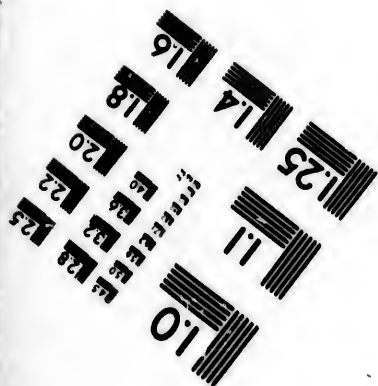
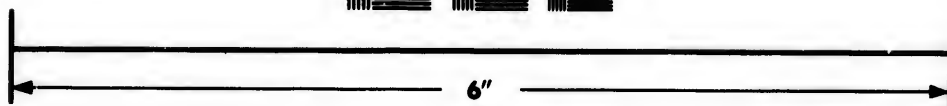


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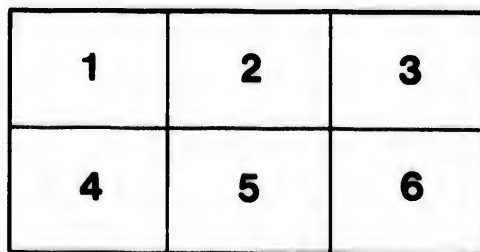
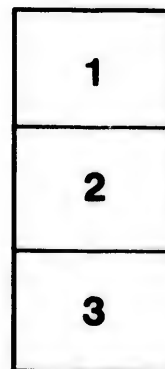
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THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS
OF
BRITAIN:

OR, AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF
ABUSES IN THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE,

IN
EUROPE, ASIA, AND AMERICA:

FROM THE REVOLUTION IN 1688, TO THE PRESENT TIME:

THE WHOLE TENDING TO PROVE THE RUINOUS CONSEQUENCES OF
THE POPULAR SYSTEM OF TAXATION, WAR, AND CONQUEST.

"The World's Mad Business."

PART FIRST.

Second Edition.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY WRIGHT & BERRIMAN, for W. YOUNG, Chestnut
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THE first edition of *The Political Progress of Britain*, was published at Edinburgh and London, in Autumn, 1792. The sale was lively, and the prospect of future success flattering. The plan was, to give an impartial history of the abuses in government, in a series of pamphlets. But, while the author was preparing the press, a second number, along with a new edition of the first, he was, on the 2d of January, 1793, apprehended, and with difficulty made his escape. Two booksellers, who acted as printers, were prosecuted, and after a very arbitrary trial, they were sentenced, the one to three months, and the other to six months imprisonment. A revolution will take place in Scotland before the end of ten years at farthest, and most likely much sooner. The nation will then certainly think itself bound by every tie of gratitude, and of justice, to make reparation to these men, for the tyranny which they have encountered in the execution of their duty. In Britain, authors of pamphlets have long considered themselves as the vanguard of every revolution. They compose a kind of forlorn hope, the skirmishers of battle; and though they may often want the influence to marshal the main body, they yet enjoy the honor of the danger of the first rank, in storming the ramparts of despotism.

The verdict of a packed jury, did not alter the opinions of those who had approved of the publication. Five times in original form, since its suppression, been offered in Edinburgh, Scotland. At London, a new edition was printed by Ridgeway and Symonds, two booksellers, confined in Newgate, for publishing political writings. They sell the pamphlet, and others of the same tendency, openly in prison. It is next to impossible, for despotism to overwhelm the divine art of printing.

A copy of the first edition was handed to Mr. Jefferson, American Secretary of State. He spoke of it, on different occasions, in respectful terms. He said, that it contained "the most astonishing concentration of abuses, that he had ever heard of in any government." Other gentlemen have delivered their opinions to the same effect; and their encouragement was one cause for the appearance of this American edition. In preparing it for the press, a multiplicity of new materials presented themselves to the recollection of the writer. Hence the Introduction has swelled to more than its former size. By indulging in the habit of enlarging, as he went on, the author has found it impossible to re-print the whole of the original pamphlet.

igned. When he came to examine his performance at the distance of two years, he saw many topics of importance that had but slightly touched; and whatever related to his native country, he was anxious to make as perfect as possible. Instead, therefore, of correcting an old work, he has in a great measure formed a new one; but to preserve the *unity* of composition, he has avoided the mention of facts, or any reference to publications, posterior to the date of the Introduction. A mixture of this kind would have confused his narrative. The reader is here presented with a kind of original ground plan, of those follies and crimes of government, which form the first foundation of a British, and in particular, of a Scots Revolution. This little volume, forms a general introduction to a perusal of those trials at Edinburgh, for sedition, that have been printed, and to those others for high treason, that will possibly be soon printed, in the United States.

The work was at first intended for that class of people, who had not much time to spend in reading, and who wanted a plain, but substantial meal of political information. The facts are therefore collected together as closely as possible. All the coquetry of authorship has been avoided. The ambition of the writer was to be candid, unaffected, and intelligible; because truth is the basis of sound argument, simplicity the soul of elegance, and perspicuity the true touch-stone of accurate composition.

A report was circulated and believed, in Scotland, that this production came, in reality, from the pen of one of the judges of the Court of Session. The charge was unjust. His lordship did not write a single page of it; but he said openly, that its contents were authentic, and unanswerable; and that the public were welcome to read it his.

For the extreme rashness of his original plan, the writer cannot offer an apology that prudence will accept. A short story may, perhaps, convey the motives of his conduct. In 1758, the duke of Marlborough, with eighteen thousand men, landed on the coast of France. The troops, when disembarking, were opposed by a French battery, which was immediately silenced, for it consisted of an old man, armed with two muskets. He was slightly wounded in the leg, and made prisoner. The English asked him what he expected, with two muskets, to silence the fire of their batteries? "Gentlemen," he replied, "I have only done my duty; and if all my countrymen here, had acted like me, you would not this day have landed at Cancalle."

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 14, 1794.

INTRODUCTION.

Of British wars since the Revolution—Immense slaughter—Expence of wars—Nootka Sound—Oczakow—Tippoo Saib—Amount of National debt—Enormous extent of its interest in the next century—Scandalous terms on which it was first contracted—Sketch of the civil list of William III.—Profligate expenditure of the court—Hints for royal economy—Queen Anne—A single fraud of thirty-five millions sterling—Lotteries—Earl of Chatham—Specimen of British taxes—Lord North—His extravagant premiums for money—Scheme of paying off public debt—Its futility—Uniform absurdity of modern British wars—Character and design of this work!

SINCE the year one thousand six hundred and eighty-eight, Britain has been once at war with Holland, five times at war with France, and six times at war with Spain. The expulsion, or flight of James the Second produced a bloody civil war both in Scotland and Ireland. Since that time, we have also been disturbed with two rebellions in Britain, besides an endless catalogue of massacres in Asia and America. In Europe, the price which we advance for a war hath successively extended from one hundred thousand lives, to thrice that number; and from thirty to an hundred and thirty-nine millions sterling. From Africa, we import annually between thirty and forty thousand slaves, which rises, in the course of a century, to at least three millions of murders. In Bengal only, we destroyed or expelled, within the short period of six years, five millions of industrious and innocent people*; we have been sovereigns of high rank in that country for about thirty-five years; and there is reason to compute that, since our elevation, we have strewed the plains of Hindostan, with thirty-six millions of carcases†. Combining the diversified ravages of famine, pestilence, and the sword, it may justly be supposed, that in these transactions, fifteen hundred thousand of our countrymen have perished; a number equal to that part of the whole inhabitants of Britain who are at present able to bear arms. The destruction of our French and Spanish antagonists, and of German, Sardinian, and Portuguese mercenaries purchased by Britain to fight against them, has amounted to at least a second fifteen hundred thousand lives. Hence it follows, that British quarrels have deprived this single quarter of the world of three millions of men in the flower of life, whose descendants, in the progress of domestic society, must have ex-

* Dow's History of Hindostan, quarto edition, vol. III. p. 70.

† *Ibid.* Chap. 34.

ed into multitudes beyond calculation. The persons destroyed have, in whole, certainly exceeded thirty millions, that is to say, three hundred thousand acts of homicide *per annum*. These victims have been sacrificed to the balance of power, and the balance of trade, the honour of the British flag, the rights of the British crown, the "*omnipotence of Parliament*," and the security of the Protestant succession. Proceeding at this rate for another century, we may, with that self-complacency, which is natural to mankind, admire ourselves, and our achievements; but every other nation in the world must be entitled to wish that an earthquake or a volcano should first bury the whole British islands together in the centre of the globe; that a single, but decisive exertion of almighty vengeance should terminate the progress and the remembrance of our crimes.

In the scale of just calculation, the most valuable commodity, next to human blood is money. Having made a gross estimate of the waste of the former, let us endeavour to compute the consumption of the latter. The expences of British wars, from the revolution to the end of the year 1789, has been stated by Sir John Sinclair† at three hundred and seventy-seven millions, twenty-nine thousand, five hundred and ninety-eight pounds sterling. Since the publication, a fleet has been armed against Spain, to enforce the privilege of killing whales at the south pole, and wild cats at a great distance. By the account of the minister himself, as laid before parliament, the affair cost us three millions, one hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds.‡ In point of economy, this project resembled the commencement of a law-suit in chancery, to recover half a crown. We have since quarrelled with Catharine of Russia, for a few acres in the deserts of Tartary; and the charges of this second armament must also have been very considerable. At present, we are tearing asunder the dominions of Tipoo Saib; and Mr. Fox, lately said in the house of commons, that this war goes on, at an expence to ourselves of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling per month, or about eight thousand guineas

* This modest phrase was current before the American revolution. It hath, since that time, been laid aside.

† History of the public revenue of the British empire, part III. chap. 2d. —

The particulars are as follows, viz.

Expences of war during the reign of William III.	£. 30,447,382
Queen Anne	43,360,083
George I	6,048,267
Expence of the war began anno 1739	46,412,689
Ditto of the war begun anno 1756	111,271,996
Ditto of the American war	139,171,876
Ditto of the armament respecting Holland, in 1787	311,385

Total £. 377,029,598

New Annual Register, for 1791. p. 141.

per day. Comprehending these fresh exploits, the amount of money debursed from the exchequer, on account of war since the revolution, must exceed three hundred and eighty millions sterling. We are also to subjoin the price of sixteen or twenty thousand merchant ships taken by the enemy. This diminutive article of sixty or an hundred millions sterling would have been sufficient for transporting and settling eight or twelve hundred thousand farmers, with their wives and children, on the banks of the Susquehannah or the Mississippi. So numerous a colony of customers could well have been spared from the nations of Europe. They would soon have rivalled the power of France, and have required a greater quantity of manufactures than this island has ever prepared for exportation. Instead of a comfortable a prospect, we are, as a nation, indebted to the extent of at least two hundred and fifty millions. The annual interest of this sum, the necessary expences of management, and of collecting the revenue that defrays it, are all together above *eleven millions and an half sterling*. This burden is equivalent to a yearly poll-tax of one pound three shillings sterling per head, upon every individual inhabitant of Britain.* Besides what we pay at present upon this account, it is worth while to notice what we have paid already. From the revolution to the year 1789, inclusive, the interest of the public debts, and of the public loans repaid, including other incidental articles connected with these matters, has been three hundred and ninety millions, two hundred and seventy-six thousand, five hundred and seventy nine pounds.†

But this is a trifle compared with the sums of interest that we must discharge in the next hundred years. The burden hath now risen to eleven millions, and five hundred thousand pounds sterling *per annum*. Six yearly payments only, from the 1st of January 1792, to the 1st of January 1798, inclusive, with compound interest at five per cent. amount to eighty millions, nine hundred and fifty-four thousand, three hundred and forty seven pounds, four

* In an affair of so much importance, the utmost accuracy may be expected. The exact amount of the debt, as stated by Sir John Sinclair, is *two hundred and forty-seven millions, nine hundred and eighty-one thousand, nine hundred and twenty-seven pounds, five shillings and two-pence*. History of the public revenue, Part III. chap. v. In another place, near the end of the same chapter, he has these words. "Thus, including the sinking fund, and the interest of our unliquidated claims, our public debts, at present require the sum of *ten millions, one hundred and thirty-two thousand, one hundred and ninety-one pounds fourteen shillings, and three half-pence per annum*." The expence of collecting this sum, in proportion to that of the whole British revenue, is about nine hundred thousand pounds a year, which, added to the interest itself, gives the eleven millions and an half, stated in the text. The preface to the volume here quoted, bears date the 30th of January 1790. The Spanish and Russian squabbles took place after the preceding estimate had been made of the extent of the national debt; so that the sums mentioned in the text are, both as to the principal and the annual interest, much about the fact, even after deducting what Mr. Pitt may have paid off.

† Ibid. Part III. chap. 2d.

shillings and three-pence. The reader may prosecute the series of figures to the end of the next century. He will then discover that several myriads of millions sterling are not for that time alone, equal to the pressure of this enormous load. We far excel the Greeks and Romans in the arts of industry, and the resources of wealth; but it would be vain to search among ancient nations, for any instance correspondent with British debts, and British folly.

It is an object of the highest curiosity and importance for every one of us, to enquire, on what account such astonishing sums have been borrowed, and by what methods they have been expended? In the course of this work, each of these queries will be explained; but in the mean time, a few detached particulars shall be here inserted to assist the reader in forming a conception of the rest of the business.

In the war of 1689, that seed-bed of the future calamities of Britain, money was borrowed upon annuities for lives. "Fourteen *per cent.* was granted for one life, twelve *per cent.* for two lives, and ten *per cent.* for three. Such terms were, *in the highest degree extravagant*; particularly as no attention was paid to *disference of ages.*"

The same author adds, on the authority of Dr. Price, that borrowing at the rate of twelve *per cent.* for two lives, and ten *per cent.* for three, is giving ten *per cent.* for money in the one case, and nine *per cent.* in the other."† From 1690, to the end of the war, the historian says, that "eight *per cent.* was uniformly paid." To raise a farther sum upon these annuities, another expedient was in the sequel embraced. The annuitants were offered a reversionary interest, after the failure of their lives, for *ninety-six years*, to be reckoned from January, 1695, on their paying only four and a half year's purchase, or sixty-three pounds for every annuity of fourteen pounds. In 1698, the demand was reduced to four years purchase; or fifty-six pounds, for the annuity of fourteen. For our farther satisfaction, "the same system was afterwards adopted in the reign of Queen Anne."‡ Some of these annuities remain at this day "to the amount of one hundred and thirty-one thousand, two hundred and three pounds, seven shillings and eight pence *per annum*, for which the sum of one million, eight hundred and thirty-six thousand, two hundred and seventy-five pounds, seventeen shillings and ten pence three farthings had been originally contributed; and for the use of which, the public must pay above *thirteen millions* before they are all extinct."§

But even all this was only a part of the evil. "Davenant affirms, that the debt of the nation was swelled more by *high promises* than even by the exorbitant interest that was paid; and that

Hist. of the public revenue, &c. Part 11. chap. 4.

† Ibid.

§ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

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its credit was at so low an ebb, that *five millions*, given by parlia-
ment, produced for the service of the war, and to the uses of the
public, but little more than *two millions and a half*.* In ano-
ther passage he seems to contradict himself, and to reduce the
losses in this way to *one million* out of five ; but there is full
evidence on record, that his first computation was more accurate
than the second.

The management of this money, when obtained, corresponded
with the terms of the loan. In the reign of William the Third,
the civil list, that *cup of abominations*, was supported by certain tax-
es, appropriated for that purpose, and which amounted " at an
average, to about six hundred and eighty thousand pounds *per*
" *annum*."† The public revenue of England, after every possible
exertion, was only screwed up to three millions, eight hundred
and ninety-five thousand, two hundred and five pounds ;‡ so that
the civil list was less than one-fifth, but more than one-sixth part
of the *whole revenues of England*. If the civil list of this day bore
the same proportion to the national income, it would extend to at
least *three millions sterling*. Sir John Sinclair has given a complete
state of the whole expences of the civil list, during the thirteen
years of the reign of the Protestant hero. A few articles may serve
as a specimen of the rest. To the robes, *fifty-seven thousand pounds*.
This money would have clothed two thousand poor people, at
forty shillings each *per annum*, for thirteen years, with a reversion
of five thousand pounds for the dress of the royal family, which
consisted, properly speaking, but of two persons. Jewels, *sixty*
thousand pounds. Plate, *one hundred and two thousand pounds*. Band
of gentlemen pensioners, *sixty-nine thousand pounds*. To making
gardens, besides an account paid under a different head, *one*
hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds. After setting apart
thirty-three thousand pounds for his gardens, William could
have applied the rest of this money much better. He might have
parcelled out of the crown lands, which are to this day lying waste,
in the centre of England, two thousand small farms. On each of his
tenants, he might have bestowed fifty pounds to begin the world ;
and the first ten years of a perpetual lease, free of rent. To the
stables, *two hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds*. To the great
wardrobe, *three hundred and nineteen thousand pounds*. This sum
would have clothed an army of sixty thousand men ; or what is
more estimable, ten thousand tradesmen and their families. Privy
purse, *four hundred and eighty-three thousand pounds*. To the treasurer
of the chambers, *four hundred and eighty-four thousand pounds*. This
money would have been of the utmost service, in paving and light-
ing the streets of London. To the treasurer of the late Queen,
whom her husband did not think worth a plate full of green

* History of the public revenue, Part II. chap. 4. + Ibid, Part III.
Ibid.

§ Anecdotes of the Duchess of Marlborough.

five hundred and six thousand pounds. To the prince and princess of Denmark, a harmless but useless couple, *six hundred and thirty-eight thousand pounds.* Fifty-three thousand debtors, at twelve pounds each, might have been relieved from prison by this money; or a fund might have been established with it, for the annual discharge of a thousand prisoners of that kind on the birth-day of his majesty, and an equal number on the day, when he signed a warrant for the massacre of Glenco. Secret services, *seven hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds.* Fees and salaries, *eight hundred and fifty-eight thousand pounds.* Pensions and annuities, *six hundred and eighty-five thousand pounds.* Cofferer of the household, *thirteen hundred thousand pounds.* In the end of the last century, one shilling went farther than three can go now; so that this sum was in reality equal to four millions at this day. The king of England therefore spent what corresponds to three hundred thousand pounds *per annum* on his household for thirteen years, while, during a considerable part of his reign, his subjects by thousands and ten thousands expired of hunger*. To the paymaster of the works, *four hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds.* The whole bill extends to eight millions, eight hundred, and eighty thousand pounds; and it does not appear that one fourth part of it was expended, for wise and useful purposes.† This was the frugality of the government, at a time, when they were compelled to borrow money, at ten *per cent.*

In the next reign, the system was not much improved. An English house of commons informed Queen Anne that "there remained at Christmas 1710, thirty-five millions, three hundred and two thousand, one hundred and seven pounds of public money unaccounted for."‡ In 1714, one million eight hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds were raised by a lottery. Out of this sum, *four hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds* were distributed among the proprietors of the fortunate tickets. This was a premium of about thirty-four *per cent.* on the sum actually received.§ During the war of 1739, the charter of the East-India company was prolonged from 1776 to 1780. This was an anticipation of twenty three years. The value of the compensation granted by the company to government, did not exceed thirty thousand pounds.¶ This was like Esau selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage. If the bargain had been deferred, till the expiration of the former monopoly, perhaps forty times that sum could have been obtained.

* *Infra* chap. 1.

† Sixteen hundred and seventy pounds for the widows of officers, appear like Falstaff's half-penny worth of bread, in a corner of one article.

‡ History of the public revenue, Part 11. chap. 4.

§ *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.*

Sir John Sinclair gives a "general view of PREMIUMS upon the "new loans," in the war of 1756.* These premiums amount in value to *fourteen millions, two hundred and eighty-three thousand, nine hundred and seventy-five pounds sterling*. The total sum borrowed, and added to the national debt, for this premium, was seventy-two millions, one hundred and eleven thousand, and four pounds. The premium is, within a perfect trifle, *one fifth part* of the whole money obtained. Thus, out of every twenty shillings of the loan, we gave back four shillings as a reward for the lender. At this rate, the British armies conquered Guadaloupe and Canada; and we continue to boast of the glory of these exploits. Yet a person might, with as much reason, burn his house, for the sake of roasting an egg in its ashes. We may suppose, that the rest of the national debt was created upon terms at least equally hard; and the fifth part of the whole two hundred and fifty millions contracted, gives a premium of FIFTY MILLIONS STERLING. After such work, it is not wonderful, that we are now harnessed in debts and taxes, like horses in a carriage; that one third part of the expences of a family consist in the payment of public burdens; that five hundred thousand people in England are supported by charity;† that we must give twenty-six pounds sterling *per annum* for leave to keep a hackney coach; and twenty shillings *per annum* for leave to make a farthing candle, besides one penny *per pound* of excise upon the manufacture; nine-pence *per pound* of importation duty for Peruvian bark; and three guineas for leave to shoot a partridge worth two-pence. Half the price of a bottle of wine, a bowl of punch, or a tankard of porter, goes off in taxes, for leave to drink it. This deserves not to be termed the language of malignity. Those who pay the reckoning have a right to read the bill.

"I am no orator as Brutus is,

"To stir men's blood; I only speak right on.

"I tell you that, which *you yourselves do know*."

One other instance only shall be subjoined in this place, of the manner in which public debts have been contracted. In 1781,

* Part II. chap. 4.

† Dr. Wendeborn, a candid, and well informed writer, in his View of England, towards the close of the eighteenth century, says that "whoever lives upon a thousand a year, is supposed to pay at present about *six hundred* of it in government duties, taxes, excise, church, parish and poor rates."

He also observes, that of the people of England, "*one million* is so poor it must be supported by the rest." These assertions have been considerably softened in the text, to avoid any charge of exaggeration. They do not at all apply to Scotland, where both taxes and beggars are much less numerous.

As a necessary consequence of this enormous taxation, the author informs us, that "fifty years ago a family might live very handsomely on five hundred pounds *per annum*, but a thousand will at present *hardly go so far*."

Lord North received for the national service twelve millions sterling. For this sum he gave eighteen millions of *three per cent.* stock, and three millions of *four per cent.* stock. The annual interest of these two sums is six hundred and sixty thousand pounds, or five and an half *per cent.* for the twelve millions actually received. Money is not commonly advanced in England, at more than four and an half *per cent.* of interest; and very frequently at four *per cent.* At the former of these two rates, the twelve millions borrowed by Lord North ought only to have cost five hundred and forty thousand pounds per annum. The *one hundred and twenty thousand pounds* additional, at twenty-five years purchase, make a premium of *three millions sterling* for the loan of *twelve millions.* It is not surprising that sir John Sinclair, Dr. Swift and other writers, complain so loudly of the scandalous conditions upon which the public debts of Britain have been borrowed. The original contractors with government for lending of the money, remind us of a band of usurers, embracing every advantage over the necessities of the state; while the ministers of the crown seem like desperate gamblers, who care not by what future expence they secure another cast of the dice. From the facts above stated, the public funds prove to be a stupenduous mass of fraud, profligacy, imposture and extortion. Behold that sacred edifice of *national faith*, that political *Sanctum sanctorum*, which we support, at an annual expence of eleven millions and an half sterling!*

The friends of Mr. William Pitt boast much of the nine millions of debt, which, in a period of six years, he is said to have discharged. The scheme is an absolute bubble. He began to buy up *three per cents.* in April 1786; at which time they sold for seventy. They rose, almost instantly, to seventy-seven, and upwards. They have since been much higher; and if the minister shall make any substantial progress in his plan, they will very soon reach an hundred *per cent.* Thus, as Sir John Sinclair observes, "the more we pay, the more we shall be indebted; every shilling that is laid out in purchasing stock, raises the price proportionably." So peculiar is the nature of this national debt, and so very hazardous an attempt to discharge it! To make this quite plain, it may be observed, that when Mr. Pitt first began to buy up, the market price of the whole *three per cent.* funds, was all together but one hundred and seventeen millions, six hundred and forty-three thousand pounds. In two years and an half, he had purchased a small part of it; but the parade that he made about this operation, raised the price of the *remaining stock* to one hundred and twenty-two millions, four hundred and twenty thousand pounds. The sequel; in

* Of the original commencement of this debt, the characters, motives, and emoluments of its authors, the reader may find an authentic history in the *Political Progress*, Part II. which will appear in a few months.

October 1788, was, that the minister had expended or sunk *two millions and seven hundred thousand pounds*, and yet, he left matters **WORSE THAN HE FOUND THEM** by *four millions, seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand pounds*.* It must be acknowledged, in favour of Mr. Pitt, that while he has augmented the principal sum of the national debt, he has reduced the annual payment of interest. The three millions and six hundred thousand pounds of three *per cents* which are paid off, cost formerly, one hundred and eight thousand pounds *per annum* of interest, which is now extinguished. This is the sole advantage arising to the public from the transaction. But there was a shorter way to have come at this same purpose. Mr. Pitt and his parliament ought to have struck from the civil list a number of useless pensioners, such for example, as the groom of the stole, the master of the horse, the master of the robes, the master of the hawks, twelve lords, and twelve grooms of the bed-chamber, twenty-four preachers in his majesty's chapel at Whitehall, and the *wet nurses* of the prince of Wales and the duke of York. Instead of abolishing useless places, to discharge this annuity, Mr. Pitt squeezed out of the people two millions and seven hundred thousand pounds, which, with the expence of collecting it, comes to at least three millions sterling. The extinction of a burden of one hundred and eight thousand pounds *per annum* has thus cost more than it is worth. At four and an half *per cent.* three millions produce one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds *per annum*; which is itself nineteen thousand pounds more than *the annuity extinguished*. Here we must observe, that ten *per cent.* is but a moderate and ordinary profit on the capital of stock, either in husbandry, commerce, or manufactures. Hence, if these three millions had been suffered to remain in the hands of the people of Britain, they would have afforded to the community at large, at least three hundred thousand pounds *per annum* of additional wealth; and perhaps twice or thrice that sum. The slightest and most necessary taxes, are, therefore, in their own nature very destructive. When a tobacco-nist, or a tanner, pays thirty pounds of excise, he does not merely lose thirty shillings *per annum*, as the legal interest of his money; but he is like-

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* The following statement puts the matter in a short, and clear view.

In October, 1788, the value of the whole *remaining* three per cent. stock was - - - - - £. 122,420,401

Mr. Pitt, at an expence of two millions, seven hundred thousand pounds, had before purchased stock to the amount of - - - - - £. 3,626,000
In April 1786, before he began to buy up at all, the whole three per cents. were only at seventy per cent. or - - - - - 117,643,308
ACTUAL INCREASE OF NATIONAL DEBT, over and above the two millions seven hundred thousand pounds, cast away in the purchase of stock - - - - - 604,777,093

† In the court and city calendar, for 1775, eight of these ladies, are charged to the nation, at salaries of each two hundred pounds *per annum*; besides dry nurses, workwomen, rockers, and other luggage of the same sort.

wife prevented from the chance of converting his capital of thirty pounds into an augmented sum of thirty-three, thirty-six, or forty pounds. Thus it is evident, that every sum raised from the public as an impost, or excise, must in reality cost them ten *per cent.* This, by the way, demonstrates the rashness of wars undertaken in defence of a *foreign trade*, since the sums levied to support the struggle are, every farthing of them, drawn from the circulation of domestic commerce; a commerce always more safe, and very commonly more profitable, than that which kings are so frequently fighting for. A commercial war is truly "*casting our bread upon the waters, that we may find it after many days.*" Now, as every million of pounds raised by government from the people of Britain, is upon an average, at least equal to an annuity forever, of an hundred thousand pounds, out of the pockets of those who pay it, the inference is, that if Mr. Pitt, had understood or regarded the interest of this country, he never would have undertaken to discharge a debt bearing three *per cent.* at an expence of ten; or, as before observed, an annuity of one hundred and eight thousand pounds, by paying a capital of three millions, producing a yearly profit of three hundred thousand pounds to the holders of it. In this way Mr. Pitt pays off the public debt. Since October 1788, stocks have risen prodigiously; so that the period here chosen for the examination of this celebrated project is, by far the most favourable that can be taken. A full account of its subsequent history will be given hereafter. Mr. Pitt might as well propose to empty the Baltic with a tobacco pipe. But let us admit the case, that he at present had an hundred millions in the exchequer. The discharge of the public debt is, on his principles, absurd and unjust. Stocks would instantly rise to an hundred; and he begins perhaps by paying off the twenty-one millions of three and four *per cents.* for which Lord North actually received but *twelve millions.* Thus, after giving as above stated, five and an half *per cent.* for a loan of twelve millions, we discharge that original twelve millions itself, with *twenty-one millions.* The present scheme for extinguishing the public debt is therefore impracticable, if it were honest, and as an act of robbery against ourselves. it would be dishonest, if it were practicable.

But, supposing that Mr. Pitt had in reality paid off nine millions of debt, and lessened the public burdens of its interest, yet for the sake of an impartial and satisfactory argument, his advocates ought to arrange, in an opposite column, a list of the additional taxes which he has imposed, and of the thousands of families, whom such taxes have ruined.* A third column should contain a list of the millions which this minister has wasted upon Spanish and Russian

* In 1723, the tax on hawkers and pedlars in England, produced in the gross, ten thousand, seven hundred and seventy three pounds; and eight thousand, six hundred and four pounds of net income. Thus, one-fifth of the revenue was sunk in the collection. In 1785, Mr. Pitt doubled the tax, and in 1788, the total amount

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armaments, on the unprovoked and piratical war against Tipoo Saib, on the Chinese embassy, the successive elections for Westminster, the creditors of the prince of Wales, and the nabob of Arcot, and the Baratrian settlement of Botany Bay. The pretended plan of discharging the national debt, on which Mr. Pitt sometimes expatiates to parliament, for two hours together, was but a sorry trap for popularity; and if "the *swinish* multitude" had been much wiser than the rest of their family, they must, in a moment, have seen through and despised the artifice. The debts of Britain never will be paid; they never can be paid; and in the present way of discharging them, they never, in justice ought to be paid. The hardness of the father of this delusion, exceeds any thing that was ever heard of; because his arguments and assumptions are, as above explained, in a state of hostility with the multiplication table; and because, though religious impostors have pretended to work false miracles, yet none even of them has ever asserted that two and two make five. But though these debts will never be extinguished by the attempts of the minister, they have certainly passed the meridian of their existence. Had the war with America lasted for two years longer, Britain would not at this day have owed a shilling; and if we shall persist in rushing into carnage, with our wonted contempt of all feeling and reflection, it must still be expected, that, according to the practice of other nations, a sponge or a bonfire will finish the game of funding.

What advantage has resulted to Britain from such incessant scenes of prodigality and of bloodshed? In the wars of 1689, and 1702, this country was but an hobby-horse for the emperor and the Dutch. The rebellion in 1715, was excited by the despotic influence of the whigs. George the First purchased Bremen and Verden, from the king of Denmark, to whom they did not belong. This pitiful and dirty bargain produced the Spanish war of 1718, and a squadron dispatched for six different years to the Baltic. Such exertions cost us an hundred times more than these quagmire duchies are worth, even to an elector of Hanover; a distinction which on this business becomes necessary, for as to Britain, it was never pretended, that we could gain a farthing by such an acquisition*. In 1727, the nation forced the same George into a war with Spain, which ended as usual with much mischief on both sides. The Spanish war of the people in 1739, and the Austrian subsidy war of the crown, which commenced in 1741, were absurd in their principles,

of it had shrunk to *five thousand, four hundred and sixty-one pounds*. Of this sum the net produce was but *two thousand, one hundred and seventy pounds*; three-fifths of the produce of the tax, were thus sunk in collecting it. This diabolical impost was laid for the professed purpose of extirpating pedlars. Crowds of them were reduced to a state of starving. The tax hath since been repealed. Vid. some account of it in the history of the public revenue, Part 111. chap. 3.

* The solitary muttering of Pottethwaite, in his dictionary, is not worth naming as an exception.

and ruinous in their consequences. At sea, we met with nothing but hard blows. On the continent, we began by hiring the queen of Hungary to fight her own battles against the king of Prussia, and ten years after that war had ended, we hired the king of Prussia, with six hundred and seventy-one thousand pounds *per annum*, to fight his own battles against her. If this be not folly, what are we to call it? As to the quarrel of 1756, "It was remarked by all "Europe," says Frederick, "that in her dispute with France, *every wrong step was on the side of England.*" By seven years of fighting, and an additional debt of seventy-two millions sterling, we secured Canada; but had Wolfe and his army been driven from the heights of Abraham, our grandsons might have come too early to bear of an American revolution. As to this event, the circumstances are too shocking for reflection. At that time an English woman had discovered a remedy for the canine madness, and Frederick advises a French correspondent *to recommend this medicine to the use of the parliament of England, as they must certainly have been bitten by a mad dog.*

In the quarrels of the continent we should concern ourselves but little; for in a defensive war, we may safely defy all the nations of Europe. When the whole civilized world was embodied under the banners of Rome, the most distinguished of her conquerors, at the head of thirty thousand veterans, disembarked for a second time on the coast of Britain. The face of the country was covered with a forest, and the solitary tribes were divided upon the old question *Who shall be king?* The island could hardly have attained to a twentieth part of its present population, yet by his own account, the invader found a retreat prudent, or perhaps necessary. South-Britain was afterwards subjected, but this acquisition was the task of more than thirty years. Every village was bought with the blood of the legions. We may confide in the moderation of a Roman historian, when he is to describe the disasters of his countrymen. In a single revolt, seventy thousand of the usurpers were extirpated; and fifty, or, as others relate, seventy thousand soldiers perished in the course of a Caledonian campaign. Do the masters of modern Europe understand the art of war better than Severus, and Agricola, and Julius Cæsar? Is any combination of human power to be compared with the talents and the resources of the Roman empire? If the naked Scots of the first century, resisted and vanquished the conquerors of the species, what have we to fear from any antagonist of this day? On six months warning we could muster ten or twelve hundred thousand militia. Yet, while the despots of Germany were fighting about a suburb, the nation has submitted to tremble for its existence, and the blossoms of domestic happiness have been blasted by crimps, and subsidies, and press-gangs, and excise acts. Our political and commercial systems are evidently nonsense. We possess within this single island, every production both of art and nature, which is necessary for the most comfortable

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enjoyment of life; yet for the sake of tea, and sugar, and tobacco, and a few other despicable luxuries, we have rushed into an abyss of taxes and of blood. The boasted extent of our trade, and the quarrels and public debts which attend it, have augmented the scarcity of bread, and even of grass, at least three hundred per cent.

There is no longer more just, says Virgil, than that the contriver of death should perish by his own stratagem. We have suffered in a full proportion to what we have inflicted. As to the slaughter of our countrymen in time of war, George Chalmers, Esq. digests it in a style perfectly suitable to the understanding and the conscience of a modern statesman. The British aristocracy consider the rest of the nation, as a commodity bought and sold; and if we required absolute evidence of this truth, here is a full attestation. "It is not easy," says Mr. Chalmers "to calculate the numbers who die in the camp, or the battle, more than would perish from want, or from vice in the hamlet or city. *It is some consolation, that the industrious are too wealthy and independent to covet the pittance of the soldier, or to court the dangers of the sailor; and though the forsaken lover, or the restless vagrant, may have looked for refuge in the army or the fleet,*" it may admit of some doubt how

* During the wise dispute about Falkland's Islands, which were, in value to this country, below the power of figures, a workman in London was returning one evening to his family with his weekly wages. He was apprehended by a press-gang, and cast into the hold of a tender. His landlord, and some other creditors, heard of what they called his elopement. They seized on his furniture, and his wife and child were turned to the door. Within a few days after, the mother was delivered of a second child, in a garret. When weakness permitted her to rise, she left her two naked children, and wandered into the streets, as a common beggar. Instead of obtaining assistance, she was reproached as an abandoned vagabond. In despair, she went into a shop, and attempted to carry off a small piece of linen. She was seized, tried, and condemned to be hanged. In her defence, the woman said, that she had lived creditably and happy, till a press-gang robbed her of her husband, and in him, of all means to support herself and her family; and that in attempting to clothe her new-born infant, she perhaps did wrong, as she did not, at that time, know what she did. The parish officers, and other witnesses, bore testimony to the truth of her averment, but all to no purpose. She was ordered for Tyburn. Though her milk, if she had any, must have been fermented into poison, it seems that nobody condescended to seek a nurse for her child. *The hangman dragged her sucking infant from her breast, when he straitened the cord about her neck.* On the 13th of May, 1777, Sir William Meredith mentioned this assassination in the House of Commons. "Never," said he, "was there a fouler murder committed against the law, than that of this woman by the law." These were the fruits of what Englishmen call *their inestimable privilege of a trial by jury.*

It would not be difficult to fill a large volume with decisions of this stamp, though there has not perhaps occurred any single case which was, in all its circumstances, so absolutely infernal. In this introduction, we have seen a sketch of the history of certain monarchs and ministers, some of whom are, at this day, held up as the political saviours of Britain. The reader may compare the wanton slaughter of multitudes, and the profligate expenditure of millions with the *gullit*, as it was termed, of Mary Jones. He will then judge which of the two parties best deserved a halter.

The particulars in this note are extracted from a letter to Charles Jenkinson, Esq. secretary at war, by Mr. John Clark, translator of the Caledonian Bards. The letter was printed at Edinburgh, in 1786.

“ far the giving *proper* employment to both, (viz. that of committing robbery and murder, and of getting themselves knocked on the head for it,) may not have freed their parishes from *disquietude*, and from *burdens*. It is the *expences* more than the *slaughter* of modern war which debilitate every community.”* This paragraph explains the memorable epithet which has been bestowed on the British nation. For if the soldiers and sailors of the British army and navy had been transformed by the wand of Circe into hogs, or even rats, it is impossible that this writer could have spoken with greater indifference of their extirpation. He considers it as a necessary circumstance, that a great part of the common people must perish from want or from vice, unless they are discharged in the form of armies on the rest of the world. The remedy is a thousand times worse than the disease; and it would be more humane to give a premium to poor people for stifling their infants in the cradle. “ If I am a coward,” says Jaffier, “ who made me so ?” What but the miserable construction of our government can have produced such a horrid necessity ? When ten millions and an half sterling *per annum* are due, and must be paid to the creditors of the nation, besides a million to the officers, who collect it, when two millions sterling are bestowed on the church of England, and a much larger sum on pensioners of all kinds, it is impossible, that we should not find in the opposite scale, a correspondent balance of want and wretchedness. When you raise one end of a beam, the other end must sink in proportion. When you give six or eight hundred thousand pounds *per annum*, to a single family, and its trumpery of a household, you reduce, with mathematical certainty, thirty or forty thousand families to poverty. It is not difficult to see that such a political progress must end in a political explosion. Mr. Hume, after adverting to the extremely frivolous object, as he calls it, of the war in 1756, makes this reflection. “ Our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not excepting even the crusades. For I suppose there is no demonstration so clear, that the Holy Land was *not* the road to paradise, as there is, that the endless increase of national debts is the direct road to NATIONAL RUIN. But having now *completely reached that goal*, it is needless at present to look back on the past. It will be found in the present year (1776,) that all the revenues of this island, north of Trent, and west of Reading, are mortgaged and anticipated forever.” He concludes with this remark. “ So egregious indeed has been our folly, that we have even lost *all title to compassion* in the numerous calamities that are awaiting us.”†

This pamphlet consists not of fluent declamation, but of curious authenticated and important facts, with a few short observations interspersed, which seemed necessary to explain them. The reader

* Comparative Estimate, p. 142.

† History of England, vol. Vth. p. 475, London octavo edition, 1778.

will meet with no mournful periods to the memory of *annual* or *triennial* parliaments; for while the members are men such as their predecessors have almost always been, it is of small concern whether they hold their places for life, or but for a single day. Some of our projectors are of opinion, that to shorten the duration of parliament would be an ample remedy for all our grievances. The advantages of a popular election have likewise been much extolled. Yet an acquaintance with Thucydides, or Plutarch, or Guicciardini, or Machiavel, may tend to calm the raptures of a republican apostle. The plan of universal suffrages has been loudly recommended by the duke of Richmond; and, on the 16th of May 1782, that nobleman, seconded by Mr. Horne Tooke, and Mr. Pitt, was sitting in a tavern, composing advertisements of reformation for the newspapers. The times are changed; but had this plan been adopted, it is possible that we should at this day, have looked back with regret, on the humiliating yet tranquil despotism of a Scots, or a Cornish borough.

The style of this work is concise and plain; and it is hoped that it will be found sufficiently respectful to all parties. The question to be decided is, are we to proceed with the war system? Are we, in the progress of the nineteenth century, to embrace five thousand fresh taxes, to squander a second five hundred millions sterling, and to extirpate thirty millions of people?

EDINBURGH, 14th September, 1793.

THE
POLITICAL PROGRESS
OF
BRITAIN.

CHAP. I.

*Purity and importance of Scots representatives in parliament—Parchments
barons—Anecdotes of the Scots excise—Window tax—Extracts from
an authentic report to the lords of the treasury—Herring fishery—Salt
and coal duties—Dreadful oppression—Summary of the public services of
the prince of Wales.*

THE people of Scotland are, on all occasions, foolish enough to interest themselves in the good or bad fortune of an English prime minister. Lord North once possessed this frivolous veneration, which has since been transferred to Mr. William Pitt; and the Scots in general, have long been remarked, as the most submissive and contented subjects of the British crown. It is hard to say what obligations have excited that universal and superlative ardour of loyalty, for which, till very lately, we have been so strikingly distinguished. Mr. Brinsley Sheridan observed, some time ago, in the house of commons, that *the Scots nation bath just as much interest in the government of Britain, as the miners of Siberia have in the government of Russia.* The assertion was at once the most humiliating and well founded. A public revenue of eleven hundred thousand pounds annually is extracted from North-Britain. Of this sum, at least six hundred thousand pounds* are lodged in the exchequer of

* History of the public revenue, Part 111. chap. 6. The statement fills four quarto pages; it appears to be candid, and as authentic and accurate, as the nature of the materials would admit. Some years ago, Sir John Sinclair transmitted a letter on this subject to a society in Scotland; and I have heard Scotsmen, so sunk in the mire of Hanoverian superstition, so degraded below the beasts that perish, as to censure him for presumption in doing so.

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England, a country that has incessantly, and not very decently, reproached us for poverty. It is strange that sixteen hundred thousand people should submit to pay eleven hundred thousand pounds *per annum* to a government, in the direction of which they have nothing to say. It is very natural that a nation absorbing six hundred thousand pounds a year of our money, should be a great deal richer than ourselves; and, at the same time, it is likewise very natural, that they should despise the Scots as a people, the most abject and contemptible of the species.

To England we were for many centuries a hostile, and we are still considered by them as a foreign, and in effect a conquered nation. It is true, that an extremely diminutive part of us are suffered to elect almost every twelfth member in the British house of commons; but these representatives have no title to vote, or act in a separate body. Every statute proceeds upon the majority of the voices of the whole compound assembly. What, therefore, can forty-five persons accomplish, when opposed to five hundred and thirteen? They feel the absolute insignificance of their situation, and behave accordingly. An equal number of elbow chairs, placed once for all on the ministerial benches, would be less expensive to government, and just about as manageable. These, and every ministerial tool of the same kind, may be called expensive, because those who are obliged to *buy*, must be understood to *sell*,* and those who range themselves under the banners of opposition, can only be considered, as having rated their voices too high for a purchaser in the parliamentary auction.

There is a fashionable phrase, *the politics of the county*, which I can never hear pronounced without a glow of indignation. Compared with such *politics*, even pimping is respectable. Our supreme court have indeed interposed, though very feebly, to extirpate what in Scotland are called *parchment battles*, and have thus prevented a crowd of unhappy wretches from plunging into an abyss of misery. But, in other respects, their decision is of no consequence, since it most certainly cannot be of the smallest concern to this country, who are our electors, and representatives; or indeed, whether we are represented at all. Our members, with some very singular exceptions, are the mere satellites of the minister of the day; and forward to serve his most oppressive and criminal purposes.

It seems to have been long a maxim of the monopolizing directors of our southern masters, to extirpate, as quickly as possible, every manufacture in this country, that interferes with their own. Has any body forgot the scandalous breach of national faith, by which the Scottish distilleries have been brought to the verge of destruction? Has not the manufacture of starch also been driven, by

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* A worthy representative was requested by his constituents, to attend to their interest in parliament. "Damn you, and your instructions too!" said he. "I have forgot you, and I will sell you." *Political Disquisitions*, vol. 1. p. 280.

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every engine of judicial torture, to the last pang of its existence? Have not the manufacturers of paper, printed calicoes, malt liquors, and glass, been harrassed by the most vexatious methods of exacting the revenue? methods equivalent to an addition of ten, or sometimes an hundred *per cent.* of the duty payable. Let us look around this insulted country, and say, on what manufacture, except the linen, taxation has not fastened its bloody fangs.

In the excise annals of Scotland, that year which expired on the 5th of July 1790, produced for the duties on soap, *sixty five thousand pounds*. On the 5th of July 1791, the annual amount of these duties was only *forty-five thousand pounds*; and by the same hopeful progress, in three years more at farthest, our ministers will enjoy the pleasure of extirpating a branch of trade, once flourishing and extensive. Two men were some years ago executed at Edinburgh for robbing the excise-office of twenty-seven pounds; but offenders may be named, who ten thousand times better deserve punishment. We have seen that oppressive statutes, and a most tyrannical method of enforcing them, have, in a single year, deprived the revenue of twenty thousand pounds, in one branch only, and have compelled a crowd of industrious families to seek refuge in England; and then our legislators, to borrow the honest language of George Rous, Esq. "have the insolence to call **US GOVERNMENT.**"

By an oriental monopoly, we have obtained the *unexampled privilege* of buying a pound of the same tea, for six or eight shillings, with which other nations would eagerly supply us at half that price*. Nay, we have to thank our present illustrious minister, that this vegetable has been reduced from a price still more extravagant. His popularity began by the commutation act. Wonders were promised, wonders were expected, and wonders have happened! A nation, consisting of men who call themselves *enlightened*, have consented to build up their windows, that they might enjoy the permission of sipping in the dark cup of tea, ten *per cent.* cheaper than formerly; though still fifty *per cent.* dearer than its intrinsic price.

Such are the glorious consequences of our stupid veneration for a minister, and our absurd submission to his capricious dictates!

General assertions unsupported by proper evidence deserve but little attention. I shall therefore lay before the reader some extracts from a book published in 1786 by Dr. James Anderson. This work is hardly known, yet every friend to the prosperity of Scotland ought to be intimately acquainted with its contents.

In 1785, this gentleman was employed by the lords of the treasury to make a tour among the Hebrides and western coasts of Scotland, for the purpose of ascertaining the best methods to promote the fisheries and the consequent improvement of that part of the

* In Philadelphia, tea is cheaper by fifty *per cent.* than in Edinburgh. At Gothenburgh also, the difference, in favour of the Swedes, is very great.

country. This commission Dr. Anderson executed with that ardor and fidelity of investigation for which he has long been distinguished. It is impossible, in a short performance of this nature, to give an analysis of the volume; but the following particulars will serve to shew that the western coasts and the western islands of Scotland groan under the most enormous oppression. Dr. Anderson has printed part of a report, dated the 14th of July 1785, and made by a committee of the House of Commons. They give an account of the custom-house duties collected for ten successive years, in nine counties of Scotland, viz. Argyle, Inverness, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, Shetland, Cromarty, Na h-eile and Moray. The expence of collection for these ten years from the 1st of January 1775, to the 31st of December 1784, was

The gross produce

£. 51,679: 13: 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
50,737: 2: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Payments exceed the produce by

942: 11: 7 $\frac{1}{2}$

The committee add, that "they have little reason to expect a more favourable result from their inquiries respecting the excise than the customs." The author rejoins, that an account of the excise had since been published, and *confirmed the truth of this observation*. But this is not the worst; for there is likewise to be added a part of the expence of cruisers employed under the board of customs in Scotland. On an average of five years, preceding the year 1785, this charge amounted to near thousand eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, twelve shillings and four-pence. "If," says Dr. Anderson, "we suppose one half of the above expence should be stated to the account of the nine counties above mentioned, which I conceive to be an under proportion; then the expence on this head would be four thousand, nine hundred and thirty-seven pounds, sixteen shillings and two-pence."† This article is very near equal to the whole annual produce of the customs of these nine counties. If we take the different sums in round numbers, we may say that the gross produce of the customs is five thousand pounds, the expence collecting them five thousand pounds, and the expence of cruisers to prevent smuggling, five thousand. Thus in the course of ten years, government collected fifty thousand pounds, by deburshing one hundred thousand. There has never was such a shameful system of robbery heard of, even in the annals of the Turks, the Spaniards, or the British East-India company. Were the whole mass of British taxes collected at such an expence, the government itself, would in six months become bankrupt; and men of honour, and gentlemen of the bed-chamber

* Introduction, page 63. There is an error of the gross in substituting the one sum from the other, which has been here corrected.

† Ibid. p. 65.

ber, and the whole cloud of squire vermin, would vanish, like the exhalations of a quagmire, in the tempest of revolutionary vengeance. "A fact of this nature, when thus fairly brought to light cannot fail to strike every thinking person with some degree of astonishment and horror. A crowd of reflections here press upon the mind. Why are these persons oppressed with taxes when the state is no ways benefited by them? Why are the other members of the community loaded with burthens, to enforce the payment of these unproductive taxes? From what cause does it happen that these people complain of taxes, while they pay next to nothing?"* This may be called the insanity of despotism. I shall now state from the same work, a few examples of the way in which this revenue is collected.

"A man in Skye, who has got a load of *bonded salt*, used the whole in curing fish, *save five bushels only*, but before he could recover his *bond*, he found himself obliged to hire a boat and send these five bushels to Oban, which cost him upwards of *five pounds expence*†."

"One would imagine, that if a man *paid the duty for his salt*, he might afterwards do with it what he pleased; but this I find is not the case. Last season (1784,) a vessel was fitted out in haste at Aberdeen to catch herring, that were then on the coasts. But as the owners of that vessel had no duty-free salt, they were obliged to purchase salt that had already *paid the duty*; but before they were allowed to carry one ounce of this salt to sea, they were further obliged to *give bond for it*, in the same form as if it had been duty-free salt."‡

"Again, in the year 1783, Mr James McDonald, in Portree in Skye, purchased from Leith, a quantity of salt which had paid duty, and shipped it by permit on board a vessel for Portree. It was regularly landed, and a custom-house certificate returned for the same. With this salt he intended to cure fish, when he could catch them in those seas; but not having found an opportunity of using it in the year 1784, he fitted out, at his own expence, this season (1785,) a small sloop, to prosecute the fisheries. On board that sloop, he put some part of this salt with the permit along with it. A revenue cutter fell in with his vessel, and *seized vessel and salt, provisions and all together!*"§

There is an excise duty upon foreign salt, imported into the Western Islands, of ten shillings *per bushel*, besides a custom-house tax of about two pence three farthings. The excise duty is too high to be paid for salt employed in the curing of fish. Government therefore, in order to encourage the British fisheries, has promised to remit the excise duty. But it is possible that the salt thus disburdened of the ten shillings of excise, might be applied to some other pur-

* Introduction page 65.

† Ibid p. 41.

‡ Report p. 30.

§ Ibid.

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pose than that of curing fish, and in this way, the intended bounty might be converted into a source of fraud against the excise revenue. When the legislature, therefore, granted this indulgence, "all importers of foreign salt were required to land it at a custom-house, where it was to be carefully weighed by the proper officers, and the importer either to pay the duty, or to enter it for *the purpose of curing fish*, and in that case, to give bond, with two sufficient sureties, either to pay the excise duty of ten shillings *per bushel*, or to account for the salt, under a penalty of twenty shillings *per bushel*. In consequence of this bond, he must either produce the salt itself at that custom-house on or before the 5th of April thereafter, or cured fish in such quantities as are sufficient to exhaust the whole salt, which fish, is obliged to declare upon oath, were cured with the salt for which he had granted bond. It is only after all these forms, and several others are duly complied with, that the bond can be got up; and these bonds if not cancelled *before they fall due*, must be regularly returned to the commissioners of salt duties, by whom an action must be *instantly commenced* in the court of exchequer, for recovery of the penalties incurred in the bonds. If any of the salt remains unused, a new bond on the same terms, must be granted for it, however small the quantity may be, nor can that be moved from the place where it is once lodged, without express warrant from the custom-house, and another bond granted by the proprietor, specifying, under heavy penalties, what it is to be landed; which bond can only be withdrawn in consequence of a certificate from the custom-house, specifying that was there lodged. Nor can it be shifted from one vessel to another, did both vessels even *belong to the same person*, without order from the custom-house, and a new bond granted; nor can a single bushel of that salt, in any circumstances be sold without a new bond being granted for it, and a transfer of that quantity being made in the custom-house books." This passage paints in striking colours, the gloomy and ferocious jealousy of English despotism. An eternal repetition of the word *bond* assure us that the act of parliament has been dictated by the very genius of Shylock. These regulations are attended with much expence, and intricacy, and so great a hazard of ruinous penalties, that, in many cases, they correspond to an absolute prohibition. In England, a fisherman grants bond but *once*;† a distinction that ascertains the pitiful malevolence of our *sister* kingdom. To give proper comprehension of all the clogs with which the Scots fishery and *they only* are burdened, would require several sheets of paper. A few particulars may serve at present, as a specimen of the

* Report by Dr. Anderson, p. 35.

† Illustrations of the report, p. 178.

" If a vessel containing salt lost at sea, or at the fishing, proof must be made of its being lost, before the salt bond can be recovered; and in some cases the commissioners are so scrupulous with respect to this proof, as to render it next to impossible to recover the bond, or avoid the penalty it contains.* These bonds cost each of them, seven shillings and six pence. As an instance of the rigour of the commissioners, Dr. Anderson tells the following story.

A burl on the fishing station was cast away. The master went to a justice of the peace in the neighbourhood, and made oath to the loss of his vessel, with the salt &c. on board, *but not having saved his papers*, he committed a mistake of five or six bushels in stating the quantity of salt. His deposition, signed by the justice, was transmitted to the commissioners for recovery of the salt bond. On account of the error, it was returned, to be altered. The man then went before two justices, and made oath to the *exact* quantity. This deposition was transmitted, but returned again as insufficient, for the law requires that it should be made before a quorum of justices *at their quarter sessions*. By this time the ship-master had gone to sea to the fishery. Dr. Anderson adds that it was *a thousand to one* if he had not either to pay the penalty of his bond, or lose a season of the fishing; as he could not when at sea, be certain of attending at the precise day of the quarter sessions.† Such is the treatment of a shipwrecked mariner from Scots commissioners of salt duty! When this transaction happened, the *sympathetic* Dr. Adam Smith was a member of that quintumvirate, who sway the excise sceptre of North-Britain.

" No vessel can lend or give salt to any other at the fishing or otherwise, even though *belonging to the same owners*, because the quantity shipped *per cocquet* in any vessel must be regularly landed at some custom-house or other, either in fish or not used; and if it must be lent, must be so landed and bonded and again shipped *per cocquet* anew. If lent otherwise, the salt and vessel are seizable.‡ This author observes, that a bare list of the prosecutions which have been raised in Scotland, in account of the salt tax would excite horror. The most trifling mistake in point of form is sufficient for reducing an industrious family to beggary, yet in England, when the committee of fisheries required a list of the prosecutions that had been raised in that country since the institution of this law, the return was only ONE.§

In consequence of so harsh a system, salt is smuggled in immense quantities from Ireland, where the duty is but three-pence *per bushel*. A person confessed, that, in a single year, he imported into one of the western islands, *nine hundred and seventy tons of salt*, which is equal to *thirty-eight thousand eight hundred and ninety bushels*. Seven-

* Illustrations of the report, page 174.

† Ibid p. 175.

‡ Ibid p. 176.

§ Ibid p. 191.

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ral other people in the same island followed that trade.* If the formalities on the remission of salt duties, did not defeat the whole intention of the law, there could be no temptation to this traffic. Dr. Anderson affirms, as a certain fact, that *five hundred thousand people* in Scotland use no salt but that of Ireland. He tells us also, on the subject of custom-house duties, in general, that he once paid thirteen shillings for leave to send coastways forty shillings worth of oat-meal.† Though the customs, in the nine most northern counties of Scotland, cannot defray the expence of collecting them, yet they are in themselves, very exorbitant, when compared with the value of the commodities on which they are paid. Bonds, certificates, and other trash of that kind cost as much on a small cargo, as upon a large one. Dr. Anderson was assured, that in the Hebrides "the expence of the custom-house officer to discharge a cargo of coals, amounts in many cases, to *more than four times the duty on the coals*, and if the cargo be *small* it will sometimes *double the prime cost*."‡ This information explains another of his assertions, that those poor people, the Scots Highlanders, "pay at least *five hundred per cent.* more than the merchants in London, Liverpool, or Bristol, would have paid for the same goods."§

The subject of the Scots fisheries has already extended to a considerable length. It shall be resumed and closed in the next chapter. For the sake of variety, and as a relief to the feelings of the reader, let us for the present make a short excursion into the more elevated regions of legislative iniquity.

Some people are in the habit of revering an act of parliament, as though it were the production of a superior being. To this class of readers may be recommended a useful of the following anecdote. In summer 1789, when the bill for an excise on the manufacture of tobacco, was brought up to the house of peers, the lord chancellor Thurlow "treated the enacting part of it with a high degree of mixed asperity and contempt. He said, that the vexatious precautions and preventive severity of the excise laws, were *unnecessarily* extended to the subject in question; that a fit attention had not been paid to the *essential interests and property of the manufacturers*; that the greater part of the enacting clauses were *absurd, contradictory, ungrammatical, and unintelligible*! He expressed his wishes, that the house of commons, if they meant to persevere in their claim of having money bills returned from the house of peers unaltered, would not insult them, by requiring their adoption of laws *that would disgrace school-boys*."¶ He accordingly moved for an amendment, which was rejected by a majority of ten

* Report, page 47.

† Introduction p. 67.

‡ Ibid p. 32.

§ Ibid p. 66.

¶ This expression intimates, that in the opinion of Thurlow, tobacco is an improper subject of excise. It was in the right; for the tax produced a scene of stupendous injustice. A full account of it shall be given hereafter.

¶ Dodley's Annual Register, for 1789, p. 157.

voices against seven. So notably was the business of the nation attended! The bill however had been so wretchedly constructed, that an alteration appearing absolutely necessary, was urged a second time by the Duke of Richmond and carried. But before this could be accomplished, the parliament were just rising. They had not time to think of their pretended constituents. The alterations were suppressed, and the bill, with all its imperfections on its head, was discharged on the devoted tobaccoists of Britain. If that parliament had been selected from the cells of Newgate, they could not have acted in this affair with a more atrocious contempt for every part of their duty.

In the reign of William the third, one Tilly obtained an act of parliament to enable Bromshall, an infant, to sell his interest in the Fleet prison; which interest was purchased by Tilly. A report was sometime after made in the house of commons, which contains these words. "Mr. Pocklington, from the committee on the abuses of prisons, &c. among a variety of other matter, reported to the house, that one Brunshill, a solicitor, had informed the said committee, that Tilly, as he was informed, should say, that he obtained that act by bribery and corruption."

"That one Mrs. Hancock applying to Tilly not to protect one Guy, being his clerk of the papers, because he was perjured, &c. Tilly refused her request; upon which, being asked how he would do, if the matter should be laid before parliament? he replied, *he could do what he would there; that they were a company of bribed villains; that to his knowledge, they would all take bribes; and that it cost him three hundred pounds for his share, and three hundred pounds for the other shop, meaning the King's Bench, for bribing a committee last parliament.*"

"That she then intimated that she must then apply to the house of lords; he answered, it was only *valming five or six talking lords,* and they would quash all the rest. And she then said, she would try the king and council; he added the best of the lord-keeper's fees were from *him*; that as to the judges, they were all such a parcel of rogues, that *they would swallow his gold faster than he would give it them; and that as to the members of the house of commons, they were many of them members of his house.*"* This picture seems unfavourable; but the parliaments of William the Third were chiefly composed of very exceptionable characters. An example or two as to their general conduct may serve at present. We shall begin with an illustrious whig leader, who was a member of the house of peers.

In 1694, William planned an expedition against Brest. The particulars were betrayed to James the Second, in a letter from Marlborough, wherein he complains that Admiral Russel was not sufficiently ardent in the cause of the exiled king. Mr. Macpherson,

has ascertained, beyond all contradiction, the guilt of Marlborough. In consequence of this intelligence, the French prepared for the reception of their assailants. A body of English land forces were disembarked at Brest. They perceived such formidable entrenchments, and batteries, that they immediately attempted to retreat on board of their ships. But the tide had gone out; the flat bottomed boats were entangled in the mud; and the French, with superior forces, poured from every side upon the fugitives. Six hundred of those who landed were slain and many wounded; one Dutch frigate was sunk, after losing almost her whole crew. General Talmarsh, commander in the expedition, died of his wounds at Plymouth. Marlborough might as well have cut the throats of these men, in Smithfield market. In 1695, Sir John Fenwick, a major-general, had been engaged with some others, in a project for a rebellion in England, and had on its discovery fled. Some time after he returned, was found out, and arrested. To save his life, he transmitted to William an account of the treasonable correspondence of Godolphin, Marlborough, Russel, and other *whigs of distinction* with James. His accusation "is now known to have been in all points true;" and as there was only *one* evidence against him, of his share in the conspiracy, "he could not be convicted in a court of law, which required *two*." William was thoroughly acquainted with the real character of the persons thus accused by Fenwick; but he durst not come to an open rupture with such powerful offenders. The charge was therefore smothered; but the persons whom Fenwick had accused "believed that they could not be safe as long as he lived." A bill of attainder was therefore brought into parliament against him, and his late friend Russel appeared at the head of the prosecution. The sequel produced a series of measures "which exceeded the injustice of the worst precedents in the worst times of Charles the Second and his successor." The whole transaction was vindicated by Gilbert Burnet, that "Right Reverend Father in God," in a long speech to the house of peers. This production the bishop hath inserted in his history, but he must have been ashamed of its contents, for he has not ventured to acknowledge it as his own. The bill of attainder against Fenwick passed both houses of parliament by a narrow majority; and on the 28th of January 1696, this betraying and betrayed conspirator was "*without evidence or law*" beheaded on Tower-Hill. Lady Fenwick having feared the testimony of a person, she attempted to bribe him to fly the kingdom. The accusers directed this wretch to place people behind a curtain to overhear the offer; "and this attempt of a wife to save her husband's life from danger, *was turned into an evidence of his guilt*." These are the words of an historian, who is himself a professed *whig*, who has been a lawyer, and is now a judge. It appears therefore, that in the close of the

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last century, the majority of a British parliament committed a deliberate murder; and that they did so under the pretence of punishing a conspirator, while, at the same time, a considerable number of themselves were partners in his guilt. Contrasted with so black a scene, there is nothing remarkable in the ruin of British tobacco-nists, or in the accusation so bluntly advanced by the keeper of the Fleet-prison. The king himself, when he consented to this bill, must have been altogether conscious of its criminality; but specks of that kind cannot tarnish the purity of so luminous a character.

Since the Norman conquest, England has been governed, including Oliver Cromwell, by thirty-three sovereigns; and of these, two-thirds were, each of them, by an hundred different actions, deserving of the gibbet.* Yet the people over whom they ruled seem to have been, for the most part, quite worthy of such masters, and to have been as perfectly divested of every honourable feeling, as *majesty itself*. In evidence of this truth, let us examine the history of a circumstance in the reign of Charles the Second, that provoked more than usual indignation. At that time, there existed no national debt; but when the parliament had voted supplies, it was common for bankers, and wealthy individuals, to advance money to the exchequer, on the faith of repayment, when the produce of the grants thus voted came into the public treasury. On the 2d of January, 1672, the exchequer was indebted to the bankers and others in the amount of one million, three hundred and twenty-eight thousand, five hundred and twenty-six pounds; and on this day Charles suspended payment. A bankruptcy for ten times that sum would not affect with an equal degree of ruin the present commerce of England. The king, however, charged his hereditary revenue with the legal interest of this sum at six *per cent.* and this was actually and regularly paid, till about a year before his death, when it was stopped. As he advanced the interest with punctuality, for so long a time, we may candidly judge that his failure in the end arose from necessity. Sir John Sinclair says that the shutting up of the exchequer "will for ever stamp the character of Charles the "Second with *indelible infamy*."† His character was, upon a thousand other emergencies, so completely *stamped*, that any single crime could have added little to the account. But the point in question is to prove that in this very affair, Charles, bad as he was, behaved with greater honesty than *any body else*. Nay, he positively acted with ten thousand times more regard to justice than lord Somers, who is commonly reputed to have been the most virtuous and immaculate personage in the sanctified corps of revolution whigs.

* Edward II, Richard II, and Henry VI, appear to have been peaceable men. They were all murdered. Edward Vth is supposed when a boy, to have shared the same fate. Of Edward VI. the exit is not free from suspicion. Queen Anne was, upon the whole, a harmless woman; and every Englishman acknowledges with gratitude and with pride, that the virtues of the house of Brunswick transcend all praise.

† History of the public revenue, part II. chap. 3.

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When Charles could no longer pay the interest of the money, the unfortunate creditors attempted but in vain to interest the legislature in their behalf. " They were at last obliged to maintain their rights in the courts of justice. The suit was protracted for *about twelve years* in the courts below, but judgment was obtained against the crown, about the year 1697. The decision, however, was set aside by lord Somers, then chancellor; though it is said that ten out of the twelve judges, whom he had called to his assistance were of a different opinion. The cause was at last carried by appeal to the house of lords, by whom the decree of the chancellor was reversed; and the patentees would of course have received *the annual interest contained in the original letters patent*, had not an act passed *anno* 1699, by which, in lieu thereof, it was enacted, that after the 25th of December 1705, the hereditary revenue of excise should stand charged with the annual payment of *THREE per cent.* for the principal sum contained in the said letters patent, subject nevertheless to be redeemed upon the payment of a moiety thereof, or six hundred and sixty-four thousand, two hundred and sixty-three pounds."

The good people of Britain speak with as much fluency of French and Spanish treachery, as if we had engrossed in our own persons the whole integrity of the human race. Yet it will be difficult to find a single transaction in any age that more thoroughly blackens the character of an entire nation than the robbery of these creditors. The perfidy of Charles himself is forgot in the superior blaze of subsequent scoundrelism. First, the flaming parliamentary patriots of that time refused to trouble themselves about the matter; though *their* piety was so deeply alarmed by the prospect of a Popish successor to the crown. In the second place, the claim became a question in *the courts below*. That the re-payment of this thirteen hundred thousand pounds should ever have been an object of hesitation at all, was, in itself, an utter disgrace to the whole system of English jurisprudence. The law-suit lasted for *twelve years*. During this time, and while the court of London rolled in luxury, many of the creditors must have gone to jail, or at least, many subordinate creditors, whom the former, in consequence of this fraud, were unable to satisfy. An immense number of families must have been reduced to beggary; and a croud of honest fathers and husbands must have died of a broken heart. At length a decision was obtained, and approved by ten out of the twelve judges. A thousand racked bankrupts rejoiced in the prospect of restitution.

Till at the last, a cruel spoiler came,
Cropt this fair flower, and rifled all its sweetness.

The decision was reversed by Somers, the lord chancellor, a sage, who exhibited in his own person the very focus of whig

virtue.* This conduct reminds us of the proverb, that *the receiver is as bad as the thief*. Charles paid the interest of the money as long he could. Somers would pay nothing. It is therefore indisputable that, of the two rogues, the *receiver* was in this instance, by much the greater. The house of lords reversed so scandalous a decree, but mark what follows. An act of parliament was immediately passed, which in opposition to every principle of law, of justice, and of decency, interfered with the decision of a judicial court. To consummate the infamy of the English house of peers, they consented as *legislators*, to the reversal of their own decision as *judges*, thus demonstrating their invulnerable contempt for all vestige of reputation. In the end, payment was delayed for more than five additional years, and then, the *half* of the legal interest was begun to be paid annually, but redeemable on refunding *half* of the sum originally stolen. The reader will observe in what kind of milk and water style, Sir John Sinclair has related this story. He has made a subsequent but small mistake, in saying that the creditors were kept for *twenty-five* years out of their money. From a year before the death of Charles the Second,† to the 25th of December 1705, is a period of less than twenty-three years. At six *per cent.* of compound interest, a sum doubles itself once in eleven years, and three hundred and thirty-one days, or twice, in twenty-three years and about ten months. For the sake of round numbers, let us reduce the original debt to thirteen hundred thousand pounds, and suppose that it doubled *twice* during the time when payment of interest was suspended. At this rate, the merchants had in December, 1705, lost five millions; and two hundred thousand pounds sterling; besides their expences in a law-suit of twelve years. In compensation, parliament granted them an annuity of three *per cent.* on the original sum, that is to say, *thirty-nine thousand eight hundred and fifty-five pounds, seventeen shillings and seven-pence sterling*. At six *per cent.* the annual interest of five millions and two hundred thousand pounds amounted to three hundred and twelve thousand pounds. Thus parliament gave somewhat more than an *eighth* part of what the merchants had actually lost. We now see that the felonious ravages of an Eng-

* "One of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unfaded, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly." All the traditional accounts of him, the historians of the last age, and its best authors, represent him "as *the most uncorrupt lawyer*, and *the honestest statesman*, as a master orator, a genius of the finest taste, and as a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views; "as a man, who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity." Catalogue of royal and noble authors by Horace Walpole. Art. SOMERS. The writer proceeds in a rhapsody of five pages to the same purpose. He appeals to the historians and *the best authors* of the last age. It is likely that none of these encomiasts had been creditors to the English exchequer, in the reign of Charles the Second. But the panegyrics of all mankind cannot convert an act of arrant robbery into an act of justice. The historians to whom Mr. Walpole appeals prove nothing but how vilely the British annals have commonly been composed.

† He died on the 6th of February, 1684.

lish government are not restricted to Scots Highlanders. With such a gulph of iniquity yawning on every side, we are tempted to think ourselves perusing the Tyburn chronicle. The real cause for shutting up the exchequer was yet more disreputable than the act itself. Charles had declared war against the Dutch, for the same reason that a Dey of Algiers declares it.* The contest had cost more than five millions sterling. His parliament refused to relieve him from the pressure of some of the expences. The king offered to make any man treasurer, who would remove his necessities. Cliford embraced the proposal, and the exchequer was closed. The Dutch wars were infinitely more criminal than even this action, but these were only piracies abroad; the other was piracy at home, and for that reason only has it been condemned. In 1655, Oliver Cromwell, without either provocation or pretence, attacked Spain; and we still celebrate the Algerine victories of admiral Blake over the fleets of that injured country, which proves that the nation has not yet acquired more wisdom or honesty, than its ancestors. A very modern act of profligacy shall close this chapter.

Sixty thousand pounds were granted by parliament to George the Third, that he might be enabled to make an establishment for his eldest son. Fifty thousand pounds a year were likewise bestowed upon this young man for his personal expences. An hundred and eighty-one thousand pounds have since been assigned by parliament for his works at Carleton-house, and for the discharge of debts which he had contracted notwithstanding his pension of fifty thousand pounds a year.† Ten thousand pounds *per annum*, like a drop in the bucket, were also added to his allowance, that he might never be under the necessity of incurring new debts. It is said, however, that the sum thus entrusted, was never applied to the discharge of his debts; and at least one circumstance is certain, that the prince of Wales continues to be on the wrong side of the hedge, by some hundred thousands of pounds. It is reported, that great numbers of London tradesmen have been compelled to shut up their shops, in consequence of their unfortunate connection with this bankrupt. His stud of horses has more than once been sold for much less than these animals originally cost him. The task of recording his exploits must be reserved for the pen of some future Suetonius. At the present time, (September, 1792,) it may be safely computed, that in one shape or other, he has expended for the

* "The wars which the king entered into against the Dutch, were principally with a view of *plundering a wealthy*, and, as he imagined, a *deserted* neighbour." History of the public revenue, part 1. chap. 9. The war, begun by the commonwealth of England against Holland in 1650, was likewise unprovoked by the latter. In these three quarrels more lives were lost, and more mischief done, than has been committed by all the corsairs of Barbary ever since, and yet we pretend to call these people *pirates*, while the far more extensive enormities of the British navy, are burnished into pages of heroism. In the practice of sea-robbery, England has exceeded every other nation.

† History of the public revenue, part 1 s. chap. 2.

nation eight hundred thousand pounds sterling, besides the interest of the money up to this date. We may compare this mode of exhausting the public treasury, with that employed in the highlands of Scotland, to replenish it.*

On a subject so hateful, there can be no pleasure to expatiate. Indeed the taste of the nation runs in a very opposite channel. We can hardly open a newspaper without meeting a rhapsody on the virtues and abilities of the prince of Wales. His admirers, like the spaniel that licks the foot raised to kick him, are not contented with general praise. They tell us, in transports of exultation, that he gave a thousand guineas for "an *admirable* snuff-box;" that, upon a late birth-day, he appeared at court in a suit of cloaths, which, including diamonds, cost eighty thousand pounds; that he bought a race horse for fifteen hundred guineas, and sold him for seventy pounds; that he was present some time ago at a boxing match, where a shoemaker was struck dead with a single blow; and that he drove a lady round St. James's park, or that she drove him, no matter which, in a phaeton with four black ponies.†

For these inestimable services, the nation has paid eight hundred thousand pounds; a sum lost in the bottomless pit of Carleton-house. How many additional millions are, like Curtius, to be swallowed up in the same gulph, time only can determine. Since this country had the honor of establishing a household for the prince of Wales, we have been burdened with additional taxes upon snuff and tobacco, on paper, advertisements, leather, perfumery, horses, attorneys, batchelors, stage-coaches, gloves, hats, male and female servants,‡ pedlars and shopkeepers; upon windows, candles, medicines, bills and receipts; upon newspapers and partridges; and if

* In North-America, there are sometimes found the bones of a carnivorous quadruped, which must have been, when alive, three or four times larger than the elephant. This animal, which may likely have been amphibious, appears now to be extirpated. Perhaps it perished from an impossibility of obtaining adequate subsistence. A forest thirty leagues in length, would have been insufficient to furnish food for so formidable a guest. It is possible that the *species of kings* may one day, come to be extirpated for a similar reason. The gluttony of the mammoth, devouring six buffaloes for a breakfast, bears no proportion to the ordinary extent of royal rapacity. Two hundred families of sovereigns like those of France or England, would of themselves, be sufficient for consuming the whole revenues of Europe.

† It is very generally whispered and believed, that an *illustrious* personage shot one of his footmen dead with a pistol, for disrespect to a woman. If this be true, the life of Dr. Philip Withers has not been the only sacrifice at that shrine; nor will Morocco be in future, the only country in the world governed by an executioner.

In the London chronicle, I read many years ago, an article stating that a very young naval officer *whose name was inserted at full length*, had stabbed one of his servants. There was never any farther notice in the newspapers of this story; but I have since learned, that the man died of his wound; and that a sailor on board of the ship where the murder was committed, underwent a sham trial for it, and was discharged.

‡ The latter tax ought to have been entitled a recipe for female idleness, theft and prostitution.

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any thing can be yet mote impertinent or oppressive, on births, burials and legacies ; besides a crowd of other impositions beyond the retention of the strongest memory. Now it is remarkable, that ten or fifteen of these taxes might be selected, which by their nett produce, could not in whole have discharged the expences of this single private person. We are incessantly deafened about our obligations to the house of Guelf. It would be but candid to state an estimate of their obligations to us, and to strike the balance.

In the course of a century, from the revolution to Michaelmas, 1788, the pilots of our most excellent constitution, have received into the British exchequer, one thousand millions, six hundred and forty-four thousand, one hundred and fifty-four pounds sterling.* It will be hard to prove that even a twentieth part of this money has been expended on wise or useful purposes. To this we must add the charges of collecting the revenue for the same period, which can be moderately guessed at six hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. This rate extends, in an hundred years to sixty millions of pounds sterling debursed for the invaluable exploits of custom-house and excise officers. Such a sum, at a compound interest of five *per cent.* computing from the respective dates of its annual expenditure, would by this time have been large enough to buy up in fee simple, the British islands, with the last acre, and the last guinea that they contain.



CHAPTER II.

Fertility of the Hebrides—Islay—Its prodigious improvement—Immense abundance of fish—Miserable effects of Excise— Astonishing Corn Law—What Scotland might have been—Famine during the war of 1689—Culloden—The bloody Duke—A strange Act of Parliament—Brutal triumph of the British Nation.

WE have, in the last chapter, learned some of the circumstances that prevent the improvement of Scots fisheries. We shall now return to that subject, by a farther examination of Dr. Anderson's performance. Other writers have cast light on this question, and well deserve to be quoted. But the present work embraces an immense multiplicity of objects ; and hence, it becomes requisite to condense and abridge our materials. There is not to be expected, in this place, a complete account of the situation of the inhabitants in the northern counties, and in the islands of Scotland. A few interesting facts only will be stated ; some shocking abuses of government will be exhibited ; and some obvious reflec-

* History of the public revenue, part III. chap. I.

tions will be submitted to the public. By a sketch of this kind, the spirit of curiosity and of enquiry may perhaps be excited; and then every person is able, at his own convenience, to make himself master of the case. This may be resolved into three points, the natural advantages of the country itself, the miserable consequences resulting from the tyranny of parliament, and the numerous benefits that would arise from an honest and beneficent administration.

It has commonly been supposed, that the Hebrides were barren and unfit for agriculture. On the contrary, Dr. Anderson states, that they contain extensive fields of unusual fertility. Many tracts which have never been ploughed are capable to produce corn, and to supply subsistence for a multitude of people. Arran excepted, which is very mountainous, the western islands are for the most part level. Tiree, for example, is one continued plain of fine arable land, with only two small hills. The west side of Barra, of Uist, and of Harris, and the whole of the islands between these, as well as the north-west side of Lewis, are low lands. They are one entire bed of shell-sand, and extremely fruitful. Dr. Anderson, who is himself a farmer of experience, observes, that these fields of shell-sand, when well cultivated, and properly manured with sea-weed, give crops of barley, which cannot, as he imagines, be equalled in any part of Europe. He adds, that were he to specify the particulars, they would not obtain credit. The crops of pease and rye are very luxuriant; and he supposes that turnips, lucerne, sainfoin, and wheat, might be raised in as great perfection as any where in this quarter of the world. Lime-stone, marle, and shell-sand, *are every where to be met with in great plenty.* The islands of Cannay and Egg, consist of several rows of basaltic columns raised one above each other. The ground is not level, but the soil is very fertile. The rocks of Lismore consist entirely of lime-stone, and the land is fruitful, even to a proverb. The climate of the western islands is more favourable, and the harvest for the most part more early than on the opposite coast of Scotland. During summer, the wind blows commonly from the south-west, and of consequence it is loaded with clouds from the Atlantic. The high lands on the western coasts intercept these clouds, and the rain descends in torrents. But in the islands the ground is low. The clouds pass over them without obstruction. There is usually less rain in summer than the inhabitants would desire. The harvest is more early and more certain than on the continent. In Islay, the crops are commonly secured before the end of September; a more early season than in East Lothian, the best corn country of Scotland. Among the western islands, where the soil is not shell-sand, the surface very frequently consists of mossy earth. When manured with shell-sand, it becomes at once capable of bearing excellent crops of grain. When afterwards laid into grass, it becomes covered with a fine sward, consisting chiefly of white clover and the poa-grasses; so that this improved soil becomes in future equally adapted for corn

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ceptible of the greatest improvement. When covered with that sort
of manure which is every where plentiful and inexhaustible, they
immediately obtain a fine pile of delicate and percnial grass.

As an evidence of what may be accomplished in the Hebrides,
by the joint efforts of industry and judgment, we may consider the
proceedings of Walter Campbell, Esquire, of Shawfield, proprietor
of Islay.* About twelve years before Dr. Anderson came to visit it,
this island, like most of the Hebrides, at present, had no roads on
which carriages could be drawn, no bridges, no public work of any
kind. It contained less than seven thousand people; and it imported
annually, between three and four thousand bolls of grain. Thus,
if shut out from the rest of the world, the inhabitants must have
expired of hunger. They were discontented; and they had begun
to emigrate. Their departure was interrupted by the very judi-
cious war against America, which commenced for a duty of three-
pence *per* pound upon tea, and terminated with an expence of one
hundred and thirty-nine millions sterling. Now let us consider the state
of this island in the year 1785. In spite of the intervention of a bloo-
dy war, that lasted for seven years and an half out of the twelve, and
checked all sorts of improvement in all parts of the empire, the
population had augmented to ten thousand souls. These, instead
of importing their subsistence, *exported* annually, about five thou-
sand bolls of grain, three thousand six hundred head of black cat-
tle, between three and four hundred horses, and about thirty-six
thousand spindles of yarn, all of their own produce and manufac-
ture. Thirty miles of excellent roads had already been formed. A
great number of useful bridges were erected. A well constructed
pier had been built. A town was begun, and its inhabitants mul-
tiplied with rapidity. Markets were opened for the produce of the
land. Large tracts of barren ground were annually brought
into culture. The people were industrious and satisfied. This
rapid improvement was atchieved, in a poor and sequestered
island, by the exertions of a single private gentleman.
Hence, it seems evident, that if the rest of Scotland had been go-
verned with equal wisdom, its wealth, population, importance, and
felicity, must, at the same time, have increased in a similar propor-
tion. From sixteen hundred thousand people, we should in twelve
years have multiplied to two millions and three hundred thousand.

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* The Doctor observed to a friend, that part of the superior good sense of this
gentleman arose from his happiness in being born a *younger brother*. He did not
obtain the estates of the family till he had reached the maturity of his understand-
ing; when the death of an elderson, without children, put him into possession of
them. Such is the ridiculous consequence of the right of primogeniture, that it
not only half beggars the rest of the family, but in two cases out of three, the ob-
ject of its favour has a very great chance for being a blockhead. Every body may
remark, at a grammar-school, that heirs are in general the most idle, ignorant,
and vicious of all the boys. Of these hopeful materials our future legislatures are
to be formed.

At the same time, Scotland must have been able to export grain in much greater quantities than what she at present imports. The agriculture of the country must very soon have doubled its productions. The existence of seven hundred thousand additional people, in twelve years only, hath been prevented by the magic wands of five or six hundred custom-house and excise officers.

It is remarkable that though the *free* government of Britain cannot perform revolutions like that effected by Mr. Campbell, yet a task of this nature has, within our own days, been executed by one of the most inflexible despots that ever menaced mankind. In the year 1763, the dominions of Frederick the Great, had been reduced to the utmost distress. The king himself, in his posthumous memoirs, observes, that "no description, however pathetic, can possibly approach to the deep, the afflicting, the mournful impression, which *the sight of them inspired.*" Among other particulars, he tells us, that they had lost *five hundred thousand inhabitants*. Thirteen thousand houses had been razed from the earth; and the whole nation, from the noble to the peasant, were in rags that hardly covered their nakedness. In about eight years of peace, the breaches of population were perfectly repaired, and the whole country became as flourishing as ever. Thus, what Mr. Campbell acted upon a small scale, was done by Frederick upon a greater. There is no doubt that Scotland itself might be improved as quickly as the island of Ilay. For instance, Dr. Anderson remarks, that within the last fifty years, a very great alteration for the better has taken place in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen. Many thousand acres of the most barren land that can be conceived, have been converted into excellent corn-fields; and he computes that, in consequence of this change, the rent of this land has been augmented by more than thirty thousand pounds sterling *per annum*. The iron forge at Bunaw gives employment to several families. When they were planted near it, the soil was nothing but a bleak moss with some dwarfish heath. Of this land, several hundred acres are now covered with grass and corn. The steep mountain at Fort William, seemed by nature incapable of improvement; but is now overspread with gardens and corn-fields. To these details by Dr. Anderson, every person may, from his own observation, add others of the same kind. The history of the parish of Portpatrick, in the statistical account of Scotland, affords an instance of how much may be done for a barren corner. What adds to the merit of the improvements in Ilay is, that they were accomplished under the most oppressive system of taxation that can be devised. The proprietor himself has encountered the most rancorous insolence in carrying on the fishery, not only from the commissioners of the salt duties, but from a petty officer of excise; and if he had not been a very able and powerful man, these harpies might have reduced him to bankruptcy. We must not therefore blame providence, because the Hebrides, and a considerable part of the main land of Scotland, are

still in a state of comparative desolation. Industry lingers not for want of a richer soil or a milder sky; but for want of such a legislator as Frederick sometimes was, and such landlords as Walter Campbell. It is not merely by the quality of the soil, that the Hebrides may become valuable. Mines of lead and copper have been found in Islay; and in Tiree and Skye, quarries of excellent marble have been discovered. Coal has been met with in several places, but a discovery of this nature must be useless, unless to the island where it may be dug; because the coasting duty upon coal would effectually prevent its being exported even to the neighbouring islands. Their inhabitants live in scattered hamlets. They can buy but a small quantity of coals at one time, possibly only half a ton. The expence of bringing an excise officer for thirty miles perhaps, to inspect the coals, an expence which the parties must pay, would often come, as before observed, to four times the price of the cargo. In the same way, if the natives had any cargo fit for a foreign market, they must before they can sail, obtain a clearance from the custom-house. This would, in many cases, cost more than the worth of the cargo.

The circumstance by which the Hebrides have as yet been principally distinguished, is that immense quantity of excellent fish that fill the surrounding seas. It is unnecessary here to mention the names of perhaps thirty different kinds, including a great variety of shell-fish; but let us remark the idiotism of the English government, when pretending to remit the salt duties for the sake of encouraging the Scots fisheries. The persons who receive *banded* salt are not suffered to catch any fish but herrings. They must carry their men, and boats, their nets, and salt, and casks to the fishing ground. They must remain there for three months, and if a shoal of cod or turbot, of haddocks, of mullet, of soal, of flounders, or of halybut, comes in their way, they are not at liberty to take them; but are condemned to spend these three months in perfect idleness,* unless they meet with a shoal of herrings. Yet it frequently happens that but for this prohibition, they could load their vessels with cargoes of other fish equally valuable. At the end of three months, they must bring their men, their boats, their nets, their salt, and their casks back to the custom-house, before their salt bonds can be relieved. If there had been no other fish but herrings in the western seas, an excuse might have been made. But this is not the case. The dog-fish are sometimes to be met with in such vast numbers, that their back fins are seen like a thick bush of sedges above the water, as far as the eye can reach. A boat-load in such a shoal may be caught with a few hand-lines in an hour or two. A valuable oil is extracted from their liver. A fisherman at Islay informed Dr. Anderson, that he frequently baited a line with four hundred hooks, for the smaller flat-fish, and caught at one haul, three hun-

dred and fifty. They consisted of turbot, soal, and large excellent flounders, of two or three pounds weight. As to skate and halybut, he could fill his boat with them, when he chose it, at a single haul. The quantity of herrings that sometimes approach the coast in one body, almost exceeds belief. In 1773, a shoal came into Loch Terridon. Many hundreds of boats were loaded as oft as the owners thought proper for two months; and the quantity caught in a single night has been computed by Dr. Anderson, at nineteen thousand eight hundred barrels. Of the quantities brought ashore upon such occasions, a great part are frequently suffered to putrify, for want of salt to cure them. The remainder are cured exclusively with Irish salt, for, in Dr. Anderson's opinion, as already observed, five hundred thousand people in the north of Scotland employ none else. Thus on the one hand, the heaviness of the tax defeats its own purpose, and on the other hand, as the smugglers of salt cannot obtain open leave to export their cargoes of fish, the business ends in a mere waste and destruction. What better indeed was to be expected, when the inhabitants of the western islands came under the domination of an assembly of legislators at the distance of two hundred leagues, an assembly who despise their interests, abhor their prosperity, and do not even understand their language?

At Loch Carron, about the year 1775, herrings "were so throng, " that though the loch, from the narrow entry, is above a league " long, and in some places above a mile broad, and from sixty to " four fathoms deep, it was indifferent to the fishers whether their " nets were near the ground or surface; they were equally sure to " have them loaded. They continued in this bay for five weeks. " On the west side of Skye, I am informed, they once swarmed so " thick in Caroy loch, and so many were caught, that they could " not be carried off; and after the busses were loaded, and the " country round was served, *the neighbouring farmers made them up " into composts, and manured their ground with them the ensuing season.* " This shoal continued many years upon the coast, but they were " not in every year, nor in every bay so thick as this last; but were " for a number of years so much so, that all the busses made car- " goes, and the whole coasts were abundantly served.—At Loch " Urn, in 1767, or 1768, such a quantity *ran on shore*, that the " beach, for four miles round the head of the loch, was " covered with them, from six to eighteen inches deep; and " the ground under water, so far as it could be seen at low water, " was equally so. I believe the whole bay, from the narrow to the " mouth, about twelve miles long, and a league broad, was *full of " them.* I am also of opinion, that the strongest fish being worn " out, in forcing their way into the inner bay, drove the " lightest and weakest on shore. So thick were these last, that " they carried before them every other kind of fish they " met, even ground-fish, skate, flounders, &c. and perished

"together."* With such inconceivable quantities of fish at home, we can be under no necessity for wandering in quest of employment, to Greenland, to Newfoundland, to Falkland's islands, or to Nootka Sound; and of obtaining a permission for fishing so far off, at an expence of three millions sterling. The true cause for such conduct is shortly this. At the union, Scotland came under the yoke of an ancient rival, by whom she was equally feared and detested; and no advantage to the empire in general could compensate to the pride of England, for the mortification of having promoted Scots opulence.†

In the year 1784, a shoal of herrings came into Loch Urn. Mr. M'Donell of Barrisdale, gave it as his opinion, that in the course of seven or eight weeks a quantity was caught, that, if brought to market, would have sold for fifty-six thousand pounds sterling. Double the quantity might have been taken, but for the want of salt and of casks. Were it not for the interruption of an excise, and some other obvious causes, the fishery business in that quarter would be more lucrative than any other that a labouring man can follow in any part of Britain.‡

These examples prove what immense loads of fish might be killed, if the people had a proper supply of salt and of casks for curing them, and a suitable market for selling them; so that they might be able to continue at the fishery during the whole time which it lasted. At present, the mischief that is left undone by the exorbitant excise upon salt, is completed by the preposterous terms on which the bounty is granted. When a buss has completed her cargo, *she must abandon the fishing entirely*; and none of her hands can return to it again in less than eight or ten weeks, before which time, the people of the buss might have caught perhaps twenty loadings, *had they been permitted to remain*.

From the complicated and oppressive conditions upon which the bounty offered by parliament has been granted, there is ground to question whether a single penny of it has ever gone into the pockets of the fishermen. First, the bounty would occasion so great an expence to the inhabitants of the Hebrides, that they are entirely out of the question. Before a native of the western coasts or islands, can enter himself, even as a private mariner, on board one of those vessels, that apply for the bounty, he must go to Greenock, Rothesay, or Campbelton, and there wait till he is engaged and mustered.

* Illustrations of the report, p. 158.

† The present method of paving and lighting the streets of London, is, as an improvement, felt in the most sensible manner by all ranks and degrees of people. The plan of this work was borrowed from the high street of Edinburgh, and the very bones for the pavement were imported from Scotland. For the personal safety of the gentlemen concerned, and their families, these circumstances were concealed from the rabble with the strictest caution. The ferocity of vulgar patriotism would not have suffered the acknowledgment of such an obligation to North-Britain, a country, on which they daily exhaust the vocabulary of Billingsgate.

‡ Report, p. 14.

If this happens at one of the two former places, he proceeds to Campbelton to be rendezvoused. These marches and counter-marches consume a month or six weeks of time, and a great deal of money. At last he returns to the very spot from whence he set out.* Thus it would be impossible for a Hebridean or west Highlander, ever to send a bus on such a circuitous voyage, for he would be obliged to dispatch her a second time to the south, to a second rendezvous, and to be at the charge of her making a second return home. She would thus be forced to perform *four* voyages instead of *two*. The door to the pretended bounty, is by this means both shut and bolted against the western Highlanders. Even to the busses that earn it, the bounty is but a mere delusion. On the east coast of Scotland, the custom-house fees, on fitting out such a vessel of thirty tons, are about seven pounds. The bounty is only forty-five pounds. The time wasted in going to a place of rendezvous, before she sails, and again at her return, cost a month of delay, and a charge of twenty pounds. Thus more than one half of the bounty is already sunk. In the second place, she is prohibited from catching any fish but herrings. On that account, she must have neither lines nor hooks on board. Though surrounded by whales and dog-fish, cod, ling, mackarel, and other aquatic tribes that follow the herrings in vast numbers, the men in these vessels, when herrings do not come in their way, are kept idle for weeks together, while charges multiply on the head of the undertaker.† A third heavy obstruction is, that all the hands in the bus must be mustered at the custom-house, not only before sailing, but *after the vessel returns*. Thus many fishers must be carried back to the rendezvous, who are superfluous for navigating the bus, and who would otherwise be left on the fishing ground till the end of the season; and this regulation also is very burdensome to the owner. The bounty is thus utterly consumed in complying with a system of regulations as fantastical, and a thousand times more pernicious, than the consulship of Caligula's horse.‡

* Report, p. 44.

† Illustrations of the report, p. 184.

‡ Foreigners unacquainted with the current style of British conversation, may condemn comparisons like that in the text. Let us hear with what reverence the legislators of this country speak and think of each other.

The Earl of Buchan hath just now published the lives of Fletcher of Salton, and of James Thomson. He there tells us, that he once said to Lord Chatham, "What will become of poor England, that doats on the imperfections of her *pretended* constitution?" Chatham replied, "The gout will dispose of me soon enough to prevent me from feeling the consequences of this *insatiation*; but, *before the end of this century*, either the parliament will reform itself from *within*, or be reformed with a vengeance from *without*." Thus spoke one of the masters of the puppet-show. It is beyond the compass of human language to express the depth of contempt and detestation, couched under these few words.

On the 28th of February, 1785, Edmund Burke addressed the House of Commons, concerning the astonishing composition made with the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot. In this affair, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas were the principals, and he

As the Hebrideans cannot embrace the terms of the bounty, they are therefore at liberty to continue at the fishing as long as they please. They are idle or busy, just as they are supplied with salt. When a smuggling salt-boat arrives, they will get perhaps six shillings *per* barrel for their herrings. As that salt is expended, the price falls to five, four, three, two, one shilling *per* barrel, and sometimes to six-pence or eight-pence. At other times, you may purchase a barrel of fine fresh herrings, for a single quid of tobacco.* A barrel contains from six to sixteen hundred herrings, according to their size.

It seems needless to enlarge much farther on the immense advantages that might be derived from this inexhaustible resource for the industry and subsistence of the Scots nation. If the bounties and taxes were at once abolished, and the Dutch prohibited from interfering in the fishery, the Hebrides and the western coasts of Scotland, would perhaps in the course of thirty or forty years, quadruple their present population. It might with reason be expected, that thousands of the Dutch mariners, who are at present employed in that business, would come and settle in the country. Multitudes would likewise flock from different quarters of Britain. Villages of manufacturers would by degrees be established, and the Hebrides would present a prospect of industry, of prosperity, and of happiness, which the most sanguine friend to national improvements can at present hardly conjecture. To make this assertion intelligible, and to show what benefits may be derived from the British fisheries, no writer can be cited with more propriety than John De Witt, Grand Pensioner of Holland. He informs us, on the authority of Sir Walter Rawleigh, that in the year 1618, the Hollanders employed on the coast of Britain, three thousand ships, and fifty thousand men; and that for transporting and selling the fish so taken, and bringing home the returns for them, they required nine thousand additional ships, and one hundred and fifty thousand men. Perhaps this estimate was exaggerated, but the real number of men and of ships engaged in British fisheries must have been very great. De Witt quotes a Dutch writer, who relates, that in the space of three days, in the year 1601, there sailed out of Holland to the eastward, between eight and nine hundred ships, and fifteen hundred busses for the herring fishery. The Grand Pensioner adds, that from the time of Sir Walter Rawleigh, to the year 1667, the Dutch fisheries had

thus describes their conduct. "Let no man hereafter talk of the decaying energies of nature. All the acts and monuments in the records of speculation; the consolidated corruption of ages; the patterns of exemplary plunder in the heroic times of Roman iniquity, never equalled the gigantic corruption of *this single* age! Never did Nero, in all the insolent prodigality of despotism, deal out to his senatorian guards, a donation fit to be named with the largesse showered down, the bounty of our chancellor of the exchequer (Mr. Pitt), on the faithful band of his Indian Seapoys."

* Illustrations of the report, p. 163.

been increased one third part. He conjectures that the United Provinces contained two millions and four hundred thousand people, and of these, that four hundred and fifty thousand persons derived their subsistence from the fisheries; and the commerce and manufactures which depended upon them.* These particulars are here specified to prove that Dr. Anderson has not on this subject made an extravagant supposition. He estimates that one hundred thousand fishermen might find constant employment in the British seas. He thinks that if this number of fishermen were employed, there would likewise be wanted, twenty or thirty thousand mariners for transporting the cargoes to market, and for bringing the necessary return of salt, of coals, of grain, of casks, of the materials for ship-building, and the numberless articles dependent on an extensive fishery.† If we suppose that one half of these mariners were married, and that the husbands had on an average four children, the total amount of their families would be three hundred thousand persons. These added to an hundred and twenty thousand seamen, would make in whole an addition of four hundred and twenty thousand British subjects.‡ But this is not all. These mariners and their families would not only supply a great part of the nation with an important article of subsistence, and thus lessen the wages of labour, but they would afford among themselves a wide market for the commodities of the farmer and manufacturer. They would thus in a double way promote the public interest. They would lessen the expence of subsistence, and at the same time, they would multiply the excitements to industry. The attainment of these two objects is the very *Alpha* and *Omega* of national prosperity. We should then see land, which gives not at present one shilling *per* acre of rent, produce from three to six pounds sterling.§ We should see a barren waste of stones and bogs, with scarce a single blade of grass upon it, converted into luxuriant crops of wheat and clover. Manufacturing villages would rise in the wilderness, that is now only distinguished by monumental vestiges of the Picts or the Druids. The farmers and manufacturers would very likely increase to an equal number with that of the fishermen, and Britain might thus acquire an augmentation of eight

* The True Interest and Political Maxims of Holland, part 1, chapters 6 and 9, translated by John Campbell, and printed at London, in 1746. Dr. Anderson, in his Evidence before the committee of fisheries, declares, on the authority of De Witt and others, that in the last century, two hundred and sixty thousand persons were computed to be employed by Holland in the fisheries alone. I mention these different numbers without knowing how to reconcile them.

† Evidence before the committee, page 317.

‡ This word, in its original sense implies something that is *cast down* and *laid under foot*. When applied in its common acceptation, the choice of expression is happy.

§ This has actually happened in Aberdeenshire. The reader may consult an essay in the Bee. vol. 7. p. 189.

hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. The example of Holland shews that this conjecture is not chimerical. As the Hebrides and western coasts of Scotland contain by far the greatest and most important part of this fishery, they would have a chance of acquiring an addition of seven hundred thousand people. An hundredth part of the millions expended upon an ordinary French war, must have been sufficient to found a colony of fishermen in the Hebrides, worth all our foreign possessions put together. But such a colony would not have answered the purposes of ministerial corruption. They would not have entangled us in a quarrel with the rest of Europe. They would not have supplied our rulers with a plausible pretence for loading the public with extravagant taxes. Mr. Pitt speaks of discharging the national debt, and of promoting the public prosperity. At the same time he accepts a Scots revenue of five thousand pounds, that is raised at an expence of ten thousand. He gives half a guinea per day to bludgeon-men to drive the electors of John Horne Tooke, from the hustings at Westminster; and an annuity of five hundred and ninety-five thousand, two hundred pounds sterling, to the immaculate creditors of the Nabob of Arcot.*

Of ministerial vigilance in collecting the salt duties in the Scots Highlands, the following particulars will afford a proper conception. "In these cases, the miscarriage of a letter, (and to places "where no regular post goes, this must frequently happen,) the "carelessness of an ignorant ship-master, the mistake of a clerk in "office, or other circumstances, equally trivial, often involve a "whole industrious family in ruin. There are instances of men "being brought to Edinburgh, from many hundred miles distance, "to the neglect of their own affairs, merely because of some neg- "lect or omission of some petty clerk in office; which, when rec- "tified, brings no other relief, excepting a permission to return home "with no farther load of debt, but the expence of such a journey, and

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* The particulars of this edifying transaction are to be found in the works of Edmund Burke, the bosom friend of the "heaven-born minister." A concise account of it will be given in the Political Progress, Part II. As to the Westminster election, full information may be had from *Proceedings in an action for debt between the right honourable Charles James Fox, plaintiff, and John Horne Tooke, Esq. defendant*, printed in 1792, of which also a summary is to be hereafter inserted. When the legislature of a country consists of such characters, it is not wonderful that our statute books are crowded with the most atrocious edicts. As one specimen out of hundreds, observe what follows.

In 1770, a law was made, which declares, "That all persons killing game, on any pretence whatever, above an hour before sun-rise, or after sun-set, shall without respect to sex or quality, and without any alternative or redemption, be committed to prison for three months at least; and be publicly whipped at noon-day, "in the town where the prison is situated." Thus, after giving government three guineas for leave to kill, upon your own ground, a hare that is dear of six-pence, you are by this law, subject to be whipped for it, whatever may be your sex or condition. This notable penalty hath since been restricted to a fine of five pounds sterling.

" *the loss it has occasioned.* But should the case be otherwise, and
 " should the mistake have been committed by the poor country-
 " man, though that mistake originated *from ignorance only*, or was
 " occasioned by the loss of a letter, in going to places where no re-
 " gular posts are established, he becomes loaded with additional
 " burdens, which, in many cases, all his future industry and care
 " will never enable him to discharge.*

Dr. Smith, in his Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations, adverts
 to the Scots herring fishery. He says, that during eleven years,
 from 1771, to 1781, inclusive, one hundred and fifty-five thousand
 four hundred and sixty-three pounds, eleven shillings sterling of
 bounties were paid on account of it. This was, in proportion to
 the whole quantity of herrings caught, a premium of twelve shil-
 lings and three-pence, three farthings *per* barrel; and this kind of
 barrels are worth, upon an average, about a guinea.† Thus the le-
 gislature paid four-sevenths of the market price of a barrel of
 herrings, as a bounty to the persons who caught them. Two-
 thirds of the buss-caught herrings are exported; and here, a second
 bounty is given, of two shillings and eight-pence *per* barrel. The
 average number of vessels employed for these eleven years was
 about one hundred and ninety-nine. " THREE THOUSAND BUS-
 " ses have been known to be employed in one year by *the Dutch* in the
 " (Scots) herring fishery, besides those fitted out by the Hamburgh-
 " ers, Bremeners, and other northern ports.‡" By the estimate of Sir
 Walter Rawleigh, already cited, a Dutch buss carries sixteen hands
 and two-thirds. If we compute that the vessels engaged in
 our fishery by foreign nations amount, all together, to four
 thousand, and that each carries only twelve hands, here are forty-
 eight thousand foreign sailors reaping the maritime harvest of Scot-
 land. The bounty first promised by parliament for vessels, was fif-
 ty shillings *per* ton. Mr. Guthrie says that " the bounty was with-
 " held *from year to year*, while in the mean time the adventurers
 " were not only *sinking their fortunes*, but also borrowing to the ut-
 " most limits of their credit."§ It was then reduced to thirty shil-
 lings. The vessels are fitted out from the north-west parts of Eng-
 land, the north of Ireland, the ports of Clyde, " and *the neighbour-*
 " *ing islands*."|| It thus appears, in opposition to what was said
 above,¶ that the Hebrideans are not " entirely out of the ques-
 " tion," as to the bounty. But the whole affair is an absolute trif-
 fle, since the Hollanders send out ten or fifteen times as many busses
 without any bounty at all, as the British parliament can collect by a
 bounty equal to four-sevenths of the value of all the herrings taken;

* Illustrations of the report, p. 189.

† Inquiry, Book iv. chap. 3.

‡ Guthrie's Geographical Grammar. ART. ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

§ Ibid. ART. SCOTLAND.

|| Ibid.

¶ Supra. p. 41.

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besides the remission of salt duties,* and a subsequent bounty on exportation. Mr. Guthrie complains with justice, that "this noble institution, (viz. the bounty,) still labours under many difficulties, "from the caprice and ignorance of the legislature." Thus an hundred thousand seamen, and perhaps a million of subjects are lost to Britain.

A committee of the House of Commons, in one of their reports, acknowledge, "that the present duties upon coals are *too high*, and "operate more as a prohibition on the use of the article, *than as a benefit to the revenue.*"† The consequences of the coal-tax are specified in many passages of the statistical account of Scotland. "Perhaps the greatest barrier against household industry and manu- "facture among us, is *the scarcity of fuel* in many parts of the "country. A human being, pinched with cold, when confined "within doors, is always an *inactive* being. The day-light during "winter, is spent by many of the women and children in gathering "*elding*, as they call it; that is, sticks, furze, or broom, for fuel; "and the evening in warming their shivering limbs before the "scanty fire it produces. Could *our legislators* be conducted through "this parish, (Kirkenrer, in the county of Wigton,) in the win- "ter months, could *the lords and commons*, during the Christmas re- "cess, visit the cottages of the poor through these parts of the "united kingdoms, where nature hath refused coal, and *their laws* "have *more than doubled the price of it*, this would be Shakespeare's "*wholesome physic*, and would, more than any thing else, quicken "their invention to find ways and means for supplying the place of "*the worst of laws.*"‡ Such legislators ought to be sent to bride- well during the recess, and to remain there, fed on bread and water, and without fire or candle, to the end of the session. Dr. Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, remarks, that *the great never*

* On Scots salt, the duty is one shilling and six-pence per bushel, on foreign salt ten shillings. The latter chiefly is consumed by the buffes.

† Appendix to Dr. Anderson's account of the Hebrides. p. 330.

‡ Statistical Account, vol. iv. p. 147.

The work swarms with complaints on this head. This simple pastor appears to know but little of British lords and commons, when he appeals to their sensibility. Take notice to what follows.

"A late ball given by lord Courtney, cost six thousand guineas. He had, among "other rarities, a thousand peaches at a guinea each, a thousand pottles of cherries "at five shillings each, a thousand pottles of strawberries at five shillings each, and "every other article in the same proportion." London. Newspapers, 5th May, 1792.—Another newspaper, some time ago, had this article.

"To such a degree of perfection are dog-kennels now brought, that one lately "built by Sir William Rowley, at his seat in Suffolk, covers four acres of ground. "Among other accommodations for his bounds, he has erected a warm bath, through "which each dog is regularly purified, after each day's chase."

Mendoza, the bruiser, some time ago refused to settle the terms of a boxing- match, until he had consulted his *intimate friend*, the duke of Hamilton. A letter from him to this effect, appeared in the public prints. His grace, not long after, invited *his friend* to a visit at the palace of Hamilton. One day, after dinner, the

consider their inferiors, as their fellow creatures. The British landholders illustrate, on all occasions, the veracity of this maxim. In England, this tax on coals, when transported by sea, has been very hurtful. "One would think" says lord Kaimes, that it was intended to check population.—One may, at the first glance distinguish the coal counties from the rest of England, by the indolence of the inhabitants, and by plenty of manufacturing towns and villages.*

In the year ending on the 5th of January, 1789, the salt duties for Scotland, produced in whole - - - £.18043 0 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Salaries, incidents, bounties and drawbacks, 8749 9 11 $\frac{3}{4}$

Net produce of the salt tax - - - 9293 10 1 $\frac{1}{4}$

Dr. Anderson has just now published a state of the bounties paid annually by government, upon the Scots fisheries, and of the premiums, upon the exportation of Scots herrings.† They amount, in round numbers, to *twenty-two thousand pounds per annum.*

duke introduced to his company the subject of boxing. He extolled the talents of the Jew, and requested leave to bring him in, that the gentlemen present might see the proficiency of his grace in *sparring*. Accordingly, the parties stripped, a ring was formed, and the combat began. The duke did not strike fair, of which he was repeatedly warned by his friend. The man was at last so exasperated by his grace persisting in foul play, that he gave him a stroke in earnest, which sent the duke of Hamilton staggering to the other end of the room. His grace was carried to bed, and the company dispersed. Mendoza was lately in a Dublin tap-room. His name was discovered, and he was directly ordered to quit the House. So different are the citizens of Dublin from this Scots Duke, in their choice of company.

The prince of Wales brought to Newmarket, some time ago, a race-horse of high reputation. Betts were laid in his favour, but when he came upon the turf, he fell far behind. He was matched to run a second time next day, and betts were laid with a very great odds against him. His royal master *accepted the odds*, and betted to a very large amount in favour of his horse. The whole assemblage of black-legs considered the prince as completely *taken in*. But he very soon convinced them that he was more than a match for the whole gang, at their own weapons. On this second day, his horse resumed his former superiority, and won the race with ease. It was said, that the duke of Bedford alone, lost, by this masterly stroke of jockeyship, twelve thousand pounds sterling. The newspapers estimated the *total balance* in favour of the prince, from fifty to an hundred thousand pounds. Such was the triumph of

"Our eldest hope, divine Iulus,

"Late, very late, O may he rule us!"

His groom was examined, and, as a swindler, forever exiled from the turf. The salary of fifty thousand pounds a-year, paid to this hopeful prince, commenced about the 1st of January, 1781.

* Sketches of the History of Man. vol. 1. p. 486. Quarto edition.

† History of the Public Revenue, part 111. chap. 6.

‡ This premium, as above stated, is two shillings and eight-pence *per barrel*. Dr. Anderson has blended under one of these articles, "herrings and *hard fish* exported from England, two thousand pounds." Hard fish had no business in a statement about herrings; and some deduction from the sum total, should be made on account of them.

A society in Scotland for encouraging the fishery, give about *ten thousand* pounds. The Scots board of customs expend about ten thousand pounds annually for cruizers to prevent smuggling; of which sum, the Doctor states one half, or *five thousand* pounds, to the accompt of salt duties. Thus, the bounties, premiums, and cruizers cost all together, twenty-nine thousand pounds a year.* The net revenue of salt for the whole kingdom is about nine thousand pounds. Thus twenty thousand pounds are sunk. If parliament would only abolish the tax, and order the Dutch and other foreigners to stay at home, an hundred thousand mariners, and a million of subjects might soon be added to the population of Britain.

We have seen the miserable effects of the coal tax. The Scots duties upon salt and coals together produce hardly a net eighteen thousand pounds a year to the exchequer.† At the same time, the Scots mint, where not even a copper farthing has been coined for eighty-five years, costs the public annually

The keeper of the great seal	£. 1000
The keeper of the privy seal	3000
The lord justice general	3000
The lord register	2000
The commander in chief of the forces in North-Britain	1200
The vice-admiral	1460
The knight marischal	1000
The signet-office is a <i>direct</i> tax upon the public, and it now nets to the keeper, Mr. Dundas	400
The salfine-office, the fees of which are a second direct tax, nets to its keeper about two thousand pounds, besides a salary from government, of two hundred more	3000
	2100

18,260

Every one of these places is an absolute sinecure, the duties of which are not discharged by the persons who receive the money. Some of them have nothing to do, but in every one of them, where business is really transacted, the deputies are paid over and above, and sometimes very extravagantly, at *the additional expence of the public*. The total charge to the nation for these ten bubbles extends, as above specified, to eighteen thousand, two hundred and sixty pounds sterling *per annum*. Thus hath one part of us been loaded with the plunder of the rest. Thus are six or eight hundred thousand Scots people kept in a state of comparative beggary, by the payment of salt and coal duties, while six or eight solitary pensioners riot on the robbery of the poor.

* The Bee. vol. xi. p. 26.

† History of the Public Revenue. part II. chap. 6.

But, the practice of granting enormous pensions, has been carried infinitely farther in England, than on the north of Tweed. As the subject is but imperfectly understood, it may be worth while to compare the Brobdignag peculators of London with the Lilliputians of the same kind in this country. For this end, we may consult a curious and authentic assemblage of evidence published by parliament. During the war with America, they appointed commissioners to examine the state of public accounts. The office was performed with fidelity, and the reports were published. In the sixth report, we learn, that the auditor of the exchequer received in the year 1780, from his place a clear profit of

His first clerk	- - - - -	£. 14,016	4	1
The clerk of the pells	- - - - -	2,752	3	6
The four tellers of the exchequer,	- - - - -	7,597	12	$\frac{1}{2}$
The usher of the exchequer	- - - - -	29,267	4	$4\frac{1}{2}$
		4,200		

Total to eight persons, £. 57,833 4

The commissioners recommend the abolition of this last office. They observe, that "the chief, if not the only present duty of the usher, is to supply the treasury and exchequer with stationary and turnery ware, and a variety of other articles, and the exchequer with coals, and to provide workmen for certain repairs." In 1780, he provided articles and repairs to the amount of fourteen thousand, four hundred and forty pounds, three shillings and six-pence. On the articles, he was entitled to the very moderate commission of forty *per cent.*; so that the post must, from the first hour of its existence, have been designed as a job. The net profits were, as above stated, four thousand guineas. The exact sum pocketed by the officers, and clerks of exchequer, in 1780, clear of all deductions was, seventy-five thousand, eight hundred and sixty-three pounds, nineteen shillings and three-pence, three farthings, sterling. The report says, that in this year, the *ineffectual* officers of the exchequer, received *forty-five thousand, three hundred and thirty-two pounds.* This account is too favourable. We have just seen, that fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three pounds, four shillings, were divided among eight persons. Of these, the only man of business is the first clerk to the auditor, and even he has a salary ten times as large as any merchant would pay to a mere accountant. The exchequer contains several other clerks with considerable incomes. The four first clerks to the four tellers, received among them, in 1780, five thousand, two hundred and forty-one pounds, and eight-pence three farthings. From this general survey, it may be suspected, that the whole duties of the exchequer might be performed for a tenth part of the wages now paid, as even, by the present glimmering, we distinctly perceive, that four-fifths of the above seventy-five thousand pounds are absorbed in sine,

eures. In time of peace, the perquisites would be somewhat less, but the labour would be less in proportion. Fifteen active clerks, at five hundred pounds sterling each, could find, at their own charges, the requisite assistants, and actually perform the business. This simple alteration would, in 1780, have saved to the public, sixty-eight thousand, three hundred pounds. The largeness of nominal salaries forms but the sag end of the story. After stating various abuses, the report goes on in these words.

" There still remain to be made up, the accounts of four treasurers of the navy, to the amount of *fifty-eight millions, nine hundred and forty-four thousand, five hundred and eighty-eight pounds*; and of three paymasters general of the forces, amounting to four millions, six hundred and sixty-six thousand, eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, exclusive of the treasurer and paymaster-general in office; to the first of whom has been issued, to the 30th of September, 1780, *sixteen millions, seven hundred and eighty-one thousand, two hundred and seventeen pounds*, and to the latter, to the end of the same year, *forty-three millions, two hundred and fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and eleven pounds*, and not one year's account of either is completed. So, that of the money issued to the navy, *twenty-five millions, seven hundred and twenty-five thousand, eight hundred and five pounds*, and of the money issued to the army, *forty-seven millions, nine hundred and twenty thousand, seven hundred and eighty-six pounds*, together, *one hundred and twenty-three millions, six hundred and sixty-six thousand, five hundred and ninety-one pounds*, (not including *ten millions, six hundred and forty-seven thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight pounds*, issued to the navy, and *eight millions, one hundred, and twenty-one thousand pounds*, to the army, to the end of the last year,) is as yet UNACCOUNTED FOR." These various sums unaccounted for, amount in whole, to *one hundred and forty-two millions, four hundred and fourteen thousand, seven hundred and seventy-nine pounds*. This report is dated the 11th of February, 1782. Lord Holland, paymaster-general of the forces, resigned his office in 1765. He had received near *forty-six millions sterling*. His final account was delivered into the auditor's office, seven years after his resignation. Compare this with the prosecution instantly raised against a Scots fisherman, for the penalty of a salt bond. The balance actually in the hand of his lordship, when he lost his place, was *four hundred and sixty thousand pounds*. The fourth report says, that upon the 30th of September, 1780, *two hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds* were still due to the public by his representatives, and on a computation of simple interest, at four per cent. per annum, that the loss to the nation by the money left in his hands was, then, *two hundred and forty-eight thousand, three hundred and ninety-four pounds, thirteen shillings, sterling*; as the public have no claim for the interest of money lodged with a paymaster, even after he is dismissed. Thus far the commissioners of public ac-

counts. Now think of the prosecution of a shipwrecked mariner for the duty of six bushels of bonded salt.* It was commonly said that Mr. Richard Rigby, a late paymaster of the forces, cleared annually, seventy thousand pounds, from his office, chiefly by keeping in his hands, immense sums of public money.† What signify the minnows of Tyburn, contrasted with the leviathans of the exchequer, sporting in an ocean of seventeen millions sterling a year?

“ In all the great monarchies of Europe, there are still many large tracts of land which belong to the crown. They are generally forest; and sometimes forest, where, after travelling several miles, you will scarce find a *single tree*; a mere waste and loss of country in respect both of produce and population. In every great monarchy of Europe, the sale of the crown lands would produce a *very large sum of money*.—The crown lands of Great-Britain, do not at present afford *the fourth part* of the rent, which could probably be drawn from them, if they were the property of private persons.”‡ This would be a better way to raise money, than by taxing shopkeepers and pedlars. It has been computed that the crown lands of Britain could be raised in their value by setting them on proper leases, or by selling them off entirely, to a rent of four hundred thousand pounds a year, more than their present value; but it would be hazardous to warrant this vague estimation.

When so great a part of the revenues and resources of a nation are thus miserably cast away, there must be somewhere in the same political body, a large proportion of distress. Accordingly, Dr. Day-nant computes, that twelve hundred thousand people in England *receive alms*.§ Dr. Goldsmith, in his History of Animated Nature, gives a calculation, that in London, two thousand persons die every year of *hunger*. Dr. Johnson says, that in 1759, the jails of England contained twenty thousand prisoners for debt.|| He conjectures, that five thousand of these debtors perished annually in prison. Dr. Wendeborn states, as a wonted computation, that London contains forty thousand common prostitutes. It shelters some thousands of highwaymen, pick-pockets and swindlers, of all kinds, who gain a regular subsistence by the exercise of their talents. These things are the natural consequence of crown lands lying waste, and of an hundred and forty-two millions sterling unaccounted for. In such a condition, we give an hundred and eighty thousand pounds sterling, at a single dash, to pay the debts of a thoughtless young man. In Holland and Switzerland, beggars, and prisoners for debt

* Supra. p. 26.

† These reports are inserted in successive volumes of the New Annual Register. A farther analysis of some of their contents will appear in the second part of this work.

‡ Inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations. Book v. chap. 2. part 1.

§ Sketches of the History of Man. vol. 1. p. 479.

|| Idler, No. 38. The author adds in a note, that since first writing, he had found reason to question the calculation.

are much less numerous than in England, because the Dutch and the Swiss, are more wise, more happy, and, to all rational purposes, more *free*, than the British nation. If half the panegyrics pronounced by Britons upon themselves are true, genius and virtue can very seldom be found beyond the limits of this blessed island. As to civil liberty, an English writer on that topic, begins by supposing, that it is confined exclusively to the British dominions.

From these miscellaneous remarks, we proceed to the corn law, lately passed. No part of our political system has been an object of more clamorous applause than the bounty granted by parliament on the exportation of British grain. It is said that this bounty was an encouragement essentially requisite for the interest of the farmers, because without it, they would not venture to raise a sufficient quantity of corn for home consumption. By giving a bounty on exporting it, the farmers were always certain of a market; and it was supposed, that, but for the prospect of this resource, they would very often forbear to raise it. The profound policy of this expedient has been extolled by Lord Kaimes, by Sir John Dalrymple, and by a crowd of other writers, whose very names would fill a sheet of paper. Others consider the bounty on exporting corn, as one of the most formidable engines of oppression, that aristocracy has ever discharged on the rights of mankind. The more that the principles of British policy are examined, the more shall we, like Rochester, be convinced that,

"Dutch prowess, Danish wit, and British policy,

"Great NOTHING! mainly tend to thee."

The empires of Japan and China are much better cultivated than the British islands. They know nothing of any such bounty. Ancient Egypt, and likewise Hindostan, before the East-India company had destroyed thirty-six millions of its inhabitants, were examples of the same kind. In these countries, and others that might be named, agriculture has advanced to high perfection; while, at the same time, the farmers of England must be bribed to the plough. There appears an absurdity on the very face of this supposition; for it is as reasonable to say, that the people of Britain cannot, like the Japanese, walk without crutches, as that their farmers will not, like those of Japan, raise as much corn as they can, unless they are hired to it by the state. Dr. Smith, in his Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations, hath combated this corn bounty. Postlethwaite also, in his dictionary, has a passage to the same purpose; and as the bulk of his book may have prevented some people from reading it quite through, we shall extract a few remarks on the cornlaws.

"There is no complaint more common among our merchants, than that foreigners underwork us in almost every kind of manufacture; and can we be surprized at it? when the general tendency of our laws, is to make labour dear *at home*, and cheap *abroad*; when we either forbid our people to work, or oblige

“ them to work in the most disadvantageous manner; when we
 “ lay all our taxes on trade, or, which is still worse for trade, on
 “ the *necessaries of life*; and when we contrive to feed the labourers,
 “ manufacturers, and seamen of foreign countries, with our corn at
 “ a cheaper rate *than our own people can have it!* To raise the
 “ price of corn at home, in whatever manner it is done, is the same
 “ thing as to lay a tax on the consumption of it; and to do that in
 “ such a manner as lessens the price of it abroad, is to apply this
 “ tax to the benefit of foreigners.”* The bounty paid by law on
 the exportation of corn hath amounted, in a single year, to one
 hundred and fifty thousand pounds.†

Weekly accounts of the average prices of corn, in different parts of Britain, are published by authority of parliament. Before we examine the law so lately past on this head; it is proper to look into these weekly reports. We shall thus learn upon what sort of information the legislature went, and how far they were qualified, by a previous acquaintance with the state of the corn trade, to make laws concerning it.

For the county of Northumberland, there were two returns of average prices of oat-meal, during the week which ended on the 28th of April, 1792. A boll weighs an hundred and forty pounds avoirdupois. At Hexham, in Northumberland, the price of a boll was said to be twenty-eight shillings and eight-pence. At Berwick upon Tweed, in the same county, and at the distance of no more than sixty miles, the average price, at the same time, was only *eleven shillings and nine-pence*. If these accounts of prices were accurate, it would have been an excellent trade to transport corn from Berwick to Hexham, where it would give more than double the same price. An hundred pounds employed in this way, must have returned a clear profit of an hundred and forty-four and two-sevenths *per cent*. subtracting only the expence of carriage. The medium is struck between these two rates, and twenty shillings and two-pence *per boll*, is returned as the average price of oat-meal, for the county of Northumberland. Nobody will believe, or pretend to believe, that both these reports are genuine. It is very likely that both are untrue. There is a constant intercourse between Hexham and Berwick, and the several prices, in every part of the county, are invariably and universally known. To fancy then such a difference in the rate of corn, is like believing that the water collected behind a dam will keep at its former height, when the dam itself hath been removed. The physical absurdity of the one supposition, is not greater than the moral absurdity of the other. In the same week, a boll of oat-meal, at *Berwick*, in this very county of Northumberland, is stated, by the weekly report, at three pounds, two shillings and six-

* Dictionary, vol. 1. p. 569.

† Sketches of the History of Man, vol. 1. p. 492.

pence. Thus, by carrying oatmeal from the one Berwick to the other, a profit might have been gained of more than four hundred *per cent.* The following are the prices in the reports of the same week, for some other places. For Westmoreland, fourteen shillings and seven-pence; for Herefordshire, fifty-five shillings and two-pence; in Lancaster, fourteen shillings and eleven-pence; in Salop, fifty shillings and eleven-pence; in Chester, fifteen shillings and a penny; in Bedfordshire, fifty shillings and seven-pence. These reports, published by the persons acting under parliament, are of equal authenticity with Robinson Crusoe. Yet, as we shall immediately perceive, the subsistence of millions of people may depend on the accuracy of these identical weekly reports.*

The new corn law commenced its operations, on the 15th of November, 1791. In every stage it had received an obstinate opposition. On one clause, a committee of the house of commons were equally divided, sixty-two on each side, and the vote of the chairman decided against it. The act, as now published, fills eighty-four folio pages of confusion and repetition.† By the assistance of some gentlemen, I have been enabled to form an analysis of a part of its contents.

The maritime country of England and Wales is, by this law, divided into twelve districts; and all Scotland into four. To simplify the discussion as much as possible, let us confine ourselves at present, to the first of the four districts of Scotland. It comprehends the counties of Fife, Kinross, Clackmannan, Stirling, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Peebles. Supposing that a scarcity of provisions should prevail in the shire of Edinburgh, wheat, for instance, cannot be imported into it from any foreign country, till the average prices of wheat have been ascertained over the eleven counties with which it forms a district. It must be proved, to the satisfaction of the sheriff depute of the county, that the average price of wheat is fifty shillings per quarter; for, if it is imported, when the price is lower than that sum, there is a duty on the importation, of twenty-four shillings and three-pence, which is equivalent to a prohibition. But though the public should really be starving, and wheat extravagantly dear, the real price of it can *only* be ascertained to the sheriff depute, by these weekly returns above stated, which are of as much actual authority as the croaking of a parrot. This is the express injunction of the statute.

Now it must be observed, that in this district, fertile and barren counties are injudiciously classed together. Of the eleven above-mentioned, only Fife, Edinburgh and Haddington produce, in ge-

* These particulars of the weekly reports were first published by Dr. Anderson, in the Bee, vol. ix. p. 96.

† The remark of Lord Thurlow, above quoted, was perfectly just. Many an act of parliament, would, as a composition, *disgrace school-boys*.

neral good grain. That of the other eight counties is often at the rate of ten or twelve shillings *per* boll, when the grain of Fife, or Edinburgh, sells at eighteen shillings. Put the case then, that the wheat of Edinburgh has risen to fifty shillings, and an importation is wanted from a foreign country. "No," says the sheriff depute of the county. "The grand broker of Westminster elections, viz. *the heaven-born minister*, the jockey peers of Newmarket, with proxies in their pockets, and the *pocket-list* representatives of St. Maves and Old Sarum, have ordered things better. They have debated and scolded among themselves, upon this subject, for three months. By two majorities of ten or fifteen votes out of eight hundred, they have produced a *permanent* corn act, an act of which they boast, as the master-piece of legislation. *Seven entire statutes* have been repealed to make room for it. This *Iacenic* law has three or four hundred clauses, which Oedipus could not have explained, and Simonides could not have remembered. By one of these articles, you are not to import wheat, though you may be starving for want of it, till the wheat of Peebles and Clackmannan, has mounted from its present rate of thirty shillings *per* quarter, up to forty. By that time, your own must have risen to *sixty*. We shall then strike the medium, and suffer you to import it, for a duty of half a crown *per* quarter. You need not grumble. The people of Orkney and Shetland are infinitely worse off. Among them, an ear of corn is an object of astonishment; and it is as much inferior in quality to that of Peebles, as the latter is inferior to yours. You are permitted to import oats, when yours rise to seventeen shillings *per* quarter, for a duty of only one shilling, which goes to make up the half guinea *per* day to Westminster bludgeon-men, and the four thousand guineas *per* annum to the usher of the exchequer. But when the oats of Orkney, are *nominally* at seventeen shillings, they are in reality dearer than yours. when at twenty-five or thirty shillings. In a word, you are graciously permitted to eat bread, perhaps a third part cheaper, than those beggarly islanders. Mark the superior felicity of your situation; and let your hearts glow with gratitude to the best of princes." The admiring citizens hear their magistrate with silent rapture, and bless their stars that they were born under the British constitution. N. B. His lordship, notwithstanding his constitutional good nature, had just then endured five or six of them to be shot, in honour of his majesty's birth-day.*—The fallacy of the corn returns has already been mentioned, and we perceive what infinite mischief they may possibly commit. The wheat in the county of Edinburgh may be returned at twenty-five shillings *per* quarter, when the real price is fifty or sixty, and thus importation may be prevented.

* In Charles-street, George's-square. They had been burning an effigy of straw.

There is another circumstance in this law that deserves attention. The wheat, oats, and barley of England are, in quality, far superior to ours. This is well known to every baker and brewer. At this moment, Edinburgh brewers are buying English barley at eight shillings *per* boll higher than is given for barley of Scots produce, taking the prices of the different counties at a medium. The former is of superior value by fifty or eighty *per cent.*

In Kent, Norfolk, and the other counties of England, subject to this law, the wheat is twenty-five *per cent.* better than that of Scotland. To make the statute equitable, therefore, the people of North-Britain ought to have imported wheat, when it was at forty shillings *per* quarter, while England should not have been allowed an importation, till English wheat had risen to *fifty* shillings. "This is what a wise and virtuous ministry would have done and" said. This, therefore, is what our minister could never think of "saying or doing." English grain of all kinds ought to have been rated, for the licence of importation, at twenty or twenty-five *per cent.* higher than Scots grain. The plain meaning of the law is that the people of Scotland must eat their bread twenty-five *per cent.* dearer than Englishmen eat theirs. That is the true intent and meaning of this corn law. Every dealer in grain will tell you, on a minute's warning, that he does not understand this statute; and that he never heard of any body, who could safely undertake to decipher these eighty-four folio pages, about the terms upon which we are to be permitted to *buy our bread.*

If a Swiss, or a North-American, were to read this account, he would certainly conclude that Britain is inhabited only by two kinds of people, slaves and mad-men. Dr. Anderson gives a just idea of this statute of desolation. "By the late corn act, it is in the power of any custom-house officer stationed there, (in the Highlands and Hebrides,) to starve nearly half a million of people for want of food, almost *when he pleases.*"† It would require an uncommon degree of penetration, to determine whether the authors of this act are fittest for bedlam or the Old Bailey. If the most inveterate enemies to human happiness, had consulted for ages together, they could not have devised a more decisive method, than by this bill, for reducing the labouring part of the Scots nation to the last extremity of poverty and wretchedness.

With regard to the probable consequences of this corn law, hereafter, we may judge of the future by the past. "During some years previous to the peace of Ryswick, (which was concluded in 1697,) the price of corn in England was *double*, and in Scotland *quadruple* its ordinary rate; and in one of these years, it was believed, that in Scotland *eighty thousand people died of want.*"‡

* Burke's speech on the creditors of the Nabob of Arcot.

† Bee, vol. 11. p. 34.

‡ Memoirs of G. Britain and Ireland, by Sir John Dalrymple, part 111. book v.

A tenth part of the expence of one of the British campaigns in Flanders, would have averted from this island so dreadful a calamity. In Aberdeenshire, the consequences of this famine may still be traced. Whole families expired together, and the boundaries of deserted farms were forgotten. To ascertain them is, at this day, sometimes an object of dispute. The land bears the marks of the plough; but, having been so long neglected, has relapsed into its original state of barrenness; and is now covered with heath, among which may be discovered the remains of the dwelling houses of the exterminated inhabitants. These extraordinary circumstances have not been observed by any former writer. They were related to me by Dr. Anderson, who has an estate in the county of Aberdeen. We may be persuaded, that in the other three years of this famine, at least twenty thousand additional persons perished of hunger; so that this reckoning of extirpation amounts altogether to one hundred thousand lives.

Much noise has been made about the massacre of Glenco, and the tragedy of Darien. This famine was a disaster infinitely more terrible than these, yet it has been recorded with far less clamorous lamentation. By the greater part of the historians of that period, no notice whatever has been bestowed upon it. Yet, if William the Third, his ministers, and his parliaments, had been penetrable to human feelings, they would have put an end to the war, for the sake of putting an end to the famine. They might have done so on the most honourable terms. Had William accepted the offers of Louis, "the war of the first grand alliance would have ended *four years sooner than it did*, and the war of the second grand alliance might have *been prevented*."* If any circumstance can add to the folly and the guilt of William, it is this. He was almost constantly beaten by Louis, in the field, and by the peace itself, none of the parties gained one penny of money, or almost one foot of territory. Yet Sir John Dalrymple, that candid and intelligent writer, has composed a panegyric on the wisdom and virtues of this monarch. A thousand other British historians have performed the same task; and the voice of the public hath constantly swelled the general chorus of admiration. This is a kind of insatiation and stupidity, that seems peculiar to the British nation. The French never celebrate the memory of Louis the eleventh; nor did the Roman historians affect to regret the suffocation of Tiberius Cæsar.

It is remarkable, that though the Scots are constantly talking of their constitution, and their liberties, the whole fabric is entirely founded on one of the grossest and most impudent acts of usurpation ever known. I refer to the celebrated *Union*. The whole negotiation, bears on its very face the stamp of iniquity. The utmost care was employed to conceal its infant progress from the Scottish

* Memoirs of Great-Britain and Ireland. part III. book x.

nation, and the bargain was at last patched up with the utmost precipitation and secrecy in the Scottish parliament. The public were inflamed into a transport of fury, but as nothing less than a revolt could dissolve it, the Scots wisely chose to shun the horrors of a civil war. It is plain, however, that the treaty, was in itself, altogether illegal. It exactly resembles the sale of an estate, without the consent or knowledge of its owner. The Scotch members of parliament had been authorized by their constituents to assemble for the common business of the nation; instead of which, they clandestinely transferred its independence to the best bidder. Edmund Burke, in the speech lately quoted, has a passage that exactly defines it. "A corrupt, private interest," says he, "is set up in direct opposition to the necessities of the nation. A diversion is made of millions of the public money from the public treasury to a private purse." A detail of the obliquities of this Union, would extend the present chapter beyond its proper limits. A full account of it will be given in the course of this work, when a regular historical narrative commences, beginning with the year 1688, and ending at the present splendid æra. Without regard to persons, to parties, or to public opinions, I shall there, as every where else, hold up truth to the world, as she rises on my researches, in the naked simplicity of her charms.

After such a review, curiosity may lead us to enquire, if the Scots government had been honestly conducted, for the last hundred years, what, by this time, *Scotland itself might have been?* In order to take a proper view of this subject, we must begin by recollecting, that since the revolution, Britain hath spent forty-two years in actual war with other nations of Europe, over and above the campaigns in America, and the quarrels of the East-India company. Frequent armaments have besides taken place, which, though they did not end in bloodshed, were still very expensive to the public, and very distressing to commerce. Britain has been either fighting, or preparing herself to fight, for sixty-five or seventy years out of one hundred. The minds of the people have been kept in a state of incessant fermentation. Their property has been the perpetual sport of ruinous taxes. We never have enjoyed peace for so long a time together, as was requisite for learning its full advantages. Britain resembles a common bully, who spends five or six days of the week on a boxing stage, and the rest of it, in an excise court or a correction house. In spite of all this folly, the wealth of the country has been continually increasing. "From the restoration to the revolution, the foreign trade of England had doubled in its amount; from the peace of Ryswick to the demise of king William, it had nearly risen in the same proportion. During the first thirty years of the current century, it had again doubled," (although three wars, fifteen campaigns by land or sea, a Scottish rebellion, and six naval armaments for the Baltic, had intervened.

" From the year 1750 to 1774, notwithstanding the interruptions of *an eight years intervenient war*," (viz. from 1756 to 1763,) " it appears to have gained more than *one-fourth*; whether we determine from the table of tonnage or the value of exports."* We can hardly conceive how very greatly British commerce must have augmented by this time, if it had not been retarded by these absurd quarrels. As to the taxes, it has been already observed,† that every sum of money raised from the public costs them *ten per cent.* The tradesmen who pays the tax must, upon a medium, clear this profit by his capital, and if he can shove the tax upon his customers, by raising the price of his commodities, it comes exactly to the same point at last, as *their* active capitals are diminished in proportion. The greater part of the money spent in war is employed in the purchase of provisions and military stores, which are consumed in the course of the quarrel, and large sums are always transmitted in hard cash out of this island. Thus a capital is transferred from the most useful and beneficent, to the most savage purposes. Instead of building farm-houses, draining marshes, and inclosing corn-fields, instead of feeding the hungry and cloathing the naked, instead of employing the idle, and animating the busy, of supporting the industry, and embellishing the elegance of life, it is destined to bribe the brutality of a press-gang, or to pamper the rapacity of a contractor, to hasten the discharge of bombs, the explosion of mines, and the storming of batteries loaded with grape shot. Transferences of this kind are infinitely numerous, and the conclusion seems evident. War is a two-edged sword plunged through the heart of society, and cutting both ways, equally to be avoided for the misery which it produces, and the happiness which it prevents.‡

In seven years, from September 1774, to September 1780, inclusive, the number of men raised for the British army, was 76,885
ditto for the navy - - - 176,008

Total 252,893§

The American war lasted for more than two years after this estimate was made, so that the whole number of men raised must have been at least three hundred thousand. Dr. Franklin, in a letter to Mr. Vaughan, says, that seven hundred British privateers, whose

* An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Britain, by George Chalmers, Esq. p. 46.

† Vide Introduction.

‡ Mr. Burke, some years ago asserted, that six hundred thousand pounds *per annum* were charged for the support of the garrison of Gibraltar. Eighty thousand pounds were charged for oats furnished to the single legion of colonel Tarleton. Twelve hundred thousand pounds were charged for the provisions only, of forty thousand men, and fifty-seven thousand for presents to the Indians, for which they had only massacred twenty-five women and children.

§ New Annual Register for 1781. PRINCIPAL OCCURRENCES. p. 40.

crews he calls *gangs of robbers*, were commissioned during the war. At an allowance of seventy-two men to each of them, the whole amount was fifty thousand, four hundred. A workman can, upon an average, earn about ten shillings a week, which in London, is at present half the common wages of a journeyman taylor. Reduced to twenty-five pounds *per annum*, and his life may be estimated at twelve years purchase, or three hundred pounds in value to the public. At this rate the daily labour of three hundred and fifty thousand men, extends to eight millions, seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds *per annum*. If they had all perished in the war, the value of their lives would have amounted, at three hundred pounds *per head*, to one hundred and five millions sterling. We are farther to observe, that previous to September, 1774, a very numerous body of men were engaged in the British army and navy, and those persons are not included in the preceding three hundred and fifty thousand. When a corps is raised, and sent out of the British islands to actual service, it seldom happens that more than a sixth, a tenth, or a twentieth part of the men, ever come home again, and even of those who do so, one half are frequently invalids and pensioners, or beggars. Dr. Johnson, in his *Tour* through Scotland, relates, that in the war of 1756, an Highland regiment, consisting of twelve hundred men, was sent to North America, and that of these, only *seventy-five* returned. Dr. Franklin, in a short essay on war, observes, that privateer men, "are rarely fit for any sober business after a peace, and serve only to increase the number of highwaymen and house-breakers." From these particulars, we may infer, that at least three hundred thousand persons were lost to the British nation, whose lives, in fee-simple, were worth ninety millions sterling. Of this account, a fifth part may safely be stated as the share of Scotland; so that the seven tea-duty campaigns, cost an expence of Scots blood, to the value of eighteen millions sterling. The war might have been avoided with the greatest facility. In the historical register of Edinburgh, for the month of December, 1791, there is a curious calculation, founded on the authority of Sir John Sinclair's statistical reports. By this, it becomes very probable, that Scotland contains ninety-six thousand females more than males. It is known, that the number of boys born exceeds that of girls; and hence this deficiency must be ascribed to war and emigration. It has been stated above, that more than six hundred thousand pounds of taxes raised from the Scots, are fairly carried into the British exchequer, and our absentees at London, who spend the rent of their estates in that receptacle of profligacy, may be estimated at an additional three hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. The total sum raised in Scotland, during the year 1788, by government, was about one million and ninety thousand pounds. This includes a conjectural article of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds as the duty paid upon goods manu-

imported in England, taxed there, and sent down to Scotland for consumption. Of the one million and ninety thousand pounds sterling, about six hundred and thirty thousand pounds went in that year into the English exchequer. The remaining four hundred and sixty thousand pounds, if managed with economy, would have been much more than sufficient for all the purposes of civil government, and the six hundred thousand guineas, might have been saved to the public. If the union had never existed, the three hundred thousand pounds *per annum* for absentees, would likewise have remained in Scotland. If we had enjoyed a wise, virtuous, and independent government, nine hundred thousand pounds a year would have been retained in this poor, despised, and enslaved country, which at present goes out of it. Shut up in a remote peninsula, where nobody comes to molest us, we, Scotsmen, have no natural business with Falkland's islands, or Nootka Sound, with the wilds of Canada, or the suburbs of Oczakow. The farmers of Fife and Lanerk, have little concern with the squabbles between Tipoo Saib, and a corporation of English merchants. Shepherds in Galloway spend their winter evenings without a fire, and weavers of Glasgow go supperless to bed, for the sake of a Dutch frontier, and the balance of usurpation between German tyrants. For such wise ends, we pay six hundred thousand guineas a year. We are not suffered to fish cod upon our own coasts,* but we fight eight or ten years at a stretch for leave to catch it on the banks of Newfoundland. Since the revolution, Scotland has furnished the British army and navy with three or four hundred thousand recruits, while, at the same time, England suffered eighty thousand of our ancestors to die in a single year, of hunger.

These particulars may assist us in comprehending the destruction produced to North-Britain by the present system of administration. Switzerland is reported, in round numbers, to contain twelve thousand square miles, and two millions of people. The soil is barren, and its surface encumbered with tremendous mountains, yet every acre of land is improved. The beauty of the country, and the felicity of its inhabitants, fill with rapture the pages of travellers. North-Britain, and its western islands, exclusive of Orkney and Shetland, form an area of at least thirty thousand square miles. The money and the blood expended in foolish wars, would have converted the whole country, like the Swiss cantons, into gardens, corn-fields and pastures. In proportion to the Helvetic population, we should have amounted to five millions, besides another million supported by the fisheries, and by the manufactures to which they give rise. Instead of six millions, the number of people in Scotland does not exceed about sixteen hundred thousand.

This mournful chapter is now approaching to a conclusion, I shall only just remind the reader of the massacre at Culloden, where

* *Supra*, p. 42.

Hanoverian ferocity exhibited its utmost horror. About two thousand of the miserable rebels were cut to pieces. The wounded were *butchered in cold blood*. The particulars must be deferred till some future opportunity. By a very strange act of parliament, the duke of Cumberland received for his services, a pension of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling, added to fifteen thousand pounds, which he had before.* The russians, who performed such work, at sixpence a day, were still more execrable than those who set them on. The toad-eating Scots exulted in this tragical consummation of victory. The wretched newspapers of that era, were crouded with verses in praise of his royal highness. The circumstances of the battle of Culloden itself, and the mean and barbarous exultation which it produced, were alike disgraceful to the name of Britain. Cumberland continues to be remembered in Scotland, by the significant appellation of *The bloody Duke*.

* This pension served to swell "the loaded COMPOST HEAP of corrupt influence." Vide Mr. Burke's speech, as to reforming the civil list, on the 11th of February, 1780.



CHAPTER III.

Blackstone—His idea of the English Constitution—Revolution in 1688—Corruption of its Parliaments—English Dissenters—Law-suit with the Corporation of London—Lord Mansfield—His singular expression as to the French Hugunots—Birmingham—Scots act of relief—Dr. Tatbam.

THE annals of Scotland present us with a series of frightful massacres. For any purpose of moral utility which it can answer, the whole narrative had better be forgotten. During the last forty years, one half of our historians have exhausted their talents to revile the memory of George Buchanan, by far the greatest literary character that North-Britain ever produced, to decide whether Mary Stuart wrote some very stupid letters in French and Latin, and whether Henry Darnley was a cuckold? We shall certainly find superior entertainment in the history of England, which, as her poets and historians tell us, hath always been the native seat of liberty. Here is a specimen.

"During the reigns of Charles and James the Second, above sixty thousand Non-conformists suffered; of whom *five thousand* DIED IN PRISON. On a moderate computation, these persons were pillaged of *fourteen millions* of property. Such was the tolerating, liberal, candid spirit of the church of England."* This

* Flower, on the French Constitution, p. 437. and his authorities.

climate cannot be intended to include Scotland, for it is likely that here alone, Episcopacy sacrificed sixty thousand victims. Of all sorts of follies, the records of the church form the most outrageous burlesque on the human understanding. As to Charles the Second, it is full time that we should be spared from the hereditary insult of a holiday for his baneful restoration.

At five per cent. of compound interest, a sum doubles in fourteen years and one hundred and five days, or seven times in a century. Put the case, that these fourteen millions of property were taken from the English dissenters at once, in 1678, and that they would have doubled eight times between that period, and the present year, 1792. This is taking the loss on the most moderate terms. By such an account, the sect, are at this day poorer, in consequence of these persecutions, than they otherwise would have been, by the sum of three thousand, five hundred and eighty-four millions sterling.

" Our religious liberties were fully established at the reformation :
 " but the recovery of our civil and political liberties was a work of
 " longer time ; they not being thoroughly and completely regain-
 " ed till after the restoration of king Charles, nor fully and explicitly
 " acknowledged and defined, till the æra of the happy revolution.
 " Of a constitution so wisely contrived, so strongly raised, and so
 " highly finished, it is hard to speak with that praise, which is
 " justly and severely its due. The thorough and attentive contempla-
 " tion of it will furnish its best panegyric. It hath been the en-
 " deavour of these commentaries, however the execution may have
 " succeeded, to examine its solid foundations, to mark out its ex-
 " tensive plan, to explain the use and distribution of its parts, and
 " from the harmonious concurrence of those several parts, to de-
 " monstrate the elegant proportion of the whole. We have taken
 " occasion to admire at every turn, the noble monuments of an-
 " tient simplicity, and the more curious refinements (salt-bonds,
 " and so forth,) of modern art. Nor have its faults been conceal-
 " ed from view ; for *faults it has*, (wonderful!) lest we should be
 " tempted to think it of more than HUMAN STRUCTURE.* The
 " Federal constitution of North-America looks, at least upon paper,
 " as well as that of Britain. James Madison, Esq. of Virginia, is re-
 " puted to have been its chief author. The citizens of the United
 " States, or at least a great majority of their number, regard this con-
 " stitution with attachment and admiration : but they never speak of
 " Mr. Madison as a *divinity*. They do not imagine, that six or eight
 " hundred years of botching were, as in England, requisite, before
 " a political cub could be licked into any tolerable shape, for two
 " or three years at the utmost, were employed in framing the present
 " American constitution. In the passage now quoted, Sir William

* Commentaries on the Laws of England, by Sir William Blackstone. Book
 IV. chap. XXXIII.

Blackstone has only adopted the ordinary cant of the English nation. If any member of Congress were to speak in such a strain as to the legislative system of that country, the whole assembly would consider him as positively crazed. As to the "happy revolution," the reader may judge from what follows. "Two hundred thousand pounds a year bestowed upon the parliament, have already (1693) drawn out of the pockets of the subjects, MORE MONEY, than all our kings since the conquest, have had from the nation." The king, (William,) has about six score members, whom I can reckon, who are in places, and are thereby so entirely at his devotion, that though they have mortal feuds, *when out of the house*, and though they are violently of opposite parties, in their notions of government, yet they vote as lumpingly as the *lawn sleeves*. The house is so *officered* by those who have places and pensions, that the king can baffle any bill, quash all grievances, and fiddle all accompts." As to the lawn sleeves, the twenty-six fees of England, are estimated at ninety-two thousand five hundred pounds, and the twenty-two Irish fees, at seventy-four thousand pounds, which is in whole, one hundred and sixty-six thousand, five hundred pounds. On a medium, each of these parsons thus receive three thousand, four hundred and sixty-eight pounds, fifteen shillings sterling *per annum*.

The following law-suit deserves particular notice, because the proceedings which give rise to it, were not the actions of a single individual, but composed a deliberate conspiracy by one great body of people in England, against the property of another. At the same time it serves to exhibit "the harmonious concurrence, the elegant proportion, and the more curious refinements of modern art."

In the year 1748, the corporation of London resolved to build a mansion-house. The scheme required money, and to procure it they passed a by-law. They pretended to be anxious for getting *fit* and *able* persons to serve the office of sheriff to the corporation, and they imposed a fine of four hundred pounds and twenty marks upon every person, who, being nominated by the lord-mayor, declined to stand the election in the common-hall. Six hundred pounds additional, were laid upon every person, who being elected by the common-hall, refused to serve that office. The fines thus raised, were appropriated for building the mansion-house. In consequence of this law, several dissenters were nominated, and elected to the office of sheriff. By the corporation act, made in the the thirteenth year of Charles the Second, no person could be elected as sheriff, unless he had taken the sacrament, in the church of England within a year, preceding the time of his election. If he accepted the office, without this qualification, he was expressly punishable by the statute. If a dissenter therefore had, in virtue of such an elec-

son, acted as sheriff, he would have been severely chastised. Hence the gentlemen of that persuasion refused the office, and paid their fines, to the amount of more than fifteen thousand pounds sterling. One of the persons thus elected was blind; another was bed-ridden. These were the *fit* and *able* persons, whom the corporation of London chose as sheriffs. The practice went on for several years.

This corporation of London had been an assemblage of the most arrant sharpers, or such a project for building a mansion-house never could have entered into their minds. It is impossible, that any mortal, possessing a spark of common honesty, should have been concerned in it. At last, Allen Evans, Esq. a dissenter, refused to pay this fine. An action was brought against him in the sheriff court of the corporation of London, and in September, 1757, judgement was given against him. He appealed to the court of hustings, another city court, and in 1759, the judgement was affirmed a second time. At last it came before the house of lords, where, on the 4th of February, 1767, it was finally set aside. We are not informed whether Mr. Evans paid his own expences. If he did so, it might have been cheaper for him to pay the fine. On this occasion, lord Mansfield pronounced a speech. "The defendant" said his lordship, "was by law incapable, at the time of his pretended election: and it is my firm persuasion, that he was chosen because *he was incapable*. If he had been capable, he had not been chosen; for they did not want him to serve the office. They chose him, because, without a breach of the law, and an usurpation on the crown, he could not serve the office. They chose him, that he might fall under the penalty of their by-law, *made to serve a particular purpose*.—By such a by-law, the corporation have it in their power, to make every dissenter pay a fine of six hundred pounds, or *any sum they please*; for it amounts to that."*

In this speech, lord Mansfield expresses the utmost detestation against every kind of religious persecution, as against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy. He declares, that he never read, without rapture, the liberal sentiments of De Thou, on this subject. His lordship then adds these remarkable words. "I am sorry, that of late, his countrymen (the French,) have begun to open their eyes, see their error, and *adopt his sentiments*. I should not have *broke my heart*, (I hope I may say so, without breach of *christian charity*,) if France had continued to cherish the Jesuits, and to *persecute the Huguenots*." When Nero set fire to Rome, or when Caligula wished that the Roman people had only one neck, they might have been partly excused, as either drunk or mad. Neither of these humble apologies can be advanced for lord Mansfield. When the Tartars once conquered China, it was proposed in a council of war, to extirpate the inhabitants, and turn

* Letters to the honourable Mr. justice Blackstone, by Philip Furneaux, D. D. Appendix, No. 2.

the country into pasture. As his lordship was not a Tartar, nor had any prospect of driving a herd of cattle through France, he still remains without an excuse or motive, as to the *case in point*, that could lead him to such a horrid sentiment. We shall quit this subject with a short citation from *The Sincere Huron*. "He talked," says Voltaire, "of the revocation of the edict of Nantes with so much energy, he deplored in so pathetic a manner, the fate of fifty thousand fugitive families, and of fifty thousand others, converted by dragoons, that the ingenuous Hercules could not refrain from shedding tears."

It is foreign to the plan of this work, to enter into a detail of all the outrages which have been committed upon English dissenters, but there is an assertion in a letter published by George Rous, Esq. that cannot be passed over. Speaking of the late riots at Birmingham, he has these words. "Government love an occasional riot, which, with the assistance of the military, is easily suppressed; in the mean time, it alarms the votaries of a fordid luxury; makes them crouch for protection; and teaches them patiently to endure evils imposed by the hand of power. Accordingly, for more than a month, preceding the 14th of July, all the daily prints in the interest of the treasury, laboured to excite a tumult." He adds, "to let loose the rigours of justice, might have been a cruel sacrifice of their friends." This gentleman is a member of the house of commons, and of respectable character and abilities. He thus expressly charges the British ministry with having excited incendiaries to burn the houses of peaceable citizens. The practice of Mr. Pitt, corresponds with the theory of lord Mansfield.

An act of religious toleration and relief, is to take place in Scotland, within six months after the 1st of July, 1792. It contains the following clause. "If any person shall be present twice in the same year, at divine service, in any Episcopal chapel or meeting house in Scotland whereof the pastor or minister shall not pray in express words for his majesty, by name, for his majesty's heirs or successors, and for all the royal family, in the manner herein before directed, every person so present, shall, on lawful conviction thereof, for the first offence, forfeit the sum of five pounds, sterling money." One half of the fine goes to the informer, and if the culprit cannot pay, he is to suffer six months of imprisonment. For any future offence, conviction produces two years of imprisonment. In virtue of this act, it would be very easy for a swindling parson to fleece his flock. He has only to get his chapel as completely filled as possible, to place two or three informers in every corner of it, and then, in his prayers, to forbear all mention of his most sacred majesty. If four hundred persons were present, this might be converted into a job of two thousand pounds sterling; as the statute makes no exceptions in favour of those who should interrupt the parson in the midst of the service. The prin-

capital actor in the farce, might by connivance abscond; but there is still one difficulty unprovided for. The informers themselves must have been present at the perpetration of this crime, and therefore they are equally guilty with the rest of the audience. It ought to be stipulated, that every informer is, in the first place, to receive his own pardon. The rest of the act is of a piece.

The institution of Sunday-schools, was at first highly popular in England. The established clergy have since become jealous of the plan, and Mr. Rous, himself a churchman, gives, in his letter, some authentic and shameful examples of this fact. The church of England, in spite of many excellent characters among its divines, appears to be somewhat lame in its political principles. Its champion, Dr. Tatham, one of the *acting* incendiaries at Birmingham, published a letter some time ago, which has these words. "It would be a terrible thing, indeed, if all the people of England should learn to read and write."



CHAPTER IV.

Civil List—Accumulation of Fifteen Millions—George the First—His liberal ideas of Government—George the Second—His hospitality at the Burial of his eldest Son.

"IT is impossible to maintain that dignity, which a king of Great-Britain ought to maintain, with an income in any degree less, than what is now established by parliament."* Sir John Sinclair has given a long account of the civil list. By this, it appears, that between two and three hundred thousand pounds annually are paid out of it, for *efficient* officers of state, ambassadors and judges, for example. In 1788, the royal family, with its fiddlers, chaplains, wet nurses, lords of the bed-chamber, rockers, groom of the stole, and nymphs of the close-stool, a station worth forty-eight pounds a year, cost all together, about six hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling. Mr. Burgh speaks in the following terms of the civil list.

"There we find places piled on places, to the height of the tower of Babel. There we find a master of the household, treasurer of the household, comptroller of the household, cofferer of the household, deputy-cofferer of the household, clerks of the household, clerks comptrollers of the household, clerks comptrollers of the household, office-keepers, chamber-keepers, necessary-house-keepers, purveyors of bread, purveyors of wine, purveyors of fish, purveyors of butter and eggs, purveyors of

* Blackstone's Commentaries, book 1. chap. 8.

" confectionary, deliverers of greens, coffee-women, spicery-men,
 " spicery-men's assistant-clerks, ewry-men, ewry-men's assistant-
 " clerks, kitchen-clerks comptrollers, kitchen-clerk-comptroller's
 " first clerks, kitchen-clerk-comptroller's junior clerks, yeomen of
 " the mouth, under yeomen of the mouth, grooms, grooms children,
 " dren, pastry-yeomen, harbingers, harbingers yeomen, keepers of
 " ice-houses, cart-takers, cart-takers grooms, bell-ringers, cock
 " and cryer, table-deckers, water-engine turners, cistern-cleaners,
 " keeper of fire-buckets, and a thousand or two more of the same
 " kind, which if I were to set down, I know not who would take
 " the trouble of reading them over. Will any man say, and keep
 " his countenance, that one, in one hundred of these hangers-on is
 " of any real use? Cannot our king have a poached egg for his
 " supper, unless he keeps a purveyor of eggs, and his clerks, and his
 " clerk's deputy-clerks, at an expence of five hundred pounds a
 " year, while the nation is sinking in a bottomless ocean of debt?
 " Again, who are they, the yeomen of the mouth, and who are the
 " der-yeomen of the mouth? What is their business? What is it
 " to yeoman a king's mouth? What is the necessity for a cofferer,
 " where there is a treasurer? And, where there is a cofferer, what
 " occasion for a deputy-cofferer? Why a necessary-house keeper?
 " Cannot a king have a water-closet, and keep the key of it in his
 " own pocket? And my little cock and cryer, what can he call for?
 " Does he come under the king's chamber-window, and call the
 " hour, mimicking the crowing of the cock? This might be of
 " use before clocks and watches, especially repeaters, were inven-
 " ted; but seems as superfluous now, as the deliverer of greens,
 " the coffee-women, spicery men's assistant-clerks, the kitchen-
 " comptroller's first clerks and junior clerks, the groom's children,
 " the harbinger's yeomen, &c. Does the maintaining such a num-
 " ber of idlers suit the present state of our finances? When will
 " frugality be necessary, if not now? Queen Anne gave an hun-
 " dred thousand pounds a year to the public service.* We pay
 " debts on the civil list of six hundred thousand pounds in one arti-
 " cle, *without asking how there comes to be a deficiency.*"†

The following conversations on the same subject, between the
 late princess of Wales and Mr. Dodington, cannot fail to excite the
 attention and surprise of every reader. "She," the princess,
 " said, that notwithstanding what I had mentioned of the king's
 " kindness to the children, and civility to her, *these things did not*
 " *impose upon her*; that there were other things which she could not
 " get over, she wished the king was less civil, and that he put less
 " of *their* money into his own pocket; that he got full thirty thou-

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* The reader may be acquainted with the progress and termination of this act of
 royal munificence, by consulting *Anecdotes of the Earl of Chatham*, quarto edition,
 vol. 11. p. 50

† *Political Disquisitions*, vol. 11. p. 128.

sand pounds *per annum*, by the poor prince's death. If he would but have given them the dutchy of Cornwall to have paid his debts, it would have been something. Should resentments be carried beyond the grave? Should the innocent suffer? Was it becoming so great a king to *leave his son's debts unpaid*? and such inconsiderable debts? I asked her what she thought they might amount to? She answered, she had endeavoured to know, as near as a person could properly enquire, who, not having it in her power, could not pretend to pay them. She thought, that to the tradesmen and servants, they did not amount to ninety thousand pounds; that there was some money owing to the earl of Scarborough, and that there was, abroad, a debt of about seventy thousand pounds. That this hurt her exceedingly, though she did not shew it. I said that it was impossible to new-make people; the king could not now be altered."—

"We talked of the king's accumulation of treasure, which she reckoned at four millions. I told her, that what was become of it, how employed, where, and what was left, I did not pretend to guess; but that I computed the accumulation to be from twelve to fifteen millions. That these things, within a moderate degree, perhaps less than a fourth part, could be proved *beyond all possibility of a denial*; and, when the case should exist, would be published in controversial pamphlets."*

In 1755, Mr. Pitt had a conference with the duke of Newcastle, which has been recorded by Mr. Dodington. A short specimen may serve to shew how the British nation has been bubbled by government. "The duke mumbled that the Saxon and Bavarian subsidies were offered and *pressed*, but there was nothing done in them; that the Hessian was perfected, but the Russian was not concluded. Whether the duke meant unsigned, or unratified, we cannot tell, but we understand it is signed. When his grace dwelt so much upon the king's *honour*, Mr. Pitt asked him, what, if out of the FIFTEEN MILLIONS *which the king had saved*, he should give his kinsman of Hesse one hundred thousand pounds, and the czarina one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, to be off from these bad bargains, and not suffer the suggestions, so dangerous to his own quiet, and the safety of his family, to be thrown out, which would, and must be, insisted upon in a debate of this nature? Where would be the harm of it? The duke had nothing to say, but desired they might talk it over again with the chancellor; Mr. Pitt replied, he was at their command, though *nothing could alter his opinion*."†

The reader will here observe, that thirty-seven years have elapsed since George the Second had saved FIFTEEN MILLIONS from

* Dodington's Memoirs, p. 167 and 290. These debts of the prince of Wales are still unpaid.

† Ibid. p. 373.

the civil list. It has been said above, that a sum, at five *per cent.* of compound interest, doubles itself in fourteen years and an hundred and five days. Now, at this rate, these fifteen millions would, in thirty-seven years, have multiplied to more than ninety-one millions and an half. It is indeed true, as Mr. Dodington says, that we cannot tell *what has become of it, or how it has been employed*, but we know that no part of it has been applied to the service of the nation. We have since paid several large arrears into which the civil list had fallen, and an hundred thousand pounds *per annum*, have been added to the royal salary. At the same time, the nation has been borrowing money to pay that salary, the expences of Gibraltar and Canada, for the support of the war system, and other matters, nominally at three or four *per cent.* but in reality, sometimes at five and an half *per cent.* To these fifteen millions, we may safely add a million for the expences of collecting it from the people, and let us again revert to the principle, that a sum taken from their purses, brings a real loss of ten *per cent.* At this rate of compound interest, the sixteen millions would double themselves once in seven years and fifty-three days, or five times in thirty-seven years and nine months. By this royal manœuvre. the public hath lost five hundred and twelve millions sterling. These sixteen millions, if left in our pockets, would have made the national debt as light as a feather, and all our taxes, a trifling burthen. Great part of the money, if not the whole, was sent to Hanover, and thus utterly lost to Britain.

The princess dowager of Wales, mother to George the Third, once observed to Mr. Dodington, that "She wished Hanover *" in the sea, as the cause of all our misfortunes."* Since the year 1714, Britain has been dragged after that electorate, like a man of war in the tow of a bum-boat. Hence the royal accumulation of fifteen millions sterling; and "hence it follows of necessity, that *" vast numbers of our people are compelled to seek their livelihood *" by begging, robbing, stealing, cheating, pimping, flatteriug, su- *" borning, forswearing, forging, gaming, lying, sawning, hector- *" ing, voting, scribbling, star-gazing, poisoning, whoring, canting, *" libelling, free-thinking, and the like occupations."*****

The sum above stated, might have been employed in clearing, and planting the waste lands of Britain and Ireland. In Hampshire, there

* Gulliver's Travels. part iv.

To this enumeration may be added *franking*. In 1763, the amount of franked letters was, one hundred and seventy thousand, seven hundred pounds. Blackstone's Commentaries, book 1. chap. 8. At that time the two houses of parliament contained, perhaps, seven hundred and fifty members, for English peers were less numerous then, than they are now. At a medium, this sum was equal to an annuity of two hundred and twenty-seven pounds, twelve shillings sterling for each member. Some commoners paid the wages of their footmen with franks, at half a crown *per annum*. About sixteen years ago, Sir Robert Herries, a banker in London, obtained a seat as member for the five Scots boroughs, included in the district of Dumfries. His subject was said to be, the saving of postage on all letters directed to his office. This

a tract of land, about ten or twelve miles square, all in one body, that still lies in a state of nature. Salisbury plains are covered with deer-parks. In an extent of about sixteen miles long, and five miles broad, we meet with five lodges, where the deer throng in crowds, and are regularly fed.* Other examples of the same sort might be given, even in England, though that is by far the most populous and best cultivated part of the three kingdoms. Many large tracts are still suffered to lie in *commons*, that is, in natural grass, which would produce ten times their present value of crops, if properly ploughed and manured. As to Scotland and Ireland, seven-eighths of the soil is at this moment in a state of nature, not the smallest attempt having ever been made for its improvement. Six miles below Dumfries, and about a mile from a seat of lord Stormont's, there is an extent of four or five miles square, sometimes covered by the tide, which has broke in upon it within the last fifty years. It is surrounded on two sides by dry land, and could be easily recovered from Solway Firth. The slesch is now carried off in large quantities for manure. At the same time, we are fighting for islands in the West-Indies, like the dog in the fable, who dropped the *substance*, while snapping at the *shadow*. Some people have dreamed that Britain is over-stocked with people. In fact, this island could, with Chinese management, readily support quadruple its present number of inhabitants. The same remark, applies to almost every other part of Europe, Holland and Switzerland excepted. While so many millions of British acres lie uncultivated, we pay six or seven hundred thousand pounds a year to the family of a single man. At a round calculation, let us guess, that fifty pounds sterling, are sufficient for converting an acre of barren bogs or moors, into meadows or corn-fields. The sum of six hundred and sixty thousand pounds, paid in 1785, to the immediate use of the crown, might thus have fertilized an hundred and twelve thousand acres.

The most miserable part of the story still remains to be told; but the particulars must be deferred to some future time. The civil list is a gulf yawning to absorb the whole property of the British em-

was computed at seven hundred pounds sterling a year. Mr. Pitt has made some very proper regulations on this head. He was warmly opposed by Edmund Burke.

In the Hebrides, four places excepted, no post-office is established. "A letter from Skye to Lewis, the direct distance but a few leagues, if sent by post, must travel above *twelve hundred miles*, before it can reach the place of its destination." Dr. Anderson's Introduction, p. 28. One is at a loss to conceive, on what account the Scots, during the American war, assumed, in general, such a ranting antipathy to the cause of the United States. Their zeal for the English government was violent; yet as justly might one feel attachment to the farmer who feeds him for the market.

* These particulars are inserted on the authority of a respectable gentleman, well acquainted with that part of England. It was stated, some time since, in the public prints, that the duke of Bedford, for the purpose of hunting, purchased, and brought over from France, *some hundreds of live foxes*.

pire. We look back without satisfaction, and forward without hope.

Lord Chesterfield informs us, that George the First was exceedingly hurt even, even by the weak opposition which he met with in parliament, on account of subsidies; and could not help complaining to his most intimate friends, that he had come over to England to be a *begging king*. His vexation was, that he could not command money without the farce of asking it; for in his reign, as at present, the debates of parliament were but a farce. Such were the liberal sentiments of the first sovereign of the Protestant succession.

This king believed that his son, George the Second, was an offspring of illicit love. His jealousy was fatal to the life of count Koningmarck, a Swedish nobleman. On the same account his wife, the heiress to the dutchy of Zell, died in prison, after a confinement of thirty-six years. George the First should have considered this accident, if real, as a *reproach* rather than a *corruption* of the royal blood. For tradition reports, that *his own* mother, the princess Sophia, bore a resemblance to Elizabeth, maiden queen of England. Like that illustrious and admired sovereign, Sophia, by the incredible number of her male favourites, attested the ardour of her sensibility, and the robustness of her constitution.

The quarrel between George the Second, and his son Frederick, prince of Wales, father to George the Third, arose from a different cause. It lasted for more than twenty years, and will be explained in my succeeding history of the reign of George the Second. It was carried to a dreadful height. When old queen Caroline was dying, Frederick requested permission to see her. His mother refused access to her son, and expired without an interview. Fifteen years after, Frederick himself died, and Dodington has obliged us with some anecdotes of his burial. By these we learn, that George grudged a dinner to the courtiers who attended it. The following is part of the account which Dodington gives of this affair.

"At seven o'clock, I went, according to the order, to the house of lords. The many slights that the poor remains of a much loved friend and master had met with, and who was now preparing the last trouble he could give ~~his country~~, sunk me so low, that for the first hour, I was incapable of making any observation.

"The procession began, and (except the lords appointed to hold the pall, and attend the chief mourner, and those of his own domestic,) when the attendants were called in their ranks, there was not one English lord, not one bishop, and only one Irish lord, two sons of dukes, one baron's son, and two privy counsellors, of whom the author was *one*, "out of these great bodies, to make a show of duty to a prince so great in rank and expectation. "While we were in the house of lords, it rained very hard, as it has done *all the season*; when we came into Palace-Yard, the way to

the Abbey was lined with soldiers, but the managers had not afforded the smallest covering over our heads; but by good fortune, while we were from under cover, it held up. We went in at the south-east door, and turned short into Henry the Seventh's chapel. The service was performed without either anthem or organ. So ended this sad day.—There was not the attention to order the green-cloth to provide them a bit of bread, and these gentlemen, (the bed-chamber of the late prince,) of the first rank and distinction, in discharging of their last sad duty to a loved and loving master, were forced to bespeak a great cold dinner from a common tavern in the neighbourhood. At three o'clock, indeed, they vouchsafed to think of a dinner, and ordered one but *the disgrace was complete*; the tavern dinner was paid for, and given to the poor. N. B. The duke of Somerset was chief mourner, notwithstanding the flourishing state of the royal family.*

* Dodington's Diary, Dublin edition, p. 72.

CHAPTER V.

Edward I.—Edward III.—Henry V.—Conduct of Britain in various quarters of the world—Otaheite—Guinea—North-America—The Jersey Prison Ship—Bengal—General estimate of Destruction in the East-Indies.

AT home Englishmen admire liberty, but abroad they have always been harsh masters. Edward the First conquered Wales and Scotland, and, at the distance of five hundred years, his name is yet remembered in both countries with traditionary horror. His annals are blotted by an excess of infamy, uncommon even in the Russian catalogue of English kings. David Hume, Sir William Blackstone, and Sir John Sinclair, have celebrated the talents and achievements of this detestable barbarian. "The English Justinian" was one of the wisest and most fortunate princes, that ever sat upon the throne of England. In him were united, the prudence and foresight of the statesman and legislator, with the valour and "magnanimous spirit of the hero."* Edward made war in Palestine and in France. He butchered some hundred thousands of the Welsh and the Scots. He was constantly at variance with his own subjects, and exerted every petty fraud to strip them of their

* History of the Public Revenue, part 1. chap. 6.

erty. The spoil thus obtained, was expended with equal criminality. We shudder to think of a domestic murder; but when a crowned robber, whose understanding is perhaps unequal to the office of a post-boy, sends an hundred thousand brave men into the field, to desolate provinces, and hew nations down like oxen, we call it *Glory*. Thus common sense and humanity are obliterated in a rhapsody of words. If Edward the First, as a private man, murdered a single Scot or Welshman, the world would have agreed in thinking that he deserved the gallows. But when he *only*, upon the most hateful pretences, butchered three or four hundred thousand people, we are summoned, at the end of five centuries, to admire "his wisdom, his good fortune, his valour and magnanimity." As to his *wisdom*, it is hard to say what England gained by his victories. The Welsh were independent or thereabouts, in the reign of Henry the Fourth, an hundred years after the death of Edward, so that the *merit* of subduing them is to be placed somewhere else. The Scots revolted in the life-time of this Edward. He died on a journey to Scotland, for the sacred purpose of extirpating the Scots nation. He would have been much wiser if he had staid at home at first, and saved himself the trouble of an impracticable conquest. As to the domestic legislation of this *Justinian*, he hanged two hundred and eighty Jews in one day. "Above fifteen thousand were plundered of all their wealth, and banished the kingdom."* The same writer says, that these enormities were committed under various *pretences*. Edward first introduced tonnage and poundage, duties on imports and exports. He was, in every respect, a scourge to the human race.

Edward the Second wanted to live at peace, and Sir John Sinclair tells us, that his reign is remarkable for "the *inconceivable* taxes levied." He was fond of the society of some companions, and all the historians mention this mark of good nature, as a very gross weakness, if not a *positive crime*. The heart of a wolf was, at that time, an essential qualification, for a king of England. After various rebellions against him, Edward was taken prisoner by his wife. He expired in Berkeley castle, by a species of death, too horrible to be described. His real guilt was, a social and peaceable disposition.

"The reign of Edward the Third is, without doubt, the most *splendid* in the English history.—His queen pawned her jewels."† The king pawned *his crown*; and this pledge lay unredeemed for eight years. He conquered a great part of France, without any sort of justice on his side. The rapacity of his son, the *BLACK* prince, as he has been emphatically termed, drove the French into rebellion, and the English out of the country. This conquest, and subsequent expulsion, first planted the seeds of that brutal antipathy

* History of the Public Revenue, part 1, chap. 6.

† Ibid.

to the French people, by which England has been too much distinguished.

Ferox Britannus viribus antehac,
Gallisque semper cladibus imminens.

BUCHANAN

The Briton, formerly terrible in his strength, and always menacing calamities to France. Englishmen pretend to be proud of the horrid ravages committed in that country, by Edward the Third, by his son, and by Henry the Fifth. The justice of their claims has long been given up; and yet we are deafened about their *vindicta*. Englishmen prattle on French perfidy, and of sucking in, with their mother's milk, an hereditary hatred for that greatest of nations. In the French wars of Edward the Third, and Henry the Fifth, England was plainly the aggressor; and the country, so far from feeling pride in their victories, ought, if possible, to suppress that part of its ancient history. Philip de Comines places the affair in a proper light. He ascribes the civil wars of York and Lancaster, that succeeded the death of Henry the fifth, to the indignation of divine justice. The murder, by Richard the Third, of his two nephews, was a diminutive crime, contrasted with the atrocity of Crecy, of Azincourt, and Poitiers. Henry the Fifth was a two-fold usurper. "If he thought," says Horace Walpole, "that he had any title to the crown of England, his right to that of France, followed as a matter of course." Since his time, the kings of England have called themselves *kings of France*, just like a person advertising that his grand-father had stolen a horse.

Ireland has long presented a striking monument of the wisdom, justice, and humanity of the English nation. That devoted island was, at the end of the twelfth century, over-run by a set of banditti, under Henry the Second. This established a divine right. Sir John Davis informs us, that even in times of peace, it was adjudged no felony to kill a mere *Irishman*. This acquisition proved very troublesome to the conquerors. "The usual revenue of Ireland," says Mr. Hume, "amounted only to six thousand pounds a year. The queen, (Elizabeth,) though with much repining, commonly added twenty thousand pounds more, which she remitted from England." The *supremacy* was, at best, a losing bargain. In war, affairs were, of course, an hundred times worse. Sir John Sinclair says, that the rebellion of Tyrone, which lasted for eight years, cost four hundred thousand pounds *per annum*. In 1700, six hundred thousand pounds were spent in six months; and Sir Robert Cecil affirmed, that in ten years, Ireland cost England three millions, and four hundred thousand pounds sterling. This profusion of treasure was expended in supporting the political conquest of a country which did not yield a shilling of profit to England, nor pay, even in time of peace, a fourth part of the expence of its government. The consolation of inflicting the deepest and

most universal wretchedness, was the total recompense to the good people of England. Sir William Petty, in his *Political Anatomy*, says, that in the year 1641, Ireland contained

1,466,000
He adds, that in 1652, they had sunk to 850,000*

Decrease 616,000

Thus, in eleven years, the Irish nation lost six hundred and sixteen thousand people. In 1641, they had been driven into rebellion, by the tyranny of that English parliament, who conducted Charles Stuart to the scaffold. On the incorruptible virtues of that upright band, much nonsense hath been said and sung. By a single vote, they confiscated two millions and five hundred thousand acres of ground in Ireland. The whole island was transformed into an immense slaughter-house. Ireland, governed by an English *republic*, might have looked towards Morocco, as a terrestrial paradise. Compared with the tremendous mass of misery produced by Strafford, Cromwell, Ireton, and the *glorious* duke of Ormond, the dungeons of the Bastile, or the proscriptions of a Roman triumvirate, shrink into forgetfulness.†

Neither the restoration of Charles the Second, nor the *glorious* revolution,‡ afforded much relief to Ireland. The people continued to groan under the most oppressive and absurd despotism, till, in defiance of all consequences, the immortal Swift, like another Ajax,

Broke the dark phalanx, and let in the light.

He taught his country to understand her importance. At last she resolved to assert it, and, as a necessary arrangement, she arose in arms. England saw the hazard of contending with a brave, an injured, and an indignant nation. The fabric of tyranny trembled on its base; and it is to be hoped that a short time will destroy every vestige of a supremacy, dishonourable and pernicious to both nations. As matters now stand, an Irishman, who loves his country,

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* These particulars are borrowed from a quarto edition of Guthrie's *Cassius*, printed at Dublin. I have not yet seen a copy of the *Political Anatomy*.

† Consult a Review of the Civil Wars in Ireland, by Dr. Curry. An epitome of his valuable book, will form a future chapter of the *Political Progress*.

‡ I adopt the current phrase, but what *glory* could be annexed to the affair, it is not easy to see. An infatuated old tyrant was deserted by all the world, and fled from his dominions. His people chose a successor. This was natural enough, but it had no connection with *glory*. James ran away, which precluded all opportunities for heroism. The character of the leaders in the revolution will not justify a violent encomium on the purity of their motives. The selection of William was reprobated very soon after, by themselves, which excludes any pretence to much political foresight. Here then, is a *glorious* event, accomplished without an actual effort of courage, of integrity, or of wisdom. When the Swiss, the Scots, the Americans, the Corsicans, or the Dutch, wrestled against the superior forces of despotism, that was a scene of glory. But when no resistance happened, the dismissals of a king and a coachman, were equally remote from it.

strongly tempted to wish that England were sunk five thousand fathoms below the German ocean.

In the East and West-Indies, the conduct of the "united kingdoms" may be candidly compared with the *trial* of Atahualpa.

British politicians exult in the victory of Seringapatam,* the butchery of the subjects of a prince, at the distance of six thousand leagues from Britain. Yet it would be an event the most auspicious both for Bengal and for ourselves, if Cornwallis, with all his myrmidons, could be at once driven out of India.

But what quarter of the globe has not been convulsed by our ambition, our avarice, and our baseness? The tribes of the Pacific Ocean are polluted by the most loathsome of diseases. On the shores of Africa, we bribe whole nations by drunkenness, to robbery and murder; while, in the face of earth and heaven, our senators assemble to sanctify the practice. Our brandy has brutalized or extirpated the aborigines of the western continent; and we have hired by thousands, the survivors, to the task of bloodshed. On an impartial examination, it will be found, that the guilt and infamy of this practice, exceed, by a considerable degree, that of any other species of crimes recorded in history. It is far worse than even the piracies of the Algerines, or the African slave trade; because, though the two latter have cost millions of lives, yet plunder, not assassination, is the ultimate object of pursuit; whereas, a plan, for exciting the Indians to extirpate the people of the United States, holds out no temptation, either of conquest or of spoil; and can arise only from a genuine monarchical and parliamentary thirst for the blood of republicans.

Our North-American colonies, including the Thirteen United States, formed a pretence for long and bloody wars, and for an expenditure of two hundred and eighty millions sterling.† We still retain Canada, at an immense annual charge, that shall be hereafter specified. The money is wrested from us by an excise, which results in the destruction of manufactures, and the beggary of ten thousand honest families. From the province itself, we never raised, nor hope to raise a shilling of effective revenue; and the chief reason why its inhabitants endure our dominion for a month longer, is to secure the money that we spend among them.‡

The mode of conducting our war against America, corresponded with the justice of our cause. At the burning of Fairfield in Con-

* On the 6th of February, 1792.

† History of the Public Revenue, part III. chap. 2.

‡ The British commissioners of public accounts, in their fifteenth report, state the following particulars. The amount of customs for 1784, in the ports of Quebec, of Halifax, of Newfoundland, and St. John's, was five hundred and sixty-three pounds sterling; the expences of collection and incidents, one thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight pounds. The charges thus exceeded the income by *seven hundred and twenty-five pounds*. This is a summary of their detail. There seems to have been a mistake, perhaps by the printer, in casting up the figures, to the extent of fifty-seven pounds. This trifling circumstance is only mentioned to ward off charge of mis-quotation.

necticut, "a sucking infant was plundered of part of its clothes," while the bayonet was presented to the breast of its mother. At Connecticut farms, in the state of New-York, Mrs. Caldwell, the wife of a Presbyterian clergyman, was shot dead, by a musket, levelled at *her*, through the window of a room, in which she was sitting with her children. Permission was granted to remove her body, and then the house itself, was reduced to ashes.† We have at least, five or ten thousand authentic anecdotes of the same kind. The Jersey, a British prison-ship, at New-York, will be long remembered in the United States. It is affirmed, on as good evidence as the nature of the subject will admit, that, during the last six years of the war, eleven thousand American prisoners died of hunger, and every sort of bad treatment, aboard of that single vessel. For some time after the war ended, heaps of their bones lay whitening in the sun, on the shores of Long-Island. When the illustrious commander at West-Point, deserted to Clinton, nothing could be more *becoming the service*, than his instant promotion to the rank of a British brigadier-general. Philips, and other British officers, at once adopted him as their associate and their confident.

But the peninsula within the Ganges, is the grand scene, where the genius of British *supremacy* displays its meridian splendour. Cul-loden, Glencoe, and Darien, the British famine of four years, Burgoyne's tomahawks, Tarleton's quarters, the Jersey prison ship, and the extirpation of six hundred and sixteen thousand Irish men, women, and children, dwindle from a comparison.

"The civil wars, to which our violent desire of creating nabobs gave rise, were attended with tragical events. Bengal was depopulated by every species of public distress. In the space of *six* years, half the great cities of this opulent kingdom were rendered desolate; the most fertile fields in the world lay waste, and *FIVE* MILLIONS of harmless and industrious people were either expelled or destroyed. Want of foresight became more fatal than innate barbarism; and men found themselves wading through *blood* and *ruin*, when their only object was *spoil*."‡ This book was published in 1772. The author, a Scots officer, returned to India *after its publication*. His return to Bengal proves that the accusation here advanced was of *notorious* authenticity, and that colonel Dow was prepared to support it, at the point of his sword.

On the 5th of June, 1792, Mr. Francis said, in the house of commons, that the Bengal newspapers were perpetually full of advertisements for the sale of lands seized *for want of due payment of revenue*. He held in his hand two of these advertisements; the one announced the sale of *seventeen* villages, and the other, a sale of *forty-two*. He quoted some minutes of lord Cornwallis to the same effect. One of these, dated the 18th of September, 1789, was in these remarkable words. "I can safely affirm, that *one-*

* Ramsay's History of the American Revolution, vol. 11. chap. 17.

† Ibid. chap. 70. ‡ Dow's History of Hindostan, vol. 111. p. 70.

third of the country's territory in Hindostan, is now A JUNGLE,
INHABITED BY WILD BEASTS."

In 1789, the British East-India company governed two hundred
thousand, four hundred and twelve square miles of
country, equal to twice the area of the whole republic of
France, which is known to comprehend twenty-seven millions of
inhabitants. The writers on this subject frequently remark, that large
portions of Hindostan, were *formerly* cultivated like a garden.
The natives themselves are, perhaps, the most abstemious of men
kind. Their subsistence requires but a trifling quantity of food,
comparable with that of any race of people in Europe. From the
temper of the natives, they had, for the most part, but few
arts. Agriculture and manufactures had arrived at a high degree
of perfection. From these important and combined causes, the po-
pulation of India must have been prodigious. But, if we suppose
that it was only in proportion to that of France, and the supposition
is perfectly reasonable, the dominions of the East-India company
must, before the commencement of British conquests, have contained
forty-four millions of inhabitants; and from various circumstances that
have been stated, this computation is certainly not overcharged.
For the sake of distinctness, we shall proceed by the help of cyphers.

Population previous to the year 1758	54,000,000
Lord Cornwallis, in 1789, states, that <i>one-third</i> part of this country, was, at that time, a jungle inhabited by wild beasts. For this jungle, deduct <i>one-third</i> of the ancient population	18,000,000
Suppose that the remaining two-third parts of these provin- ces have lost <i>only</i> one-half of the number of the inhabi- tants whom they contained, <i>before</i> their subjection to the British East-India company. This one-half gives	18,000,000
Subtract this from the original population	36,000,000
Present number of inhabitants	18,000,000

Thus, in thirty-five years, that is, from 1758, to 1792, inclu-
sive, there has been an uniform waste of people, under these mer-
cantile sovereigns, at the rate of more than *one million* per annum; in
whole, THIRTY-SIX MILLIONS. The premises, on which this
caloulation has been founded, are explicitly placed before the reader.
As to their justice, he is competent to decide for himself.

T H E E N D.

ERRATA. Page 6. Line 2, from bottom, read *went* on.—P. 10. Line 1, from ditto, read, 1766.—P. 13. L. 11, from ditto. for nineteen, read, *two* million.—P. 19. bottom line, read, 1792.—P. 61. L. 2, from ditto. read, *the* *same* *year*.—P. 64. L. 14, from ditto. read, 1785.

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