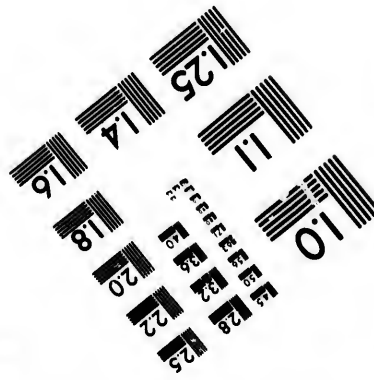
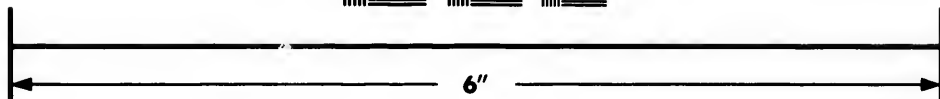
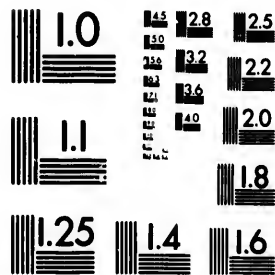


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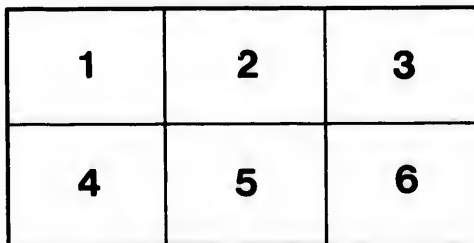
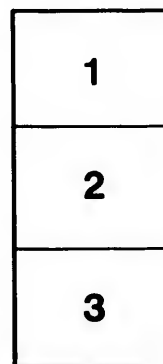
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COURSE OF THE LATE DEBATES.

WITH STRICTURES ON THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL,
AND OTHER INSTANCES OF THE DESPOTISM OF SIR
JOSEPH BANKS, THE PRESENT PRESIDENT,
AND OF HIS INCAPACITY FOR HIS
HIGH OFFICE.

BY SOME MEMBERS IN THE MINORITY.

Sir, you are a public man in this Society ; your conduct, therefore, must
be subject to revision. *DR. HORSLEY'S Speech.*

Still the minority feel no abashment. Two and two ever will be four,
and the three angles of a triangle ever will be equal to two right an-
gles, whatever majorities Presidents of Royal Societies may procure to
vote the contrary. *Narrative of the Dissensions in the Royal Society.*

L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXXXIV.

E R R A T A .

- p. 6. for Cooke, read *Cook*.
p. 11. l. 16. for Oxford and Cambridge dissenters, r. *Oxford and Cambridge of the dissenters*.
p. 13. l. 5. *Consequence*.
p. 14. Note. for his sin towards the society, read, *his sin is towards the society*.
ib. l. 26. for friends to the personal distinctions of men, in opposition to the imaginary ones, read, *for friends to the real distinctions of men, in opposition to the personal ones*.
p. 16. for dignity of society, read *dignity of the society*.

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An History of the Instances of Exclusion from the Royal Society, which were not suffered to be argued in the Course of the late Debates ;.....With Strictures on the Formation of the Council, and other Instances of the Despotism of Sir J. Banks, the present President, and of his Incapacity for his high Office.

THOUGH we have certainly much reason to be satisfied with the success of publications, which, whatever the adversary, to hide his shame and mortification, may suggest, have hitherto remained without an answer, solely because the facts stated in them are unanswerable ; it is, notwithstanding, with a considerable degree of reluctance, that we again appear before the awful tribunal of the public. It is, indeed, no pleasing thing to be even the innocent causes of publishing the disgrace of a learned body ; nor do we feel complacency in giving way to a censure, some small part of which must light on those we admire and respect. Still, however, as there confessedly are circumstances which necessitate a departure from the general rules by which good men direct their conduct, we flatter ourselves that they apply to our case. Whether they do or not, will appear by the following short recapitulation of what has passed ; a fuller account of which may be met with in the pamphlets, entitled, A Narrative of the Debates and Dissentions in the Royal Society, and An Appeal to the Fellows of the Royal Society.

On the 11th and 18th of last December, we stood up in our places in the Society, to procure some kind of reparation, for what we shall always consider as a most *illiberal and unprecedented injustice*, done to a most respectable and worthy Member, our friend. Though we obtained what we then asked for, to wit, a vote of thanks, and a subsequent approbation of conduct ; the tone of authority assumed by the President, the very unfair manner in which he managed the debate, and the violent attempts he made to stop any discussion whatever, provoked one

of our Members, who had before that time no fixed design of a systematical opposition, to declare, that he had other charges to bring forward, which might possibly keep the Society in debate the whole winter. The President, instead of answering this as, if firm in innocence, he ought to have done, by quitting the chair, challenging his enemies to produce their charges against him, and calling upon the Society to hear them, deceived one of his friends so far as to make him come to the Society, and demand of it (after what had just passed!) not only a vote of general approbation, but an *unconditional* promise of support. What was natural, took place: The opposition, who, ignorant of what was to follow, had never thought the game could be so played into their hands, came forward with their charges, and set up, amongst the foremost, that of the interpositions at elections; but we were immediately stopped by a clamour more worthy of a Covent-Garden rabble, than the Fellows of a learned Society; and this clamour, or artifices similar to it, has been repeated, whenever we have endeavoured to gain a hearing to our just complaints. What, therefore, *could* not be done, when it ought to have been done, *must* be done now, when we should not have wished it to be done. The President has thrown the defensive part from himself upon us, and we are obliged to declare what we have to say, that we may no longer pass for factious and turbulent men. When this debt to ourselves is paid, then, if no farther outrages shall be committed, we both may and will sit quiet; for, though certainly our contempt for Sir Joseph Banks's puny pretensions to the Chair of the Society, ever most strong, has been greatly increased by his conduct throughout the whole of this affair; and though we firmly believe that he will only plunge the Society deeper and deeper into ridicule and disgrace, yet if numbers shall still continue to think otherwise, with numbers we do not mean to carry on an unavailing contest. We came forward on what *we* conceived to be the call of duty; we have not hastily given up a cause which *we* thought required only time, and the wearing off of first impressions, to be seen by others, in the same light in which we see it ourselves; but if we still shall find that nothing is to be done, we certainly feel too much what is due to ourselves, as well as to the Society, to disturb either by a fruitless pursuit.—Let the experiment be tried, it may not perhaps turn out so ill as our fears tell us that it will.

The mode of election of Fellows, which is prescribed by the statutes of the Royal Society, is the following: The candidate proposed has a certificate, attesting his qualifications, signed by three or more Members. The certificate, thus signed, is read at the public meeting of the Society. After having hung up dur-

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ing twelve meetings in the public room, the candidate is put to the ballot, and if he has two-thirds of the votes of the Members present, he is chosen; if not, he is rejected.

The charge we bring against Sir Joseph Banks, is, that, though not entrusted with any such power, either by statute or custom, and very unfit, from his acknowledged violence of temper, and from his incapacity to judge of literary qualifications, in which he is himself shamefully deficient, to be entrusted with it, he has repeatedly interposed, in a clandestine manner, to procure rejections of proper candidates *, with the visible design of taking away the privilege of the body at large, and making himself the sole master of the admissions, in other words, the *Monarch* of the Society.

Before we bring our proofs of the fact, we shall examine the justifications of it that have been offered; as, if these are really well-grounded, no doubt it will be unnecessary for the reader to give himself the trouble to proceed.

First then it has been said, that in influencing elections, the President had only exercised a right which every Fellow enjoyed in common with himself, but which it particularly *became* him to exercise, because from his situation he had greater opportunities of being acquainted with the characters of the candidates, than any other Fellow could have; but to this doctrine, did it apply to the complaints, as it will be presently seen it does not, we cannot accede for the following reasons.

In the first place, from what has just been stated of the mode of election, it must appear that there are very few cases indeed in which it can be supposed that a President, however omniscient by nature, or great in connection, can know more of the literary or moral character of a Candidate, than the 456 other Fellows, in whose room the certificate hangs up for 12 weeks, and about 200 of whom have opportunities of conversing together upon it. If after such opportunities, the Society is still liable to be imposed upon, it is much better it should be so, than that the negative should be put with so much danger into one hand. For when a private Fellow exercises his right of asking balls against an improper candidate, he exercises it *pro una vice*, probably, from the purest motives, and certainly with no danger to the freedom of the Society, whether he succeeds or miscarries; but it is not so with the President, for what must be the natural consequence of his repeatedly interesting himself in exclusions? Will it not soon be seen that his favour is the only

* By taking advantage of his situation on the very night of election to surprise such Fellows, as were ignorant of the case, to put in black-balls, or by frightening the Candidate, by the fear of his opposition, into taking down the certificate.

passport into the Society? Will it not soon be understood that as those who are excluded are excluded by him, so those who are suffered to come in come in through his connivance? And will not this create a counter obligation, and a dependance in every new Member, that must secure voices to the President on the 30th of November, and keep him perpetually in his seat, though ever so disagreeable in his administration? It would certainly be much better, supposing that those whom we believe to be the wisest, greatest, and best men amongst us, in other instances, are, indeed, grown so weak as to set their hands to certificates they are ashamed to support, and that, consequently, all the guards and checks to improper election, such as the declaration of *personal* knowledge, &c. &c. are no checks at all; it would, surely, be much more dignified, and much safer, rather than to suffer a President to run about the room on a night of election, out of breath, it may be, with anger and impatience, seducing the ignorant, awing the timid, and deceiving the wise, to have recourse to the old method, and give the President and Council the power of negating every Candidate proposed, before his certificate is hung up. In this case, at least, some sign of deliberation would be kept up, some previous discussion would take place, and the Candidates, instead of being sacrificed to the caprice of an individual, or the caprice of the junto of an individual, (for to that the power contended for leads) would depend upon men who come forward, and are answerable for their decisions. This previous ballot, was, however, in the year 1730, given up by the Council, it should seem upon the suggestions of the late Lord Hardwicke, who being consulted on a still farther extent of power intended, cautioned them, in the true spirit of a whig lawyer, to have a care how they encroached upon the chartered rights of the Society.* But if the power was taken away from 21 persons, surely it is not fitting that it should be trusted to one, and that one, perhaps, of all others, the most improper to have it. For the President, (we do not now speak of Sir Joseph Banks) is what is commonly called, in this country, a great man; he has those who flatter him, and he has those whom he flatters; he has purposes to serve, and prejudices to attend to; he lives also much with persons who know nothing of the Society, or its pursuits, or its regulations. Shall such a one then dictate to us whom we are to chuse? Shall it be to *him* that we resign the little power that is left? or what is worse, shall it be by him that we shall suffer ourselves to be tricked out of this power? Certainly not, if we are consistent philosophers, or consistent Englishmen, if we recollect that there can be no such thing as a *small* encroachment, and that what is not very right, and very fitting,

* See the Journals for 1730.

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sitting, is very wrong, and very unfitting, that it must have very bad consequences, as without doubt this must, if this presuming man be not now at least taught to know himself, and the respectable body he presides over. Besides, as has just been observed, the President is himself an elective annual officer, who is never to suppose he will be re-elected, and that alone militates against the idea of giving *him*, of all other possible Members, a power, that, in the end, secures his re-election.

But, 3dly, it is asserted, that other Presidents have exercised the *same* power, and that it has not been found fault with. This is absolutely denied. For if other Presidents—Presidents called for, not self-obtruded on the Society, who had sitten long in their chairs, and were surrounded by a set of Counsellors, who could bear witness to the temperance and propriety of their conduct—have sometimes fallen upon this method; they never pursued it to the extent of 12 Candidates in four years; nor did their exclusion fall upon such men as Sir Joseph Banks has excluded, nor was it capricious, nor (what is most important of all,) was it carried on in the under-hand clandestine manner, in which the late exclusions have been; on the contrary, the gentlemen who signed the certificate were applied to to take it down, the Candidate had it intimated to him, that upon great grounds, not for capricious reasons, it was probable he would be rejected; the matter was discussed at the Mitre Club: but in the present cases, as will now be seen, either these steps have not been taken at all, or they have been taken on occasions, of all others, the most improper.

Of Mr. Clarke of Manchester, the first unfortunate Candidate, so much has already been said by Dr. Horsley, that we shall only observe, that he is an *inventor* in mathematicks—that the certificate attesting his moral character, and the character he bears in his own country, was signed by the most respectable Fellows of the Society in his neighbourhood—that it was farther signed by the Astronomer Royal, Mr. Wales, and Dr. Hutton, three of the first mathematicians in our Society—and that, notwithstanding this, Sir Joseph Banks thought proper to go about the room on the night of election, when none of Mr. C's friends could suspect any danger, and ask votes against him. The excuse now given is, that Mr. Clarke is a school-master, and a low man; if by a low man is meant a man unfit, from his habits, to commune with philosophers, upon philosophical subjects, we say that Mr. Clarke's temper and manners make him a fitter man to commune with philosophers than Sir Joseph Banks himself. Any other acceptation of the word *low*, as well as the objection which arises from Mr. Clarke's being a school master, we leave to be estimated by Foreign Academicians, and the gentle-

gentlemen amongst ourselves, who have not forgotten Horace.

At pueri ludentes, Rex eris aiunt.
Si recte facies,

the only answer we conceive that it becomes literary men to give to such an accusation.

But if Mr. Clarke was a school-master, and, therefore, ineligible, what was Major Desbarres? The school-master of Captain Cooke; † whose friend, by the fatality which fights against men, who suffer their passions to play where their reason only should be heard, Sir Joseph Banks, contrived to disgrace nearly in the same hour that he was paying deserved honours to the Captain's memory. Major Desbarres bears a most unblemished private character; he received a regular mathematical education, under the two Bernouillis; the present First Lord of the Admiralty, bears witness to his abilities as a maritime surveyor, and a practical astronomer; and the Major speaks still more strongly for himself in his arduous, most difficult, most important, and most universally well spoken of work, entitled the *Atlantic Neptune*, for the use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain. Such a man, one would suppose;—a traveller too into distant and remote countries, where he might make useful discoveries, or send useful communications of Science,—would be one of the first persons the Royal Society would chuse to take into their body; it had been their policy always to do so, and the gentlemen who signed his certificate, Sir Herbert Mackworth, Major Grant, Mr. Jodderel, Dr. Fordyce, and Dr. Richardson, thought themselves so sure of their adhering to it, that they deemed it needless to attend. What was the consequence? Major Desbarres was black-balled. Let Sir Joseph Banks step forward, and say it was not by his whispers. We can, and are ready to prove, from very strong and very extraordinary evidence, that nothing but his whispers did produce it.

The next person black-balled was Mr. Meyrick the army agent, and his certificate was signed by Lord Loudoun, Sir William Musgrave, Sir James Napier, Mr. Peter Crawford, Colonel Duroure, Colonel Calderwood, Alexander Bennet, Esq. and Doctor William Pitcairne, and he was black-balled by the President asking votes in the room.*

With

† Captain Cooke received his first lessons of maritime surveying from Major Desbarres.

* In this case Mr. Maty was asked to black-ball, as Mr. Poore was in that of Mr. Clarke, but it is supposed this influence is not meant to be denied;

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With Mr. Meyrick's literary abilities we happen not to be particularly acquainted, (though we have heard good accounts of them,) and, therefore, shall say nothing of them; his moral character must, we presume, have been respectable, from the respectable signatures attesting it. If then there was no reason why Mr. Meyrick should be a Member of a Society, which neither does nor can profess to reward, but only to encourage and promote science, there was certainly no reason why he should not; or if there was, it becomes the President to shew, why he has encouraged so many other Candidates,—every titled man, foreigner or English, he could pick up, not at all more learned than Mr. Meyrick, if indeed he be not learned, which it is certain the President does not know—to offer themselves as Candidates to the Society; now this, it is asserted, the President cannot shew, and therefore, in this instance too, he has acted partially and capriciously by the Society, and, instead of approbation, merits great reprehension from us.

Come we now to Dr. Bates's certificate, which, it is presumed, will find us room for much speculation. Dr. Bates, it seems, is a physician at Buckingham, of whom Sir Richard Jebb is said to think so highly, that he recommends it to all his patients who happen to be within a day's journey of him, to think themselves as safe with the Doctor as they would be with himself. The Doctor came to us recommended by Lords Despencer and Hamden, by Dr. William Saunders and Mr. Richard Sharp, by Mr. Hemming, Mr. Whitehurst, and Mr. Felton, names, one should imagine, that would have merited some degree of attention, if any names could. But the President was then determined to have no *country physicians*.—No country physicians, Mr. President! the men, who, by their pursuits, the stability of their residence, and their wide excursions into distant and obscure parts of the country, are, without doubt, the most likely to be serviceable to us! Here would certainly be the place to ask, who made thee a lawgiver over us? and to explode that silly maxim that has long been creeping into the Society, that this or that body of men were too powerful, and ought to be kept down: but we will not interrupt our narrative. The President was determined to have no country physicians—and what way did he take to keep them out? Why, because Mr. Hemmings and Mr. Felton were not immediately convinced of the justice of this most sagacious determination, and the two *Assessors** (so the two Secretaries were for

denied; for if it is, no doubt, but General Melville, and 100 other Fellows, will start up and give their testimony.

* "You are hard run, Sir Joseph," said a Gentleman.—"How should it be otherwise, when my two *Assessors* are against me? Note, the *Assessors* had received no orders what to do, till they came into the room. Some persons

the first time denominated by the President) had had the indiscretion and temerity to engage their votes without going to head quarters for the word, he was obliged to run up and down the room, begging black-balls, a list of 36 of which he afterwards shewed Mr. Felton, as some consolation for the little mortification of having frightened him into taking down the certificate.

May we be allowed here to ask those respectable gentlemen, who, by the pains they have taken to keep this point from being discussed, seem to be so very well satisfied with resigning the right of private judgment, whether they have made up their minds about their names being written down, shewed about the room, and kept by the President? Would they be perfectly easy to meet Dr. Bates with the consciousness that he may perhaps know, that after having voted for ten ordinary Candidates before, and as many since, they have excluded him upon an *ipse dixit, ipse voluit, ipse cogitavit*, of Sir Joseph Banks?

But how long did this rage against country physicians last?— Was it *bellum internecinum*, as that denounced by our ancestors against the wolves, or is it made up? It lasted just three months; for three months after, Dr. Blackburn, a country physician, at Durham, was chosen.

And here let it not be contended, that the respectable attestations of Dr. Heberden, Dr. Turton, Dr. Simmonds, or Dr. Kaye, saved Dr. Blackburn. No, it was the consciousness that there had been a spirit roused, which would not have been laid, if another outrage of the same kind had been soon repeated. Had the signatures of Drs. Heberden, Turton, and Simmonds, saved Dr. Blackburn, the equally respectable signatures of Dr. Warren, Dr. Gisborne, and the two Jebbs, with the additional ones of Lord Hardwicke and Dr. Lort, would probably have saved Mr. Hallifax. Here, on the contrary, the President took a firm and decided part indeed, and, proud of the victory he had obtained, determined to drive over the necks of the slain, and terrify the unconquered into submission. The *two Assessors* had been in opposition, as has been seen, on a former occasion; here, as it happens, only *one* of them proved contumacious, Mr. Maty, who, allowing no man, and last of

persons indeed have thought, that this phrase might be used by the President in a very innocent sense, and that he meant no more by it than the Chancellor does, when he speaks of his Assessor, the Master of the Rolls: But why then use it all? why use the novel expression of *my Assessors*, instead of *the Secretaries* of the Society? The thing speaks for itself to any one who knows Sir Joseph Banks, and the idea he unhappily entertains of the imaginary distinctions of rank and fortune; but it would not have been insisted on, if it had not been to establish the truth of a story which will be told in the next page.

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all, Sir J. Banks to prescribe to him, had moreover, promised an old friend *, the most amiable man of his time, to vote for his friend, and likewise thought it became him to pay some deference to the signature of a nobleman who had been his father's friend and his own †. Hereupon, the following dialogue took place —“ Mr. Maty, do you know any reason why Mr. Hallifax should be a Fellow of this Society ?” —“ I know no reason, (not meaning that he did not, but intending a short answer) I know no reason, but that I have promised to vote for him.” —“ Very well, Sir, take notice, this is the second time you are in opposition to me.” —“ In opposition to you, Mr. President, I never understood, when I became a Secretary of this Society, that my vote was to follow yours” —“ Very well, now we understand one another; we never understood one another before; but it may come before the Council.” — Whether the President meant the Privy Council, or the Cabinet, or the Cabinet in Soho-square, or the Council of Ten at Venice, or whether he only meant to be very angry, is uncertain; but these words he assuredly did say †. Is the Society sensible of its danger now? Does it see that if the standing Secretaries are so treated, the Foreign Secretary will be so treated next? Then, those Members who wish to be in Council, then those who have Candidates to bring forward? Does the Society see this? Does it feel that an irresistible influence must thus be created, and that such an influence may hereafter, by an indiscreet man, (we will call him only *indiscreet*) be extended to the sending up addresses, whig or tory, no matter which; to transactions with Foreign Academies, &c. &c. Here, however, we are sensible, that it may perhaps be said to us, “ amiable and respectable as every body must allow “ Dr. Hallifax's character to be, and distinguished as he is “ as a classical scholar; do you really think yourselves, that an

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“ apothecary,

* Edward Chamberlayne, Esq. † Earl of Hardwicke.

‡ As the President did not recollect this conversation, at a very critical minute for himself, viz. when the opposition, (not so absurdly or inconsistently as has been supposed,) endeavoured to obtain a resolution from the Society, stating, that it would be highly indecent for a President to use his influence over any officer of the Society, to induce him to black-ball a Candidate, it is proper to establish the truth of it by the following considerations. Sir Joseph Banks does not deny that he applied the term *Assessors* to the two Secretaries, upon a former occasion. Why did he apply it at all? He confesses that he made some such observation as that Mr. Maty and he were always upon different sides: Why did he make such an observation? Was it delicate, was it just? Does he pretend he has a single claim, except his own idea that Mr. Maty was *his* Secretary and not his fellow-servant, to form a judgment which Mr. Maty does not possess, in an infinitely higher degree? As to the threat of bringing the matter before Council, Mr. Maty, who came, and told the story (uncontradicted) in his place the Thursday after the debate, allowed they were words spoken in a passion (just such words as the threats

of

“ apothecary, not eminent in any of the pursuits of the Society, “ is a proper Member ?” Our answer to that is, the President must certainly think so; for, with his own peculiar consistency, he encouraged and admitted Mr. Hurlock, apothecary, of St. Paul’s Church-yard, within the same year; but we do think, that if an apothecary is happy enough to get a sufficient number of friends to think so, he is as proper a Member as a vice-admiral of the Russian navy, or as a Knight of the Order of Januarius and Malta, or as an Alderman of London, (no disparagement to Mr. John Wilkes.) or as any other idle gentleman in our motley and variegated list; for whatever we ought to be, (which is another question,) we are not an Academy of Sciences, i. e. a receptacle for the Great in Science, but a Society of Gentlemen, of all ranks and professions, all opinions, and, we must add, all kinds of learning, (or no-learning) paying 52 s. a-year for the encouragement of literature. Though we ought, therefore, certainly to set ourselves some limits, as to our Members, they are limits which each of us ought to set himself, and not to allow to be set for him by any other man, who may remove them at his pleasure. And where, after all, will be the damage, if these limits are a little wide? A philosopher is admitted one Thursday, a classical scholar the next; The third, neither a classical scholar nor a philosopher; *Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim*; it is so, we know it, there is a liberty in introducing our friends, which we take and give, by turns: Philology does not lose much; good humour and friendship get a great deal; and, to cut the matter short, it has always been a custom and a privilege, which we do not see why the Society should give up, to a person so unqualified both by temper and abilities to direct their choice, as Sir Joseph Banks. That he is so unqualified, and that his causes of exclusion are the most frivolous, illiberal, and unfair, that can be, will again appear by considering the history of the next unfortunate Candidate, Dr. Enfield, tutor of the Academy at Warrington, of whose exaltation and humiliation, the following is the faithful history.

A set of gentlemen, Fellows of the Royal Society, and others, were dining together at Mr. Shore’s, in a large mixed company; Dr. Priestley, Mr. Butterworth Bailey, and Mr. Maty, were of the number: Says Dr. Priestley to Mr. Maty, “ Mr.

of turning him out of his place so often, and, till Mr. Maty, long tired out, thought proper to emancipate himself, so fruitlessly repeated.)— They were so; but what then? The President of the Royal Society should be like Sir Harry Sycamore in the play; he should not put himself in a passion; or when he finds a propensity to it rising, he should say his alphabet.—— The elected officers of *one of the* (not *the* most respectable, as Sir J. B. in his idle speech idly calls it) most respectable literary Societies in Europe, are not to be the victims of Sir Joseph Banks’s passions. Give us the man that is not passion’s slave!

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“ Bailey and I wish Dr. Enfield to be a Fellow of the Royal Society ; but the times are difficult—What say you to it ?—
 “ Why, really, Doctor, some very strange notions about elections have been propagated ; but as I cannot approve them, or think they apply to Dr. Enfield, I shall be very glad to shew my dislike to them, by supporting him firmly. It will be objected, that he is a school-master ; but as that very illiberal and partial argument can originate only from some person notorious for stupidity at school (as none speak ill of universities but those who were pointed at there for insufficiency) and would never, I am persuaded, be urged against such school-masters as the masters of Westminster or Eton, I think, for the honour of the Society as philosophers, and, as such, defenders of the freedom of religious opinion, it ought not to be suffered to weigh against one who is at the head of the Westminster and Eton, or rather the Oxford and Cambridge, Dissenters : With respect to Dr. Enfield's (the Doctor is certainly an ingenious ethic writer, and a man of high character in his profession,) not having distinguished himself in the pursuits of the Society, he stands exactly on the same footing as several other Doctors of Divinity, whom we both know, but will not mention. However, after all I have said, I know that the things I have mentioned will be urged, and therefore, as it does not become me, nor would I, in my situation, stand forth in a fruitless opposition, I desire you to consider the matter, to weigh it well before-hand ; and, if Dr. Enfield will stand, I am persuaded we must get the better of the President ; but, above all things, do not suffer the certificate to be taken down.”

The substance of this conversation was repeated in a letter to Dr. Priestley ; Dr. Priestley acceded on the part of his friend, Dr. Enfield : The Doctor's name was hung up, and, to the inexpressible surprise of Mr. Maty, who certainly did mean, if other preservatives had failed, to have run up one side of the room, whilst the President was running down the other, the certificate was taken down. This certificate was signed Houghton, Kippis, Priestley, Stewart, Whitehurst, Butterworth Bailey, Percival, Holles !

The history of the taking down *seems* to be this. The President signified to Mr. Wedgewood, that his friend Dr. Enfield must transmit a paper, and that, if he did not, he should be rejected. But what business had the President to make any stipulation of this kind ? Did he make it with 50 other persons, whose election he has not only connived at, but supported ? All that the opposition has ever called for has been equal justice ; they desire to have *one* weight and *one* measure ; they do not see any good end that can be answered by the violation of all the de-

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encies and customs formerly observed by the Society: especially as one injustice connived at, or not punished, almost always leads to a greater. Dr. Beerenbrock, a physician, the next unfortunate Candidate, a gentleman very well respected in his profession, and who had published some medical treatises and observations, *did* send in a paper, (which, by the bye, the Secretary, the proper officer to receive papers, never saw) but he had it returned to him within three days of the election, together with this civil message, "that he was still in time to take down his "certificate." The Doctor had too high a spirit to submit to this, and he was black-balled, as is well known, by Sir Joseph Banks's contrivance. In this instance, not only the most respectable domestick Members, but almost all the foreign ones of any note were insulted: for the signatures to this certificate, were, Pringle, Baker, Saunders, Gisborne, Wright, Simmons, J. Jebb, Beljoioso, Cigna, Allioneus, Ingenhouz, Pallas, Rogerfon, Cullen, Garthshore, Beccaria, and Frisi. That the new President's feelings should not have taught him what was due from a man in his situation, to the respectable signature in the front of this list, is not surprizing to those who know how Sir Joseph Banks speaks of Sir John Pringle, and how infinitely inferior a President to himself, he affects in almost every council to think him; but that he should have set his puny self against such a host of such men is astonishing, unless he had determined, to shew the Society once for all, that names should avail nothing, unless the name of the Candidate was found in the private registers of Soho Square.

Finally, that the Society might be taught to bear all that it could bear, on the 2d of May 1782, Dr. Blane was black-balled, although he had sent in a paper, and although his certificate was signed Lind, Garthshore, Kippis, Solander, and John Hunter.

One observation now presents itself, which is of too great magnitude and importance to be passed over. Notwithstanding the clamour of the 8th of January, which made it impossible to lay before the Society the matter that has been now stated, the division on the previous question, for thinking the vote of approbation was ill timed and premature, (i. e. for not approving the President's conduct,) was 59 to 106; but as it appears Dr. Saunders, Mr. Felton, Dr. Turton, Dr. Heberden, Dr. Simmonds, Dr. Warren, Dr. Lort, Sir Richard Jebb, Sir George Baker, Dr. Wright, Dr. Garthshore, Mr. John Hunter, Dr. Lind, Sir William Mufgrave, Sir James Napier, Dr. William Pitcairne, Colonel Calderwood, (gentlemen who voted with the President on that occasion,) had been insulted by the contempt paid to their signatures; if, therefore, these facts had come out when they should have done, these gentlemen, however well disposed, could not have voted approbation; but take their names from the 106, and add them

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them to the 59, and the numbers will be 89 to 76; * a majority it is presumed too small to have produced any but an ignominious success on the main question, on which if the division had been a small one, Sir Joseph Banks would have been obliged to resign, in consequence of his own declaration, for want of that decided majority, without which he declared he would not go on. It was, therefore, a step of high, though dangerous, policy, to prevent, by any means, this matter from being gone into; but the more politic it was, the more the whole transaction now calls for the resentment of the Society, which, at the same time, must acknowledge that the warmth of opposition has been no greater than might well be expected, from persons so treated as we have been under such circumstances. We were warm in the beginning, because we found ourselves unfairly opposed, when we were conscious we were in the right; and because we were still more unfairly opposed, we have grown still warmer. Surely there is nothing in this extraordinary, or that should make our case unfavourably thought of, any more than the small minorities in which we have been found since the 8th of January. Whoever knows the nature of mankind will easily account for those minorities, as whoever knows us will easily believe our positive assertion of having disdained to make them greater by other methods than by fair argument. Had we thought it fit, and decent to make this a personal business, it will be confessed our names are not so inconsiderable, nor our personal friends so few, but we must have carried some more votes, and have neutralized many, but we disdained to adopt any such artifices, and never went farther (the proofs exist) than to desire a few friends to literary liberty to be present and hear. We trusted to the force of truth upon liberal minds, we trust to it still, and doubt not but it must be victorious. For, as to the President's last refuge, and the only cover his friends ever attempted to make him fly to, that the attack upon his interference in elections, is an unfair one, because it makes his defence personally dangerous, * who that is used to reason but sees that it proves too much? Once allow that any public officer is not to answer a charge of injustice and illiberality, in the proper tribunal, because the consequence of his own action may bring himself into danger, you allow all that faint-hearted fraudulent tyranny ever can contend for; whereas the true reasoning is, that, whoever undertakes to exclude a man from any club or society, on the score of character, of course, does it at his own risk; he trusts his secret to ears which he has a right to depend upon, (when he has such a right) and must

* Add the names of the insulted absentees who would have been asked to come if the bold stroke had been apprehended, and the numbers must have been still nearer to an equality.

* See Mr. Anguish's speech,

take the consequences,* if either thofe ears have chinks in them, or he has choien ears which were not *affected* to hear him. At all events, that this is a general defence, ill applied in this particular instance, any one will fee who once more reads the respectable names of Mr. Clarke, Major Desbarres, Mr. Meyrick, Dr. Bates, Mr. Hallifax, Dr. Enfield, Dr. Berenbroock, and Dr. Blanc.

If any thing farther could be wanting, after what has been said, to induce the Society, now at length, fince it has not done it before, to interpose, it would be the following very strong considerations: to wit, That from the nature of our elections, two remedies remain in the breast of the opposition, which may be tried, and, probably, with success, if all the rest fail. The one is for the members of it to form into a firm and steady phalanx, to shut the doors of the Society entirely, and oppose all admissions whatsoever, till there is full assurance given that the outrages now complained of shall never be repeated. As the law, which places the power of rejection in the hands of one third only of the company present, affords great facility for doing this, so it is more than probable, that many, even of the members who have lately voted with the President, would see, with pleasure, any attempt to restrain that deluge of ignorance, and idleness, which, in the course of the present Presidency, has flowed down upon us from the upper parts of the town. Nor, indeed, would it be an improper step if the friends to the personal distinctions of men, in opposition to the imaginary ones, were to seize the present occasion of holding out, that they will no longer chuse any Peers or Privy Counsellors of the three kingdoms, who are spiritless enough to suffer their friends to *smuggle* them into the Society by surprize, under the cover of the statute, which *allows* but does not (as, perhaps, is commonly thought it does,) *compel* them to be put to the ballot on the night they are first proposed; thus precluding the usual previous enquiry into their characters and literary qualifications. This statute, which is a disgrace to the framers of it, might, perhaps, be less obnoxious at a time when Peers and Privy Counsellors were fewer, and when the *real* claims of high birth were less understood; but now that mistakes in these matters are no longer (publicly at least) made with impunity, it is proper that the only literary body in Europe, which knows any thing of the kind, should throw down this monument of the adulation and servility of its first Founders. And it will easily be thrown down, without giving the council the trouble of repealing the statute, (which, however, it should be recommended to it to do,) if a few members will give in

* Which in this case cannot be bad, for we do not assert that Sir J. B. has excluded any man on the score of moral character, and any other causes of exclusion, he was certainly, *quoad*, the candidate, at full liberty to urge, his sin as towards the Society.

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their names, and unite to consider, as unworthy, all such persons as shall still think proper to insult all the commons, as well as all the learned men of this country, by claiming, on the score of birth only, what any man must confess to be the sole due, if not of literary merit, yet of other qualities with which birth or station have nothing to do. To such an association, therefore, i. e. to the rejection of every Candidate, except persons of the Royal Family, whose certificate does not hang up twelve nights, the Fellows of the Royal Society are here most earnestly invited.

Another remedy of a quite different kind, (and which we only mention to shew the danger of not checking Sir Joseph Banks's usurpation, as we should be sorry to see Candidates have recourse to it,) is the following:—Let every Candidate, who wishes to be a Member, make a regular canvass of the Society, as one gentleman did; his admission will then depend upon personal civility, upon common good nature, against which it is folly to suppose Sir Joseph, who has himself stretched that string so far on a late occasion, could either contend or weigh. Had he, indeed, appeared to have had a proper sense of the dignity of the Society; had he uniformly rejected improper Candidates; had he not shewn so shameful a partiality to high birth and situation, as, amidst all his professions of attachment to the minutæ of order, to suffer, only five weeks ago, the Earl of Salisbury and Sir William Younge, to sit in the room whilst their election was going forward, thus precluding all possible enquiry into their literary qualifications: if it did not appear from what has been stated, that he had yielded to favour at one time, and followed private resentment or caprice, at another; he might have expected that the independant Members would have joined him in preventing so improper a mode of getting into the Society; but till he abjures, in a public manner abjures, (the only security he can give *us*) any interference as President, direct or indirect; till he gives unequivocal signs of repentance, by supporting, with all his strength, the eight Candidates he has used his strength to overthrow, it is folly to suppose, that any gentleman of the Society will any longer suffer himself, or his friend, to be laughed at and duped by Sir Joseph Banks: that *he* will not, on the contrary, avail *himself* of the facility the intercourse of this great town affords to those who know how to canvass, to bring about, what the President brings about by surprize and a secret junto. We repeat it, that we do not mean absolutely to recommend such measures, but only mention them to shew what the President's conduct unavoidably must end in.

But perhaps, after all, we may be reminded, that we speak only of the certificates which Sir Joseph Banks ought not to have rejected, but omit to mention some in which his interference

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ference has done good. To this we briefly answer, that the good done even in those cases, the merit of which we know very well, is extremely dubious, that it remains to be proved, that the effect Sir Joseph Banks's influence produced, would not have been produced in a natural way; and that, if ever so much good had been produced, we do not think, the whole case being stated, and the considerations prefixed to this article having been taken in, that the good at all balances the evil. It is true, Sir Joseph had a certificate withdrawn, the owner of which soon after advertised a *patent for water-closets*—(water-closets, by the bye, are parts of mechanics, and very necessary parts too, even to philosophers); but he did not get Dr. Price, the *gold-finder's*, certificate withdrawn; and if he had, still we must ever think, the depriving the Society of Major Desbarres, and Mr. Clark of Manchester; the contempt thrown upon the statutable mode of election, prescribed by our ancestors, the insult offered to upwards of fifty respectable men, who, as we said above, the President well knew could not have voted approbation, if this matter had been brought forward when it should have been, and, above all, the violences, and disingenuous artifices, exercised in the above cases of Dr. Bates Mr. Hallifax, and Mr. Desbarres,* are more than a balance to any accidental good that might arise from such unconstitutional interference.

HITHERTO we have confined ourselves to matters which, tho' dangerous to the safety, only affected the dignity of Society in *this* country; but we come now to the consideration of a business, which tends to lessen, degrade, and ruin us, in the sight of the whole European world of letters—We mean, the formation of every Council since Sir Joseph's presidency, but particularly, of the last Council. The Council of the Royal Society is, at the same time, as is well known, its Committee of papers, that part of the body who is to decide upon the merit of discoveries, either foreign or domestic, and to hold the equal balance between its own laborious Members. The nomination of this body is in the Society at large, who, however, in a very evil hour, of later years, have in fact left it to their President, evidently under an implied, though not expressed, covenant, that he would take care that there should always be in it a proper number of men of science in each branch, fit to do the work for which they are deputed. With this security, we rise from our beds on the foggy 30th of November, come and make our bows to the Chair, and throw our lifts into the balotting boxes without ever looking at them. But what lifts have we put into the

* By giving out that he was the writer of periodical publications.

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* Sir W. H.
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boxes this year! *Aruspex aruspicem*; Let the Committee of Papers consider their own assembly, when they meet next to deliberate upon the papers before them, and then let them estimate what degree of gratitude they, or the Society, owe to the President, for bringing them into this situation. And here let not malignity exult, as though in our zeal we cared not on what subjects we touched, or how many respectable characters we attacked; the gentlemen are public men, and too well acquainted with the condition of such men in this country to be offended at a discussion of their public characters, when any part of the public interest is at stake; but besides, unqualified though we must maintain them to be, when thus joined together in one body, it follows not that we cannot allow great and distinguished merit to many, indeed to all the individuals. We know, and repeat it with as much pleasure as the reader reads it, that one honourable member, dear to the Society, as well for his amiable qualities, as for his History of Vesuvius, is well qualified to decide in several branches of Natural History*; we are sensible, that fame of a more than ordinary proficiency in the particular studies of the Society has followed an amiable young nobleman † from the place where Newton began his illustrious career ‡, to that where he concluded it; we gladly confess that another learned member || brings us all that fund of honesty, all that attachment to the business he undertakes, all that ardour for useful knowledge, and that proficiency in it, which render him the boast of every learned as well as every humane society he belongs to in this country, and he belongs to many; in a word, we know that, in his single capacity, much good of every man is to be spoken, and that no evil is to be spoken of any; that all are wise and learned, and most honourable on all accounts—honourable indeed, they have shewn themselves, even amidst all those little irregularities to which the defence of a first opinion, too eagerly taken up, has carried them—but still what is this to professional skill? to that accuracy of science which arises from having been employed only about one object? to that acquaintance, in short, with the *minutiæ*, and if we may so call them, the finesses of those dry studies which mostly occupy us in the times of our meeting, and without which no man is fit to judge of philosophical inventions? Where in a word are the mechanics? Where are the professed chemists? Where are the mathematicians? Where are the practical astronomers?—What not a single one of either? What not a practical astronomer in the council of the Royal Society of London, instituted for the promotion of natural knowledge, at a time when the Heavens, almost shut up since the days of the immortal Newton, seem to be again opened by Mr.

* Sir W. Hamilton. † Lord Spencer. ‡ *Pruned his infant wing*, as a great writer calls it. || Isaac Hawkins Brown, Esq.

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Herschel to the curiosity of mankind? Is it possible! and do we affect (for affect it we must) to be seriously uneasy, because we suspect that some foreigners may not have had answers in form to their letters of form, while this is our shame and this our disgrace? And let it not be said that this evil, great as it is, may be remedied, and that the council have the power of calling into their committee any member to assist them; we know that they have this power, and we know that they must use it this year; but what is this irregular, temporary, and partial mode of proceeding to the regular nomination of a standing body known, and, in some degree at least, responsible for its proceedings? Such a body we expected and had a right to expect, from our president; we trusted him to procure it us; he has abused that trust, and is answerable not only to us, but to all Europe for the abuse.

He is so much the more answerable, because it will immediately be made appear that the distress arose not from accident. The astronomer royal was dismissed suddenly from the council; why he was dismissed, makes no part of the present enquiry; the president, indeed, told General Rainsford, in the presence of three or four gentlemen, on the 30th of November, that it was to hasten the publication of the Greenwich Observations; it might be so; if it was, never was vigorous measure of government attended with more complete success; for the observations were ready for press within the month, as, indeed, (which certainly the good president did not recollect) the astronomer had promised that they should:— But, once more, be this as it may, the astronomer-royal was dismissed; he might very constitutionally be dismissed, perhaps there may be some propriety in his being sometimes left out of our council, as we are visitors of the Royal Observatory; but when he had been dismissed, why was not another astronomer put in his place? What had Mr. Wales done, or Mr. Wollaston, or Sir G. Shuckburg, or Sir H. Englefield, or Mr. Herschel himself? In other sciences, what has Mr. Smeaton done (he comes to town once a year)? What had Mr. Cavallo done? What had Dr. Horsley done? This last gentleman may, indeed, be supposed to have *disqualified* since, but at that time * . . . Not a chemist, not a mechanician, not a mathematician, not a practical astronomer in our councils! What then is to become of the papers, home papers we mean? (foreign papers we henceforward shall have none), and by whom are they to be tried? Formerly there was some kind of established order in the Society; the learned man gave his papers to the secretary, the secretary

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in due time produced them to a body of men that was known, and each of whom was responsible for the sentence he gave. The President now takes them, the President changes the order of reading them (not in particular cases, as alone he is permitted by exception in the statutes, but every Thursday) the President may, if he pleases, hand them about to a junto (he must hand them about to somebody) for an opinion, who may, for aught he knows, be the enemies or the rivals of the writer, or whom, at least, he does not know that the writer would either choose for his judges, or like to communicate his paper to. Surely, whoever sees not in this, as well as in the imperial ludi-magisterial knock with the hammer, in the dictatorial rebuff, which Messrs. Bridgen and Brereton received in very early days, for speaking modestly about the alteration in the hour of meeting; in the affected introduction of great people into the Society; in distinctions of rank upon every occasion; in the nomination of Dr. Dryander to take the catalogue of the books, when there was a Librarian in the house, who having given security, might have refused a stranger admittance; and when, if there had been no librarian, a President, duly disdainful of jobs, might have proposed the business to some of the Fellows; whoever, in all this, as well as in the *then* avowed and *not yet* relinquished plan of last year, to ruin a whole family, by dismissing our Librarian and Clerk, unheard and unadmonished, for a few venial and many imaginary faults*, sees not a fixed and settled plan of despotism, not less violent in the means than trifling in the object, must have been born blind, or have made himself so.

Does there remain a doubt in the mind of any man? We will state one more anecdote. After all that has been now passing for nine months in the Society, it was not six weeks ago, that in the presence of ten of the most respectable members of the Council, the President told Mr. Maty, when he rose in his place as Counsellor, to give an opinion, which happened not to be exactly that of the President, that he was always in opposition to the President, and that it was sufficient that the President should propose a thing, for Mr. Maty to oppose it. Is it plain now of what malady the President is sick, and how incurable and inveterate the disorder is, since all the medicine given has had no effect?

* This matter went so far, that the several members of the Council were applied to in form to protect their Clerk, and that many of them, the Dean of Christ Church amongst others, Dr. Maskelyne, Mr. Harrison, and Dr. Hoare attended, or declared themselves ready to attend Council for that purpose: But the President relinquished his idea for that time, as the year before he had relinquished the idea of proposing another Secretary, in lieu of Mr. Maty, in whose possession *written* evidences of this last fact exist.

Does not it strike every man who reads, that Sir Joseph Banks cannot give up the idea of being the *Governor* and *Director* of a body, whose custom it never has been to choose a Governor or Director? But ought he, or ought he not, to give this idea up? Ye hitherto faithful supporters of authority, will ye publicly maintain, and can ye maintain, that the constitution of the Society will be preserved, if he keeps it? Will ye say, that by the constitution of the Society, by the Royal charters which define its constitution, the annual election of a council is meant to be a mere mockery of an election, and that the President of the Royal Society has greater powers than the Head of a House at Oxford or Cambridge? If ye cannot say this, and (if ye can, ye take very difficult ground indeed) be consistent, and have the spirit to do something effectual to prevent abuse. Either choose a new President on next St. Andrew's day, which we must think will be the best step you can pursue, or, if that be going farther than ye think for the good of the Society, unite in putting an effectual restraint upon the present one; give him *Ephri*; choose two or three, it matters not what two or three, but choose two or three professed members of the opposition into your councils. Do ye start? Be assured, that this is the only way ye can take, either of checking him or evincing your own fairness. As there can be no pretence whatever for the twenty members of a Council, deputed jointly to do the duty of the body, being all persons who think with the President upon all subjects, and as nothing can be so illiberal or so unworthy of ye as to suppose that the gentlemen who have opposed him now from public principle, will thwart and oppose him when he shall happen to be right, from motives of peevishness or revenge; so, depend upon it, you can only give the Society rest by this means; otherwise, think of what palliatives you may, introduce as many moderate men as you please, heap together as many learned ones as you can, things will soon return again to the same state in which they now are. The President is incurably sick with the lust of domination, he imagines himself born to rule (Good God! how little do men know themselves!); and cannot perceive that he has neither the intellectual nor the moral qualities of a ruler. Honesty he possesses—the honesty of a private man. Of the honesty of a governor, for which modern languages have no name, the Greeks called it *επιμετεια*, he is destitute.—His attachment to the interests of the Society may be warm and sincere; but while his understanding of its interests is defective, the mischief which is daily done by his mismanagement must be increased proportionably to his zeal for your service. Put, therefore, about this well-intentioned and ill-advised President, those who professedly disallow his omniscience and divine right to govern wrong, those who have different views for the Society from his, those who will not be held in from speaking by

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false timidity or partial regards. This may preserve peace, by preventing the commission of fresh outrages, but nothing else can. If this, or something of the kind be not soon done, you are to expect the erection of a new Society, a real Academy of Sciences, in the country. This will be weak at first, perhaps, and for some years the object of your mirth and derision; but, as it will be founded upon the true principles now acknowledged all over Europe, and conducted by men who know what is required to make such an undertaking prosper, it will emerge within a short time, pass you a short time after, and, at length, leave you the mortification of being only the second scientific body in the kingdom. It behoves, therefore, those who seriously wish well to the Society, first to tear from their President the usurped and so-much-abused power of making the house list, and then to consider very seriously how they shall form it themselves.

Not to take up the time of the public in vain, we would willingly pass by the other charges, which are of a more trifling nature, though by no means of so trifling a nature as may be conceived. There is one, however, that must be taken some notice of, because the arrow has been picked up by the enemy, and may, it is suspected, be thrown back again, dipped in a little venom. Amongst the complaints which Dr. Horsley on the second night of debate, said he would bring forward, there was one which respected the improvident squandering of the public money; in this it has been supposed, that the Doctor meant to point at a silly aristocratic innovation intended by the introduction of very sumptuous and expensive chairs into the Society's rooms, for the reception of great personages. It is admitted that this was one, though not the only object the Doctor had in view. Now, in answer to this complaint, it has been alleged by the other side, that the purchase of these chairs was not a proposition which came from the President, but from one of the Vice Presidents; and that it was first suggested by an idea that the Patron and our gracious Queen should have Royal chairs to repose in when they honoured their own apartments in Somerset House with their presence. Of any intended disrespect to those Royal personages, the present opposition can certainly not be suspected, nor will it be credited of them when it is known, as it is pretty well known, who they are. But the chairs or thrones, we aver, had certainly retrospective, as well as prospective views; and these, it is contended, were strongly supported by the President, and do interest the body at large.— They were certainly intended to be the distinguishing seats of such Royal personages as the Margrave of Anspach, when they do the Society the honour to visit them; not to see the House, but at their ordinary meetings. Now, against this, it is apprehended, the objections are by no means so absurd and frivolous

volous as the public may have been taught to think, and may, for aught we know, invidiously be suggested in *another place*. As to the intention of levelling principalities and powers, of which some of us are so ridiculously and senselessly accused on this occasion; nothing of that tendency can be attributed to our measures: For whatever may be this man's or that man's opinion of the utility of honorary distinctions, and the respect due to them (and where shall opinions of that kind be free, if not among the members of a Philosophical Assembly?) it is, we think, pretty well agreed on, that every man leaves his rank at the door of the Royal Society, except with regard to the bare object of civility, just as every man leaves his sword at the door of some other peaceable assemblies. The question, therefore, is not whether any Margrave, or Bargrave, or Palsgrave, is great enough to have particular respect shewn him; but whether it is more manly for him to be contented with the attention that was shewn to Peter the Great the great civilizer of Russia, to the present King of Denmark, the present King of Poland, &c. when they visited the society, than to have innovations made on his account. Now it is apprehended there are some very good reasons why he should be contented with these civilities. In the first place, if he is a man of sense, or has had a tolerable good tutor, he will be taught, what we conceive to be very good morality, even that of king Solomon, and no levelling doctrine at all, that it becomes crowned heads to bow to science, and not science to bow to crowned heads. Secondly, he will see, that though he sits in ever so fine a chair, he will still be but the second man in the room, for the President must sit above him, covered too, whilst he sits uncovered, unless it is indeed *appointed, constituted, and ordained* otherwise by a new statute*.

* Since this article has been drawn up, Mr. Maty has written to Paris, to know what the custom of the academies there may be, with regard to the distinctions paid to great personages. The following is the answer he received.

“L'Académie Françoise, mon cher confrère va recevoir à la descente du carrosse les Souverains étrangers qui lui font l'honneur de la visiter et leur offre le fauteuil du Directeur. L'Empereur l'a refusé absolument, comme nous avons vu à l'académie des Belles Lettres le Grand Duc & la Grande Duchesse de Russie refuser absolument les fauteuils qui *les auroient distingués* et vouloir être assis sur nos chaises. A l'Académie Françoise ainsi qu'à l'académie des Belles-Lettres les personnes de la suite occupent les sièges placés derrière les fauteuils des academiciens, ou chez nous derrière les sièges des officiers.”

No doubt the Kings of Bolabola and O-whi-hee are the only monarchs in the world who would dream of introducing the “ceremonies that to great ones ‘long,’” into a literary assembly. Not again that we lay great stress on such matters, one way or other; but they serve to shew the spirit by which the President is governed, and the splendid improvements he is likely to introduce.

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But, besides these considerations, which are to the President and his *Assessors*, there is one which immediately concerns the Society, and that is, that if the *ducal chairs* are once to be bestowed, we shall be involved in endless *unprofitable* debates, about recommending to Council, on whom they shall be bestowed. The republican, when he hears they are to be given to Sovereign authority, will ask them for the senators of Lucca and San Marino; or if he is not a very learned republican, for the senator of Rome; somebody else will think that Meer Catibaw, a Cherokee King, or the well-educated Omiah, now perhaps a powerful Chief, in his own country, ought to have them; and a third party will be of opinion, that General Paoli, sometime Protector, tho' never King of Corsica, and certainly not the worse for having been unfortunate, ought to have them perpetually. Thus the Geographer and Heralds of the Society, will be constantly at work about the *jus gentium*, and Somerset Place continue in as great a ferment as the diet of Ratisbon, 'till it is determined who are sovereign princes and who are not. But this must not be: *traditum ab antiquis morem servare memento*, which being translated means, no chair but the President's and the two Secretaries ever ought to come into the meeting room of the Royal Society. It is the same spirit of adulation to great personages, which has dictated the new alterations in the lists, in which, amidst the truly courtly care to secure protection, support, and forbearance for the Royal Society of London, by inserting the *additions* of every Commissioner of the Customs, and Member of Parliament, who has the honour to be of the body; we cannot but admire, that it has been thought improper to print any addition after the name of the surgeons. As to Mr. Nairne, the instrument-maker, though foreign academies may think the admission of an eminent man in his profession, does us as much honour as any admission on the list, we can account for his profession not being marked. The President, (preluding, as it should seem, to his future greatness) endeavoured formerly to exclude him, as well as several other learned members, from the Society. Another proof, if any was wanting, that the gentleman now in the chair, however qualified, or whatever his merits of another kind may be, has not the ideas proper for a President of the Royal Society, and that he never will have them.

Two words more, and we have done.—Much has been said of the President's attachment to the interests of the Royal Society, as far as his abilities will allow him to see them (nobody has spoken of him as a lynx) and of his nice attention to the management of our finances. Neither of these qualifications we mean absolutely to deny him; for, though the two worst papers in the *Transactions* of the four last years—papers

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very expensive in the publication, and certainly no ornament to the volume—were written by the President's friends, and have been published solely out of compliment to him; and though the sending Mr. Nairne, who had taken a decided part in the controversy about conductors, at all to Heckingham was an *imprudent*, and the sending him as *second* to Dr. Blagden, was an *improper* step, we are willing to attribute them both to those little partialities inseparable, perhaps, from the condition of human nature, and which we should even disdain to remark in one who did not plume himself so much on disdaining jobs. We allow then that our finances have been well managed (not better managed than they were by Sir John Pringle) we grant our President the praise of being attentive in his attendance and solicitous to do us good (not more attentive, nor more solicitous than Sir J. Pringle was)—But what then? We have not written thus far to dissemble what we think. Sir Jos. Banks *might* make a very good Clerk, a very good Attorney, or even a very good Treasurer to the Society; but the man who is to fill the place of President, should be something more. As to the procuring more papers, better papers than other Presidents have done, though possibly some slight praise is to be bestowed upon the hospitality that has aimed at this (God forbid that we should seriously detract from this hospitality any more than from the *love* of science, or any other praise-worthy quality the President may possess); nobody will tell us that it is owing solely to this hospitality. Surely the papers of Mess. Cavendish, Kirwan, and Herschell; of Dr. Maskelyne, Dr. Hutton, and Mr. Wales; of Mr. Vince, Dr. Waring, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Maseres; (and take these away, what so great remains?) would have been produced, though there had been no breakfasts in Soho Square, and though it had not been known that Sir Joseph Banks wished the Society should have many papers. And *who knows*, after all, (we speak upon more than conjecture) how many papers have been stifled, and how many *subjects* of science have been discouraged, by the same caprice and love of dominion, which has dictated so many other innovations. One thing *we* know, that to affect a high contempt for some very good foreign papers (visible in the cases of Abbé Fontana and Dr. Ingenhouz) and to make himself the tribunal by which all papers are to be judged, before they are offered to the tribunal of the Society, is not the way, cannot be the way, to procure many papers. But once more, it is for higher objects we contend, and of delinquency in higher objects we accuse. The Royal Society *was* a *Society*; we do not wish to see it a *monarchy*; it *did* conduct itself according to the rules of justice and equity; we desire it may not violate those rules; its principles *were*, that the first distinction of men is virtue, and the second learning; we cannot bear that

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birth should take rank with either of these. Now, the President does think that it ought, and *therefore* it is proper to look out for one, who, with Sir Joseph Banks's merits, be those merits what they may, does not think so. No Fellow of the Society will insult the Society or himself so much, as to suppose for an instant, that such a President is not to be found, if we seriously seek for him. Perhaps, indeed, it would become such an one, *to offer himself to rescue us* : perhaps it would ultimately redound to his lasting honour, notwithstanding the clamour the *polished* part of the town might perhaps at first raise against him, if he did offer ; but if he does not, let once a hundred of us associate, and offer ourselves to be rescued, and no doubt twenty persons, will be glad to accept the honourable office.

To conclude, some gentlemen, for whose opinions we have real and great deference, seem to think, that, whatever side may be in the right, the dignity of the Society is committed by publications of the nature of the present. That the dignity of a body consisting of five hundred members, and dependant for its real dignity on the merit of its annual publication, and on that alone, should be committed by any thing which a few individuals, themselves responsible for what they publish, can write, is a doctrine in our eyes unphilosophical, and not to be maintained. However high some privileged beings amongst us may soar, or think they soar, Charles the Second gave no charter to exempt us all from the common frailties of humanity, nor does philosophy herself (one arrogant and impious philosophy alone excepted) affect to set her votaries so far above the ordinary condition of mankind, as to keep them ever exempt from the common feelings and common resentment of the species. But if it were so, the wrong rests not with us, who have only come forward to heal, or, if not to heal, at least to prevent the enlarging of wounds, which would, alas ! receive no gentler medicine. If *indeed* the dignity of the Society has been committed, and if our learned brethren of Europe, have *indeed* reason to lament, that we stand no longer on that high eminence where they loved to see us ; it was then committed, when, for the first time, and with a fatal example to literature, an example that has been but too much followed, we suffered our chair, which ever before had been offered to unassuming modesty, to be claimed and publicly canvassed for through this great town ; it was committed when we received into that chair, the chair of Newton, a gentleman who had not published a single line in our Transactions, nor given any sign of literary merit, but what might have been given by one of the humblest of the votaries of the humblest of the sciences ; it was committed when

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we sent forth to Europe, at the head of our learned volume, a speech of that gentleman, deficient in English, deficient in grammar, deficient in idea, full of fulsome and undignified adulation of ourselves, mean and inadequate in expressions of respect and gratitude, where the highest respect and gratitude is due. The dignity of the Society was committed, when we sat patiently by, and saw that gentleman encouraging the very disorders he was elected to restrain. At one time voting in his own cause; at another, affecting not to count the balls in a question which was going against him*; a third, taking the sense of the body, in direct opposition to a positive statute, by

* On a question moved by Sir Henry Englefield, without the knowledge of any professed member of the opposition, to insert in imitation of other academics, in the volumes of the Transactions, the names of the persons who gained the Society's medal. Whether Sir Henry thought that abuses had existed, which would by this means be corrected, and that L'Abbé Fontana and Dr. Ingenhouz, (great despisers of imaginary distinctions and literary charlatans,) had been particularly ill-used by not having it given to them, is more than can be said; but it is certain that Sir Joseph Banks was desired by one of his intimate friends, on the very morning the question was to be debated in the Society, to let the Council do what Sir Henry asked, and that he refused it.—He will tell the world, whether it was for the purpose of stopping useless and unprofitable debates, in which he has so admirably succeeded. On this occasion, however, the debate, profitable or unprofitable, went against him; for Sir Henry carried the question by a great majority, though Sir Joseph was then in the plenitude of his power; but, strange to tell! though the question was carried four months ago, the Council have as yet made no order in the business. Is this persevering in the support of claims that cannot be supported, or is it not? Surely, a conciliating and moderate-minded man, would not only have *directly* seized this occasion of seeming to yield a little to the declared sense of the body; but he would have anticipated their desires, and been himself the mover to take a fresh opinion of Council concerning the right of nomination to the place of Foreign Secretary, which he could not but be sensible was not only a point very likely to be disputed, but a very disputable point. Yet Sir Joseph will be surprized, and inveigh against those who consume the time of the Society in frivolous and unprofitable debates, when at the very next meeting of the Society the Secretary receives, as he certainly will, a motion signed for the purpose of recommending to the next year's Council, immediately to take this opinion.—As to this whole quarrel with the Foreign Secretary, it appears so thoroughly ridiculous, that one would hardly think new circumstances could come out to make it more so; and yet, strange to tell! there are such. An iniquitous law was made, that Dr. Hutton should not reside at Woolwich, and lost his immediate successor resides near Chelsea: Dr. Hutton was held up as a negligent man, for not having answered an insignificant letter of Mr. Bonnet; and, for aught that appears upon our books, *where the President himself ordered that it should appear*, the Margrave of Anspach's letter, accompanying a most splendid present, has never been answered.—O consistent spirit of inconsistency, how harmonious are all thy blessed operations!

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tumultuous acclamation †; clinging, in short, like a polypus,
to every one of his usurpations; and never (which has driven
us to this harsh necessity) never at any one period of the long
nine months the contest has now lasted, acknowledged, wledging that he
might be mistaken, promising that he would amend; or even
soliciting a friendly conference of the two parties, authorita-
tively to settle what might be amiss. Finally, our dignity has
been essentially committed, by some of us persisting, against
every admonition, and by every artifice persisting, to support
acts which it is one of the first and darling distinctions of
science to abhor and repress, acts of arrogance, acts of injus-
tice, acts of inhumanity. These are our real humiliations; these
are the true causes, that point the unblinded finger at us:
To aim at the cure of such evils, can less the dignity of no
man, or set of men.—On the contrary, it is to the honour of
our natures that we have felt, it will long continue our boast
and consolation that we have endeavoured to redress, them.

† When upon the "History of the Debates and Dissentions," being
presented to the Society, the President positively refused to put the question,
whether thanks should be returned for it or not, and even, when Mr.
Baron Maseres, declaring his disapprobation of the motion made by Dr.
Horsley, for those thanks (though he approved the contents of the *Authen-
tic Narrative* itself,) endeavoured to get rid of it by moving the previous
question, and was seconded in that motion by Dr. Maskelyne; the Presi-
dent refused likewise to put that question, though he was almost certain
that it would have been carried in his favour by a prodigious majority.
Can there be greater ignorance in a chair than not to know that
the *only* way to gather the sense of a body on a measure, is to put a
question; and can there be a greater proof of the madness of party,
than that grave and learned men should have betted this ignorance?

P. S. Since this sheet has been set to press, the following
paragraph has appeared in all the public papers.

"Yesterday, Major Desbarres kissed his Majesty's hand, on
being appointed Governor of Nova Scotia." This reward, we
hear, has been conferred on this able and spirited officer—for
great national services—in recompence of much time and much
money—for having saved, by his philosophical labours, many
of the King's ships, and the lives of many of our fellow sub-
jects. What will the *Royal Society* of London, instituted for
the promotion of natural knowledge, do now? will it choose
this rival of Cook, this successor of Halley, if he should
condescend to offer, or will it *sup-*ercede the chair, follow up the
blow, and because it has been in the chair, follow up the
be in the wrong for ever? The eyes of Europe are upon us,
and we are called upon to correct what we have done amiss.

