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CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE STATE OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR MDCCXCVIII.

PART THE SECOND.

*UPON THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S PLE-
NIPOTENTIARY AT LILLE, AND THE INDEMNITY
OF GREAT BRITAIN AT THE PEACE.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“CONSIDERATIONS, &c. at the Beginning
of the Year 1796.”

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THE material part of the following pages was written during the period of the Negotiations at Lille, and under impressions inseparable from what the Author regarded as at least a great public danger and dishonour. He had not, however, courage to take upon himself so great responsibility as attaches, in his opinion, upon persons who interfere with the actual measures of the Executive Government. He chooses a time for publishing these Reflections when they clash with no object of Administration; when the good sense and deliberation of the public may judge of them without heat, anxiety or prejudice; with the

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tranquillity and even coldness which attend the discussion of remote and contingent interests. It will easily be seen, that he neither courts popularity nor favour; and that he speaks the language of no party.—The greatest danger of Europe, he considers to arise from the people's ignorance of their true situation, and from mean and temporizing politics in the Governments. He reserves for a future, but not very distant opportunity, to offer a few Considerations upon the domestic situation of the Empire and its Dependencies, and the necessity of explicitness, economy, and example, in the Government, in order to enable the people to bear their share of privations and hardships during the contest, and to triumph over every difficulty and danger.

MARCH 30, 1798.

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CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

AS soon as France had received that constitution which ended on the 14th of Fructidor*, the king's servants brought down a message † to both houses of parliament, expressive of his majesty's readiness to treat for a *general peace*, and containing a virtual acknowledgment of the republic. Though no eagle flew, nor thunder rolled, nor favourable murmur issued from the aisles of the Luxembourg, they seemed confident that their offering was accepted; inspired and sanguine of success. The silence of the oracle and the suspicions of its priests, that they had ap-

* 4th September, 1797.

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† 9th Dec. 1795.

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proached the Altar with insincerity, did not disconcert nor lead them to despond. They held, they thought, in their hand a branch that would open every portal, and soothe every monster, between them and their elysium. They cannot say "*Pbæbi cortina fefellit*;" they do not yet seem convinced that they have been deceived: and though the state of Europe has, since that time, without intermission, suffered new and progressive changes, more and more unpropitious to peace, and utterly inconsistent and irreconcilable with the safety or permanence of peace, they have not desisted from their attempts to obtain it, in spite of the avowed indisposition and insolence of the enemy, which have defeated them at Basle, at Paris, and at Lille.

The most glorious advantages of his majesty's arms have produced the same effect, as the aversion and the insolence of his enemies.

My Lord Malmesbury expelled, or my Lord

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Duncan triumphant, could not alter a tittle in the project for peace*: so wise, so perfect, so secure, and, above all, so certain of success do those instructions appear, which can neither swell by victory nor contract from failure; which are equally just and adequate under every alternative; adapted to the most contrary events, and becoming in the most opposite circumstances.

Whatever, therefore, were the causes of the war, it can now alone be expedient to enquire into the causes of its continuance: it is no longer necessary to entrench ourselves behind the Scheldt, and the Treaty of Munster, or to trace its sources beyond the desert of the revolution. However blameable it may have been in some men to have defended our allies, and the treaties which bound us; and in others, to have maintained our constitution; however wicked it may have been in some of

* Declaration of October, 1797.

us to have combated for the system of Europe, and the independance of its several states, and in others to have taken arms for our religion, property, and civil state: in short, whatever be the nature and degree of our respective crimes and delinquencies, who, from whatever motive, and with whatever apprehensions, have dared to resist the aggression or aggrandisement of France, it is now become useless or superfluous to accuse us; unless we are still guilty of protracting the war, and have been prevented by our pride, or our ambition, from offering such terms of peace as France *might and ought to have* accepted.

When nations have made their appeal to arms, it is by the success of them that their claims must be decided, instead of the original justice of their quarrel: if Justice weighs any thing in the scale, she must bring her sword with her; she would once have been counted

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counted at a negotiation for the perseverance of the injured, and the favour of mankind.

The relative state, therefore, of the belligerent powers, and not the cause of the war, or pretence of injury, gives the measure and equity of the peace. Indemnities are not for the just but the powerful. There is a right in wrong itself. The plunder acquired by crime is to be divided with justice; states and banditti acknowledge this law.

If we have not offered to France her due share of the common prey, which is the plain English of what diplomatic cant and ministerial prudery have christened by the affected name of mutual compensation; if the project of Lord Malmesbury does not leave to France her fair division of the spoil—*then* we are the protractors of the war. If we ought to have abandoned the whole to France without any moiety or equivalent for ourselves,

selves, *then* we are certainly guilty of its
 continuance. But if the Harbour of Trin-
 comalé with the Island of Trinidad, and
 the Cape of Good Hope, are not more
 than an equivalent for Flanders, Brabant,
 Liege, Cologne, Holland, Savoy, Lombardy,
 and the whole catalogue of the French
 robberies; then, considering that the arms
 of France have not been more victorious than
 our own, and that our successes upon the
 high-seas are equal to her's upon the high-
 ways, we have acted like thieves of honour,
 and are entitled to defend our equitable share
 of the booty.

When peace was first offered to the repub-
 lic; and so late as my Lord Malmesbury's first
 expulsion from France, we proposed to ourselves
 some honest and nobler objects: we were
 willing to divest ourselves of our conquests, in
 order to reinstate our unfortunate allies in the
 countries of which they had been dispossessed

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by the fortune of war, and to restore the balance of Europe. Upon an occasion so generous, and with intentions so truly just and magnanimous, it would have been mean to have haggled or bargained: the more and the less were questions of trifling importance. We were indemnified by honour for all our cessions of interest. To be the acknowledged deliverers of Europe, had even a political advantage in reputation, and possibly in gratitude, which might easily counter-balance some degree of inferiority in our relative position. But now that we, together with all Europe, have abandoned that system, which, in our turn, has defended all of us; now, that disengaged by the treaty of Udina, we think of our individual state alone, and we become insulated in the politics of Europe, as well as in the map, it is doubtless our part to keep our full share of the common plunder, and assert *our right in wrong*: more particularly, as our armed confederates demand

not only the whole of the purse but the pistol.

If we examine the *project* which has been rejected at Lille, we shall find that there exists no longer in any cabinet of Europe a basis or design of peace, that is not founded in the complete abandonment of its ancient system, or that is any thing else than a new plan for its division and spoliation. Even England, the generous and impartial arbitress of its fate, and the protectress of its liberties so often, appears there in the character of one of its plunderers: meek indeed, and moderate, and self-denying, and declining still the invidiousness and the full reward of a crime of which she more than divides the meanness and the guilt.

How we have declined from our original purity and disinterestedness, and by what means we have fallen so imperceptibly through
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the mighty space which separates England at Paris, and England at Lille! How we have changed to such wide extremes without a demise of the crown, or a change of ministers, or a dissolution of parliament, or the least shock or violence of public opinion; and how we have glided so smoothly from our *sine-quâ-non* of the Netherlands, to our *quâ-cum-omnia* of the Cape of Good Hope, I will not for the present enquire. I shall endeavour to discuss the peace, as it was offered at Lille, upon the footing of political wisdom only, since morality, since honour, since engagements the most sacred and solemn that ever nations entered into, are publicly betrayed and insulted by the basis upon which it was projected; and I shall be able to shew, if I do not deceive myself, that, having abandoned the system and public law of Europe, we are as much compelled, as political robbers, by the wisdom of injustice, and the necessity of wrong, to keep our full share of the conquests, as we were prompted

as a great and generous nation by a true and honourable policy to effect a mutual restitution, and restore the state of things to the period before the war.

Justice, law, custom, opinion itself, protect right. Wrong has no defence but power. To usurp a little is weak as well as wicked. To seize that which may defend the robber is the wisdom of iniquity. When the system of this vast republic of Europe, when the relations of these federal empires are overwhelmed and forgotten, as they will be in a peace of plunder; when the common dislocation is followed every where, as it must be, by partial convulsions, and internal changes, who does not see that there will be no right in any thing but occupancy, no tenure but the sword? Is it possible for any one to be so fond and childish as to expect that justice, equity, or prescription, will remain even in the language of ambassadors, and that words will survive the ideas they represented? The whole

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whole public code of Europe is cut off with a blow of the sword, and all its leaves are dispersed by this perfidious peace, by this true and effectual treaty of partition. Crime is every where successful and acknowledged, usurpation incensed and revered, innovation ratified, revolt sanctioned, robbery confirmed; and do men think that virtue, right, custom, allegiance, property, will remain even in Dictionaries? or that they will be title-deeds, which will cease even to be names? We ourselves, (not certainly ourselves) accomplices and parties in the guilt, and with no palliation but the smallness of our portion, do we think our folly any thing but an aggravation of our crime? and that it is either honesty or wisdom so to divide iniquity as to share the baseness without the reward, and the shame without the security? We have not even Ambition's plea; but are slaves and fools in an useless and a dangerous villainy.

*Quod si violandum est jus regnandi gratiâ
Violandum est aliis rebus pietatem colas.*

If we are to make a peace of plunder, let us not talk of moderation and false modesty; we will be virtuous in other things; but abandoning virtue in the basis and the principle, she will but ruin and betray us in the detail and the conditions. We have nothing but power to look to, because nothing but power can be the sanction of such a peace. Who will make himself responsible for its duration? Who of either* party will hesitate or scruple to violate it for one moment, after it shall appear probable to do so with advantage? Those who think that they can wrest back again from France the fruits of so many crimes and so much injustice? or France herself, unjust and criminal, when she thinks she can add to her usurpation, and lay her yoke upon other necks? Who will

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engage that peace shall last for a year? for a month, for an hour longer than the voyage from Cadiz, and the Texel to Brest harbour? Does any one think such a peace ought to last? and can that last which every one knows ought to be broken? If peace comes to be not restoration of right, but ratification of violence, what does it bring but more leisure to complain, and brood over injuries no longer doubtful, no longer to be remedied? In this state of things it is that the minds of men dwell upon their wrongs, and grow rancorous and gloomy; and in this state and disposition of men's minds it is that those obstinate and interminable contests are prepared, of which there is no end but with the nations that wage them; and no cause but the unjust and premature pacifications, with which weak or cowardly governments have endeavoured to compose and compromise their first contests and dangers.

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As this peace therefore cannot, in the contemplation of any man, endure longer than the renovation of the first of the enraged and revengeful powers that conclude it upon unjust and temporizing foundations; as it will have no sanction from honour, equity, or common interest, after the first of the high contracting parties shall have respired from the weakness occasioned by the war; as all alliances and treaties (as I shall presently shew) are henceforth to be regarded as vain and uncertain, it is, I imagine, to our relative strength, and to the equality of our offensive means, that we must look exclusively not only for its permanence, but for its observance at all! If France had fled to sea, does any one think she would make peace at all? Does any one think then, that she will observe the peace after she shall have obtained fleets? And does any one think that she can raise the blockade of her ports of Spain and Holland, without giving up her fleets? Can we make peace without

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out giving her seamen, who are now our prisoners*? Can we restore her colonies without giving her the nurseries and schools of seamen? And can a peace last which furnishes her, in an instant, with every thing wanting to her, and inducing her to break it?

It is worth while to consider what the external position of France would have been had the citizens Le Tourneur or Treilhard been instructed to catch at the offers of Lord Malmesbury; and to examine what would have been the extent, population and resources of her empire, while the share of Great Britain in the plunder was restricted to the acquisition of the Cape and of Trincomalé; and in making this comparison of booty, it would be important to contemplate not only the

* There are 24,000 French seamen now in the English prisons of war, besides whatever number we may possess in the West-Indies and other quarters.

relative

relative power acquired respectively, by the treaty of partition, but the actual power remaining internally in each country, as previously affected by the events, and the manner of carrying on the war; for if the *status quo ante bellum* had been literally admitted, the whole public debt of France has been passed under the sponge of the revolution, while we have added at least a third part of the total to our own enormous mortgage. The discontents of this country would be fostered and enflamed by the intercourse of France and the presence of a French minister, while the little disposition there exists in France to resist or complain of any injury or oppression, would be allayed, or diverted by the return of commerce and the liberty of the sea. British capitals would flow into France, and French principles and conspirators would overwhelm England. The credits France would easily obtain in this speculative country would give her friends and associates in all

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her enterprizes, and the ball of revolutions would gather by every mercantile connection that she made, and every million she became indebted to our merchants. This would have been the case if the peace had been projected upon the *status quò*: but besides these advantages, of which we could not well, under any circumstances, I fear, be able to deprive the enemy, she was to derive others of no trifling concern, notwithstanding all the possible bad management, and all the possible commotions upon which we might rely to counteract or diminish them. The peace of which Lord Malmfbury was instructed to present the project, would have ratified the French empire in the Netherlands, her paramount authority over the vassal governments of Holland, Spain and Sardinia, and her tutelary sovereignty in the new Italian republics, together with whatever part of the Venetian or Imperial territories within the Rhine, was not to be given to the Emperor, either by the treaty of
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Leoben, or as an equivalent for its violation. For this is an axiom of our new public law, and a principle of the French code of nations, that every treaty may be broken, and every oath be cancelled, so it be done with an indemnity, or a compensation. What other changes were to be effected in Europe in favour of France, are perhaps as yet too mysterious and uncertain to be stated amongst these acknowledged and public usurpations; (Rome and Swisserland had not yet been conquered) it is not material to swell the catalogue with Avignon, Porentru, and the German rents in Alfatia, the briars and brambles in a forest of iniquity. It is enough to trace her from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain, from whence she strides like another Neptune, shaking the foundations of the earth.

Of all the barriers of Europe, of all the boundaries, natural, or created by the art and policy of nations, the British Channel alone
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remains, yet considerably impaired, and menaced and outflanked by an hostile line, from Ushant to the Ems. The Alps and the Pyrenees are levelled; Savoy and the Netherlands, that once, with a ridge of fortresses, presented an impenetrable chain, and fixed the political geography of the world, are in the hands of France; her garrisons are admitted in the Adriatic gulph, and the islands of the Grecian Archipelago: the sceptres of Turin and Madrid are swayed by her nod, and exist by her connivance; Brabant and Austrian Flanders are annexed; the United Provinces, held in awe by their own ramparts, now manned by France, are governed by French legates and proconsuls; the commercial republics of Italy plundered and revolutionized; all abandoned by the peace to the French regimen and forced to swell the catalogue of the French power and resources, give a solidity and extent to the military republic, which no wise man, and no free state,

can look upon without terror and apprehension*.

It would be easy to add to this chart of aggrandizement, if it were not better to leave something to individual thought and reflexion. Tracing the degrees upon the surface of the globe, the mind cannot fail to people so much space, and to figure to itself the inhabitants, the ships, the ports, and the wealth acquired by the Republic. The peculiar circumstances of a peace of plunder, dispense me from estimating the arts or industry, the agriculture or commerce, of so many millions of new subjects. Conservation is not the object of the conqueror; it is not to round or consolidate his new dominions that will employ his care, but to wield the arms they

* It is to be observed, that all the usurpations of France subsequent to the PROJECT OF LILLE are purposely omitted.

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bring him, but to advance his outposts upon a new line, and a broader circumference.

There are persons, I know, who will infer from hence, that the acquisitions of France are not so dangerous as if she made them in the spirit of conservation. I confess, I think very differently; for with that spirit, France would, of necessity, be pacific; but with the opposite spirit, she is, by the same necessity, military and aggressive. From this doctrine, however, that the sacrifices conceded to the republic will not weigh as heavy in the political balance, as if they were made to a just and tutelary government, very important consequences are drawn, in the minds of some persons, with just as much prudence and security, no doubt, as all the errors and inequalities in the scales of peace, are corrected, in those of others, by their belief and expectation of misgovernment in the usurper, and of confusions and civil wars in his own bosom. To me these ideas occur, but

but with very different sensations, and leave, I own, the most opposite impressions upon my judgment: for if France becomes pacific and conservatory, these provinces, which by the peace are to become part of her, will more than double her power and resources, always too great for the equilibrium of Europe. They amount at least to one-half of her empire prior to the war, considered absolutely and without relation to other states. But, in the relative scale, the addition of one-half resolves the Grecian problem, and more than doubles the whole; being all disposable and offensive, all military means and resource. If France, notwithstanding the peace, should remain still bent upon waste and revolutions, then the annexed countries are to be estimated as recruits and plunder, as magazines and arms, as fuel and materials of anarchy and war; so that if the revolution were to cease at the peace, the French empire over Europe would be erected upon the
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prosperity of the conquered countries ; and if it were to continue after the peace, the French principles would be advanced, and propagated, and established by the soldiers, and the plunder they would supply.—Under a good administration, they suppose the paramount dominion of the French sceptre—under a bad one, the power of revolution, and the progress of barbarism.—With a provident ambition they found a new Rome—with a furious and destructive ambition they enthrone new Goths, and Huns and Lombards, upon the ruins of the civilized world. For my part, I fear, there is not a Frenchman who would not rather be Alaric than Cæsar, Attila than Scipio ; and I regard all the conquests of France, and all the truces which may ratify them, as so many epochs and stages in the career of a new Vandalism and darkness which are preparing to involve all human society. Plunder and recruits, however, she will at least draw from the unfortunate countries in her power, which even at this time

she divides into slaves and soldiers. Misery and oppression are the nurseries of her armies, recruited by wickedness and calamity. Plunder and recruits are demanded by her, by a law of moral necessity and political gravitation. The wealth and growth of Italy and Flanders are absorbed by the emptiness of France. She fills the chasm of her population with the rubbish of the world. All that hangs loose and floats upon society, throughout Europe, obeys her influence, and flows towards her.

Soldiers, and with them plunder, and the power of wickedness and barbarism, she will draw from this immense aggrandizement, in which it seems all Europe is prepared to acquiesce. But it appears to me, that she has gained already, and will have confirmed to her, and ratified by the peace, a power of mischief, which she will esteem at a higher rate than the transfusion of foreign blood and gold into her exhausted circulation: that she

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she has gained, and will fix and stamp for her own, advantages that she will value more than setting her gigantic feet over so many promontories and rivers, and overleaping every frontier with which the arms and prudence of a whole century have confined her. By the cession of the Netherlands, the European union is dissolved, the bridge of England into the Continent is broken down: by the peace of plunder and partition, the public law, the faith of nations, the relations of ancient amity, and the sanction and bond of new leagues, are ridiculed and vilified. *Whoever looks at the end of the war, will believe we have made it confederated with France against our common allies, or at least refuse to believe, that either party had a virtuous or an honourable cause, when both have concurred in so base and so guilty an issue. France will prize the benefit of the common dishonour; she will know how to estimate the general depravity and disgrace: it is*

her exclusive gain ; and to have banished faith and shame from the transactions of nations, she will value as a pledge not only of her impunity, but her greatness. Upon the crimes and follies of her enemies, during the war, she has reared that enormous and mishapen mass which is yet called her republic. By the common crime of the peace, she will destroy all principle, all opinion ; and triumph over the reluctant hypocrisy of states, and the *last* scruples of public morality.

The advantage, however, of France in this peace of plunder, is not confined to the triumph of immorality ; she derives a specific interest from her share of the plunder, which cannot be compensated, even by adequate values in the booty allotted to us ; for besides that by the nature of the peace, no future treaty can be considered as binding and effectual, against which, any interest can at any time be alledged, or any convenience

venience pretended—she knows that by the cession of the Netherlands, the real bond and interest, the *casus fæderis* of every treaty that ever was, or can be made, between this country and the House of Austria, is effectually cut off. If ever England could hope to arm the emperor in another war against her, and to employ by that means, a part of her forces in her own defence upon her own frontier, it could only be from the vivacious claims of that monarch upon the Netherlands, which might still perhaps linger in the chancery of Vienna, and survive a forced surrender, or an interested exchange and equivalent. The subsidies of England might tempt him to a war *otherwise* advantageous, but as a mere mercenary that power could never employ him; so that England having accepted of plunder, and the emperor being indemnified, (whether in Italy alone, or in Bavaria besides, is immaterial, excepting as to the degree and suddenness and expansion of political immorality) there

could be no danger of any future union between those courts, whose interest she had satisfied, and whose honour she had subdued. From hence she possessed the means of chusing her enemy in another war, and attacking either single-handed, without the fear of an alliance, which had no longer the support, either of good faith, or of a common interest. That the enemy she will choose is England, there can be no doubt, because the policy of England will always be to succour the continental enemy of France; but the continental policy is so perplexed and entangled by reciprocal jealousies, that England may be deeply wounded before it can be settled which of the powers on the Continent shall move to her assistance. The general policy or gratitude of Europe, I confess, I do not rate very high; and though it is undoubtedly the common interest of the great powers on the Continent, that we should remain as a counterpoize to France, yet the moment it is rendered uncertain, whether

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whether it is more the interest of one power than another, it appears to me of no consequence and effect. But admitting that it should remain the interest and policy of any one power upon the Continent in particular, or the general policy and design to move to our assistance, upon which side is the diversion to be created? The emperor no longer possesses any frontier towards France; the Cisalpine republic, and the republics on the hither side of the Rhine, are interposed between him and France; the low countries are henceforward France; the King of Prussia, if ever he were to become our ally, is too far removed in the map, and cut off as we are both from Holland, can co-operate in no single point. The keys of the Pyrenees and the Alps are in the hands of France. With the means of invading every state in Europe, she is rendered secure and inaccessible to them all. France, therefore, will close the present war with the flattering prospect of being able to attack us

single

single handed in the next war; and this advantage, even before the rancour and spirit of revenge which she now breathes against us, she would have prized as of the highest and most inestimable value. It is well known, that for the last fifty years at least, it has been a maxim of political faith in the French cabinet, that in such a war she could not fail to crush and extinguish us. This important possibility, therefore, she would have purchased with mighty sacrifices, even in purer times, and with no hostility in her bosom, but that of rivalry and ambition. How dear and valuable must it now appear to her, when she openly threatens us with all that revenge and lust, and avarice* can inflict, of wounds, dishonour and oppression? Now, when added to that possibility she multiplies in her own hands, the power, facility, and advantage of

* The English women and the English guineas has long been a *cvi de guerre*.

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attack: now that possessed of harbours opposite the mouth of the Thames, and outmeasuring our coasts, she may pour her forces from every haven, and with every wind? I confess, for one, I cannot consider all this without deep and serious apprehension, and I would fain (if it were possible, amidst the languor of the public mind, and the obsequiousness of the King's ministers towards it) seek a better remedy against the danger, than what seems to be esteemed so powerful, and is, doubtless, so certain a resource as the misgovernment or civil broils of France.

But when I compute in my own mind the restoration of the whole of the French colonies now in our possession, the readmission of France into India, where our government appears to me more prosperous than secure: and the accumulation of her maritime and colonial preponderance by the acquisition of the Spanish part of Hispaniola, and her power
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over the naval forces of Spain, Holland and Venice; when I add to these means of insult and offence, the eagerness, perhaps the necessity for war on her side, which would render any peace a state of distrust, alarm, and armament, I am forced to bow down in gratitude for the rejection of our offers, and to rejoice in the continuation of war, if it is not terminable with less danger, less calamity, less disgrace, and less immorality, than we have projected.

Whatever may be the chances of a civil war arising in France, to extricate us out of the evils we seem willing to plunge into at the peace; whatever may be the probability or the just and near expectation of such a crisis, under the present oppression of that unhappy and insulted nation, it is impossible to consider the physical force of France without terror and dismay. I have already explained my sentiments upon those topics; and,

and, upon the present occasion, it is less important to confirm or destroy that dishonourable hope in us, than to be convinced that such expectations are better reasons for avoiding or delaying the best peace, than for courting or precipitating the very worst; and therefore that they furnish the reverse of a defence or palliation of my Lord Malmesbury's instructions.

Besides the expectation of the civil war, there is but one argument amongst all those that I have heard assigned for agreeing to this enormous mass of aggrandizement, that appears to me to require any degree of refutation, and that only because of the effect it seems to operate upon a certain class and order of understandings. I hear it said with much confidence before those, and even by those, who ought rather to feel shame than confidence upon such an occasion, that it is impossible to think worse or to apprehend more from the

present project of peace, than men feared and thought of the peace of 1783; that that peace was commonly reputed at the time, to be disgraceful and disastrous, inadequate to our remaining resources, and to the relative state of us and our enemies; that by that peace we abandoned the thirteen colonies of America, and ceded islands to France and Spain; that we were considered commonly in Europe to have descended from our rank among the states of it, and were calculated by France herself to be no longer more than a power of the third order *; that no hope could then have been formed in our favour, from the resentment and censure of the House of Commons, and their declaration that the peace was inadequate to the pretensions of our relative situation, because that vote was generally ascribed to party-pique and disappointment, and it was the common sentiment and feeling, that our condition did

* Mirabeau, Rabaud de St. Etienne, &c. &c.

not entitle us to more favourable terms than we obtained; that our debt had encreased a third part of the total, a third part of our commerce was abandoned, our manufactures were interrupted, an arm of our power and empire was cut off, and a principal branch of our revenue and population intercepted. "The sun of England was declared to be set for ever," and an universal dark and fatal despondency seemed to hover over us. Nevertheless, the omens and menaces of these times and that peace, passed over us, and with the interval of two years at the utmost, we recovered our rank, our credit, our commerce, and our political importance.—It is easy to perceive the tendency and final scope of all this reasoning; we imagined ourselves more degraded and unfortunate at that peace, than we were in reality; we despaired beyond what we needed to have done; the chapter of accidents turned out in our favour; and so without doubt it will now do!

Though I have not diminished or dissembled the force of this argument, I confess it fails of convincing my reason. To have escaped once, seems to me but an insufficient motive for tempting or trusting fortune a second time. The convulsions of our enemy, no doubt, concurred with our own efforts and enterprize, to extricate us from the situation upon which we had fallen in 1783: but shall we always trust, and trust exclusively to that *odium sui* which Tacitus invoked upon the enemies of Rome, without reliance upon our own fortitude and prudence? and are these foundations so secure and virtuous as to enable us to throw down all the props and buttresses with which we have hitherto endeavoured to strengthen the fabric of peace, and uphold the pillars of our greatness? Surely it is important to consider well, and I must be forgiven if I press it with obstinacy upon the reflexion of the public, what reasons exist at this time for expecting the unexpected deliverance

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ance we experienced then? whether the circumstances of these two periods are so resembling and parallel to one another as those persons would infer or insinuate; and whether there is not a material distinction between our case at that peace, when we acknowledged our danger without foreseeing the remedy; and this, where the confidence of the remedy is made an argument to shut our eyes and plunge into the danger?

Perhaps I might safely trust this opinion to the public feeling, but it will be at least pardonable if I err from too much caution, and compare some of the most prominent circumstances of the two epochs, which will easily destroy the argument from analogy. By the peace of 1783, it is true that we consented to a very great diminution of our empire; but the advantages positively acquired by the enemy were diminutive indeed, and did not certainly amount to the indemnity of the
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fiftieth part of the expences with which the war had left him oppressed and exhausted. By the debt he had accumulated, by the principles he had defended and received, he had brought into his own bosom those very seeds of revolt, and those internal dangers and confusions from which we were delivered by the peace. Our state was indeed diminished, but our honour was entire. A peace which dismembered our empire, disarmed the envy also and rancour of our maritime rivals, which, ever since the peace of Paris, had brooded in every court, and made the whole commonwealth of Europe pleased spectators of the humiliation that we suffered. The system of Europe and the public law remained and flourished, and we had a just expectation, both of the duration of peace, and of alliances and assistance, if it were wantonly to be broken. If any one indulged a hope from the distractions of our neighbour, it was a hope of many years of peace for Eu-

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rope, from the reform and amelioration of
 his own government and empire. It was a
 hope of general tranquillity from individual
 improvement. There was then no speculation,
 no wish of evil to our enemies, no base il-
 liberal desire of mischief more salutary than
 our own virtue, economy or wisdom. A
 peace of plunder and common wrong had not
 shaken the sanction from our treaties; and
 we could look, unblamed, as to a pledge of
 their duration, to that situation of our enemy,
 which would occupy him at home, and pre-
 vent him from disturbing them. If there
 were statesmen who foresaw the explosion
 that has since convulsed that unhappy empire,
 they did not dare to alledge it as a motive
 or defence of a peace, for which they pleaded
 humble, but strong necessity; when they
 severed us from America, they did not bid
 us be of good cheer, we should be indem-
 nified by the civil war which hung over
 France; when they abandoned the loyalists,
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when they ceded Dominica and Minorca, they did not cry out, no matter, we shall be compensated by the calamities that wait for France. Humble but strong necessity was all their plea, and all their hope was peace; a just and honourable hope from our own industry and fortune; commerce, and above all, economy, they said, with many years of peace, might repair our privation; upon her lap, upon her unruffled bosom, they laid down their anxious head; with that ingenuous and virtuous scheme they dared to disarm, and trusted to respire. But what was the danger of their mistake, if they had made one? what were the disasters that hung over their country, if they had been deceived? We should have declined in power; we should have felt a gradual decay; we should have missed the blood we had shed, and the arm we had amputated. In the lapse of time, and with the current of events and years, with prepared and pliant spirits, adapted to necessity and use, we should have

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have glided down into that third order of the powers, where the bitter insolence of our enemy had already ranked us. But at that time, peace was peace. We could disarm with confidence; we could diminish our burthens with security. We disbanded our armies; we dismantled our fleets; we returned to our fields and looms; fresh air played round our temples; we slept and were renewed. But what has such a peace in common line with that which, whenever it arrives, is now *projected* to close the war we are engaged in? Have the circumstances of these two periods any thing in parallel or analogy? If a definitive peace were to be signed to-morrow, at Lille or at London, can we disarm, can we dismantle, can we confide, can we respire? will France cease to plunder and recruit? will she cease to agitate and conspire; will she cease, even to insult and to threaten? Is every thing to be feared from hurricanes, nothing from the tides and trade-winds of hostility? but

our western shores of Europe are relieved by storms; the atlantic wave beats heavier in the calm. Let us then open our eyes (it is full time) upon our true situation, and since *we will* have peace, let us fairly know the peace we are to have!

Every negociation, every attempt, even the very name of peace is a stumbling block in the way of the French government, and a momentary check in that career of barbarism and dissolution, through which it drives mankind. If it is still useful to gain these pauses, and to catch at every projection in the abyss through which we are falling, I am content to offer still new negociations; if it is still necessary to expose their tyrannical designs against the liberty of Europe, after the system of Europe is abandoned by every power in it; if any advantage is derived, even now, by exposing afresh the perfidy or the perjuries of France; if any veil or shadow is
still

still spread over the smallest part of them, I am still willing that new efforts should be made to remove every mist, and every thread that hangs over them. I would be deterred by no insults; I *could* be wearied by no disappointments. But if, after what has happened, and happened I think, without the surprize of one rational being in the whole public of Europe, any other end or object is proposed by these inauspicious conferences; if the king's ministers seriously believe, that in the present convulsed and disjointed state of Europe, and from the present anxious and guilty tyrants, twice the usurpers of the French government, and traitors not more to the throne than to the republick, they can obtain any permanent peace, or any peace at all, which should bring a state of repose, and disarmament; if they rock themselves with this absurd and deceitful hope, and are intoxicated with these wild and dangerous speculations, then I must acknowledge my ob-

ligations to the preposterous ambition of the enemy ; then I must bless the terror or the pride which defeats their plans, and rejects their capitulation.

Peace is of necessity, either armed or confidential, there is no alternative or subterfuge. If the first, it has little but the name of peace ; if the second, it is full of danger, beyond any state of war. A confidential peace, founded in robbery and the ratification of wrong ; a confidential peace, reared upon the ruins of the system by which we, and all the states of Europe, have been preserved independent and free from a foreign yoke, and before any new system or balance of power is essayed, or even invented, is not only impossible but absurd ; is not only beyond our understanding, but contradictory to our reason. But if an *armed* peace is all that we can obtain, it is clear that we ought not to desire it with the same impatience, nor to

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buy it with the same expence and sacrifice as a *peaceful peace*. If we may not sleep, why so eager to lie down? It is a joyless banquet where the sword is suspended over our head. The paths of this peace are strewed with thorns and poppies: shall we wound our foot or drown our senses? If your eye winks, the enemy is upon you; if you watch, you consume with a slow and doubling fever. Will your revenue support an *armed peace*? Will you have recourse to loans to supply the deficiency of your revenue? If you *could* borrow in the time of *nominal* peace, what would be the state of your funds?—what of the exchange?—what of commerce? In the mean time the enemy makes war upon your credit and finance, almost the only part of the war in which you are *now* vulnerable. He exhausts, he fatigues, he consumes you. The name of peace leaves him to his attack, and exempts him from his danger. He continues his hostility, and is

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relieved from his defence. With his recruits and his plunder he menaces your coasts and your colonies,—with his emissaries and his plots he disturbs your interior, and encourages your jacobins. By the joint danger he exhausts your treasury, and alienates from your constitution your mean and mercenary people, murmuring at the burthens he renders necessary for their defence.

But if your state is unquiet at home, what is it in your colonies? in your colonies, where he has sown the fruitful seeds of insurrection, during the last five years, and where the root has struck profound and rank in a genial bed and a virgin soil;—in your colonies, where revolt is natural and legitimate;—where government is exposed to treasons and dangers, unknown amongst the same colours and natures of human beings;—where the white empire shakes to its foundations, or leans henceforward on the dangerous support

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port of a black army;—in your colonies, cultivated by an unhappy race, which links us with the brute, and humiliates us, at least, as much as it is oppressed by us.—In your colonies, where you have associated the slave in the government, and placed the bayonet in the hands of despair.—In your colonies you cannot enjoy even that degree of false and suspicious tranquillity in which it is proposed to watch at home.—Here you are to admit the very system of the enemy, to be modified, indeed, and qualified by my Lord Malmesbury.—Here you are to organize the plans of Mirabeau and Barnave, with the comments of Rigaud and Sonthonax.—Here you are to admit and swear to the French constitution.—Here, if at the instance of England, and by the address of her plenipotentiary, it is consented to relax at all in favour of the planter and the metropolis, the slave and the Mulatto are to be told, the one, that he is deprived of natural liberty, the other,

other, of civil rights by the cunning and cruelty of England. The emancipating hands of France are tied up by the tyranny of England. The liberty of the Black, and the franchise of the Creole, interdicted by the mercantile apathy of England.—Their promised happiness blasted by her cruel policy, withered under her intense meridian avarice. Oh ingenious policy, egregious wisdom, divine forecast of thought and prudence, to commit your rich and peaceful colonies to the *analogy* of a government which has foresworne the principle of conservation, which wastes from policy, and ruins by design! Glorious *analogy*, for which St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, and the whole island of Hispaniola, which is either yours or nothing, are cheap, and vile, and nothing.

Well! but in the East at least we shall be tranquil and secure. There we may re-
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admit the enemy, without all those dangers which, doubtless, I have exaggerated! We may restore to him his counters at Chandernagore and Pondicherry, without all this inconvenience and anxiety; there we may repose: there will be peace, at least, for the East India company, and the board of control.—What? I thought the war had been the peace of India!—Are Pondicherry and Chandernagore all?—Is the neighbourhood of Tippoo-Sultaun nothing?—Is not the king of Myfore already armed, victualled, garrisoned, prepared at every point?—Does he wait for any thing but assistance: any thing, perhaps, but a signal from France?—Are the Mah-rattas, the Nizam, the whole of the country powers nothing?—Are not all of these laid open to the restless intrigues and malevolence of France?—Are not the Rights of Man already circulated in the languages of the Vidam and the Koran? There are circumstances still more dangerous, and nearer dangers, in that part of your empire, which

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I will not point out ; but he is a miserable politician, indeed, whom some late occurrences, not unconnected with the constitution of your own armies, have not made rejoice in the absence of France from the peninsula of Hindoostan. You cannot close your eyes then even *there*. In the East, in the West, in the body of your own state, there is matter of watchful anxiety, or uneasy dreams. Such is a jealous and an armed peace !—Such is the position in which it places you with regard to your enemy, I mean your foreign enemy ; for to your domestic foe, such a peace resembles victory, and is welcomed as success. *He* would triumph, if it were only in our dishonour ;—he would exult if it were only in the infamy of a peace, the conditions of which do not only abandon every object and every principle of the war, both moral and political, but violate every principle, and every form, and render incredible and ridiculous every future pretext of justice, of honour, and of

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virtue. Conditions which, whatever are assigned as the causes of the war, betray them *all*. If the balance of power, they betray and abandon it to France.—If the civil order, with religion, property, law, charters, and all the duties and relations by which social life is defended and endeared;—they betray and abandon it to France;—to France, who has condemned and exploded for herself alone, the wild and pernicious doctrines which bloody experience and satiety of ill have refuted and suppressed. Not so for other nations, and the rest of men, whom she has never ceased to regard, as slaves or enemies, with hatred and contempt. Amongst these she scatters, with malignant generosity, the seeds of evil; in their ground she sets the dragon's teeth,—true symbol of democracy, where men spring from the earth to perish instantly by mutual wounds. Amongst these she plants that tree of liberty, whose roots are steeped in blood, whose branches hang with poisons. The danger of her

principles is not surely, (I address myself to those who have feared them most), in their beauty, or their wisdom, nor in the happiness of their practice; but in her success, in her means, and power to propagate them by the sword. Such a peace, therefore, is as favourable to the moral disorganization of the rest of Europe, as it is to the territorial aggrandizement and permanent dominion of France. It is not only *her* conquest, but our degradation, *her* encrease, but the general decay and danger. It brings not triumph only to France, and her principles, but the common fears and troubles, but the revolution, anarchy, and barbarism of Europe*.

Such

* There remains no danger from the brilliant chimeras, any more than from the visible deformity of the principles which have desolated France. Not one of them has triumphed, and only one remains in existence. This one, however, contains the seeds of all the rest; for all would revive and spring up again, if France were permitted to *preserve her conquests, and destroy the equilibrium of Europe.* Cured herself by experience, she

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Such is the faint uncoloured outline of that feverish and anxious state, which we are eager to purchase with all the conquests we have made upon the enemy; conquests which are now our sole defence, the sole balance of power, the sole obstacle and delay to his unlimited universal despotism: conquests which are held in trust for Europe, for the barriers and the liberties of Europe; conquests, which, if ever France should return to peace, and peaceful arts, will liberate at any time the Netherlands; in favourable ones emancipate the Dutch; and in the interval confine the ravages of anarchy, and

would spread around her the mischiefs she had banished from her own bosom; she would corrupt with the poisons she had vomited, and conquering with one hand, and corrupting with the other, she would impress upon the nations that true dis-organizing impulse, which would make them revolve for ever round her own endless revolutions.

Considerations on the State of Public Affairs at the Beginning of the Year 1796.

the tyranny of France to the Continent. If such a state is preferable to the just, necessary, and victorious war that we are engaged in:—If we are determined to exchange our vantage-ground for this uneasy and precarious situation:—If we prefer the post of danger without honour, to the post of honour without danger which we now hold:—If we prefer precarious safety in humility and baseness, to our present proud and invulnerable security: or in the present state of Europe, expect any safety but in arms:—If the people will have it so, and if the ministers and the parliament will yield to this ignorant and unhappy will of the people:—If the government will not deign to enlighten it upon its nearest and dearest interests, and resist its fatal errors and dangerous passions:—If they cannot awaken, or create in the British public, nor in the rich and threatened classes of the church and state, a sense of honour, nor a sense of shame:—If they cannot extract

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tract an offering from cumbrous wealth, or proud nobility:—If property is deaf, if religion nods, if there are no moral resources in a corrupt and mercantile community, mis-called a state, and unworthy of its greatness:—If ministers have abandoned the guidance of it, and are become no more than passive and obedient instruments of the multitude committed to their care:—If such is the genius of government, and the disposition of the people, I know of no remedy. Troy has been.

*Excessere opes adytis arisque relictis,
Dii, quibus imperium hoc steterat.*

But still *this* people that command their obsequious governors to betray them, are a calculating people, and they know that a peace like this, with half a war establishment, at the least, and half the expenditure of war, is not *worth* as much as a peace of honour and security. They feel
taxation,

taxation, who cannot feel for the departed glory or liberty of their country; here they are tremblingly alive, and shrink with a sensitive alacrity. Here, at least, they feel, and, in the spirit which remains to them, they estimate this peace, as not so *valuable* as a genuine and perfect peace. They see it is a damaged, and a counterfeit commodity, and they will have it *cheap*; they know it is a smuggled and adulterated spirit; that it is not proof, and they expect a bargain.

This argument is of no little force, since it comes from them, for whom every thing is sacrificed, to whose fugitive will and precarious wishes, the solid and permanent policy of the country has been made to give way in a race of popularity, and a struggle for power. It would divert me too far from the course of my argument, were I to express, in this place, my feeling and resentment at the

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the temporizing obsequious policy; the pliant and ductile character of ministers, who appear to me to want of virtue, at least, some of its dignity; and of wisdom all its firmness; who, with the purest views, as I believe, and in the noblest cause, seem to me more blind to their own splendour than giddy from their height. This, at least, it is necessary for them to know, and be prepared for, that the nation, such as it is, and, with its present disposition and sentiments, will not approve of the same measure of concession, nor be willing to divest itself of its conquests to the same extent, for the purchase of this equivocal and expensive peace, that it would willingly consent to for a peace of *confidence* and *ECONOMY*. To all other untoward and inauspicious circumstances which, if they persevere, will usher in this peace, they will do well, therefore, to add this also, which it is easy to foresee, (even were not that of 1783

an example of it,) that the authors of it will miss of the popularity they court, and be most loudly blamed by those who have most urged them to conclude it.

If it should appear, as I confess I hope it does by this time, to every candid and ingenuous mind, that there is nothing really desirable in this peace of expence and vigilance, it is not, I imagine, less clear, that we can obtain *no other* peace by *concession*. A peace of confidence is not to be bought or begged. The foundations of peace are very different from the conditions upon which it is concluded: these very often impair or destroy altogether its foundations. The basis upon which a pacification is concluded, is very distinct from the basis by which it is to be maintained; and is frequently the cause that it cannot be maintained. A dreadful experience, and a bloody school, have taught mankind, that there is no real sanction and
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bond of treaties, but the common fear and inconvenience of breaking them. They are maintained by the reciprocal means of defence and injury, not by the weakness of one party, or the oath of either. In all their perjured history, how many are to be found that were not signed in actual contemplation of future hostilities? After the firm, lasting, and perpetual peace, which is sworn to in the first article, how constantly follows that by which peace is rendered insincere, precarious, and of short duration, namely, robbery on the one side, and concession on the other? Injury and extortion here, and there brooding revenge with politic submission. *Stant belli causæ*. So that it would be juster to enquire into the causes of peace, than the causes of war, which recur for ever in the history of the world, as soon as the causes of peace are withdrawn. These are nothing but an equality of power, and consequently an equality of fear. There is no peace in

disparity of conditions. Mutual weakness is a seal of peace, and so is relative aggrandizement; but when nations grow confident of their own strength and power, ambition follows easily; so that reciprocal fear can alone restrain them, for the cause of war is never wanting: the conqueror sees it in the weakness of the vanquished, the vanquished, as he respire, finds it ready to his hand in the injury he has suffered. He who would seek the causes of any war, any where else but in the conditions of the preceding peace, will much mispend his time and labour, excepting indeed in such a case as the present, where the course and order of things is prevented and overturned by new elements and sudden revolutions. The peace of 1763 was the cause of the American war, and the peace of 1783 would have been the cause of other wars, if they had not all been anticipated and confounded by the French revolution, and the preposterous ambition of the French usurpers.

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If I were asked, what was the cause of the second Pontic, or the second Punic war? I should not answer, the siege of Saguntum, or the massacre of the Romans, but the peace that terminated the war of twenty-four years, and the peace which wrested three provinces from Mithridates. Those hard and unjust conditions could not survive the weakness of the state upon which they were imposed; with its renovation, the causes of war returned also. If of the third Punic war? I would answer, that it is to be found in the conclusion of the second. By that peace, Carthage abandoned Spain, and *all her islands*, as we are to abandon the Continent, and islands, without which we cannot hold our own; and by that peace, having nothing but the oath of a perfidious enemy to secure it, as we shall have nothing more, and with the temptation and power of breaking it in the hands of her implacable and preponderant enemy, as they will be placed in the

hands of ours, and having yielded up her ships to Rome, as France demands of us to yield up ours to her, she continued to be an empire as long as it pleased Rome, as we shall continue to be called an empire as long as it pleases France! The first peace with Rome she broke herself, because she recovered from it; Rome broke the second, because she could not recover. Her strength caused one war, her weakness another. This tempted her, and that her enemy. There is this difference, however, between us and Carthage, that she was able to buy *peace twice*. The rancour of our enemy, his principles of barbarism, and his near neighbourhood, force us to see, that the present is the last peace we can buy from France. She will presently return without much intermission and delay, to consummate her achievement, and destroy her Carthage*.

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* If any one should think proper to enquire why I select these instances, rather than from modern treaties, it

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Is it not absurd, then, to talk of *buying* a lasting peace, since the very price of it is the cause that it cannot last? And is it not absurd and contradictory in terms, to talk of a peace of confidence, without a balance of powers? If we would have such a peace, must it not be based, and founded upon our relative aggrandizement, since a mutual restitution can no longer be effected? Must it not be by maintaining our acquisitions, since France refuses to release hers, instead of contracting and diminishing ourselves within our former proportions, while France enlarges and even doubles hers? We have failed in the great cause for which we took up arms; we have not been able to repress the enemy within the frontiers of his empire. He has

it is because, since the destruction of the system of Europe, and abandonment of the balance of power, they would only perplex and mislead; those I have chosen, appear to me to apply strongly to the peace of Udina, and the project of a peace at Lille.

extended

extended himself upon every side. The balance of power is every where overthrown : he has removed the landmarks of the world : we cannot any longer combine all Europe ; we cannot rely, with certainty, upon a single friend upon all her Continent ; we cannot, in any future war, supply our inequality of means and population, by bringing another nation into the scale with us, to weigh against “ the natural superiority of France.” The conquerors of the Continent, the victors in their duel with mankind, expect us single-handed, and threaten to crush us with their gigantic and disproportioned force. They wield at once the whole physical power of their empire, the fee simple of their soil, the capital of their produce and population : they oppress us with their numbers, and with numbers which are not theirs, with the plunder and with the soldiers of conquered nations. What is to be done ? How are we to be defended ?—by submission. Look at

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Venice, Genoa, Spain, Holland; look where you will in that part of Europe which they have pacified—By arms then? By arms certainly, and by our own arms alone, since we are cut off from the Continent, and from our allies. If we must, therefore, defend ourselves by arms, must we not do every thing to preserve our superiority upon that element where alone our arms can defend us? Must we not spread and extend ourselves upon the waters as France has swelled and enlarged herself upon the land? If she will be Rome, must not we try to be Carthage? Is there any other wisdom, any other policy, any other security, any other choice? Is this ambition? No. It is necessity. Is it thirst of power? No. It is self-preservation. If we will preserve our domestic state, we must preserve our relative power. If we will maintain our constitution, we must maintain our greatness. We are attacked at every point, above and below, at the centre and at

the circumference: there is no choice. If we will be free, we *must* be powerful. The system of Europe is not more hateful to France than the system of mixed and moderate liberty which makes us free at home, and powerful abroad. We can keep nothing but by keeping all.

Could we have restored the antient limits of Europe, we would seek no aggrandizement; could we maintain the balance of power, we would desire no other strength nor security; could we preserve a single certain alliance on the Continent, we would trust even to the chapter of accidents; could we bring back France to the *status quó*, we would not go out of it ourselves; were it attainable for Europe, we would accept it in India, at the Cape, at the Antilles. This is a peace that we will buy at any price, we will pay the consideration of it for all the world. But since the conqueror of the Con-

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tinent will not relent, since he will not listen
 to this just and equitable scheme of virtuous
 wisdom and equitable policy, what alternative
 is left us but to advance with equal strides
 with him who will not recede with us? Have
 we any other safety? While he wastes the
 Continent, we will plough the Ocean; while
 he oppresses foreign cities, we will exercise
 the innocent and profitable industry of our
 towns. We will nurse our colonies, extend
 our fisheries, enclose our commons, multiply
 our canals, encourage our manufactures,
 discover new markets for them, improve the
 old ones, carry the produce of every climate,
 and exchange the redundance of every soil.
 These shall be our arts. To whom of all
 mankind are they invidious or hurtful? By
 whom are they not received as benefits, and
 applauded with gratitude? Let us not then
 be wanting to our own fortune; let us not
 be unworthy of our destiny. Whatever employs
 our seamen, and nourishes our navy,

defends our coast, and enriches our country. Whatever renders it impossible for France to become again, I do not say, a formidable naval power, but a naval power at all, is our true policy, and the sole defence of Europe. This empire is not hateful; this greatness is not dangerous to other states. We will hold it only as a sacred trust; we will exchange it at any time, and under any fortune, for the *status quó* of the year 1789: we will yield every acquisition, when France shall render what she has usurped; and, in the mean time, who is threatened or terrified by us? Whom can we conquer, whom even can we invade? The Ocean that surrounds us is a shield, and a shield only; the waters are our defence, and not our arms. The Continent of Europe is not only invulnerable, but inaccessible to us. We never touched it but by treaties, subsidies, alliance. All these are now intercepted and cut off: we shall be missed, perhaps, in the scale of Europe, who
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will see, with some degree of favour and satisfaction, some resource remain, some obstacle preserved against the intolerable tyranny of this corrupt and polluted Rome; and we shall at least delay the ruin and dissolution of the civilized world, while we protract our own downfall and dishonour. The Continent too, may respire and recover, in no small degree, from the present panic and astonishment which betray and deliver it hand-bound to France, while we engage her whole attention, and employ her concentrated forces: hereafter the great powers of Europe may alternate with us in resistance, and defeat, by divided but constant efforts, those mighty projects which have triumphed over the general but short-lived endeavour.

I cannot persuade myself that the king's ministers do not perceive all these advantages, and do not feel this necessity for preserving the conquests till such time as they can be exchanged

exchanged against those of France. But I am told, they despair of the public spirit, and doubt of the resolution of the people, under the inevitable hardships and pressure of a prolonged state of war. To this I answer, in the first place, that the ministers have it not in their power to terminate the war; and that it will continue in spite of them, and of any terms they may offer, and even in spite of any peace they might conclude, upon terms like those they have offered. In the next, that the state of public spirit is not so properly their excuse as their fault. It is good, however, if it is not high; and sound, though it is not exalted. It would have been better and nobler, if care had been taken of it; if a generous principle and a generous example had come to it, from whence it had a right to look for them. Upon this subject I shall explain myself particularly in another place; I shall confine myself here to the asking of a very few questions, which I would rather

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rather have answered by the public feeling than by my own solution. Has care been taken to satisfy the public mind upon the enormous expenditure of the public money? Has the quota of income subscribed in the highest places, been such as to encourage the spirit of the public to contribute with patriotism from private fortunes? Are perpetual embassies for peace, treated always with insolence; is the spectacle of our ambassador twice expelled and driven from the republic calculated to create a great and lofty spirit in the people? Is the project of a peace of plunder calculated to create a right spirit, and of a peace of unequal plunder to create a high spirit in the people? It is not, then, the spirit of the people that is to blame, or that can be assigned as an excuse, for those who have made it what it is, and neglected all that could have made it what it ought to have been, and what it may still be, whenever that example is given to it from above, without which I

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do not know of any people having atchieved, or endured any very great trial or success. For my part, the more deeply I consider and resolve in my mind the actual state of this public opinion, the more I am at a loss to determine whether it is more to be commended for being what it is, in spite of the neglect of government, and of the egotism and avarice of the great and rich, or more to be censured for being no better and no higher than it is, in spite of the glorious successes of the war, the unrivalled renown and prosperity of the nation, and the justice and dignity of its quarrel.

To this despair, or doubt, however, of the public spirit, whether or not the plea be just in itself, or favourable to those who assign it, we are, without doubt, to attribute that eagerness and impatience for peace, even without tranquillity and disarmament, and those perpetual projects and missions which
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distract us at home; and impair our influence and dignity in the cabinets of Europe. I am far from censuring the moderation of the king's councils. Moderation is true wisdom; but there is some danger of its declining into mediocrity and littleness. To hold every thing acquired in the war as a trust for those whom the war has despoiled and plundered is true moderation; and since the peace of Udina it is true generosity. To restore every thing to the spoiler and plunderer of Europe, is neither of these, but the very contrary and reverse of these: for do we not abandon the liberties of Europe, when we abandon that for which they may be redeemed, and which is a valuable compensation to France even now for them? And do we not take the price of their abandonment, like a corrupt guardian, by a part of the plunder? If we are to consider our portion of the spoil only, there is no doubt of our moderation; but if we estimate what we give up of the common

property and deposit of Europe, and of our own honour for it, then I cannot find the footsteps of moderation. I see the principle and passion of ambition, with all its characters and distinctive marks. I see it treacherous to others, confident of itself, speculative and daring. I see it traffic the welfare and happiness of mankind for its own security and advantage; I see it false and hypocritical, pretending moderation, and covering its crime with the threadbare mantle of necessity. Necessity! Moderation! What? When fortune puts every thing into your hand, and makes you arbiters of the world, to set your colossal feet upon the promontory of Africa and the Archipelago of America, instead of holding the scales in the centre of Europe, and compressing her with your weight? To prefer your own sordid interest and local politics (I speak not here of your mistaken view of it) to the general good, and the high office of dispensing it?

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it? To prefer any thing, all things, to the unrivalled glory of restoring the balance of the world, and being hailed the general benefactor of mankind?

I have been accused by a great statesman*, for whom I entertain a profound respect, and to whose politeness I am indebted, of entertaining ambitious views in the West-Indies; I hope he will accept of this apology.—We are ambitious only of the general good, and careful only of our own security. Whenever the ancient lawful government shall be restored in his country, we trust the public law of Europe, and the common principles of equity and justice will be restored along with it: we will take any engagement, in the face of heaven and of mankind, to restore every thing to every lawful government of Europe which

* M. de Calonne.

we may retain from their several usurpers; whenever the states of Europe shall be emancipated from the yoke of republican France, we will render every thing that belonged to them at the beginning of the war; to Spain as well as to Holland, the constrained and shackled allies of the republic. This is the spirit of all our declarations and manifestos*; that we will not usurp from the lawful monarchy of France restored; not that we will not provide a defence for ourselves, or an indemnity for Europe, against the dominion of revolutionary France, or against the contagion of the principles which, flowing out of France, have corrupted so great a part of it, and endangered, in so particular a manner, our colonies in the West Indies.—We have taken no engagement not to resist the arms, or diminish the power of the usurp-

* Declaration, October 29, 1793.

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ing republic, by our own relative aggrandizement; but, even in this article, we cannot be suspected of ambition, who will hold the whole of our acquirement, but as a pawn and pledge for the emancipation of Europe, and restore the *status quô* before the war, *even to the republic*. What I have said, therefore, of the identity of government in the West-Indies*, can be regarded only with national, or rather republican prejudice, as a dismemberment of France. For the rest I have delivered only my own sentiments, and, if, against my hope, M. de Calonne should persist in his opinion of them, he must at least give the king's ministers credit for *their* moderation, which I confess is very different from mine both in nature and degree.

The circumstances of Europe have changed in so material a manner since I ha-

* Considerations, 1796, p.

zarded that opinion; and it is now become so clear from the successive pacifications which so many powers have made with the usurpers of France, that the fate of that empire will be abandoned to its own struggles, that I consider the whole public fortune as in suspense and abeyance. It appears to me premature in the present physical and moral situation of Europe to attempt a final settlement, and specific adjustment of the disputes and pretensions that distract us. Conquests and revolutions deface the natural and the moral order: Reciprocally nourishing and strengthening each other, they present two distinct but allied obstacles to peace, which, I confess, I think it impossible to throw down, or to over-leap at the same moment.— From the principles of France I have long ceased to apprehend any thing for foreign nations, excepting in the case of her being able to make a victorious peace; the power
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and the popularity they would gain by *that* event, would alone render them dangerous, and be able to propagate them, in spite of her own example and renunciation *. Her own repeal and execration of them, together with a just and equitable peace, would be the salvation of Europe. But her crimes and her sufferings might be effaced and forgotten amidst the splendor of her arms and successes. She could not long maintain her influence in the countries she revolutionized, unless she maintained the dregs and refuse of these communities in the power they usurped. These men would always look to France, because, if the protection of France were withdrawn from them, they would instantly become amenable to the laws of their country which they had violated and betrayed. In spite, therefore of her own amelioration and return towards moderation, France would

* Considerations, 1796, p.

of necessity encourage jacobinism in the new republics, because jacobinism would be the only bond of their dependence upon her. Every well-governed republic, every virtuous commonwealth of any name or form, would have as much to dread from these principles, and would consequently be as naturally hostile to France, as any monarchy, mixed, or even absolute *. Europe, at the conclusion of such a peace, would remain in a state of civil war ; in which the revolted and the conspiring throughout all her territory, and in all her states, would lean upon France, or look towards her. The principles therefore, of France, which, without her aggrandizement, as it seemed to me, would be extinguished at the peace, it is evident to all the

* It is remarkable, that the free and fraternal arm of the republic has extended the blessings of revolution only to republics. The conquered despots of Turin and Madrid are maintained in their tyrannies, while the free citizens of Switzerland, Holland, Genoa, Brabant, &c. are all revolutionized.

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world, will acquire additional force and vigour from a peace, admitting her aggrandizement. The just obstacles, therefore, to peace are double; first, the physical variation and inequality of the territory of Europe, and secondly, its moral position. The usurpations of France are the first difficulty, the civil war in Europe, the second. If you could replace the antient limits of its states, the moral order would be replaced of course, and without effort or stipulation; it would follow naturally, from the simple experience of the mischief and misery which have flowed from our deviation from it; from the abhorrence of the new principles which have been reduced to practice; and from the repentance and abjuration of them by France herself. But to imagine that you can restore the moral good, while you admit the natural evil, is foolish and absurd. To think that you can bring back virtue, by acknowledging crime, and consenting to the rewards of crime; that

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you can reinstate order by recognizing anarchy and revolution, and usurpation, on every side, on the Scheldt, on the Rhine, on the Adige, on the Tiber—that you can establish property, by agreeing to plunder and robbery, or maintain whatever may be yet untouched in Europe, by betraying or dividing whatever has been contended for; can be the madness of those only whom heaven is preparing to destroy.

The present moment and circumstances, therefore, are inauspicious and unfit for peace; and it is either weak or perfidious to invoke it. Look at the state of all those countries which have purchased peace, and see if there be any thing there to envy or approve? throw your eyes over the whole of Europe, and say, if war be not the natural state and order for all those nations who will defend their constitutions, their independence and their property? If you will pull down the throne, the

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altars, and the laws, and consent to abandon the care and government of the country to whatever is base, and corrupt, and treacherous amongst us, I think *you may have peace.*— France asks this before all other terms; this is her first and true preliminary; institute a government which I shall govern, and a constitution in which I will daily interfere and interpret for you; let felons rule you whom I shall rule, and who will lean upon me for impunity; who will confiscate and forfeit every thing for my exchequer, and put your fleets and armies under my command and instructions; change your parliament for a club, and your king for a directory, and your religion for schools of atheism, and I will no longer dread you; be factious; be criminal; be bloody; be licentious; be idle; be poor; and then I will dare to trust to you. Is not this the language she has held? Is it not the law she has given? Is it not the practice she has enforced wherever she has granted

peace? And is not war then the right and natural state of our nation in particular, whose wealth and constitution, whose industry and morals, she is resolved to corrupt and destroy? She thinks there is no peace between right and wrong, between laws and murderers, between justice and usurpation; and until our government shall become like hers, she will never trust it. War then is our state, our true and wise position, and *economy* alone can enable us to hold it; an enemy like ours, is to be tired and disappointed; the rapidity of his motion keeps him from his fall; he spins but cannot stand; suspend the scourge and he lies upon the earth.

War then ought to be incorporated into our system, and the whole of our conquests ought to be made subservient to the conduct and economy of the war. The expences which we bear, and which are in truth too heavy to be borne, must be reduced by a strict
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system of economy; by sacrifices to the state; particularly from those who enjoy honours and emoluments from the state, and who must cease to perplex themselves and insult the public, by disputing the public right to contract its own profuse liberality. Upon these points I shall speak more plainly in another place; what I aim at here, is to persuade the people to consider their situation with a firm and patient spirit, and to look at war as the very reverse of evil, so long as the enemy shall leave them no alternative of a just and honourable peace. The time, I doubt not, is at hand, when peace will court us, and when we may safely meet her. I do not, for one, despair of the public fortune; the reign of wickedness was never long; but supposing it eternal, would not a state of war with it become eternal also? Let us accustom our eye to our station; let us dare to tell our own hearts there is as yet no prospect nor overture of peace; that the state of the world forbids

forbids it ; that to defend our country is our post, and that our fathers have acquitted themselves for us of more than is required of us for our children.

With these sentiments in the people, and with the example and the sacrifices they have a right to look for from those who hold the first and most ostensible stations in the country, there will remain no real danger from the madness of the enemy, though doubtless much inconvenience, hardships, and unhappiness; and whenever, from exhaustion and debility he shall wish for peace, there will be little difficulty in the conditions of it. The state before the war, or the state after it, are the sole alternatives of a real, solid, and permanent pacification. The first is the peace of justice and humanity, the other, of political violence and wrong. There is in both, perhaps, apparent safety, and what the world regards as glory: in the first only, true wisdom

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wisdom and true honour. As long as the war continues, I can see no reason for declining, or disowning that object, however difficult, indistinct, or speculative its attainment may become. I see many for keeping in it view and remembrance. When peace shall present herself in her own real form, it will be time enough to discuss equivalents and compensations; but as long as she is only a name and a mask, as long as she is regarded by the enemy as his danger and his ruin, it cannot be unwise to keep alive the memory and the prospect of the antient order of things, and of its renovation. The power of the enemy is neither based nor rooted, unless we make it so by an unjust and dangerous peace. His projects cannot all prosper, nor prosper always: he cannot be successful every where; and he cannot fail in any place without failing every where; nor fail for a moment without failing for ever. The ball of wickedness unravels as it falls. Whatever is right,
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and wise, and virtuous, grows strong and clear, and firm by duration. Time is the enemy of every false and vicious system, and the sole enemy that it is necessary to oppose to them. That we may make the right use of this sincere and faithful ally, is the best prayer I can make, and the best advice I can offer to the country; and as the sole means that occur to me of rendering that advice practical, and finally triumphant, I presume to recommend and provoke in the highest places, explicit counsels and generous resolves, a great example, and a strict economy.

END OF THE SECOND PART.