ever be the case, if the nation was once to feel its undoubted strength, or have it put into a

proper way of collecting and exerting itself to the purpose.

So much for my "extolling the wisdom and ability of the French." And now, Sir, give me leave to represent to you, your not having made the fairest use of the assertion you quote (P. 6.) of there having been those who pronounced boldly that nothing would or possibly could be done by that grand Armada; an anticipation you observe at once astonished mankind, and afforded a bad omen of the success; though it could certainly mean no more than an indifferent opinion of the projection, or perhaps of the projector himself. For to think that any private malevolence, pique or envy, could have prevailed on the commanders of the expedition to neglect so grossly their duty to their king, their country and themselves, and to commit therein a treason for which no protection could ensure their impunity, no reward in the power of a king to bestow, could compensate the infamy; *such a belief, I say, would itself* be such a stretch of injustice mixed with folly, as mankind at least can hardly be suspected  
of,



of, however a few individuals blinded by party-rage, or prejudice might adopt it.

But of all the charges you bring against me, the heaviest and certainly the most ill grounded, is, my want of candor, which would be infinitely the more criminal in me, for all my prefatory solemn professions of it. Had you deigned to peruse my discussion in a state of mind, free enough from prejudice, for truth not to find the entrance shut against it, you could not miss observing that I was far from seeking to derive unfair advantages from the testimony of the officers of the council of war (P. 23.) whom you very justly call parties, or from vague reports in opposition to those of authority. The whole strength of my conclusions are rested entirely on the information produced on your own side, but especially on the intelligence and deposition of Col. Cl— himself. You cannot reasonably suppose him to have been favorable or partial to the resolution of not attempting to proceed against Rochefort; and yet, what could more conduce to it, next to an immediate survey and consideration of circumstances on the spot, than the figure that gentleman himself made

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made before the council of war of the 25th, if the minute of it was not partially or falsely taken, though it does not appear to have been contradicted : as follows (*Proceedings* p. 87.)

“ On examination of Col. Clerk, ALL  
 “ that could be *gathered* is, that the *army*  
 “ are to *march up* TO SEE *if* Rochefort  
 “ *can be* escaladed or *not* ; but that all  
 “ opening of trenches for carrying on of  
 “ a regular siege, were not in HIS plan of  
 “ attack.”

You will excuse, Sir, this repetition, on account of its importance, and which conveys not an unpleasant image of an *army* marching up an enemy's country *to see*, if an attack, upon the plan of a surprise, *N. B.* already long over, was practicable or not, in which last case, there was nothing for them, but to march back again, that is to say, if they could.

As to the virulence which you accuse me of a tendency to support against the M---n---r, in that you also greatly injure the meaning of my heart. I know the  
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present state of parties too well, not to think him the most plausible, if not even intrinsically the best of the leaders of them, and from his popularity, deserved or not deserved, the most capable to serve his country, if he could act up to his professions. And since it is fatal to Britain, that some particular party must rule, in exclusion of a more national spirit, and of those who if they deserved to rule, would despise all parties whatever, and wish the nation fairly rid of them all, than which day it could never see a happier : since, I say, there seems no great likelihood of so desirable a change of system taking place, no doubt your admired m---n---r is as proper a one as any other head, or member of a party. Yes ! even though new linked with colleagues, he once affected sovereignly to despise, on the sole strength of which contempt, he rose to his present super-eminence, and whom he has however taken under his most gracious protection, at the hazard of his popularity, and of making no better a figure, considering the different color of the principles he boasts, than a new patch on an old thread-bare ducal mantle. But  
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what were the terms of the treaty, of a political penitence on their side, which cannot however be entirely unsuspecting, or of relaxations from the rigor of patriotism on his, the course and tenor of affairs must decide, and has, in truth, already pretty clearly decided.

So far then from harbouring the least malevolence against him, utterly indifferent as it must be to him whether I do or not ; if he has not already all the talents that constitute the great minister, which I am far from denying, as he may surely have them all without my knowledge or assent, at least, I wish he had them all both for his country's sake, and his own.

I wish he may remember that though in this infamous age, the rarity of having clean hands, has made that a great merit which is purely a common duty, it is also not unessential to have a clear heart, a heart that will not suffer to fume up to the head, and cloud it, the arrogance of superior lights, the fondness of power, without the requisites to discharge its  
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function,

functions, that narrow-spirited partiality which leads to the selecting of subjects for employment out of one's own little family, instead of the great store-house of the nation : a heart in short above all the little-nesses of the times.

I wish him the discernment necessary to nominate or recommend the greatest and ablest ministers to foreign courts ; fit to support the dignity and interests of the [nation, in this most critical conjuncture, and likewise to select the properest and most useful subjects for his own assistance at home, the want of which attention was the very rock on which Alberoni split, whose head intoxicated with his strange sudden elevation, and vanity did not permit him to listen to advice.

May he for his own sake remember, and apply the two following maxims of the Cardinal de Retz, which will be found true in all times, because all times resemble one another, so far as the heart of man, which is always and every where the same at bottom, goes to form them. The first, “ That no circumstance so  
“ much

“ much disgraces one who pretends to  
 “ be a great man, as his not seizing ex-  
 “ actly, or making the most of the de-  
 “ cisive moment of his reputation, which  
 “ is generally sacrificed to an over-eager-  
 “ ness for making his fortune. And it  
 “ is in that precisely he is commonly  
 “ doubly deceived.” The second. That  
 “ the very shadow of a closet, the weak-  
 “ nesses in which one cannot hinder, is dan-  
 “ gerous to a man, whose principal force  
 “ consists in his reputation with the  
 “ public.”

May he also be thoroughly assured that  
 many proposals which might with a toler-  
 able grace, or at least without much in-  
 decency be made by others, will with the  
 worst grace imaginable come from him, if  
 he has ever before violently opposed the  
 matter of them ! that will be for ever re-  
 membered against him, and the most in-  
 vidious assurance, on such occasions, will  
 be but the more hurtful to the conclusions  
 he would establish, as it will less operate  
 conviction, than provoke indignation. A  
 mind thus changed, is always supposed  
 to be so by respects of interest and power,  
 and

and not by the actual position of things. This inference may certainly sometimes be wrong, but men are ever less afraid of being unjust, than of being taken for bubbles.

In my present train of good wishes to him, I cannot omit wishing him a manly, nervous oratory, such as may rather bespeak a command of business, than a command of words. These never fail him who is a thorough master of the first. May he entertain a just contempt for all that rumor and false fire of declamation, so much in the nature of a mounted sky-rocket, that bursting with a bounce, scatters little artificial stars, whose glittering impression vanishes instantly into the ambient darkness. I wish him, in short, an eloquence rather of service than of parade.

This will show you, sir, that not the warmest of his well-wishers, wish him better, or indeed, so well as I do, unless sincerity should be esteemed more pernicious than the rankest flattery. Can any thing, for example, be more pregnant with injury

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ry to him than what you say (p. 62.) that no man in England durst fill his office after him? I wave an insistence on the scorn and derision, which such a suggestion must naturally provoke in every man in England of rank, quality, or pretensions equal, and many must be superior to his, and shall only remark that another cause was assigned for that long vacancy, at least as probable as yours, which was, that none cared much for sitting after him in a place; his very getting into which proved at once the nature of the times, and of the qualifications for obtaining it, such as could not render it a very *great* object of ambition.

I come now to your mention of the *six weeks admiralty* (p. 62.) which I am extremely ready to grant you was at least as valuable a set, as that which succeeded them: though I then thought the nomination of some of them, the highest impolicy in the personage, who was supposed to have nominated them, as it appeared so bad an omen, and gave his enemies so fair an handle to impeach his disinterestedness, in his very first step into power. Some of them one would have thought too  
great



great men to accept such a subaltern part on his recommendation. I also admit the fact to be exactly as you state it, as to their designed reinforcements for America; but you will allow too that this, though very laudable attention, was nothing to the point I contended for, of taking Cape-Breton. For certainly that force could not be supposed sufficient, humanly speaking, to ensure success; and any force in the least, short of that, was nothing to Cape-Breton. If we know its importance, in the opinion of which, I am flattered with your agreeing with me; the French also know it. These are the French king's words, in a memorial of instructions, dated Versailles, April, 1751. "*La Colonie de l'Isle Royale quoiqu'une des moins etendues sous ma domination dans l'Amerique, est cependant une des plus importantes et par sa situation, et par le commerce qui s'y fait.*" \*

It is not then to be doubted but it will require a force to reduce it, in proportion

\* The colony of Cape-Breton, though one of the least extensive ones of my dominions in America, is nevertheless of the greatest importance, both for its situation and for the trade carried on there,

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to the naturally to be supposed augmentation of its works and defence: but it is as certain that it cannot, or is not at least hitherto put into a condition of resisting such a force as it is in our power to bring against it. As to the reproach you mention, having been made to that branch of the ministry of their being *America-mad*, there was a retort at hand too obvious to be missed, which is, that it was at least better than being *Germany-mad*, and the worst I wish them, is that they may not be whiffed round nor fall off from the deserving the honor of such an attachment to that truly national object being imputed to them, as hardly admits of an excess.

As to several common-place aphorisms interspersed in your letter, the purport of which is that a soldiers life is not his own, but belongs to the state—that hard services ought not to be neglected because liable to loss, or danger, and the like: they are much too just to be disputed in general; all that I presume to deny of them, is their being in the least applicable to the present point.

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But to the question you propose with a little air of triumph. (p. 34.) "Is a private officer or a collection of officers in council (for the number does not alter their condition) to say, my orders are ridiculous? who constituted them counsellors of state, and submitted the propriety of their orders of decision?" a particular answer is due in acquittal of the commanders of the heavy charge it implies against them.

In one word, sir, it was the KING, the king who made sir John specifically, and his council the judges of the propriety of their orders, which must be exactly in proportion to the practicability they should find or not of them, on that or any part of the coast, to which they were sent. And let any one but consider the defectiveness of the information, on which the plan was embraced, and it will hardly be denied that his majesty with great consideration and justice, left that latitude in his instructions. An express positive order of proceeding, at all events and risks, would have certainly born date with more propriety from a cell in a mad-house, than from

from a closet, which ought to be respected as the sanctuary of wisdom. If the commanders then, who must know on what intelligence and advice the plan was originally founded ; (however it came to be adopted by the highest authority) in the gall of their disappointment, at being sent on such an errand, had even taken the liberty to treat those orders not indeed as quite ridiculous, but only as better to have been spared for their being so impracticable, of which they were happily for this nation, and themselves left the judges ; there could not, methinks, have been any great harm in it, even though none of them were counsellors of state, or had not left a low post in the army in the aspiring views of becoming so, in the safer course of rising by parliamentary campaigns, or the wordy warfare of opposition.

Disdaining too all petty cavils, I wave what advantages might be drawn from *Port L' Orient* being suffered to stand in the instructions to the general, though that place was known to be unattackable, and it remaining uncanceled, was repre-

presented as a hardship on the commander. (See Proceed. p. 61. and 106.) This it seems was over-ruled, though probably it would have been more exact, consequently more in the style of business, in an affair of so solemn and momentous a nature, to have complied with the motion for leaving it out. But let it go for a companion to the famous letter by the Viper-sloop.

Having now, Sir, gone through the points I thought most required an answer and purely to avoid too great a tediousness, passed by many, in which I am however far from acquiescing, I might here properly conclude this letter, and the same is in fact concluded as to its principal object, the expedition. But my gratitude for the pleasure you gave me (p. 64.) to find there is one man at least in Britain whose heart is, or seems to be susceptible of tender feelings. "For the distress and "disgrace of this country," continues the pen in my hand, whether I will or not. I cannot quit it, (though you may this letter, if you are tired with it) without stating my sentiments of the cause of that disorder

order you lament, and of the only glimpse of chance for a cure that appears to me. For I am not thoroughly satisfied, but that where past indolence may have invited that perdition, we have long seen jogging on towards us, a mis-governed wrong-headed activity must bring it on upon the spur.

If to bad heads or bad hearts, or to a complication of both, for they are seldom seen entirely separate, our present wretched state may justly be imputed, the too too rational despair of our emergence out of it, is owing to, if possible, yet a worse cause, that prodigious insensibility of the nation, to its greatest and most sacred interests, that so deplorably lie a bleeding.

So stupid, so even treasonable an unconcern, one would however be tempted to think incredible, if to, what every day passes before our eyes, the whole stream of history did not join its force of demonstration. Search all its records and you will hardly find a single instance of the fall, especially, of a free state, that was  
not

not precisely owing to the gross indolence of those very persons who had the greatest interest in its preservation and prosperity : who yet were wanting to their country, wanting to themselves, in not taking effectual and timely measures against the pernicious designs of their foreign enemies, or to stop the ruinous career of domestic ones.

This torpor of the mind it is, which whether brought on by corruption, or bred and nursed by effeminating luxury, or by a mixture of both, gives the reason, and marks the epoch of the declension of so many of those states, of which there now remains nothing but the empty sound of a name. Rome, Carthage, Athens, ultimately perished from no other cause than the supine acquiescence of the bulk of their respective communities, in the follies, passions and vices of their leading men.

If we turn our eyes on the prospect offered us, by our country, nothing is easier to trace, than the present ruinous state of things, to the same original cause. It is  
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but too visible an one ; the extream negligence of those whose honor, interest and safety demanded so contrary a conduct. Who yet contented themselves with remaining passive spectators of this long series of blunders and impolicy, of which not to have foreseen the consequences such as they are, must be as great a reproach to their understandings, as their not joining to prevent them, must be to their spirit, or to their sense of duty to their country and to themselves.

But what renders such an indolence yet more inexcusable, is the egregious worthlessness of the adversaries those would have had to encounter, who, clear of all party-spirit, should have united purely on the principles of preserving and defending their country.

These adversaries may be divided into two classes, which, however, occasionally different, may be pronounced exactly the same at bottom.

The first, such as were in the actual possession of power, and who, whether through

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through incapacity of better judgment, or through that corrupt, and always disloyal concurrence to unnational measures, which might be prescribed to them as the sole tenure of their offices, sacrificed their country so much in vain to another, whose evidently greatest interest was, that it should not be sacrificed to it.

In the second, and surely not the much more respectable class of the two, might be ranked those, who being out of power, were not ashamed in their eagerness to get into it, of profaning the sacred term of patriotism, and of pressing it into the service of dirty self-interest, or private ambition. Such, however, is the force of that word, or of its equivalents, that even the frequency of the detection of their being no more than empty sounds, or the hackneyed language of pretext and selfishness, has not been able to stale their effect, or to rob them of the popularity annexed to the employ of them. These terms of art then, for such they literally were, under favor of a smock of zeal, and of petulant invective tragically declaimed, passing for all that is great and  
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profound in oratory, and appearing to be attacks on the fortress of power, masked the oblique lines of approach, that were to produce the opening the gates to these mock-besiegers. But whether the admission of them was voluntary, or forced by conjunctures, or by the besieged being tired with the galling of their fire, certain it is that the nation was not one jot the better for their success, or for its having lent its name to their attack: for either very congenially and kindly incorporating with the old garrison, or rather relieving than disarming it; their country saw and felt, that whatever change there might be of men, there was none of maxims or measures, at least, for the better; and the truth is, that by those who knew them best, no better was or could be expected.

Certainly then, there never was any thing so formidable in those, or in all parties whatever, separated or united, as to deter those Englishmen yet uninfected with their corruption, folly or falsity, from interposing in behalf of their country against the fatal effects of them. Their nonsense could not be supposed to be the

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common nonsense of the nation ; and not being so, how easy would it be to kindle up a spirit ; and what spirit ? not that of a further schism, but of a cordial union of all true well-wishers to their country, against all who should oppose the rescue of it out of its present growing distress. What could withstand such a cause, pursued with the zeal it deserves with all the laws of God and man on its side ? laws, of which even that great one of self-preservation, is not the greatest, since that of restoring the national honor stands included in the attempt.

Circumstanced as things are, can there be any so blind as not to see the necessity of this noble and virtuous union, or seeing it, such traitors to their country and to their own interests ; or so abandoned to sloth and indolence, as not instantly to concur to the promotion of it ?

On such an union taking place we should see the public measures replaced on a national basis, and all the lines of deliberation and execution drawn to their long-forgotten centre, the true good of  
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this country ; and those alone would be considered as enemies to it who should set their faces to obstruct it. They, it would be, that would themselves be treated as visionaries, who should know so little of the true British spirit, as to suppose it, especially when thus roused as it must now be, incapable of producing such a salutary union.

Compared to which, when comprehending as it would do, the whole power and activity of the community, how petty, and how contemptible must appear all the selfish cabals of particular families or factions, who in their rage of engrossing that power to which they are so unequal, think it an injury done to them, if instead of serving their country, their country is not suffered to serve them.

Neither would the opposition, that such as they could make to that political regeneration, which would reduce them to their original nothingness of power as well as of character, deserve the name of an opposition. It could, at most, pass for a madness, that would justify the tying their

hands up from doing further mischief to the nation and themselves. Their struggles would be even a jest, instead of a discouragement, to such as, in the strength of such a cause, would resolutely undertake them. For, in fact, what are all the proofs they have hitherto attempted to give of ability or vigor, been, but matter of pity and ridicule, when considered with an eye of the least penetration or discernment? Contempt is, however, undoubtedly their due, and that is a debt as easy as it is just to pay them. For, in fact, what fear can there be of mistaking as to them, or of danger from them, unless of not despising them as much as they deserve? Even in the case of any prevalence of theirs against their opponents, the scorn of them could only be increased by the reflexion of the indignity of such a prevalence. Hard indeed would it be, if such as could never make any use of the power intrusted with them by their country, to the least hurt of its enemies, should be only armed with it effectually against its friends; and of being friends to this country, there can scarce exist a stronger

stronger proof than the wishing it out of their power to do it farther harm; nor is this wish even an unfriendly one to themselves, since their own private interest, in the common fate of the nation, is manifestly included in it.

It is not, however, from those who are congenially satisfied with the present course of things, from their hopes or views to come into play on the foot of that complaisance, or acquiescence, that the nation can expect its redemption. From these, if they were but honest enough to speak out, one might anticipate an answer, something in the spirit of that given by one of the great men of Java, to those who were urging him to join in suppressing a band of robbers (with whom, by the bye, he used to share the plunder), as a measure essential to the good of his country; “*Tell them so,*” said the great man, frankly, “*who have the good of their country at heart; for may I perish if I have.*”

As little good may be expected from those whose constitutional sloth, or, with  
leave

leave for the expression, whose innate *vis inertiae* is proof against all the motives of honor, or even of what one would imagine dearer to them, self-preservation; yet, if it might not too much shock these men of ease, to urge to them any thing of so rough a nature as Reason, against the grain of velvet-indolence, they might, in favor even of that supream good of theirs, Ease, be reminded, that its being lost and destroy'd, in the consequences of a general wreck, is far from being impossible.

This epidemic indolence, however, it is, which is not only an enemy to action, but tends to propagate a general and fatal blindness, in matters of the highest concern, to every individual of the nation. It begets, in those infected with it, an aversion to thought, as an invader of their quiet, especially when they have a sort of confus'd pre-notion, through the powerful instinct of truth, that the result of an examination will not be agreeable to their favorite prejudices. Prejudices that shall have been infused into them by such as had an interest to mislead them by false lights, or rather to keep them in utter  
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darkness. In this, their mis-leaders are greatly favored by the nature of indolence itself ; it being natural for those inclined to sleep, and to those who would lull them to it, so shut out their common disturber, the light of truth. Thence too, the so frequent administration of political opiates, which increase the disease, whilst they stupify the sense of it, and dose the patient into perdition.

But, if from characters of this lethargic turn the nation has little succor to hope, in times, when the utmost vigilance and activity could not be too much against that alert enemy at our gates, whose motions will be only quickened by our slowness ; neither can there a much greater dependence be reasonably had on those whose little heads are so engrossed by trifles, as to have no room left in them for any thing that is great, noble, or spirited.

Many of these however deserve great pity ; they are what they are, constitutionally. It would perhaps be even cruel to rob them of that taste of theirs for every thing that is futile and silly, since nature has made them



them capable of nothing else. Take from numbers of them their joy, and plume of pride in a wdry equipage; their race-horses, dogs and flatterers; their keeness of composition for who shall be king of the butterflies on a birth-day, and other the like sublime points of their delight or occupation; what would you leave them, but a dreadful voice of existence there would be no filling up? organized as their heads are for the reception of nothing but refuse-trash, whilst their hearts are too rotten-soft for receiving and retaining the fair impressions of virtue or honor.

But even these, if they could be brought to a sense of their truest interest, would, for their own sakes, for the sake, in short, of preserving that property which enables them to indulge themselves in all their insipid rote of dissipation, and furnishes them the materials of parade with which their most miserable vanity is so humbly satisfied; yes! even these ought to wish for such a change of system, as might allow of some hopes of averting the storm that threatens to involve them all in the general ruin.

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This consideration too, one would think, might give an alarm even to a certain veteran camp, where there has been long hung out a flag of defiance to the common sense of mankind ; and where it is impossible to decide which prevails most, the spirit of rapine, or the infection of dulness. There it is, that nonsense and folly receive as a favor, what sense and taste would spurn, if proffered ; an admission into clubs, which requires at least as much interest to obtain, as a seat in the senate. In that rookery, it is that, the greatest and most sacred interests of the nation have often been regulated over a card-table, or a dice-box, or at best, in the intervals, snatched with regret from the only serious occupation there, that of unmercifully pillaging one another. And, to say the truth, the face of affairs did not belie the nature of the time allotted to them, the manner of their digestion, nor the place whence they had dated. Even, at this day perhaps, that receptacle of gamesters and statesmen outvies the present m—t—r—l closet in point of extensive influence and solidity of power, though to do it justice, it has not

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yet indeed produced any thing equal to the Secret Expedition.

Those then, who yet retain a claim to the name of Englishmen, a name once never associated but with the ideas of the highest honor, of courage, of spirit, and and in short of every thing that is great and estimable amongst mankind, never could desire an occasion more worthy of a just and virtuous ambition, than the present one of stepping forth; and, before it is too late, effectually taking in hand, the cause of this much injured and long deserted country. Who should defend it, if they betray or fail it? or where is there in the known world, that country so well worth defending as this? let them consider too, that there is nothing of an affectation of gloominess or exaggeration in painting the prospect of ruin, as imminent and inevitable, unless averted by immediate counteraction and negotiations. There plainly appears but one alternative; that of a bloody war, or of an ignominious ruinous peace. Between these two courses, there is no middle one; and it is not hard to decide, for which of them it is, that a true Englishman

man will declare. It will also not appear a proposition very difficult to grant, that for the British Genius to soar once more to its antient heighth, it must first be freed from all those fetters of foreign interests, corruption, folly, and futility, that have so long kept it chained down groveling in the dirt. Not forgetting withal, that if inaction must be granted highly pernicious, it can, however, hardly be more so, than an unadvised, or misdirected activity.

Here, Sir, I conclude, and if there is any part of the foregoing has offended you, or can offend any one in the character of a true Englishman, I am heartily sorry for it, sorry for myself: nothing could be less my intention. As to those whom partial attachment, weak prejudice, or the strong byas of interest, subject to an invincible prepossession; it is for themselves that I am sorry; and especially, for so far as this country may, or must be affected by their error.

*I am,*

*S I R,*

*Yours, &c.*

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**A P P E N D I X,**  
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**T O T H E**

Monitor of the 21st January, 1758.

**T**H E not having seen the Monitor till the foregoing sheets were finished and sent to the press, hindered my including in them my answer to it. On perusal of it, however, I judged this appendix, the more necessary for the good opinion in which that paper deservedly stands with the public. The spirit that animates it, is so palpably that of justice to this country, that I cannot but respect it, even where it may be, I do not say actually is, in an error. But, however different our sentiments may be in this or any other point, I defy him to wish the cause he has undertaken to defend

send more success than I do, if the justice of it deserves it, and I hope he would not himself wish it on any other footing.

That the report of the board of enquiry was ineffectual, I entirely agree with him. If he even understands it, or can but guess at its drift or meaning, it is more than I pretend to do. The most I could make of it was, that it was something in the nature of the *special verdict* of a petty-jury, that leaves the matter of the indictment to the decision of the judges.

As to the unanimous acquittal passed by the court martial, which makes the great object of the Monitor's complaint, that the commanders of the expedition were not delivered up to a *public execution*, for not less do the motto and tenor of that paper import; I own, after perusing the proceedings of that court, with the utmost attention, that I do not see what other sentence could pass, unless the members of it could have thought the sacrifice of the lives of those gentlemen, a compliment due to the wisdom of the minister, a sacrifice of which they deserved the

the less to be the victims, for their having spared to this country, so vain an one, as that would have been of its troops intrusted to their conduct. Or was nothing but their blood to atone for their having trusted their own senses, in defiance of what the admirers of the projection of the plan might think or say, and for having obeyed his Majesty's commands who so evidently constituted them the judges of its practicability? Or were they, in complaisance to an information of which the defectiveness could not escape them, especially when they had already found so many parts of it directly *false*, to proceed upon the uncertainty of two or three *ifs*, not one of which made scarce a possibility, to engage their forces beyond a power of retreating, in case of the repulse they had not a single reason not to bespeak, and a thousand to be sure of it.

The M. exclaims against the use of lenitives in failures of military duty, with great justice, no doubt, on his side. But in this case, it is plain, the commander spurned the thought of owing any favor to them : and, at least, as to his part, it is not even quite



quite fair to upbraid him with his having the benefit of them, when he previously and solemnly disdained it.

The M. says, that, on this occasion, "The enemies of the government seize the opportunity to spread insinuations against the propriety and practicability of the measure." And why not the friends of it? Is it then become a criterion of loyalty, to believe that the minister could not commit a mistake, and that it is better to put half a dozen innocent gentlemen to an ignominious death, rather than that his infallibility should be questioned? Or is the government to stand or fall, according to the notion that shall prevail of it.

If it is notorious, "That there is a lurking faction, which labored hard to carry their point in the court-martial." Let infamy attend that faction, it deserves it. But what is that to the commander of the expedition, who, it is plain, never rested the issue of his cause upon either faction, intrigue or favor, but purely on the justice of it? His defence is before the public,

public, and above all, that great and essential part of it, produced by his accusers themselves, the intelligence on which the plan itself was founded, and which if the *best*, as the M. styles it, then certainly bad was the best, for it contains, except the memorial of the forces, nothing but that information of Col. Cl— so evidently vague and defective as to the fortifications; and as to the accessibility of the place so miserably supplemented, by the pilot Thierry's deposition, even admitting it had been a true one, whereas, in fact, it proved false in the most essential points, when it came to the trial. Yet, says the M. Sir Edward Hawke recommended Thierry to the favor of the Minister. He did so; but review the deposition of Sir Edward Hawke, and it will appear why he did so. The man had behaved bravely on board the *Magnanime* at the taking of the Fort of Aix, and was hearty and willing in the service, and Sir Edward's great humanity made him think he deserved encouragement, at least for his good intentions, and in favor of them, excused that ignorance of his, of which he specifies two or three proofs.

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The truth is, that on board the whole fleet, they had not a single pilot that knew any thing of the navigation of the river Charente. Thierry was undoubtedly the best they had, and him, Sir Edward H. calls "*very ignorant.*" But was that the fault of any of the commanders ?

The *Reflexions* at which the M. is pleased to cavil, he says are made up of remnants. I do not clearly understand what is meant by remnants ; but he is certainly right if he means by them, particular parts picked out of the report itself on the enquiry, with the comments that occurred to the writer on them. The vague reports which are objected to him, he gives only as such, nor opposes them in the least to the intelligence of the government ; it is on the foot of that intelligence he reasons. If he mentions the other, it is purely to justify the opinion some had of the expedition the moment its destination was known. The Monitor calls the French militia " a phantom, or at least the invention of a frenchified genius to deter England from attempting to cut out work for the common enemy of Europe  
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“on their own coast.” All of this but the militia’s being his own invention, that writer confesses to be true. He heartily too wishes it was but a phantom, or that we had but such a solid body of militia to oppose to that phantom. As to the deterring England from any attempts on the coast of France, it would have been a great expence, and not a little ridicule spared to it, if it had been deterred in time, from this last one. That nothing under an army of force enough to attempt the conquest of France, can materially hurt it, many have said, and that for a self-evident reason. All its maritime places worth attacking require a regular siege, and what can form a siege with any hopes of success, unless an army sufficient to oppose the French one that would come to its relief? Is there any thing in this so obvious conclusion that implies a frenchified genius? Or that does not rather speak the plain Englishman, who would wish the prevention of his country’s blood and treasure, from being vainly and ridiculously lavished, or its reserving them for more practicable enterprises?

That bold strokes in war are highly commendable, and that even desperate attempts have oftener saved than ruined nations, experience and history concur to establish. The more hazardous the undertaking, consequently the more honorable it is, but that can never suppose a madness so blind, as that of having no certainty at all of the strength of the enemy's forces, nor no knowledge of the place to be attacked. Will the greatest advocate for the plan say there was? That *best* intelligence furnished by the list of the troops, only concludes with a supposition, which were it even a probable one, is at best but a supposition, contradicted by infinitely stronger ones, on the spot; and as to the state of the strength of the town, if one may believe Col. Cl.— who certainly would not exaggerate them: to have marched up an army of eight or ten thousand men, nine or ten miles at least, into that alarmed country, to view those works of it, of which he or they knew so little, and *see* if an escalade could carry them, where there was no such thing as a surprise to favor it, and without artillery, on failing of that,

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to have at least a chance for succeeding by a siege, and that too, depending on another supposition, that the French could not come down with an infinitely superior force, to cut off a retreat, must have been a measure of which not to see the matchless absurdity and folly, or to impute it to a general as a fault the not having proceeded in it, is one more melancholy proof of the prevalence of prejudice and party spirit, over all the powers of common sense, and common candor. Had such an enterprize proceeded from any of the minister's competitors, none of which, by the by, I mean to insinuate are preferable to him, what a flood of scorn and ridicule would not have been poured out upon them? so true it is that popularity, no matter how gained or merited, will acquit of any thing.

Nay there would even on this occasion be great justice in the popularity of the measure at least, if but on account of its presumable good intention, if it was not so much at the expence of so many innocent gentlemen who were demanded as the sacrifices to it; whose fate is surely hard to have their reputation, which

to soldiers especially, ought to be dearer than their lives, called into question upon a point which is itself no question at all.

The M. too seems greatly to mistake, not the meaning—indeed of the word Coup-de-main, for in that he is tolerably clear, but its having been attempted to take sanctuary under the definition of that military term. For surely nothing can be more plain *against* the commanders than the extension of it by sir John Ligonier, to even an operation in the course of a regular siege, such as that of Bergen-op-zoom, or of Fort St. Philip. Sir John's advice then was far from countenancing the return of the troops, before they should have sat down before it, and even tried the siege for some time. But what do the commanders say? “The surprize on which  
“the only chance on making a vigorous  
“impression, or a coup-de-main, call it  
“which you please, was evidently over;  
“and as to sitting down before it, we had  
“no artillery. Our plan admitted of  
“none.”

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The safety of the Basque-road was not it seems so much as known 'till sir Edward himself made the experiment of it. This is one more proof how defective his prior information had been, which at least supposed the taking the fort of Aix so necessary a preliminary.

“ The shore is said to be inaccessible,” (says the M.) but whoever said so beside? both land and sea officers plainly declare the contrary, and built on it the resolution of landing the troops, to proceed against that fort Fouras, which had been evidently proved inaccessible by sea. Why did they then retract that resolution? because they found that that measure, which they had resolved on, purely from their ardent wish and desire to do something of service to their country, and of damage to the enemy, before they came away, after the main point had been formally given up, was not one jot the more advisable, for its appearing so practicable. They might indeed have got on shore, but only in such divisions, and with such probability of effectual opposition, that, such an object as the fort Fouras, and it was their only one, could



could by no means have justified the risk. Sir Edward Hawke, who was so far from giving his opinion that the troops should not land at all, that he urged the necessity of it, was however satisfied that fort Fouras was become of no consequence to troops landing in Chatellailon bay; and as no *other* object appeared worth landing for, either to Sir Edward Hawke, who wished it so much, or to the other commanders; what could they do but come away? for as to Rochefort, all of them had concurred in the opinion of its being not to be thought of more. And surely if the admirals were not judges enough of land-operations, to give a thorough weight to that their concurrence, at least being on the spot, their common sense could not be inferior to that of men equally unskilled, who have at a distance so sanguinely condemned that resolution to return. And as to the court-martial, composed of gentlemen of the army, whose military profession made them at least judges of the matter, they have unanimously approved it. But if the sea officers are ignorant, and the land ones partial, from whence can a judgment be admitted? or are none fit to pass

pass and impose one on the public, but the admirers of the plan ?

There is in the said M. a very invidious reflection on that insinuation which he styles "vague and farcaetical, evasive and fallacious," of the fleet's being wanted on more considerable service, and especially to watch the return of the *expected* fleets from Louisbourg and Martinico. But, surely, the little or nothing that obviously remained to be done against Fouras, was not an object for keeping the fleet longer upon that coast. It could not be worse to set it at liberty to proceed on important and real service, than to detain it in fruitless attendance on an imaginary one.

As to that great pretended informality of suppression of the minutes of the council of the 28th; all that appears to solve it, is, that the great point of the expedition against Rochefort being over, they did not deign to do so minute and inconsiderable an object as Fouras, the honor of holding a council about it. At least, there does not appear the shadow of any ill-design or unfair dealing being assignable to the unanimous resolutions of the commanders, for

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no minutes to be taken of that part of their procedure, to the insignificance of which, the report on the Enquiry has done but justice, and of which themselves were probably conscious and ashamed, though they had suffered their judgment to be carried away by their eagerness to do at least something ; or by what is yet a greater reproach to them, the fear of that unpopularity, they ought to have had the courage to despise, since they might be sure of not deserving it.

The M. concludes with a kind of threat of a parliamentary enquiry into every part of this transaction. I fancy, if the commanders have any fear at all about it, it is of its not taking place. Of this, I am sure, they could not but be greatly obliged to the interest or influence that should promote it.

Injured, cruelly injured as they have been by the popular clamor so unfairly excited against them, the representatives of the people would, probably, even but on the principles of common humanity and justice, grant them all the reparation in their power, or that they should be found  
to

to deserve. At least there can be no doubt of their clearly discovering, " whether it " was an *impracticable* or *unadviseable* " scheme of the *Ministry*, or the *bad con-* " *duct* of those entrusted with the *execu-* " *tion* of his Majesty's commands," which has *brought the nation* into the *present disgrace*.

F I N I S.



