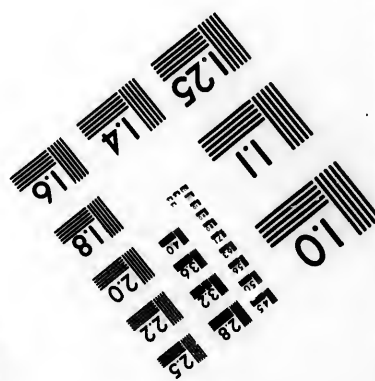
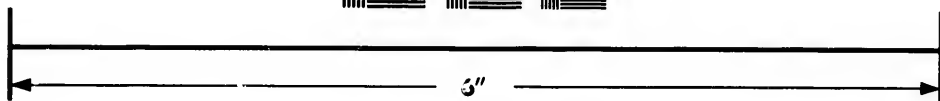
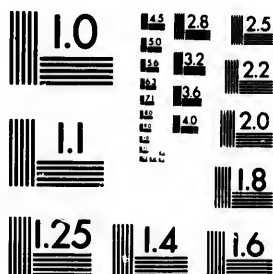


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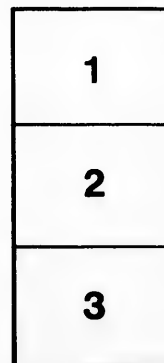
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T O
Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON:
TOGETHER WITH
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A PAMPHLET LATELY
PUBLISHED BY DR. SHIRBEARE.

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A
L E T T E R
T O
Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON:

OCCASIONED BY
HIS LATE POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS,

WITH AN
A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A PAMPHLET LATELY
PUBLISHED BY DR. SHEBBEARE.

*" Here let those reign, whom PENSIONS can incite
" To vote a PATRIOT black, a COURTIER white;
" Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
" And plead for pirates in the face of day;
" With SLAVISH tenets taint our poison'd youth,
" And lend a LYE the confidence of TRUTH."*

JOHNSON.

L O N D O N :
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A
L E T T E R
T O
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

S I R,

W HEN a man, who has rendered himself eminent by his productions in morals, and in polite literature, engages in political contentions, and in those which are apprehended to be of great national importance, it may reasonably be expected of such a writer, that he should distinguish himself not by party violence and rancour, but by moderation and by wisdom: and that at least he should not wholly lose sight of that liberality of sentiment, which should characterize the scholar; nor of that decency and politeness, which should adorn the gentleman. But unhappily your political productions have been chiefly remarkable for

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bitter-

bitterness of invective, unjust and uncandid representations, the most bigotted prejudices against them whom you oppose, and the highest strains of contemptuous insolence. You have written in a manner which must degrade you in the judgment of the impartial public, in a manner utterly unworthy of a great, or liberal, or philosophic mind, and for which even your being a royal pensioner cannot apologize.

— WHEN I first heard that a pension had been conferred upon you by those in power, I hoped that it might have been given as the reward of merit. I knew that your literary labours, your elaborate Dictionary, and other works, in which you had displayed great force of genius, extensive knowledge, and uncommon powers of language, had given you a just claim to public support and encouragement. I thought it not impossible, that those by whom your pension was procured, might have been satisfied with rewarding your ingenuity, without imposing any services on you unworthy of your character. But the use that has been since made of you, renders

renders it sufficiently apparent, that a pension was conferred on you with other views. It now seems probable, that your known Jacobitical principles, which, however strange it may be thought, appear now to be in high estimation at court, were among your chief recommendations; and that it was these, added to the hope of employing you in the service of your new masters, which really occasioned your being placed in the list of royal pensioners.

It has been said, that few men are capable of bearing prosperity well; and if receiving a pension may be considered as a species of prosperity, it appears sufficiently evident, that this has not had a favourable effect either upon your head, or upon your heart. Not one truly valuable piece has issued from your pen, since you received the royal bounty. From that time, your native pride and arrogance appear to have been augmented; and your latter pieces are far from breathing that virtuous spirit, by which your former writings were generally distinguished. Instead of employing your talents in the service of the republic of letters, and in benefitting mankind,

you are now dwindled into the rancorous writer of a party; and produce only such performances as the *False Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, and the *Patriot*.

DURING the last reign, you were generally considered as one of the most bigotted Jacobites in the kingdom. It is commonly said, that you scarcely ever spoke of the family on the throne with any degree of temper or decency; and you not unfrequently exhibited in your writings your aversion to the government. It was then a subject of your most pathetic complaints, that England was *oppressed with excise (a)*, that it was a *cheated* and a *groaning nation*, and a *beggar'd land (b)*. We were then cursed with a *pensioned band*, and with *hireling senators*; and it was a *thoughtless age lull'd to SERVITUDE (c)*.

You

(a) Vid. London, a Poem, in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, published in Doddsley's *Miscellanies*, vol. I. p. 188.

(b) London, *ut supra*, p. 189, 191, 196.

(c) London, *ut supra*, p. 189, 196, 197.

You then wished for those happy days of old, when justice was uprightly and impartially administered. You sighed for the age of Alfred, because, as you inform us,

*Fair Justice then, without constraint ador'd,
Held high the steady scale, but deep'd the sword;
No spies were paid, no SPECIAL JURIES known,
Blest Age! but ah! how diff'rent from our own! (d)*

But whatever evils the nation suffered from an iniquitous government in the last reign, they are, it seems, happily removed in the present; so that you can now discover nothing to complain of, but the turbulence and wickedness of the popular party.

As this country was so much oppressed, and laboured under such a variety of evils, in the reign of George the Second, it may amuse a speculative man to enquire, by what means so happy a revolution in public affairs has been effectuated in the Reign of George the Third. Are our taxes lessened? No. Is the nation freed from *excise*? No. Are the rights of the subject more religiously preserved? No. Is Justice

(d) *London, ut supra.*

tice more impartially administered in our courts of law? No. Are *special juries* less frequent? No. Has the commerce of the nation been encreased, and its interests better attended to? No. Are our Parliaments more incorrupt, and less under the influence of the court? No. What is it then that has so wonderfully changed the face of public affairs, as entirely to reconcile the author of the RAMBLER to the government? The whole may be answered in one short sentence. The grievances of the kingdom are removed; the nation is no more in a groaning or a sinking state; for DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON HAS A PENSION. It follows, as a necessary consequence, that wisdom presides over our councils; that all complaints against the administration must be unjust and unreasonable, and that we have the happiness to possess "a government approaching nearer to perfection, than any that experience has known, or history related (*e*)!"

You have observed, (*False Alarm*, p. 28.) that "the acceptance of a *place* contaminates
" nates

(*e*) *False Alarm*, p. 45.

“ nates no character ;” and you have probably the same ideas of the acceptance of a pension. But surely the characters of those men are contaminated, who are induced by a place, to sacrifice the rights of their country; or by a pension to write in defence of measures that are oppressive and iniquitous. As to your engaging in vindication of an arbitrary administration, some allowance ought, perhaps, to be made, for that attachment to despotic principles which you early imbibed, and by which you have so often distinguished yourself. That bigotry which could lead you to celebrate in the highest strains of panegyric, that most eminent high-church saint, archbishop LAUD, and that zeal in favour of tyranny which could induce you to deplore the death of the Earl of STRAF-FORD (*f*), may perhaps be pleaded in extenuation of your conduct. And as you appear to have been always disposed to justify the tyranny of the Stuarts, you were

(*f*) Vid. the Vanity of human wishes, a Poem, by Samuel Johnson, printed in the 3d volume of Doddsley's Collection of Poems, and also in the 2d volume of Miscellanies and fugitive pieces, published by Davies.

were already half prepared to defend despotic proceedings under a prince of another family. Though your Jacobite prejudices gave you a predilection in favour of the Stuarts, yet it might somewhat reconcile you to the government of the House of Hanover, if you had reason to believe that principles were now adopted at court, similar to those of that family, whose attempts to enslave the nation had been the cause of their expulsion from the throne. But whatever allowances may be made to you on this account, you are still extremely censurable for those notorious fallacies and misrepresentations, and that gross scurrillity, with which your late political productions so much abound.

As a specimen of the moderation and civility with which you have expressed yourself concerning the party whom you oppose, I shall collect a few of the rhetorical flowers, and polite phrases, which are scattered throughout your political pieces in such bountiful profusion. Of JUNIUS you say, that *he burst into notice with a blaze of impudence*; and of Mr. WILKES, that he was *a varlet driven out of*

of the House with public infamy. The popular party are stiled by you a *despicable faction, bellowers of sedition, ruffians who would gain power by mischief and confusion, and those who having fixed their hopes on public calamities, sit like vultures waiting for a day of carnage.* You also say, "Of this faction what evil may not be credited?" "They have hitherto shewn *no virtue,*" "and very little wit, beyond that mischievous cunning, for which it is held "by Hale that *children may be hanged,*"—You have also discovered, that they are more wicked than the Devil. — "As they "have not the wit of Satan, they have "not his virtue."—"Their hope is malevolence, and their good is evil." (g)—And you likewise complain of *the howl of Plebeian patriotism, and the howling violence of patriotic rage.*

Is this the language of a man whose understanding has been refined by literature? Is this the language of a scholar, a gentleman, or a philosopher? In the

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heat

(g) *Thoughts on the transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, p. 41, 70, 71, &c. *Vid.* also the *False Alarm*.

heat of a political controversy, such scurrillity might not have been wondered at in low and vulgar minds ; but surely something better might have been justly expected from a teacher of morals, and a professed improver of our language. Nor do the terms in which you have expressed yourself of them whom you oppose, convey a very favourable idea of your heart. The utmost stretch of candour cannot lead any man to suppose, that you believe one half of the evil that you have said of the popular party. You must be the most prejudiced man in the kingdom if you do : and if you do not, have you any right to be considered as a man of principle, or probity ?

SUCH is your rancour against all who have engaged in any opposition to the court, that you cannot express yourself with decency even of the Earl of CHATHAM. The eloquence of that illustrious nobleman, who is unquestionably one of the greatest ornaments of his age and country, is described by you under the contemptuous

temptuous appellation of *feudal gabble* (*b*); and you observe that it will be happy for him, "if the nation shall at last dismiss him to nameless obscurity." But however highly you may estimate your own talents, be assured, that you will be extremely fortunate in this respect, if your fame should be as lasting as that of the Earl of CHATHAM, whose name will be mentioned with distinguished honour in the annals of this country, so long as any records of it shall be preserved.

THE people are frequently honoured by you with the polite appellation of *the rabble*; and the citizens of London, and the freeholders of Middlesex, are also spoken of by you with similar contempt. They have been both active in the opposition to the court, and must therefore experience the effects of your loyal indignation. The inhabitants of London, have, indeed, long been under obligations to you, for the genteel terms in which you

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have

(*g*) Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands, p. 37.

have spoken of their city. It was thus described by you many years since :

LONDON, *the needy villain's general home,
The common sewer of Paris and of Rome.*

The freeholders of Middlesex have also the honour to be thus distinguished by you: " Mr. Wilkes, and the freeholders
" of Middlesex, might all sink into non-
" existence, without any other effect,
" than that there would be room made
" for a *new rabble*, and a new retailer of
" sedition and obscenity (i)." It is needless to make any remarks on this passage. It is equally characterized by politeness and humanity.

In your last political publication, *the Patriot*, speaking of the opponents of government, you say, " The greater, far
" the greater number of those who rave,
" and rail, and enquire, and accuse,
" neither suspect, nor fear, nor care for
" the public; but hope to force their way
" to riches by virulence and invective,
" and are vehement and clamorous, only
" that

(i) *False Alarm*, p. 35.

“that they may be sooner hired to be
 “silent (*k*).” That this assertion is noto-
 riously untrue, must be evident to every
 man who will consider it. A great major-
 ity of those who are dissatisfied with the
 measures of government, and who testify
 their discontent, cannot possibly have any
 hope of acquiring riches by their oppo-
 sition, or cherish any hope of being bribed
 to silence. But you have, with an equal
 disregard to truth, also passed a similar
 unjust and undistinguishing censure of the
 popular party, in the *False Alarm*. You
 there commend the King for having neg-
 lected or *forgotten* the many petitions sent
 to him from different parts of the king-
 dom; because you say, “he might easily
 “know, that what was presented as the
 “sense of the people, was the sense
 “only of the *profligate* and *dissolute* (*l*).”
 That this is a gross falshood must be
 evident to every candid person in the king-
 dom, of whatever party. Among those
 who approved of the petitions to the
 throne, and who joined in their complaints
 of those grievances of which the petitions
 con-

(*k*) *Patriot*, p. 5, 6. (*l*) *False Alarm*, 48.

contained an enumeration, were many of the worthiest persons in this country; and not a few who were distinguished both by abilities and learning, as well as by integrity. Surely then neither party violence, nor the influence of a pension, can be pleaded even by your friends as a justification of what you have written. Nor can you possibly vindicate yourself, unless you think it right to support the cause of your patrons, not only by a total disregard of candour, but by the most gross deviations from truth and justice.

You observe in *the Patriot*, p. 1. that
 “ at the end of every seven years comes
 “ the *Saturnalian season*, when the people
 “ of Great Britain may *please themselves*
 “ with the choice of their representatives.
 “ This happy day has now arrived, some-
 “ what sooner than it could be claimed.”
 Your comparison here of the period of election with a Roman festival, wherein the *slaves* were put on a level with their *masters*, appears to convey in it a compliment to your countrymen not of the most delicate kind. And as to your remark, that *this happy day has arrived somewhat sooner*

sooner than it could be claimed, for which you seem to suppose that the people are under some obligation to administration, it is, I believe, far from being generally apprehended, that the unexpected dissolution of the parliament arose from any desire to gratify, or to serve the people. And if it was done with the views that are supposed, little gratitude can be due from them on that account.

IN the course of those observations, wherein you profess to point out the marks which distinguish true patriots from those who falsely assume that character, you say, "Some claim a place in the list of Patriots by an acrimonious and unremitting opposition to the court. This mark is by no means infallible. Patriotism is not necessarily included in rebellion (*m*)."

Was it your design here to insinuate, that *opposition to the court* and *rebellion* are synonymous terms? Something like this appears to have been intended. That opposition to administration merely for the sake of opposition, or when engaged

gaged in from private views, is not Patriotism, may readily be granted. But if the prevailing measures of government are unjust, pernicious, and despotic, the purest public virtue would dictate an opposition to such an administration: and it is natural and reasonable for the people to consider those as their friends, who distinguish themselves by their opposition to measures of this kind. With whatever caution the people may elect their representatives, they are often liable to be deceived. But they always act rightly in electing such men for members of the House of Commons, whom they believe to be friends of freedom, and disposed to join in a vigorous opposition to all schemes for aggrandizing the power of the crown, or depriving the people of their rights.

You say, *Patriot*, p. 4. that “ a man
 “ may hate his king, yet not love his
 “ country.” I shall not dispute this assertion, because I consider yourself as an evidence of its truth. In the last reign, no man suspected you of any affection for the King: and yet there were reasons to believe that you had not much more for your
 country.

country. When the rest of the nation were rejoicing at the advantage which they had gained over their enemies by the conquest of Louisbourg, you seemed to view it with disgust; and therefore wrote an Essay in the *Idler*, calculated to depreciate the merit of the English in that capture, and to lessen the general joy on the occasion, under the pretence of shewing the partiality of national historians (*n*). You remark in that essay, that "there is "no crime more infamous than the violation of truth." It would have been much for your reputation as a moral man, if you had attended more to this consideration in your late political productions. However, that you are not tinctured with many prejudices in favour of your country, is sufficiently apparent to those who are conversant in your writings (*o*). And let

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it

(*n*) Vid. the *Idler*, N° 20.

(*o*) Vid. Dr. Johnson's attempts to justify the proceedings of the Spaniards, in his *Thoughts on the transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*; and his arguments in favour of the conduct of the French in America, in "*Observations on the State of Affairs in 1756*," reprinted in the third volume of *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*.

it also be remembered, that no man can with propriety be said to love his country, who will be induced by a pension to defend violations of the rights of his fellow subjects. As to that public liberty, by which England has long been so honourably distinguished from other nations, the very idea of it appears to be offensive to you: and the acrimony with which you have criticised Dr. Blackwell's "*Memoirs of the Court of Augustus*," (*p*) seems to have arisen from no other source, than your dislike of that ingenious writer; on account of the zeal which he had discovered in support of liberty, and the common rights of mankind.

You observe, *Patriot*, *p.* 16. that "a true patriot is no lavish promiser: he undertakes not to shorten parliaments: to repeal laws; or to change the mode of representation, transmitted by our ancestors." If you mean by this, that no true patriot will undertake to effectuate these things himself, because every individual

(*p*) Vid. the third volume of Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces.

vidual knows that they are not within his power, you say what may be true, but what is nothing to the purpose; for no man, whether Patriot or otherwise, has undertaken any thing so absurd. But if you mean, that no man, consistently with the character of a true patriot, can promise to use his endeavours, and to vote for shortening the duration of parliaments, for repealing bad laws, or changing the mode of parliamentary representation, your assertions are without proof; and, as I apprehend, totally repugnant to reason.

THAT long parliaments are a very considerable national evil, is the opinion of many of the best and most intelligent friends to the free constitution of this country. And with respect to any man who is of these sentiments, what can there be inconsistent with true patriotism, in his declaring to those whom he offers to serve as their representative, that he will use his endeavours to procure a law for shortening the duration of parliaments? There can be nothing in this repugnant to the purest principles of patriotism; and your assertion must, therefore, be wholly groundless.

It is the same with respect to a promise made by a candidate, to use his endeavours to procure a repeal of any other laws that are apprehended to be detrimental to the nation. The people have a right to apply for a repeal of such laws; and there can be nothing inconsistent with public spirit, that those who offer themselves to be trustees for the people, should make declarations of their readiness to comply with the requisitions of their constituents.

As to *changing the mode of representation transmitted by our ancestors*, all who have considered this subject with any degree of attention, must be convinced of the inequality of the present mode of parliamentary representation, and that it is productive of great evils to the constitution (*q*). In what respect then can it possibly be inconsistent with true Patriotism, that a candidate for the office of member of parliament, should promise that he will use his endeavours

(*q*) See this matter accurately stated, and placed in a very strong and just light, in a valuable work lately published, intitled, *Political Disquisitions*, vol. I. p. 39—72.

vours to procure a redress of this grievance? You say, that the true Patriot knows, that "futility is not in his power." Every man knows this, and nothing more has been required of any candidate, but that he should use his endeavours to effectuate what was required of him by his constituents, when it should be in his power. As to your other observation, that the true patriot knows, that "all times are "not alike favourable to change;" this is nothing but the common cant of those men who are desirous of preventing improvement of any kind, when it interferes with their private views; and who, when they are ashamed of objecting to a measure evidently good, content themselves with saying, that the present is not a proper time. And indeed to people of this class, no time ever arrives, which they suppose proper for the discharge of their duty. To do it is not their aim; they are only solicitous for some new excuse, or plausible evasion.

"Much less," you say, "does the true patriot make a vague and indefinite promise of obeying the mandates of his
"con-

“constituents. He knows the prejudices
 “of faction, and the inconstancy of the
 “multitude.” But upon this it may be
 observed, that the notion that members
 of parliament are not under an obligation
 to obey the instructions of their constitu-
 ents, is a novel doctrine. It was not un-
 frequent formerly for members of the
 House of Commons, and sometimes the
 whole body of them, to refuse to vote,
 till they had consulted those who sent them.
 And both Houses of Parliament have often
 been adjourned to give them time to do
 this. Lord Coke says, “It is the custom
 “of parliament when any new device is
 “moved for in parliament, on the King’s
 “behalf, for his aid, or the like, that
 “the Commons may answer, They dare
 “not agree to it without conference with
 “their countries (*r*).” And surely no-
 thing can be more just, than that those
 who act as the deputies of others, should
 conform to the instructions of those from
 whom they receive their delegated power.
 As to the apprehension, that injudicious
 instructions might be sent to the members,
 let

(*r*) Vid. Political Disquisitions, vol. I. p. 191, 200.

let it be remembered, that this would hardly be the case with many places in the kingdom at once; and therefore, if it should happen in a few places, could not be supposed materially to affect the final determination of the House. When instructions have been sent to members from many parts of the kingdom at once, they will, I believe, always be found to be in favour of some object of great and evident national utility; and when these instructions have been disregarded, it has been to the public detriment. The *prejudices of faction*, and the *inconstancy of the multitude*, which you so *dolorously bewail*, would not be in any degree so prejudicial to the nation, not even the prejudices of the Jacobite faction, as the having a House of Commons regardless of the sense of their constituents, and ready to vote as any minister should direct them.

As in the last parliament, the dependance of the House of Commons on their constituents seemed often to be forgotten, or disregarded; and the connection evidently was, in general, not between the members
and

and their constituents, but between the members and the minister, it was high time that the people should propose some *tests*, in order to secure the fidelity of their representatives. And the particulars to which they were required to declare their assent, were of great national concernment, and of evident utility; and not matters of difficult discussion, or which depended on times and circumstances. It would have been well if tests of this kind had generally been proposed to candidates throughout the kingdom; it had been much talked of; and to prevent this, by taking the people unprepared, was probably a principal cause of the sudden dissolution of the last parliament.

You have also laboured in the *Patriot* to vindicate the *Quebec Act*; and in support of it you urge, *p.* 11. that "Persecution is not more virtuous in a Protestant than a Papist; and that while we blame Lewis the Fourteenth, for his dragoons and his gallies, we ought, when power comes into our hands, to use it with greater equity." This is only confounding the state of the question,
by

dissenting laity. Would it not have been sufficient, if the Popish clergy had been put upon the same footing? They would hardly have complained of ill treatment in this case. Indeed of whom could they have complained? Not of the English government, who allowed them the free exercise of their religion, and left the laity to support them as liberally as they pleased. And surely the Popish laity could not have complained, when they were allowed liberty of conscience, and permitted to support their clergy in that way which they thought best. Neither clergy nor laity, therefore, could, with any shadow of reason, have complained of the English government; for if the clergy had not thought themselves sufficiently supported, they would have had no blame to throw on any but their own people. And let it be supposed, that in consequence of the laity not being compelled to pay the clergy, Popery had decreased in Canada. Would this have been thought an evil, by a truly Protestant King, or a truly Protestant Parliament? It is impossible.

It

It may be said, that Popery was the religion of the inhabitants of Quebec, when it was taken by the English; or, as you express it, that "the inhabitants, "being French, were always Papists." Be it so: but is that a reason why French Papists, in a country conquered by the English, should be put on a better footing than Protestant Dissenters in England? Is it just, or reasonable, or decent, that in any part of the British dominions public provision should be made for a Popish clergy, whilst a *legal* toleration is refused in England to Protestant Dissenting ministers?

You say, that "when Canada with its "inhabitants was yielded, the free enjoyment of their religion was stipulated; a "condition of which King William, who "was no propagator of Popery, gave an "example nearer home, at the surrender "of Limeric" (*t*). It was certainly reasonable, that when Canada was conquered, a stipulation should be made to the inhabitants of the free exercise of their

E 2 religion;

(*t*) *Patriot*, p. 12.

religion; and it would have been extreme injustice and inhumanity to have violated that stipulation. But there was no necessity, in consequence of the capitulation made with the Canadians, that an act of Parliament should afterwards be passed to compel them to pay their own priests. The case of the surrender of Limeric, therefore, is not a similar one, nor can with any propriety be urged in support of the Quebec Act; for it is that which is now justly the subject of complaint, and not the articles of capitulation, or the adherence to those articles.

You observe, *Patriot*, p. 13. that if liberty of conscience “be an indulgence, it may “be allowed to Papists, while it is not “denied to other sects;” and that “those “at least, who enjoy a toleration, ought “not to deny it to our new subjects.” I am far from considering liberty of conscience as an indulgence of government. It is a right of nature, which no government can deprive men of, without being guilty of inhumanity and injustice. If the penal laws against Papists, were ever defensible, it must have been from political

con-

considerations, and a regard to the safety of the state. How far they were justifiable on that ground, I shall not now enquire. But it may be remarked, that the considering Protestant Dissenters and Papists as equally entitled to favour under the present government, is a kind of novel doctrine. However, if it were just, the Dissenters would still have reason to complain. At a time when a legal establishment, and public maintenance for the clergy, have been granted to the Papists in Canada, the Dissenters in England have been refused a legal toleration !

THE Dissenters are not only obliged to contribute their full share towards the support of the established clergy, and the national worship, and to maintain their own clergy separately; but the most unjust and oppressive laws are still continued against them, by which their most learned and most respectable ministers are subjected to pains and penalties, to heavy fines, and to imprisonment. These laws, it is true, are not at present put in force; but the Dissenting clergy are constantly liable to prosecutions, and yet have been repeatedly refused

refused any legal security. And this at the very period when Papists are placed on such a footing by a British Parliament, that they have the freest exercise of their religion, are not required to pay to the support of any clergy but their own, who have a legal maintenance afforded them, and who are not shackled with any such subscriptions, as are required by law of Dissenting ministers in England. Are the Protestant Dissenters in this country less entitled to liberty of conscience, than the Papists in Canada? If they have only an equal claim to it, why is it granted to the latter, and the legal enjoyment of it refused to the former? I do not, indeed, remember to have met with any Protestant writer, except yourself, who ever thought that the Protestant Dissenters and the Papists were to be considered as on an equal footing under this government; and I believe no man, pretending to be a Protestant, has ever in this view given the Papists the preference, at least since the Revolution, excepting your colleague Dr. Shebbeare.

BUT your desire of considering the Protestant Dissenters as on a level with the
Papists,

Papists, probably arises from that aversion to them which you sometimes discover, and of which we have a curious specimen in the *False Alarm*, p. 52. Speaking of the opposition, you say, "None can indeed wonder that it has been supported by the *sectaries*, the *constant fomenters of sedition*, and *never-failing confederates of the rabble*, of whose religion little now remains but hatred of establishments."

Of this malevolent and injurious account of the Dissenters, I shall say but little; it is unnecessary; as its manifest want of justice, and of truth, must be evident to every equitable and impartial member of the established church. I shall, however, observe, that it may be considered as some tolerable kind of evidence, that the religion of the Dissenters is not very near being extinguished in this country, that there are now upwards of eleven hundred Dissenting congregations in England, supported by voluntary contributions among themselves, without including either Methodists or Quakers.

BUT it is not only that part of the Quebec Act which relates to the Romish religion

religion that is censurable; what is still more alarming is, that so considerable a part of the British dominions should have a despotic government established in it. The inhabitants are not only deprived of trial by jury in civil cases, but the government of the province, and the power of making laws, are invested in persons appointed solely by the king and privy council. No assembly of the people, as in other British colonies, is to be allowed; it being *at present inexpedient (u)*; and we have no reason to expect that those in power will hereafter discover its expediency. The management of the colony, therefore, is entirely entrusted to the King, and the creatures of the crown; and the persons who are nominated for this purpose by his majesty, and who are honoured with the title of a *legislative council*, have also power given them to make *ordinances touching religion*, which may direct fines, to any amount, or imprisonment for three months, as they shall think proper; and they may enact severer laws relative to religion, if they are such as his majesty shall be graciously

(u) *Vid.* the Act.

graciously pleased to approve. The King may also erect such courts of criminal, civil, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as he *shall think necessary and proper*. And the boundaries of the province of Quebec are extended by the Act, that the advantages of this blessed system of government may be the more widely diffused.

For what purpose was Quebec retained by England at the last peace? Was it that it should be made an English colony, in which English subjects might have the liberty of settling? If this was any part of the design, it appears to be almost entirely defeated by the Act. What man deserving the name of Englishman, who has ever enjoyed the blessings of freedom, or formed any just notions of its value, would ever chuse to retire to the province of Quebec, where no religion but the Romish is countenanced by government, and where French laws, and an arbitrary government, are established? Of what use then is Quebec to this Kingdom, or what purpose does our possession of it answer, under such circumstances, excepting merely the aggrandizement of the power of the crown?

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All

All the future English settlers in Canada, as well as those who are now there, are, while this act continues in force, to be deprived of their freedom and their laws; though it has been acknowledged by an advocate for the Quebec Act (*w*), that the English who are now settled in the province, "*fervently* desired to be governed "by the laws of England." Was not some regard due to English Protestants, as well as to French Papists? Or, was Canada conquered by British arms, that British subjects might be compelled to submit to Gallic laws?

You observe, that "Quebec is on the "other side the Atlantic, at too great a "distance to do much good or harm to "the European world." It appears, however, that your worthy colleague and brother-pensioner, Dr. Shebbeare, is of opinion, that Quebec may be made very useful in promoting the purposes of administration. The Quebec Act, he says, "has established an AMPLE and SUFFICIENT FORCE to quell the *democratic* "spirits

(*w*) Letter to the Earl of Chatlam, p. 18.

"spirits of the Americans (x)." What thanks are not due to those refined politicians, who have formed a scheme of employing an army of French Papists, to keep the New England heretics in order, or to exterminate them if they should prove refractory! It is an admirable project; and similar to that attributed to Charles I. of endeavouring to crush his rebellious English subjects by an army of Irish Catholics. The politics of Charles were also very refined; but it may not be amiss to remember, that they at length brought him to the scaffold.

You observe, *Patriot*, p. 22. that "that man is no Patriot, who justifies the ridiculous claims of American usurpation; who endeavours to deprive the nation of its natural and lawful authority over its own colonies." But it may very justly be questioned, whether the authority now claimed over the Americans be either na-

F 2

tural

(x) Vid. Dr. Shebbeare's Pamphlet, p. 30. This Writer also says in another place, that by the last peace the nation acquired "a number of *loyal subjects* to oppose the rebellious intentions of the *democratical* *sectaries* in America." p. 69.

tural or lawful. There are, perhaps, other claims, at least as ridiculous, as those to which you have given that appellation. Nor do I apprehend, that it is a just impeachment of any man's patriotism, that he disapproves of the late proceedings respecting the Americans, or that he thinks more may be alledged in vindication of the colonies, than will be admitted at St. James's.

You say, *Patriot*, p. 23. "He that
 "accepts protection, stipulates obedience.
 "We have always protected the Ameri-
 "cans; we may therefore subject them
 "to government." This argument is not
 good. We protected the Portuguese in the
 last war, but no man supposed that on that
 account we had a right to their *obedience*,
 or to *subject them to government*. And
 however differently the Americans may be
 circumstanced, from their more intimate
 connection with Great Britain, it is cer-
 tain, that our having protected them, even
 though we had not done it from a regard
 to our own interest, can give us no right
 to reduce them to slavery.

You

You observe, that the “ power which
 “ can take away life, may seize upon
 “ property. The parliament may enact
 “ for America a law of capital punish-
 “ ment; it may therefore establish a mode
 “ and proportion of taxation.” Perhaps
 the best method of refuting this argument,
 is to shew the consequences to which it
 would lead. If it be admitted, the King
 and parliament must be the absolute and
 uncontroulable lords of the Americans.
 If the British parliament, in which the
 Americans have no representatives, can
 enact any laws of capital punishment re-
 specting them, *can take away life, seize*
upon property, and tax them at pleasure,
 are the Americans, in a political view,
 more free than the inhabitants of the em-
 pire of Morocco? Are not their lives, pro-
 perties, and privileges, wholly at the
 disposal of others? If it should be supposed,
 contrary to fact and late experience, that
 they would not meet with rigorous treat-
 ment from a British parliament, this makes
 no alteration in the argument. The Negro
 who has a kind master is as much a slave,
 as he who has a severe one. When all
 this is considered, perhaps it may easily be
 discerned,

discerned, to whom *ridiculous claims* ought most justly to be attributed.

THE present contest with America appears to be one of the most unhappy, in which this country ever was engaged. It is a contest in which we have almost every thing to lose, and in which nothing can be gained. What may be the event of it, or how fatal its consequences, either to Great Britain or the colonies, no man can foresee. Whether we crush them by force, or they are successful in resisting our pretensions, in either case this nation must greatly suffer. And should our enemies on the continent take this opportunity of attacking us, how perilous would be our situation? Can those then, whatever offices they may hold, be considered as real friends to this country, who are precipitating such measures against the Americans, as may, in the event, bring the British empire to the brink of destruction? Is it more probable, that this conduct is dictated by wisdom and by justice, or by the mere lust of power, without any regard to the most important interests either of Great Britain, or the colonies?

You

You assert in the *Patriot*, p. 27. that those can lay no claim to the illustrious appellation of patriots, "who impute want of public spirit to the late parliament." I confess, that had it not been for your information, I should never have suspected, that faith in the public spirit of the last parliament, was an essential mark of patriotism. But you are an uncommon genius, and have therefore a right to make uncommon discoveries.

You ground your argument in support of the public spirit of the last parliament, on their having passed Mr. Grenville's bill for determining contested elections, and another for abridging the privileges of members of parliament. It should seem, that the good works of the last parliament were not very numerous, because different advocates in its favour fix on the same two acts as evidences of its virtue. A fellow labourer with yourself in the royal vineyard, the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, did also, near four years ago, though at second hand, alledge these acts in justification of the

the *King's* last parliament (y). But I should rather be of opinion, that two good acts, in the course of about seven years, could hardly be a proof that a parliament had no deficiency of public spirit. Some persons may possibly think, that the merit of these two acts was much more than over-balanced, by the iniquity of the new Game and Dog Acts, the Royal marriage act, the East-India company act, the Boston Port Act, the Act for changing the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay, and the Quebec Act; not to speak of the violation of the right of election by the last parliament, and the facility with which they voted half a million of the public money to pay civil list debts, without examination or account.

Is there an impartial man in this country, who understands its constitution, who will assert, that the last House of Commons acted like the real representatives of the people? In how many instances, during the seven years wherein they were assembled, did they vote in conformity to the

(y) Vid. Wesley's Free Thoughts on the present State of public Affairs, 8vo. 1770. p. 26, 27.

the wishes and interest of their constituents, when they were contrary to the will and pleasure of the minister, or of his master? Or can it be conceived possible, that the Prime Minister would have dared so openly to direct the determinations and proceedings of the last House of Commons, if they had possessed any proper sense of their own duty, or their own dignity?

If under the most solemn obligations to act on behalf of those by whom they were elected, the last House of Commons almost invariably supported every measure of the minister for the time being; if instead of considering what was the sense of their constituents, they attended only to the nod of the prime minister; if instead of being the guardians of the people's rights, they were the mere creatures of the crown, on the proceedings of which they ought to have been a check; if they were induced by places, pensions, contracts, lottery-tickets, and other *douceurs*, to sacrifice the interests of those from whom they received their delegated power, and for whom they should have acted as faithful trustees; if this was the character

of the majority of the last House of Commons, and I believe few impartial men entertain many doubts upon the subject, I know no words in our language, that can convey too severe a censure of their baseness, servility, and treachery to their constituents.

IN the 32d page of the *Patriot*, you say, " That the next House of Commons
 " may act upon the principles of the
 " last, with more constancy, and higher
 " spirit, must be the wish of all, who
 " wish well to the public." But this is merely your assertion, and appears to be unsupported by reason or by truth. I believe, on the contrary, that it is the sincere wish of all who are friends to the free constitution of this country, that the new House of Commons may act on principles exceedingly different from the last; that they may attend more to the real interests of the nation, and less to their own private emolument; that they may be more tender of the rights of the people, and less ready to comply with the requisitions of the ministry; and that if they do discover more spirit than the last, it may not be exerted in trampling on the privileges of
 those

those whom they represent, and whom they are bound by the most sacred obligations to defend; but in treating with the contempt and indignation they deserve, any efforts of a first Lord of the Treasury, to direct their deliberations, or to controul their parliamentary decisions; and in bringing knavish ministers to justice, and to that exemplary punishment which they deserve, though they should take shelter behind the throne.

It is somewhat curious to observe, how much your Jacobitism is apt to break forth, notwithstanding your present zeal in support of the government of a Prince of the House of Hanover. All your newly acquired loyalty to George III. cannot make you forget your much-favoured House of Stuart, nor wholly remove your attachment to it. It was too deeply rooted, and become too natural to you, to be totally eradicated:

Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret.

IN the *False Alarm*, p. 51. you say, that "the struggle in the reign of Anne,

" was to exclude or restore an *exiled King*." This exiled King was the Pretender. And notwithstanding the many resplendent virtues which you have discovered in his present majesty, you are far from paying any compliments to his predecessors since the expulsion of the House of Stuart. For you inform us, that the prince from whom you received your pension, and in whose reign of consequence your loyalty commenced, is " the only king, who, for " *almost a century*, has much appeared to " desire, or much endeavoured to deserve" the affections of the people (z). The caution, and attention to chronology, with which you express yourself here, is truly admirable; you compliment his present majesty, but take care to exclude from your list of those Kings, who deserved the affections of the people, William III. George I. and George II. At the same time, leaving room for your readers to draw all honourable conclusions in favour of their predecessors, the Stuarts; whom you have entirely excepted from your censure; and, indeed, it ought to be remembered, that

if,

(z) False Alarm, p. 50.

if, peradventure, they had a few faults, they were amply atoned for by that divine and hereditary right, which resided in their sacred persons !

You observe of *Falkland's Island, Patriot*, p. 20. " that it is a bleak and barren spot " in the Magellanic ocean, of which no " use could be made, unless it were a place " of exile for the hypocrites of Patriotism." But, perhaps, a better use might be made of it. It would at least be as well adapted for the reception of men, who, though born under a free constitution of government, have no sense of its value, or concern for its preservation; who are ready to prostitute their talents in the service of every minister who will employ them; or who have so much attachment to despotic principles, as to be for ever incapable of becoming real friends to that public liberty, by which this country has been so long, and so honourably distinguished. Men of slavish principles must ever be unworthy members of a free state. And as to yourself, however unwilling you may now be, when you can bask in the beams of royal favour, to remove to a spot like this, there was a
time

time when you seemed to languish for such a retreat: when you pathetically exclaimed,

*Has Heav'n reserv'd, in pity to the poor,
No pathless waste, or undiscover'd shore?
No secret island in the boundless main?
No peaceful desert, yet UNCLAIM'D BY SPAIN?
Quick let us rise, the happy scene explore,
And bear OPPRESSION'S INSOLENCE no more (a).*

It is a misfortune which has attended your political writings, that they have degraded your own character, without rendering much service to those by whom you were employed. I believe no writer of your abilities ever engaged in politics, whose productions were of so little effect, and so unprofitable to his patrons. And you may in many respects be considered as a memorable instance of human weakness. For though you have given evidences of great force of genius, you have at the same time discovered such little prejudices, and such bigotted attachments, as would have disgraced a common understanding.

You

(a) Johnson's LONDON, *ut supra*.

You will probably, with that haughtiness which is natural to you, but which even your best friends must acknowledge to be a considerable flaw in your character, affect to disregard whatever can be offered against your conduct, or your writings. But should you ever again really be influenced by those principles of virtue, which you have so forcibly inculcated on others, you will regret that your time has been misemployed in the vindication of measures, which should have excited the indignation of every honest man. I would, however, wish you to remember, should you again address the public under the character of a political writer, that luxuriance of imagination, or energy of language, will ill compensate for the want of candour, of justice, and of truth. And I shall only add, that should I hereafter be disposed to read, as I heretofore have done, the most excellent of all your performances, THE RAMBLER, the pleasure which I have been accustomed to find in it will be much diminished by the reflexion, that the writer of so moral, so elegant, and so valuable a work, was capable of prostituting his talents

talents in such productions, as the *False Alarm*, the *Thoughts on the Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*, and the *Patriot*.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant.



APPENDIX.

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X.

IT is somewhat worthy of observation, that at the present period, the pensioned-advocates for the court should be of opinion, as it appears they are by their writings, that the best method they can take of gratifying their patrons, is to degrade the characters of King William and Queen Mary, to traduce the revolution, and the most illustrious patriots of the last age, and to pour out the most scurrilous abuse on the Protestant Dissenters. Of this we have an extraordinary specimen in a piece lately published by Dr. Shebbeare, intitled, "An Answer to the *Queries* contained in a letter to Dr. Shebbeare, printed in the Public Ledger, Aug. 10. together with animadversions on two speeches," &c. in which he has also made a comparison between the public and private virtues of their present majesties, and those of King William and

Queen Mary; and likewise, as the Doctor himself says, *fairly stated* the merits of Roman Catholics, and of Dissenters from the Church of England, respecting allegiance and liberty, and their claims to national protection.

It is not my design to enter into a particular examination, or refutation, of Dr. Shebbeare's voluminous pamphlet. It is the less necessary, as the Doctor's performance is so full of gross scurrility, and evident malignity, and so totally destitute of any appearance of justice, or of candour, that it carries in a great degree its own antidote with it. I shall, however, make a few observations on this curious production.

In the preceding letter, I have given some instances of the politeness with which Dr. Johnson has treated the popular party, and those against whom he has thought proper to engage. In like manner, I shall here select a few specimens of a similar stile from Dr. Shebbeare; as both he and his brother-pensioner have much distinguished themselves in this way, though
it

it may be presumed, that neither of these courtly gentlemen acquired this kind of language in the drawing room.

Dr. Shebbeare stiles the popular party, *the remorseless crew of present patriots (a)*, and also says, they "are *the spawn* of those " who were uniformly rebels to the *(b)* " best of Kings *(c)*." The Americans, he stiles *graceless subjects, trans-Atlantic sectaries, and rebellious ingrates (d)*. He also says, they were *conscious of their internal rottenness of soul (e)*; and that from their hearts "it would be excessively more difficult to eradicate ingratitude, than to " divest arsenic of the power of poisoning *(f)*." The Dissenters he compliments with the title of *sectarian crews*, and also speaks of *the infernal altar of Presbyterian perfidy, in whose religion REGICIDES ALONE are saints (g)*. The Bishop of St. A—ph, he says, is a *speech-printing*

(a) P. 132.

(b) The Doctor, it is presumed, means the blessed Martyr.

(c) Shebbeare's Pamphlet, p. 92. (d) P. III.

(e) P. 112. (f) P. 110, 111. (g) P. 173, 174.

printing Iscariot (b); and he is of opinion, that Bishop Burnet was "as great a *villain*, "and merited death as much as Garnet," the Jesuit, who was executed for being concerned in the powder-plot (*i*).

THIS is a most admirable historical style! and from which the public may be enabled to form some judgment, of what is to be expected from the Doctor's projected History of England. For though Dr. Shebbeare's late piece be not properly an History, yet it contains so many historical facts, or at least what he has thought proper to give as such, that it may reasonably be supposed he intended it as a specimen of his historical talents.

The Doctor says of the truly illustrious ALGERNON SYDNEY, not only that he was a *fanatic visionary (k)*, but that "no history has yet produced a more *fan-guinary* and *ungrateful traitor (l)*." And he has quoted a passage from one of Sydney's letters to Henry Savile, in order to confirm the charge of corruption, which has been lately brought against Sydney,
grounded

(b) P. 124. (i) P. 145. (k) P. 55. (l) P. 59.

grounded on Barillon's letters, as published by Sir John Dalrymple (*m*). But this pretended new evidence against Sydney, appears to be founded on nothing but a wilful perversion of the meaning of his letter. For it must be manifest to any man, who will read the letter referred to by Dr. Shebbeare (*n*), that Sydney, who wrote from London to Savile then in France, and who was giving him an account of the state of public affairs in England, when he said, "You know Monf. Barillon governs us, if he be not mistaken," meant only, that Barillon thought he managed the councils of the English court; and not that he governed Sydney and Savile as individuals. It is well known to be common for private persons, when conversing on political subjects, to use the phrase *our affairs*, when speaking of the public affairs of the kingdom; or

(*m*) *Vid.* some observations on this subject in "An Examination into the Nature and Evidence of the Charges brought against Lord William Ruffel and Algernon Sydney, by Sir John Dalrymple, Bart. in his *Memoirs of Great Britain*." 8vo. 1773.

(*n*) *Vid.* Letters of Sydney to Savile, edit. 8vo. 1742. p. 130.

to say the French have defeated, or outwitted *us*, when the persons speaking have not the least reference to themselves as individuals, but only speak of themselves as members of the community at large. It is evidently in this manner that Sydney uses the phrase *governs us*, in the letter referred to. So that Dr. Shebbeare, when he quoted this passage as a proof, that "Sydney and Savile were secretly intriguing with the French court," is unquestionably guilty of a gross and shameful misrepresentation.

As to the Doctor's reflexions against SYDNEY, on the supposition of his being a republican, it may be sufficient to observe, that if this justly celebrated man, in consequence of the abuse which he had seen of regal power, was of opinion, that a republican form of government would be most advantageous to the people of this country, there are few men of sense who will form a very unfavourable opinion of him on that account. The great design for which civil government is established, is the promotion of the interest and happiness of the people; and modes of govern-
ment

ment are of little consequence, but so far as they are more or less adapted to that end. The private interest of a particular prince, or family, is of trifling consideration, when compared with the welfare of a whole nation.

As Dr. Shebbeare seems to take a peculiar pleasure in blackening some of the most excellent characters, and especially if they have been friends to public liberty, he has introduced Lord SOMERS, as one of those, "who had violated the constitution, and plundered their country." But as it is no part of my design to enter here into a minute examination of the conduct of Lord Somers, I shall content myself with inserting a part of what has been said of this celebrated nobleman, by Mr. Addison and Mr. Horace Walpole; as it is possible that the public may pay nearly as much regard to their opinion upon this subject, as to that of Dr. Shebbeare.

Mr. ADDISON observes, that Lord SOMERS "had worn himself out in his application to such studies as made him useful or ornamental to the world, in

I

"con-

“ concerting schemes for the welfare of his
 “ country, and in prosecuting such mea-
 “ sures as were necessary for making those
 “ schemes effectual: but all this was done
 “ with a view to the public good that
 “ should rise out of these endeavours, and
 “ not to the fame that should accrue to
 “ himself. Let the reputation of the
 “ action fall where it would; so his
 “ country reaped the benefit of it, he was
 “ satisfied. As his turn of mind threw off
 “ in a great measure the oppositions of
 “ envy and competition; it enabled him
 “ to gain the most vain and impracti-
 “ cable into his designs, and to bring
 “ about several great events for the safety
 “ and advantage of the public, which
 “ must have died in the birth, had he been
 “ as desirous of appearing beneficial to
 “ mankind, as of being so. As he was
 “ admitted into the secret and most retired
 “ thoughts and counsels of his royal master
 “ King William, a great share in the plan
 “ of the Protestant succession is universally
 “ ascribed to him. And if he did not en-
 “ tirely project the union of the two king-
 “ doms, and the bill of regency, which
 “ seem to have been the only methods in
 “ human

" human policy, for securing to us so in-
 " estimable a blessing, there is none who
 " will deny him to have been the chief
 " conductor in both these glorious works."

" His life was, in every part of it, set
 " off with that graceful modesty and re-
 " serve, which made his virtues more
 " beautiful, the more they were cast in
 " such agreeable shades. His religion was
 " sincere, not ostentatious; and such as
 " inspired him with an universal benevo-
 " lence toward all his fellow subjects, not
 " with bitterness against any part of them.
 " He shewed his firm adherence to it as
 " modelled by our national constitution,
 " and was constant to its offices of devotion,
 " both in public and in his family. He
 " appeared a champion for it with great
 " reputation in the case of the seven
 " bishops, at a time when the church was
 " really in danger. To which we may
 " add, that he held a strict friendship and
 " correspondence with the great Arch-
 " bishop Tillotson, being acted by the
 " same spirit of candour and moderation;
 " and moved rather with pity than indig-
 " nation towards the persons of those, who

“ differed from him in the unessential parts
 “ of Christianity. His great humanity ap-
 “ peared in the minuteſt circumſtances of
 “ his converſation. You found it in the
 “ benevolence of his aſpect, the compla-
 “ cency of his behaviour, and the tone of
 “ his voice. His great application to the
 “ ſeverer ſtudies of the law, had not in-
 “ fected his temper with any thing poſitive
 “ or litigious. He did not know what it
 “ was to wrangle on indifferent points, to
 “ triumph in the ſuperiority of his under-
 “ ſtanding, or to be ſupercilious on the
 “ ſide of truth. He joined the greateſt
 “ delicacy of good breeding to the greateſt
 “ ſtrength of reaſon.”

Mr. Addiſon alſo obſerves, that as Lord
 Somers greatly contributed in his political
 capacity “ to the eſtabliſhment of the
 “ Proteſtant intereſt, and the good of his
 “ native country, he was always true to
 “ thoſe great ends. His character was
 “ uniform, and conſiſtent with itſelf, and
 “ his whole conduct of a piece. His
 “ principles were founded in reaſon, and
 “ ſupported by virtue (a).”

Mr.

Mr. HORACE WALPOLE says of Lord SOMERS, that “ he was one of those
 “ divine men, who, like a chapel in a
 “ palace, remain unprofaned, 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 incorrupt lawyer, and the honest-
 “ est statesman, as a master orator, a ge-
 “ nius of the finest taste, and a patriot of
 “ the noblest and most extensive views;
 “ as a man who dispensed blessings by his
 “ life, and planned them for posterity.”

“ The momentous times in which he
 “ lived, gave Lord Somers opportunities of
 “ displaying the extent of his capacity,
 “ and the patriotism of his heart; oppor-
 “ tunities as little sought for the former,
 “ as they were honestly courted and pur-
 “ sued for the latter. The excellent ba-
 “ lance of our constitution never appeared
 “ in a clearer light than with relation to
 “ this Lord, who, though impeached by
 “ a misguided House of Commons with
 “ all the intemperate folly that at times
 “ disgraced the free states of Greece, yet
 “ had

“ had full liberty to vindicate his innocence,
 “ and manifest an integrity, which could
 “ never have shone so bright, unless it
 “ had been juridically aspersed.”

“ IT was no inglorious part of this great
 “ Chancellor’s life, that when removed
 “ from the administration, his labours
 “ were still dedicated to the service of the
 “ government, and of his country. In
 “ this situation, above all the little pre-
 “ judices of a profession, for he had no
 “ profession but that of Solon and Lycur-
 “ gus, he set himself to correct the grie-
 “ vances of the law, and to amend the
 “ vocation he had adorned (p).”

SUCH was the man, who, because he
 was a Whig, and a friend to liberty, hath
 been represented by Dr. Shebbeare, as a
 plunderer of his country, and a violator of
 its constitution!

IN the 94th page of his pamphlet, Dr.
 Shebbeare has given a quotation from Dr.
 Price’s

(p) Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, second
 edition, vol. II. p. 107, 111, 112.

Price's "Appeal to the Public on the subject of the national Debt;" but in so dishonest and disingenuous a manner, as few writers, besides himself, would have ventured to be guilty of. The Doctor observes, that 'even Dr. Price, in his appeal to the public, p. 39. in enumerating the causes of our present evils, introduces that of "giving security to the Hanover succession. This, says he, "is in truth the fundamental grievance of the kingdom; and that patriotism, the first object of which is not the removal of it, can be nothing but an imposture."

It is evident, that Dr. Shebbeare here meant to impose upon the public, by representing Dr. Price as having spoken of the Hanover succession as the fundamental grievance of the kingdom. But this is a most shameful misrepresentation; for the grievance alluded to by Dr. Price was, the pernicious influence which has been obtained in the House of Commons. After speaking of the Sinking Fund not being appropriated to its proper purpose, and supposing that this partly arose from a view to the dependance created by the national debt,

debt, and the security that gave to the Hanoverian succession and the administration, Dr. Price proceeds as follows: "For like reasons and with like views, a pernicious influence was maintained and promoted in the House of Commons, which has sapped the constitution; and which may in time establish among us a tyranny of the most intolerable kind; a tyranny attended with the mockery of all the forms of liberty; a tyranny created, supported and sanctified by a PARLIAMENT. — This is, in truth, the fundamental grievance of the kingdom; and that Patriotism, the first object of which, is not the removal of it, can be nothing but an imposture. To this grievance we owe, among other evils, the loss of the sinking fund. Had the guardians of the state been under no undue influence, they would have been more faithful; and could not have given up this great security of the kingdom (q)." *(q)*.

THOSE who compare this passage at length with the mutilated and unfair quotation

(q) Dr. Price's Appeal, p. 38, 39.

tation made by Dr. Shebbeare, will at once see the flagrancy of his misrepresentation, and be convinced how little credit can be due to such a writer. Indeed, he hath been guilty of this misrepresentation for no other purpose, than to give an injurious opinion to the public of a most respectable man, who is much and deservedly esteemed for his learning and abilities, and still more for the worthiness and integrity of his character.

BUT the greatest demerit of Dr. PRICE is, his being a Dissenter; and this charge lies equally against Dr. PRIESTLEY, whose free and manly spirit has also given offence to Dr. Shebbeare. And, therefore, he hath taken occasion to introduce an imperfect quotation from his "Essay on the first principles of government," partly for the purpose of making Dr. Priestley appear to write bad English. But Dr. Shebbeare should have remembered, that what Dr. Priestley has said in defence of the execution of Charles the First, was on the supposition of that prince's being a convicted tyrant; so that Dr. Shebbeare has paid but a very awkward compliment to his

present Majesty, in supposing that, on Dr. Priestley's principles, he was in any danger of being brought into the same situation^(r).

Dr. SHEBBEARE is very much displeased with Mr. Lee, for having said, with reference to Sir John Dalrymple, "Not that
 " I blame an historian for laying facts
 " before his readers, but I blame him
 " for prejudging a cause by preliminary remarks of his own; yet this is
 " the case of the compiler of the book
 " in question; he prefaces his anecdotes
 " with a prejudication of characters." In all this, Dr. Shebbeare says, there is not one syllable of truth. For "these preliminary were posterior remarks, and
 " were not printed in a preface to the
 " Memoirs; and therefore could be no
 " prejudication of the characters, unless
 " that which follows precedes the thing
 " which it succeeds. They were printed
 " in a preface to the second volume, containing a collection of state-papers, including indubitable facts, two years after
 " the Memoirs had been published. And
 " thus

(r) Vid. Shebbeare's pamphlet, p. 93, 94. compared with Dr. Priestley's Essay, p. 40.

“ thus it happens, that the case which “ Mr. Lee blames has no existence (*s*)”. But notwithstanding the confidence with which this is asserted, it is evident, that this attack on Mr. Lee, and vindication of Dalrymple, is founded on nothing but sophistry and misrepresentation. The charges against Ruffel and Sydney, which have so much excited the attention of the public, were not contained in the first volume of Sir John Dalrymple’s Memoirs; but in the papers published in the second; and it was the preface to this volume, that contained the passage for which Sir John Dalrymple has been censured. So that what Mr. Lee said was strictly true, that Sir John Dalrymple had prejudged the cause “ by preliminary remarks of his “ own;” and “ prefaced his anecdotes “ with a prejudication of characters.” Nor is the mere unsupported assertion of Barrillon, admitting the papers in question to be genuine, by any means sufficient to prove, that the charges against Ruffel and Sydney are “ indubitable facts (*t*).”

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AMONGST

(*s*) Shebbeare, p. 63, 64.

(*t*) Vid. this subject further considered, in the *Examination*, &c. before referred to.

AMONGST others, against whom Dr. Shebbeare hath poured forth his abuse, are those clergymen of the established church, who have lately assembled occasionally at the Feathers tavern, in order to consult about the proper means of procuring some relief in the case of ecclesiastical subscription. Of these gentlemen, he says, that "their principles are the same "with republicans and regicides (*u*)," and therefore intimates, that it is necessary "to be watchful of their actions." But can there be a more egregious absurdity, than to take it for granted, that a man must be a republican and a regicide, or of the same principles, because he thinks there are some errors in the thirty-nine articles of the church of England?

Dr. SHEBBEARE sometimes pretends, that he is not an enemy to the Revolution. Of this every man may judge for himself, when he reads the account which the Doctor has given of the manner in which it was effected. "On King James's abdication," he says, "a few men, unelected"

(*u*) Shebbeare, p. 55.

"elected by the people, and at the exclu-
 "sion of all others, were called together
 "by the Prince of Orange. These transf-
 "ferred the administration of public af-
 "fairs into his hands, advised him to call
 "a convention, though not yet a King;
 "and this convention deprived King James
 "of all future right to re-ascend the throne
 "of the three kingdoms (*x*). In another
 place he says, "One hundred and sixty
 "men, with the mayor, aldermen, and
 "deputies of London, were considered as
 "a majority of the people of England;
 "and the administration of the nation
 "was imparted to him without the least
 "application for the consent of the rest
 "of the nation. A convention was called
 "by the Prince of Orange, the members
 "of it were elected, and they placed the
 "crown on the heads of him and the
 "princess Mary, and excluded King James,
 "without consulting the people on that
 "most momentous transaction (*y*). The
 man who wrote this must unquestionably
 be

(*x*) Shebbeare, p. 72.

(*y*) P. 99.

be a very zealous friend to the Revolution!

It is evident, that Dr. Shebbeare's account of the character and administration of King William, is full of the grossest misrepresentations; but if it were just, it would only prove, that too much confidence ought not to be placed in princes; and that, by whomsoever the throne may be filled, the people ought to guard with the utmost vigilance and caution against regal encroachments. Perhaps few princes have exercised their authority with more upright views than King William: but the history of mankind affords too many instances of princes and others, who have derived their power solely from the free choice of the people, and who yet, with the utmost wickedness and ingratitude, have betrayed the trust reposed in them, and totally disregarded the interests of those to whom they owed their elevation.

As to the Doctor's parallel between King William and his present Majesty, I shall only observe, that it is in general very safe to libel dead Kings, and it may be profitable

table to flatter those who are living. But if any man were to draw a character of the present King, in the same stile and manner as Dr. Shebbeare has done that of King William, it might possibly involve him in some inconveniencies. The Doctor fights on the highest and the safest ground; and his character of the present King is a sufficient proof, that his pension has not been given him for nothing.

AFTER such specimens of Dr. Shebbeare's talent at misrepresenting facts and characters, as he hath exhibited in his pamphlet, the public will certainly have little cause to regret their loss, if he should never finish his intended History of England. They may possibly, however, consider themselves as somewhat obliged to him, for having already given them so compleat a demonstration, of his total unfitness for any work of that kind.

Dr. SHEBBEARE's character of the Quebec Act, and the compliments he pays the Bishops on the part they took in promoting it, are truly admirable, and need no comments. He observes, p. 124, that in
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this act “ no circumstance seems to be omitted, which humanity and the Christian faith can dictate: nothing enjoined, but what good polity hath suggested, and reason can support. And in no reign, since this kingdom hath existed, is there to be found one instance, in which the wisdom of the institution is so perfectly united with the precepts of Christ, and the virtues that dignify the best of men.” He adds, that “ to the *immortal honour of the prelacy of this realm*, they have, in the enacting of this law, afforded the most undeniable proof, that, by the doctrines which are taught in the evangelical writings, their actions have been *truly directed*.”

THIS inimitable defender of the government acknowledges the corruption of the parliament, but defends it on the principle of *necessity*. “ It appears,” says he, “ to be as easy to abolish the existence of parliaments, as to eradicate the corruption of them (z).” The corruption of parliament is no more necessary
to

(z) P. 39.

to the community, than any other species of iniquity ; but there is no kind of wickedness, of which some men may not discover the convenience or expediency. And by whomsoever such an undue parliamentary influence may have been introduced, it should be the business of all honest men to oppose it to the utmost, and to endeavour to render contemptible and detestable, all who employ, promote, or participate of this corruption, which, of all our national evils, is the most formidable, and the most likely to be the destruction of this country.

THAT Dr. Shebbeare is not very ill inclined towards the Romish religion, may reasonably be inferred from the very favourable manner in which he speaks of Popery and the Jesuits. But the Dissenters, being generally friends to liberty, are honoured with a great share of that rancorous abuse, with which his performance so much abounds. Even the penal laws against the Papists, he attributes to the Presbyterians ; they are answerable, it seems,

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for

for the most rigorous proceedings of the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; for, " Leicester, Walsingham, and Cecil," he says, " were Puritans." But the Doctor has not very clearly informed us, who the statesmen were, by whose influence the severe laws against Nonconformists in that reign were procured. It is probable they were not Puritans. However, the Doctor's ingenuity in suggesting, that the Powder-plot in James the First's reign, was probably formed by Cecil, who, he says, was "*a Presbyterian at his soul,*" is truly admirable ! (a)

WITH respect to many things that are alledged by Dr. Shebbeare against the conduct of the Nonconformists during the civil war, and under the republican form of government which was for a short time established, it may be sufficient to observe, that the Dissenters of the present age, think themselves no more answerable for the conduct of the Presbyterians or Independents of the last century, than the Episcopis-

(a) P. 144, 145.

piscopalians of the present age are for the cruelties exercised by Archbishop Laud and his colleagues, in the Star-chamber and High Commission courts. As to the execution of Charles the First, the Dissenters are by no means agreed in their sentiments respecting that transaction. There are, however, many of them, who are far from thinking it any dishonour to their ancestors, that they assisted in bringing a tyrant to the block. They are of opinion, that Charles the First demonstrably was a tyrant, and a betrayer of the rights of the people, and that he well deserved the fate he met with.

As to the ordinance of 1648, against heresy and blasphemy, referred to by Dr. Shebbeare, it is justly entitled to the severest censure ; but it should be observed, that it was by non-conformists to the church of England that it was prevented being put in execution. It may also be remarked, that the real principles of toleration were then very little understood by any party amongst us. Mr. Locke was

the first writer who appears to have had clear ideas upon the subject. And it can hardly be considered as any very peculiar reproach to the Presbyterians in the time of Cromwell, that they did not understand the principles of toleration, when it is remembered, that no other body of men in that age did; and that even in the present age, when these principles have been so much propagated, and so ably defended, the present Bench of Bishops could not discover that Protestant Dissenters in England had a right to a *legal* toleration; though since their rejection of the Dissenters bill, their lordships judgments have been so much enlightened, either by the assistance of Lord North, or by some other means, that they have not only supported the claim of right of the Papists in Canada to the free exercise of their religion, but have voted them a legal establishment of it, under the authority of a British Parliament.

WITH respect to the Protestant Dissenters, they, like the members of the established church, differ in their sentiments
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of some public measures, and on political subjects. As a body of men, however, they have generally and justly been considered as firm friends to the Hanover succession, as judging it friendly to the Protestant religion, and to civil liberty. And this attachment, of which they have given many proofs, will undoubtedly continue, so long as the princes of the present reigning family shall regulate their conduct by the principles of law, and of the constitution. However, it cannot be worth while for any body of men to enter into a formal contest with a writer, who chuses chiefly to distinguish himself by gross scurrility, and wilful misrepresentation. But the Dissenters are not ashamed of their principles as such, for they are satisfied that they will bear the severest scrutiny; and they are, therefore, ready to meet the ablest of their opponents on the fair ground of reason and of argument. And if it be a reproach to be warmly attached to the interests of civil, as well as religious liberty, and to detest tyranny, under whatever form it may appear, it is a reproach that many of them are well content

tent to bear. The friends of freedom, and of public virtue, are naturally objects of dislike to the servile and the venal; and it can be no dishonour to be reviled by the avowed tools of a minister, by state-hirelings, and pensioned-parasites.

F I N I S.

