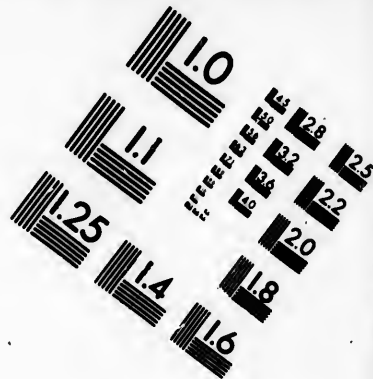
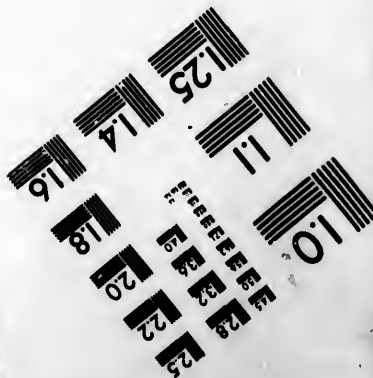




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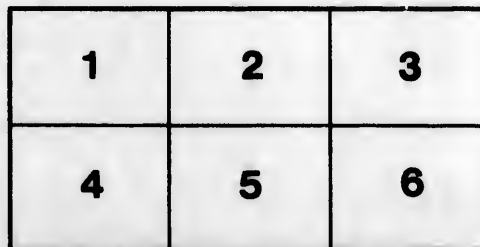
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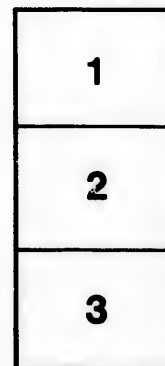
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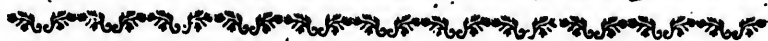
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LETTER

TO THE

Right Hon. GEORGE GRENVILLE.



[Price one Shilling and Sixpence.]

A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

Right Hon. GEORGE GRENVILLE.

Quem maxumè odisti, ei maxumè obsequeris: aliud stans, aliud sedens,
de rep. sentis: his maledicis, illos odisti, levissimum transfuga: neque in
hâc, neque in illâ parte fidem habes. SALLUST.

The T H I R D E D I T I O N ;
With several Corrections and Additions.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILLIAMS, next the Mitre Tavern, Fleet-Street.

M.DCC.LXIII.

1-245

A

L E T T E R

T O T H E

Right Hon. GEORGE GRENVILLE.

S I R.

HAD you not been on two accounts remarkably conspicuous already, you should not have been made more so by this letter. The one is, when the strength of the opposition, supported by the voice of the people, forced the earl of Bute to resign, a declaration was made by authority to all the foreign ministers, signifying, that his majesty had been pleased to place his government in the hands of the Right Hon. George Grenville, and the earls of Egremont and Halifax; who, in all matters of importance, were not to act separately, but in a conjunction of the three. The other is, the busy part you are supposed to have acted in raising and fomenting a cry against Mr. Wilkes. I will not absolutely tax *you* with being the author of the many nonsensical ministerial squibs and letters in all the papers, of the many hand-bills dispersed about the streets, and of that laborious and contemptible ministerial paper called the Plain Dealer, but I do really believe you know *who* is; and if he actually has the honour of receiving his instruc-

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tions

tions from the first lord of the treasury, and his pay from Mr. chancellor of the exchequer, I much wonder that one so learned in the law, and consequently skilled in our constitution, should not have been able to defend the cause much better. But the attempt at doing what was intended to appear like something, I presume was to make amends for the deficiency, in not having acted *openly* in conjunction with your coadjutors, the *wise* and *dispassionate* earls of Halifax and Egremont, in the apprehension and commitment of Mr. Wilkes; which being a matter of importance, the assistance of the third person was absolutely necessary towards fulfilling the declaration. Notwithstanding this aid (which I do not doubt was to the best of your abilities, *if you really had any hand in it*) I have not as yet heard that Mr. Wilkes has brought any action against you, so that I cannot help lamenting those labours are likely to escape any reward.

However, it is not my intention to reproach; I leave that to those whom you have both deserted and deceived. But were I to give the public but a very short sketch of your conduct from the time of your being a solicitor at the Old Bailey, to your holding (I hope for yourself, not *another*) the high office of first lord of the English treasury, I do not know whether your veracity, ability, or integrity, would most be doubted. But this I will not do: some part of it may relate to private life, with which the public, sir, have no concern; yet I mean it as a hint to the venal tools of your cause, who have daily in newspapers and pamphlets abused the private characters of several noblemen and gentlemen, which are not only as irreproachable as your own, but, perhaps, much less so than some of those with whom you are in league. The libels, however, which the *hired* advocates

cates of your cause (for I will do you the justice to believe you have none but what *are hired*) have published, are disregarded by the public; and those very noblemen and gentlemen, whom your scriblers have attempted to slander, look down with contempt on both the libels and the libellers; and consider them, as every honest man does, the pitiful and wretched shifts to which the ministry are reduced, in order to acquire, what they never had, some little credit with the people. Nay, so odious and obnoxious is your cause to the honest and sensible part of the nation, that if a man in any public company, from the greatest to the meanest, were but to attempt to speak in defence of the ministry, he would be shun'd by every man present, and looked upon as one of your tools or emissaries, *sent about to deceive*.

Since the North Briton was seized, for asserting the rights of every free-born Englishman, to canvas and scrutinize with the utmost freedom, what is vulgarly called the king's speech; and since the ministry have attempted, and are still endeavouring to confound, the sacred name of their sovereign, with the acts performed in his kingly office by their advice, and for which they alone are responsible, as if any canvas of them were an insult upon majesty; the people have taken the alarm: because such a step seems to lead to an invasion of their liberties by an arbitrary extension of the *prerogative*. I am sorry there should be any occasion for mentioning the word *prerogative*; my lord Bute's advocates* raised such a cry about the *prerogative*, that many are inclined

* It would be justice to his lordship to acquaint him, thro' your means, that he is continually exposed to the most severe censures and suspicions, by the stupid defences of a monthly understrapper to a Scottish printer and publisher. The piece thus issued forth is called the Critical Review, the design of which now is, and of late has been,

inclined to doubt, whether they did not contribute more effectually to his overthrow, than even the North Briton himself. But now that we have, in all *outward* appearance, an English minister, who has himself been the *retained council* against arbitrary proceedings of this kind, and who, if ever in his life time he was in earnest, has offered, what was the greatest sacrifice to him, to plead *gratis* against them; who could have expected to see, during *his* administration, any thing that should bear the least resemblance to a design for extending the *prerogative*? Yet what is

been, to indiscriminately condemn all pieces which are wrote on the behalf of the English liberty, constitution or interest, and to applaud with rapture whatever has a tendency to the promotion and establishment of arbitrary power and Scottish aristocracy, or defends lord Bute and abuses the English nation. From hence it has been remarked by those, who have had patience to read but a few pages, that lord Bute has certainly taken the writer (I mean the *dear*) into his pay; otherwise, say they, surely such a barefaced and scandalous partiality would not be repeatedly manifested with respect to *every* book he pretends to criticise. Unluckily, by some means or other, a notion has got abroad, that the *dear* of the Critical Review is the same person who *did* the Briton, a ministerial paper, which every week abused the people of England, because they would not bend their necks to the yoke of a Scottish minister: the inference from which is, that lord B— took every little mean and vile method to impose himself upon the public, even to the *puffing* of the most wretched performances on the behalf of himself and his cause; but I will do his lordship the justice to *believe*, that in this particular he is entirely innocent of what has been, and still is, suspected of him; my reasons for believing so are, viz. That the Review is printed by a Scot, is published by a Scot, and Dr. Smollett, who is a Scot, was lately imprisoned and fined for being the author of a libel in it. I therefore think, that as such a Scottish clan belong to it, that alone is sufficient to cause the partiality, which so forcibly strikes every man who reads but a few lines in it. Although the natural propensity in Scotsmen to the being partial is no new remark, yet they should in justice, in gratitude to the people, who has prevented them from crawling in filth, famine, and misery, at least spare their gross abuse, and stop their licentious tongues. Although they are in their natures proud, tyrannical, overbearing and arrogant; yet it is now high time they should take shame to themselves, and, if possible, live in peace and silence. The years 1715 and 1745, it is hoped, have convinced them, they cannot place an arbitrary Stuart on the English throne; and the year 1763 will be an everlasting monument of their defeated attempt to domineer over us by another Stuart, in the character of a Scottish minister.

it

it but an extension of the *prerogative*, no matter by what mode it is enforced (though particularly odious if by any of the foul dregs of the Star Chamber) that forbids the people of England to condemn, or even canvas, the transactions of the ministry, because, as they have received the royal approbation, such freedom is an insult upon the king? Thus, by this parity of reasoning, we are not to say the peace is bad; nor that the excise is an attack on our constitution; because they have received the royal approbation, and therefore any blame of them would be an insult upon majesty: upon the same principle likewise, no act of parliament ought ever to be repealed. From an insult it is to be construed and termed *treason*; and then the secretary of state, without any information upon oath against the offending person, may issue a warrant, without inserting his name or even describing his person, and send the king's messengers to break open the man's house at midnight, seize his person and ALL his papers, break his locks and plunder his house from top to bottom, and when he is carried away by force, and his friends are endeavouring to procure him that liberty which the laws of this country would give him, he is tossed about, in a manner something like smuggling, and at length thrown into a jail where nobody is admitted to see him, and he is consequently deprived of the *benefit* of the laws of his country. The case here alluded to, you need not be informed, is that of every Englishman, in the person of Mr. Wilkes.

I would calmly and dispassionately ask you, sir, whether you think the people of England will submit to this sort of treatment? and whether, if you remember any of your former pleadings on the behalf of Mr. Amherst, as author of the *Craftsman*, you do not think such warrants, and such outrages, absolute and di-

rect attacks on the freedom and constitution of this country? — It is true the Scots talk high in their vindication; they are warmly for an *extension* of the *prerogative*; for making the king ABSOLUTE if it were possible; therefore they are not to be minded. They are arbitrary and overbearing in their very natures; their Lairds used to keep gaggs and racks in their houses, to torture their vassals, and *extort* from them confessions or impeachments: they never were blessed with such a thing as Magna Charta; nor had they ever any idea of the mildness of the English government, which abhors the very thoughts of torture; the horrid practice of which, the laws of Scotland admit in its full extent. But we are now, thank heaven, no longer under Scottish government; we have at least the *appearance* of an English one; and therefore expected to have seen the true spirit of the English constitution asserted and preserved. Instead of that, there seems to be the strongest reason to suspect, that, under colour of an *English* administration, it was resolved to attempt, what was too odious and too unpopular, to be hazarded while the *Scot* was *openly* in power: otherwise the North Briton might have been persecuted long before No. 45 appeared. But this is a point too tender to be insisted upon. The natural pride of human nature is such, that none of us chuse it should be *publickly* known that we are *subordinates*; notwithstanding it may have been *privately* settled among friends: therefore I will take my leave of this point, with only supposing, you are perfectly acquainted with both the truth and force of it. Yet I much question, if the North Briton had been persecuted while the *Scot* was *openly* in power, the people would have been more alarmed by an attack on their liberties, than they now are; nay, I do believe, that weak and incapable as his enemies have pronounced him to be, he would have managed the affair much better.

Can

Can any thing be more odious to Englishmen, than an attempt to *exclude* them from giving any opinion or judgment on ministerial transactions? or more alarming to a man, who is acquainted with our constitution, than a design to set the king in so high and awful a light, that whatever he does, or says, even in his REGAL capacity, though by and with the consent of his council, for which his advisers are responsible, is nevertheless *not to be questioned*, by any person, either as to the truth or wisdom of it? was it ever understood, or supposed, that a king of England could give his sanction in such a manner to any thing, so as to put it *above* the judgment of his subjects; who are thereby to be *excluded* from, or *abridged* of, their antient, and, till, hitherto, undisputed right, of giving their opinion, whether they think it good or bad? Or, was it ever understood by the people or parliament, that any minister, or set of ministers, could take refuge behind the royal person, from the blame of any transactions executed in the royal functions? Or was it ever understood by any Englishman, that the ministers were not responsible for every thing transacted in the royal functions; because such transactions, of whatsoever nature they are, are not valid, unless with the advice and consent of some of them? If, therefore, any of those transactions are found, upon examination, to be *false*, weak or prejudicial; ought not every Englishman, by the right which he has of speaking his sentiments, to lay the blame of them upon him who advised them.

Upon the same reasoning; if a *falsehood* is *surprised* upon his majesty, and he gives it, as he received it, to his parliament; and it is afterwards discovered to be an imposition, who is to bear the blame, the imposer, or the imposed? or must no man open his
lips

lips upon the occasion? By the spirit of our constitution a king of England can do no wrong; therefore the blame must necessarily fall upon the imposer: and he who detects the imposition, will in that instance have done a piece of real good service to his country: the ministry, as may be expected, will abhor him; will take every method, however low, pitiful and base, to calumniate, and, if possible, depreciate him in the eyes of the people; but every honest man will despise them; because, if they are capable of imposing a falsehood on their sovereign, they are unfit for his service, and their words on no other occasion are proper to be taken.

I speak in this manner, because the partizans of the present ministry, have repeatedly attempted to impose on the public, through the channel of the papers, that number 45, the last number of the *real North Briton* which has been *published*, is a libel upon the king's speech, by telling the sovereign he had told a falsehood. I have carefully read that famous paper, and I own I can no where perceive, any thing like a libel upon the king's speech, or that the lie is given to the sovereign. There are indeed the words *INFAMOUS FALLACY*; which are supposed to be those which have given most offence. But a fallacy, sir, is not a falsehood; there is a material difference. The cry, which the foolish abettors of your cause have raised on this occasion, has been owing to their not understanding English. A fallacy is composed of a number of words only *tending* to deceive. Pensioner Johnson explains the word, "logical artifice; deceitful argument;" and quotes the great Sidney as authority. Whereas a falsehood may be *one* word, and direct in its implication. Pensioner Johnson explains *falsehood* thus, "want of truth; want of veracity; a lie; a false assertion." But the most extraordinary thing yet, is, if that passage in the speech from the throne,

throne, to which the North Briton applied the words *infamous fallacy*, be true, why is it omitted, together with these two offensive words, in the information against the North Briton? are the ministry afraid to let the veracity be disputed in an open court, where the truth must be sifted out? or do they find they cannot support it? — Whether they will not presume, for the sake of their own credit, to attack the veracity of the North Briton, cannot yet be determined; but I think it pretty clearly follows by the omission of those remarkable words, *infamous fallacy*, which are supposed to have been principally offensive, together with the other parts of the paper which seem to a common eye most acrimonious, that they intend not to try him for giving the lie to his sovereign, as their tools have falsely asserted he did, but for asserting the constitutional rights of the people to oppose any extension of the *prerogative*, and their claim to a full examination and detection of all impositions from ministers. This question will therefore naturally follow, Why was the cry raised of the North Briton having given the lie to majesty, if it is either not intended or cannot be proved? when the very information filed against Mr. George Kearsly, the *late* publisher, does not object to those words.

As some of the tools of your cause, may, amongst their usual nonsense thrust into the news papers, term this a sort of prejudging an affair, which is yet depending in a court of law; I beg leave to obviate whatever may appear like a charge of that kind, by asserting my equal right, to the giving my opinion and facts, relative to this matter, with any of those who have been either hired or instructed, on the behalf of the ministry, to mislead and deceive the public. Have they not christened the North Briton

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number

number 45 a libel ? is it yet proved so ? or has any jury given their verdict that it is so ? Have they not christened Mr. Wilkes the author ; and has it ever been proved that he is ? or have even the secretaries of state, either, or both of them, any information upon oath, that he is ? have not your advocates, before any kind of proof is made, by every artful, and I will venture to say wicked means, endeavoured to bias, and set the public against Mr. Wilkes ? Is this fair ; in a country, where, by the laws, every man is supposed to be innocent till convicted ? Have they not prejudged him ? condemned him ? and have not the Scots hanged him, and burned him, in effigy ? — My arguments and my reasonings are fair : they insult no man, in either his private or public character. I do not scrutinize, and reason upon what *is done* ; I only mention what *is omitted*.

The speech which his majesty pronounces to his parliament, is never in the debates of either house called his majesty's, but the minister's, and is accordingly treated with the greatest freedom. I could bring many instances, but I hope the following will be sufficient : On the 17th of January, 1734, when the speech from the throne was debated in the house of commons, Mr. William Shippen said “ it has always been taken for granted, that the “ speeches from the throne are the compositions of ministers of “ state ; and upon that supposition we have always thought ourselves at liberty to examine every proposition contained in them. “ Even without doors people are generally pretty free in their remarks upon them ; and I believe no gentleman that hears me, is “ ignorant of the reception the speech from the throne, at the “ close of the *last* session of parliament, met with from the *nation* “ in general.”

To

To the authority of Mr. Shippen I will add the example of that truly able and impartial Scottish historian, Dr. Smollett; which to be sure must have great weight, because he has in the latter part of his history (as he calls it) bedaubed lord Bute with such gross and fulsome adulation as would turn the stomach of an Englishman; and then the Critical Review has in the same gross and fulsome manner *puffed* the history. In the year 1727, after giving a very partial summary of the speeches which his late majesty made to his first parliament, Dr. Smollett adds this *remark of his own*: "Those speeches, penned by the minister, were composed with a view to soothe the minds of the people into an immediate concurrence with the measures of the government; *but without ANY INTENTION of performing those promises of œconomy, reformation and national advantage.*" Thus, if we are to believe Dr. Smollett, his late majesty knowingly and purposely told a falsehood to his parliament, with an intent to deceive them. Yet, though this was published during the life time of his late majesty, neither the writer nor publisher were taken up by a secretary of state's warrant. And now I make no doubt but Dr. Smollett, who took this freedom with his late majesty, is, like the rest of the Scots, against any such freedoms being taken with his present majesty's speech. I too am against *such* freedoms as to say, or insinuate, that his majesty *knowingly* and *purposely* told a falsehood to his parliament, with an intent to deceive them: but I will never alter my opinion that his majesty, as well as many other good kings, may have been *surprised* into a falsehood. In such a case, the blame of such surprise will naturally, and constitutionally, fall upon the ministers. This is the case of a sovereign of Great Britain with respect to his speech to his parliament. That speech is *previously* composed

composed by the ministers, and is read to a select number of the members, who are summoned to the Cockpit to hear it. To prove this fact, I desire leave to state one remarkable instance. Circular letters, dated from the Treasury, of which lord Bute was at that time the head, were sent as usual to most of the members of the house of commons, desiring their attendance at the Cockpit on the evening before the meeting of last session of parliament. Mr. Fox took the chair, and produced to the company a paper, which he only called *a speech*, and which he said he would, as usual, read to that assembly. He afterwards produced an address, which he likewise read, (*not bishop Fleetwood's PREFACE* *) and then said, lord Carysfort and lord Charles Spencer had been so kind to undertake to move and second *that* address. The same ceremony is observed with respect to the upper house of parliament: every lord has a summons, desiring his attendance to hear the speech, which is read by some distinguished peer, who is supposed to conduct the business of the house of lords. The *speech* read that evening by lord Bute's *doer*, Mr. Fox, was verbatim the king's speech at the opening of the last session of parliament; and the *address* was verbatim the address which was presented by the house of commons to his majesty, in return for *that* speech from the throne.

Give me leave, sir, to remark, that it is understood, that whoever at the Cockpit reads the speech, is supposed to take upon him the business of the house of commons: it is therefore no injustice to Mr. Fox, to call him lord Bute's *doer*. I think

* If the reader should not be so well versed in the mysteries of state as to comprehend the meaning of these *four* words, he may probably have them explained to his satisfaction, upon application to either lord Carysfort, or Mr. Nicholson Calvert.

I should

I should further mention, that the table at the Cockpit is always covered with paper, pens, and ink, for the use of the members *to make remarks.*

I think this clearly and sufficiently proves, that the speech is the minister's ONLY, not the king's; and therefore it can be NO INSULT upon majesty to make any remarks or observations upon it. If it were ever understood that any such remarks could be construed an insult upon majesty, would not the use of pen, ink, and paper, be forbid at the cockpit?

As the practice of summoning the members of the house of commons to the cockpit by a ministerial writ, and haranguing them there before his majesty opens the session with a speech from the throne, may be unknown to a great part of the public, I will give a short history of it from a very excellent pamphlet, published in the year 1734, entitled, *An humble Address to the Commons of Great Britain.* "I don't know exactly how long this custom may have prevailed, nor is it of much importance to the public; but I may venture to affirm, that it hath been carried farther, within a very few years, than it ever was before; having not only been punctually observed at the beginning of every session, but even prostituted to the service of *particular jobs.* There is something very ridiculous in these *ministerial conventions.* The first assembly is commonly held at the *minister's* own house, three or four days before the meeting of *parliament*, and consists only of a *few trusty creatures*, who are called together in order to peruse the *king's speech*, and consider of proper persons to move for and second the *addresses.* These gentlemen, who are generally proposed by the *minister*

E

"himself,

" himself, after a self-denying speech, modestly declining so
 " great an honour, and desiring it may be put into abler hands,
 " are at last overcome and prevailed upon to undertake it. At the
 " same time, these *choice friends* are let into the state of affairs,
 " as far as is necessary, and instructed what to say, in case of a
 " debate upon several particular points. The *address* likewise is
 " drawn up and settled, long before they met, as well as the
 " *speech*; for it is the practice of *ministers* not only to put what-
 " ever they think fit into their master's mouth, (which is com-
 " monly a panegyric on themselves, or a justification of their
 " measures) but likewise to do the same kind office for the
 " *parliament*, and make them echo back the substance of it by
 " way of *address*. When these points are settled in the *ministerial*
 " *cabinet*, for so I may call it, a general assembly of all the *well-*
 " *affected* is summoned to meet, a day or two afterwards, at the
 " *cockpit*; where the same farce is acted over again, in a more
 " circumstantial and solemn manner. The *minister* produces a
 " copy of the *speech*; which being read and received with great
 " applause, it is resolved, *nemine contradicente*, to promote a loyal
 " and dutiful address to his majesty upon it, not only to return
 " him thanks for so *gracious a speech*, but to applaud the *wisdom*
 " *of all his measures*. In this manner do they deviate from the antient
 " practice of parliament, which consisted only in returning his
 " majesty thanks for the speech, in general. Though it may be
 " understood at home to be only a compliment of course, it cer-
 " tainly carries a different aspect abroad, and looks as if the par-
 " liament had in a lump approved of all the measures of the ad-
 " ministration. Then the persons, agreed upon before to move
 and

“ and second *this Address*, are proposed by *another* § *worthy gentle-*
 “ *man*, who is likewise let into the secret, and unanimously ap-
 “ proved. Here again they modestly decline it, as if there had
 “ been no *previous meeting*, and again with great importunity are
 “ prevailed upon to accept it.—What makes this scene still
 “ more diverting is, that when the *commons* return to their *own*
 “ *house* from the *house of lords*, after his majesty hath made his
 “ speech, the speaker tells them in a formal manner, *that he hath*,
 “ *with great difficulty, obtain'd a copy of it*†; when above half
 “ the members, perhaps, had seen, or heard it read, a day or
 “ two before.”

Gentle reader, or, “ *Gentle Shepherd*,” if you like that name better, are not thou astonished with these farfical scenes about what is vulgarly called the *king's* speech? which being known to every one present (for ALL circumstances prove it) to be the minister's, and not the king's, is canvassed in every one of these assemblies with the greatest freedom; even in parliament it is understood and treated in the same manner. Is it therefore a libel to write one inch out of those doors what could have been none within? or is it intended that the people shall know nothing but just what the ministry pleases? I am afraid the latter.—Yet if I were to ask what crime the North Briton had committed, the trumpeters of the virtue and goodness of your cause would tell me, he had libelled the king's speech. I am sorry for the general good of my fellow subjects, whose interest and welfare the ministry ought to consult and to promote, that so little understanding appears among their advocates, and even in what should

§ The noble author is here mistaken; it is always the *same person*.

† The noble author is here again mistaken; for Mr. Speaker always says,
 “ he had, to prevent mistakes, obtained a copy.”

sometimes

sometimes seem to come immediately from themselves, that they cannot perceive it must be an affront upon the understanding of almost every man to tell him, that it is an insult offered to his majesty, to make any remarks upon, or refutations of the speech from the throne ; when it is universally known, and believed, that the speech so made is *not* his *majesty's*, but his *minister's*; and that the advisers and makers of it are *wholly* responsible for whatever it contains.

I am sorry too, that, in a dispute which is properly and only between the ministry and the people, his majesty's name should be introduced and made so free with, as it every day is upon this affair, by those who by this means think they defend the ministry, and who doubtless intend, in violation of the constitution, to make out the pretended crime an insult upon the king, not an attack on the minister's measures. Some candid men have thought, that this *unnatural* freedom, taken with the king's name, is *departing* from the principles of toryism, which have ever been strenuously supporting an exalted and extravagant idea of the high and awful supremacy of the royal person; and therefore the ministry and their defenders are in this particular contradicting themselves. It does indeed at first sight seem like a contradiction of principles; but if we give ourselves time to reflect on what will inevitably be the consequences of the establishment of an opinion and precedent, that any reasoning, facts, or arguments, tending to shew the weakness, fallacy, or injury of ministerial measures and conduct, which the king has been advised to approve, is a gross and punishable insult upon the sovereign; it will not appear so much like a *contradiction* of tory principles, as a most alarming *improvement* upon them.

Let

Let us figure to ourselves a Tory sitting in a private corner behind the curtain, surrounded by a number of his creatures, plotting the utter destruction of our liberties, in order to introduce arbitrary power: building his whole system on this fundamental principle, "allow but the reasonings and arguments on the speech "from the throne to be construed an insult upon the king," and upon that precedent will be established the doctrine, That every future attack on the *measures* of the *ministry*, which have received the royal approbation, is ALSO an insult upon the king. Thus allowing this one point, every other will readily be taken, till the people of England are become as absolute slaves, as the people of France.-- In a little time we are not to say the peace is bad, because it has been ratified by the king, and would therefore be an insult upon him. And with respect to every other ministerial measure, the case is to be the same. I do not know by what appellation you, or the hired slaves of your cause, will chuse to distinguish this, but I will not hesitate to call it an arbitrary extension of the *prerogative*; a most alarming invasion of the constitutional liberties of the people.

The liberty of the press consequently receives its wound at the same time, and that no doubt is the great end intended to be accomplished; for it is not so much the debarring us of the natural use of our tongue, that can tend to the security of a temporary and tottering administration, as the effectually putting an entire stop to the communication of our sentiments in print; which, in cases of danger, has ever had the good effect of alarming the people in general, with a sense and knowledge of that danger, and thereby they have been enabled to put themselves on their defence, and make head against such attacks: but should this

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liberty,

liberty be destroyed, there will instantly be an end of every other ; for this is the great bulwark which supports all the rest. It is too visible to be conceal'd, and it is too true to be denied, that there have lately been several attempts made to accomplish it. They have hitherto failed. But as this is a point which weak and wicked ministers have incessantly laboured at, the people must continue to be watchful over it, lest a time should come when a ministry, afraid of their own conduct, or any part of it, being argued or reasoned upon before the public, shall have made such large strides towards despotic power, as to steal this inestimable jewel out of the hands of the people. No honest minister will ever shew a desire of wounding this great and only barrier of the liberties of this free country. We have only to fear such attacks from ministers who are afraid their actions should see the light, and who will therefore be eternally promoting, publickly or privately, persecutions against authors, printers, and publishers, in order to put a stop to this liberty and establish the office of a licenser, where every thing is to be inspected before it is printed. The yoke of slavery would then be most effectually put round the necks of the people ; for there is no doubt but every thing Scottish, and in behalf of the ministry, would be instantly licens'd, while every thing otherwise would doubtless be refused. We have lately had an instance of something similar. A tragedy called *Elvira*, written by a Scot, and intended to compliment lord Bute, was licens'd and performed at Drury-lane. Another tragedy, called *Electra*, written above twenty years ago, but unluckily by an Englishman, was refused a license: now what could there be in a play, written above twenty years ago, which can be affirmed, with not a single sentiment since altered, that could with any propriety be deemed applicable

applicable to the present times, was astonishing to every one, who had either read the play or seen it rehearsed; yet it should seem that some heads were so sore as to take caps which no body ever intended for them, and therefore the license was not granted*. If ever this should be the case with respect to the liberty of the press, might not fifty different arbitrary and grievous modes of EXCISE be passed

† Since the former editions of this pamphlet were printed, undeniable proof has been received, that the Tragedy of *Electra* has in it no one sentiment or circumstance that carries in it the smallest appearance of malevolence, either implicative or direct: that it contains not a single passage allusive to the situation of affairs with us, nor one glance at any political or party matter whatsoever. But, on the contrary, appears to be an inoffensive subject, as fairly and chastely handled as any that has ever been wrought into a Tragedy. Nor was it indeed objected to as a performance that manifested an ill design. The licence was simply denied to it, with a declaration that the office never assigned reasons for rejections, and the only one which seemed to be insinuated, was an apprehension that the public might make misapplications.

But on this it surely remains to be considered, if any innocent man ought to be made to suffer in his interests and character on such a plea, or rather on none at all? A free-born subject of England ought not surely to be so wantonly deprived of the fair fruits of his labour, or strip of that birth-right which intitles him to the full benefits that he should acquire from an honest exercise of his talents. Nor ought he to be arbitrarily injured by any power in this kingdom, from idle and ungrounded apprehensions. The legislature could never mean to place a power in the hands of any officers which they might at will exercise in so hateful, oppressive, and unconstitutional a manner. As the licensers are possessed of a copy of that play, a regard for their own characters should now induce them, when thus arraigned, to satisfy the world in what the author of it has forfeited his rights as a free subject of this state: and they are hereby called upon to assign their reasons for the refusal of a license. If they cannot do it, they have acted unjustly. If they will not do it, they act arbitrarily; and thereby prove themselves unworthy of a trust, by their daring to abuse it. The rights of the meanest subject of these kingdoms ought to be as sacredly secured to him as those of the greatest: and therefore, unless this point is cleared up to the satisfaction of the public, which is highly interested in this matter, both with regard to right and entertainment, let the instant injury for ever silence and put to shame those daring champions of the administration, who have so frequently and boldly thrown out the gauntlet of defiance against every man for standing forth to accuse them of gross abuses of power.

In the odious reign of Charles the Second, when this nation was in the most imminent danger of being enslaved, and when that very worst badge of slavery, an imprimatur on the press, had become actually established, we are told a reason was assigned for stopping the run of Lee's Tragedy, called *Lucius Junius Brutus*, though so bad a one as that was considered to be an anti-monarchical play; which certainly may be pronounced a bad one, because we have since seen the same story made the subject of a French Tragedy, which was not only permitted to be acted in that land of slavery, but also highly applauded, with-

out

passed into law, and ninety-nine parts of the kingdom ignorant of the invasion of both their liberties and properties? — Every one has observed, how often the ministerial champions have endeavoured to diffuse the terror of the laws amongst the honest and sensible part of the people, who will presume to judge for themselves, and consequently dissent from their false reasonings and infamous fallacies. If it could be supposed that these writers

out giving state-offence. So that we see, notwithstanding all our boasts of Liberty recovered by the revolution, that the stage is become reduced to a worse state of slavery here than in France, or than it was here at a time when *prerogative* was seen stretching apace into every species of tyranny.

But it may now become very worthy of particular observation, how far the hurtful licentiousness of the stage is really checked by our licencing office, or rather how far it is made an instrument of oppression to the innocent, and of indulgence to the most licentious. *Electra* has been refused a licence for one of the royal theatres; but with what justice has been set forth, and the licensors are desired to give proofs that the representation is a false one; and which, if they do not, must convict them of oppression. For a proof of the bad use of their power another way, in the toleration of licentiousness, I appeal to the pieces which they licence for representation at the little house in the Hay-Market, where a buffoon is, under the express sanction of authority, making the most innocent and even the most respectable characters of the nation the objects of public ridicule in their private, their official, ministerial, and even Legislative capacities. Are not these instances of gross outrages both ways, that are alike highly scandalous in their natures? Are they not alike reproachful to government, to law, and to every kind of justice? An innocent and deserving man, on one hand, is dishonourably deprived of the fair fruits of his labours. On the other, worthy men, and some of them of the highest ranks and fortunes, have their characters assailed, in order to deprive them of respect; and if it were possible, render them the objects of contempt. Are not these some of the blessed fruits which were at first foreseen and foretold would become the effects of establishing this licencing office, which is now made an engine of ministerial oppression and licentiousness, for the serving of partial and vile purposes? and therefore decency as well as justice must now clamour for its abolition.

Some people have indeed ventured to suppose, that the principal objections to the licencing of *Electra* lay against the author, and not the piece. But these are suppositions of a turpitude too great to be conceived, because if the character and principles of the writer of it were really as bad as they are unknown to be good, it would be wicked to believe men could be base enough to be guilty of such injustice as would, if it could be proved, make them deserving of the severest punishments. But, however, from these uses which we see are now made of a licencing office for the stage, learn, Englishmen to tremble for and to resist all like attempts to establish a licencing office for the press; for when once the full liberty of that is gone, or essentially lessened, every other will soon follow, of those in which you now so very justly place, your highest glory, surest safety, fairest boasts, and truest happiness.

give

give us the language and sentiments of their masters, it will follow, that the design of attacking our liberties is not far distant; for they have repeatedly talked of fines, pillories, and goals, and other tyrannic proceedings, such as were practised by the ever odious and unconstitutional star-chamber; and, when they have found themselves over matched in point of abilities, they have gone so far as even to threaten such of their antagonists with these kinds of punishment, hoping thereby to silence them. But this sort of language has had no other effect than convincing us of their own arbitrary principles and secret inclinations. They have likewise had recourse to scurrility and abuse, and have made use of every low and gross epithet that could be dictated by malice and disappointment, to insult and revile the whole body of the people of England, and particularly the common-council of the city of London; who refused to prostitute the honour of the metropolis with the most servile and fulsome adulation to an administration which no good Englishman can reflect on without horror. The employers and the employed in this work are doubtless totally ignorant of the temper and genius of Englishmen, otherwise they would not take a method which borders so much on tyranny to serve an unpopular cause. Englishmen will not silently and patiently suffer a yoke to be put round their necks; they value themselves on being free, and the right of communicating their opinions. Their high sense of this liberty they will never suffer to be infringed; and that administration which attempts it must hazard its own safety. The people are, and they will consider themselves as the *proper* judges of all ministerial conduct. Government and power came from them; and they therefore will enjoy the right of freely giving their opinions relative to all acts of that government

and that power. That nonsense of passive obedience and non-resistance, which, though not in *term*, has in *reality* been lately revived, could serve no other purpose than to create an alarm; for when once the right of the people to judge and to speak begins to be disputed, they consider it instantly as an attack on their liberties. Ministerial advocates may be resolved, without any regard to truth or the constitution, to delude the people into a different persuasion; but they will in the end find their mistake: for the more the people are abused, or treated with insignificance in the manner they lately have been, or their liberties are invaded, the more they will be exasperated. It therefore is not safe to push a point so apparently opposite to their inclinations.

The wretched advocates of the ministry have, in order to deceive the people into a notion that the speech from the throne is in reality the king's, compared it to a man's will, which, say they, is certainly the will of the signer, not of him who drew it up. True, it is the will of the signer; and what makes it so is, *he dictates it*. But from only the single fact already stated, relative to the business of the cockpit, it is clearly demonstrated, that this is far from being the case with respect to the speech from the throne: nay, it is quite the reverse; for that speech is composed by the ministry themselves, and his majesty perhaps does not even so much as know of it till it is read to him. I would therefore ask you, sir, whether this argument, fairly stated, turns out for or against your cause? and whether this one instance alone, though some hundreds could be brought, does not plainly evince the design of the ministry to make the regal character subservient to their security?—If they were not ashamed of their
conduct,

conduct, or afraid of the just judgment that must and will be put upon it, would they thus endeavour to screen themselves under the protection of the sacred name of their sovereign?—I could push this nice point much further, but I chuse to forbear, because I hope you already feel the force of it. Yet I cannot help again expressing my extreme concern at seeing, in the productions of all those who attempt to defend the ministerial cause, the royal name so frequently introduced, so wantonly made cheap and common; nay, sometimes hung out as if intended by way of *terrorem* to the people; tho' every good Englishman is convinced that nothing can be so opposite to the intentions of his most amiable sovereign. I am so sensibly struck, and I believe so is every man that has not lent himself in one shape or other to the support of the ministry, with this sort of subterfuge, that I suspect whether they are capable of administering constitutional advice to the crown.—This whole affair favours so much of a design to abridge the people of their right to judge of public measures and ministers, that it has all the appearance of a most alarming step towards the establishment of arbitrary power; I therefore cannot help concluding it with the words of one of the ministerial advocates, "*It is wisdom to foresee such danger; it is courage to meet it in its approach; it is our duty to die or to repel it.*"

The violation of the privileges of parliament is *another* subject. I dare say you think yourself happy in not being openly concerned in it; and I, as your friend, cannot help congratulating you on this lucky escape: indeed it was fortunate beyond example. But whilst I am thus congratulating you, I forget that you are a coadjutor; which is a fact I would by no means suffer to

slip

flip my memory, because of the respect to which it entitles you. I would not likewise be understood to be so cruel and hard-hearted, as not to feel for the misfortunes of others. I can tremble for the two secretaries of state when the parliament meets, if contrary to the expectations of every rational creature they should be secretaries till then, as much as any of my countrymen would rejoice in seeing them sent to the Tower. I can feel for you, sir, if you should face the house of commons, both as first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer—and should moreover take upon you to *do* the business of that house. The excise act you cannot but be convinced *must* be repealed; and *where can you lay another tax?* I repeat it emphatically, *Tell me where can you lay another tax?* The people are utterly averse to any *extension* or *enlargement* of the excise laws; and, I will venture to prophecy, will be utterly averse to any new burdens imposed by a ministry that has hitherto, in every step they have undertaken, appeared both odious and contemptible: odious, because they seem to be, in principle, enemies to the freedom and constitution of this country; contemptible, because in every step which they have taken, there has appeared the most evident want of ability. Does therefore any independent Englishman, who is not seeking to sell himself for some pecuniary consideration, put any confidence in them?

To this embarrassment *without* doors, I will add another which may possibly happen *within*. I am credibly informed, that notwithstanding all the boasts of *economy*, which every placeman and pensioner have echoed to the ministerial shrine of Bute, the civil list is *considerably above* FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS *in arrear*; and that there was an intention, even last winter, of applying

applying to the house of commons for four hundred thousand pounds to discharge the then arrears of it: but Mr. Fox had more wisdom than to appear in it; and this I take to be one of the most undoubted proofs of his being a man of *strict* virtue, as well as good sense; notwithstanding he may have been over-reached in some things, and have consented, merely for the sake of furthering his majesty's business, to *do* some *little* matters which were beneath his character; though very compatible with his interest. How this large debt came to be accumulated I leave the public to judge. I can only take upon me to say, that when Mr. Pitt was driven from the state *the civil list stood clear of all incumbrances*. Every one was paid up to his last quarter; agreeable to that wise and regular plan of quarterly payments, which Mr. Pelham established a little before his death. Why the intended application was not made, every man will readily conceive who considers the late extraordinary methods of creating influence and extending power, as well as the necessity there was of procuring a ready support on certain occasions, and how dangerously all these might have been exposed by a keen and penetrating opposition, which seemed determined at all events to dispute, inch by inch, every sacrifice of the interests, and every encroachment on the liberties, of the people: therefore for *prudential reasons*, I suppose, the design was dropt. Such a key to the transactions of the winter as this must unavoidably have been, being for the present withheld from the public, we are left to form such conjectures as may either suit our fancies, fears, or suspicions. I will, for my own part, amuse myself with the words of that famous member of

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the

the house of commons, Mr. Shippen, upon a former motion to discharge the debt of the civil list; which do so forcibly strike me, that I cannot forbear quoting them here. “ I am informed there
 “ remains a debt in the civil government of above six hundred
 “ thousand pounds. If so, surely there must have been a most
 “ egregious neglect of duty, to say no worse. There must have
 “ been a strange spirit of *extravagance* somewhere, or such im-
 “ mense sums could never have been so soon, *so insensibly squan-*
 “ *dered* away. And it is amazing this *extravagance* should hap-
 “ pen under the conduct of persons pretending to surpass *all*
 “ their predecessors in the *knowledge* and *care* of the public
 “ revenue. But we are not to wonder that the world has been very
 “ free in its censures. None but those who are in the *secret* can
 “ refute the reflections that are made without doors, not only on
 “ the ministry, *but even on both houses of parliament*;—I must say
 “ no more:—but I heartily wish that Time (the great discoverer
 “ of hidden truths and concealed iniquities) may produce a list
 “ of all such (if any such there were) who have been
 “ perverted from their public duty by *private pensions*,
 “ who have been *the hired slaves and the corrupt instru-*
 “ *ments of a* PROFUSE AND VAIN-GLORIOUS ADMINISTRA-
 “ TION. If there have been none such, then the *whole* weight,
 “ then the *whole* guilt, of the late mismanagements, lies on the
 “ ministers themselves.” It will doubtless astonish his majesty’s
 good subjects, how, in these halcyon days of *wisdom* and *economy*,
 this money can have been expended. And it will be more asto-
 nishing if we recollect the cry that was raised at the time of the last
 elections,

elections, " that not a shilling should go out of the treasury to influence any man," because we cannot *that* way account for any of it. But that fact, supposing it to be one, though it may be doubted, was intended to wound the duke of Newcastle's interest : to prevent his opposing " the zealous, fond, believing, obsequious, " confiding, supporting, acquiescing, bearing, and forbearing, *country gentlemen.*" How well this *free* parliament, as it is called, has agreed with the sense of their constituents, the *inadequate peace* and *odious excise* sufficiently declare. Yet we have seen in these days of *virtue, wisdom* and *economy*, such a strange alteration among men, such a sudden revival of obsolete places, such an amazing *increase* of dependents, such a munificent distribution of pensions, augmentation of salaries and other favours, that the inference is natural ; if the interest of our country *is sold*, what signifies the difference, whether the electors or elected *are bought* ? The Whigs, in the most corrupt times of their administration, when there was every thing to fear from the restless spirits of the Tories and Scottish Jacobites, never went such lengths as to be able to produce such a list of placemen and pensioners as the present ministry can. When the vigorous and continued efforts of the Tories and Scottish Jacobites seemed to bid fair for enslaving *this* country, there was then some very good reason for dealing out places and pensions to form a counterpoise to their power : but now, when not the least spark of disaffection appears in the land, not even among the Scots *at present*, when every subject almost adores his sovereign, to INCREASE those placemen and pensioners beyond what they were ever known in former times, shews, that the measures were such, as there was reason to

appre-

apprehend the people would *not approve*; and therefore they required more than ORDINARY SUPPORT. Thus is our country bleeding to death between *profligacy* and *ignorance*.

I think I may be fairly and honestly allowed to suppose, that after the most flagrant violation of the privileges of parliament, the earls of Egremont and Halifax will not, in their ministerial capacity, chuse to face that great assembly: nor that you, sir, will undertake to *do* the business of the house of commons; propose new taxes for discharging the interests of this and next year's supplies, and above all the arrears of the civil list. It is not believed that the present ministry can be so imprudent as to think they can accomplish these great ends. They cannot be strangers to the general disgusts of the people: they cannot be ignorant that *their* measures are the cause; therefore for the sake of that sovereign, whom they pretend so zealously and faithfully to serve, it is not doubted but they will resign. By this time they cannot but be convinced that no other step will procure that harmony which is so much wanted: that this will be serving him *better* than ever they served him before, — it will be to a good purpose. I will not presume to say who should or who ought to succeed to power; but I will venture to give my opinion upon the known goodness of his majesty's heart, and the sincere love which he bears to ALL his people, that he will condescend to meet them half way in the objects of their wishes and happiness: and I sincerely hope that when that time does come, (which cannot be far distant) an union among parties, and *divided families* may take place: for it is then, and not till then, that the national business can be prosecuted

cuted with glory and unanimity : then the supplies may be raised, ways and means found, and the debt of the civil list discharged, without throwing the kingdom into a ferment : then we may establish our own internal happiness at *home*; and, with WISDOM and SPIRIT in our councils, be respected by those who will otherwise soon be our enemies *abroad*.

Some where towards the beginning of this letter I happened to drop an expression, or a hint, concerning both "a desertion and deception of friends." Lest both, or either of these should be misrepresented, by some of those who foolishly vindicate the ministerial cause, it will be necessary to explain what may be called the great outline, which I hope will be sufficient to prevent any impositions on the public, with respect to an affair, that has more than once agitated the most eminent and respectable public companies and private gentlemen.

When a certain gentleman, whom I dare say you will easily recollect, understood that Mr. Onslow intended to resign the speakership of the house of commons, he first went and offered himself as speaker to the duke of Newcastle, and then held himself out in the same capacity to lord Bute, whose interest he solicited towards obtaining the royal approbation. This latter step was without the consent, or even knowledge of his great and noble friends, with whom it was then thought (though not quite clear of suspicion) he had in general acted through life *above-board*; and afterwards at least dissembled, if not denied the having done it. He then with the greatest earnestness supplicated their support on that occasion. A short time after this he acknowledged to several friends the *destination* of himself as

speaker, and put it upon his ——— personal intreaties of him, which he declared was attended with all the agreeable circumstances of the cabinet, &c. The house of commons can never sufficiently regret the not having got rid, in a gentleman-like manner, by the chair, of the most tedious lawyer that ever called them to repose. If there really had been any intention of putting him into the chair, it would have been on the same principle that a meeting of country gentlemen, on a commission of the turnpike, &c. always make it a rule to chuse the most tedious and troublesome long winded prater for their chairmen; for the derivation of *SPEAKER* is known to be analogous to that of *lucus a non lucendo*. At last finding an opportunity, by a small sacrifice of honour, &c. that he could cater much better for himself in another department, he abandoned his former scheme, which, had he not deserted his friends, would have obliged them to abandon him; and had the *presumption* to take Mr. Pitt's seals.

When in his hands the seals he *found*,
 Did they not make his brains go round?
 Did they not turn his head?
 I fancy, (but he hates a joke)
 He *felt*, as Nell did, when she woke
 In lady Loverule's bed.

When great impending dangers shook
 Its state, old Rome dictators took
 Judiciously from plough:

So

(35)

So we (but at a *pinch* THOU know'st)
To make the higheft of the loweft,
The TREAS'RY gave to YOU.

Another gentleman of real found fenfe and good s, of acknowledged probity and unfulled honour, I mean Mr. Prowse, refused the same chair: who succeeded to it, I leave you, because I would not *blush* to say.

I am,

S I R,

With real friendship,

and very much esteem,

your most obliged,

and most humble servant,

An INDEPENDENT WHIG.

This Day is Published,

(Price Two Shillings.)

Dedicated to his Grace the Duke of DEVONSHIRE.

A

R E V I E W
OF
Lord BUTE's ADMINISTRATION.

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OF THE

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"single Person has had the Force of Law, the innumerable Extra-
"vagances and Mischiefs it has produced, have been so notorious,
"that all Nations, who are not stupid and slavish, have always
"abominated it; and made it their principal Care to find out Rem-
"edies against it, by so dividing and balancing the Powers of their
"Government, that *one* or a *few* men might not be able to oppress
"and destroy those they ought to preserve and protect."

SIDNEY.

XX

MEMOIRE HISTORIQUE
SUR LA
NEGOCIATION
DE LA
FRANCE & de l'ANGLETERRE.

XX

