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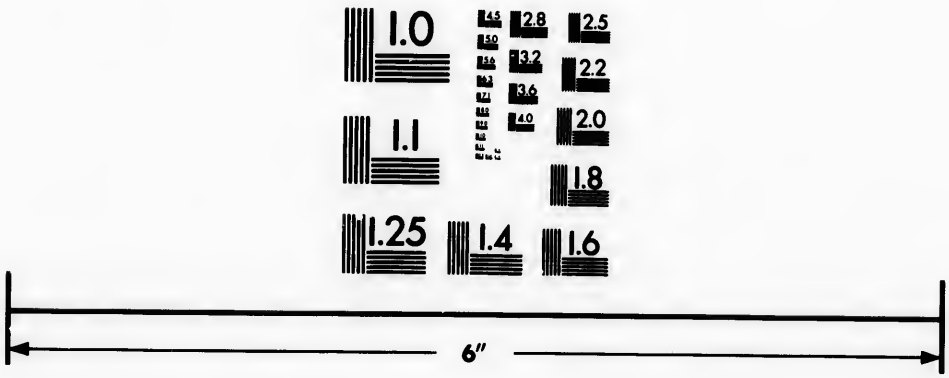

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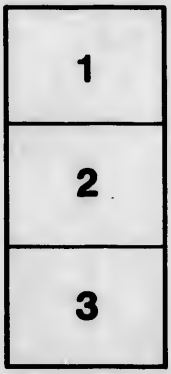

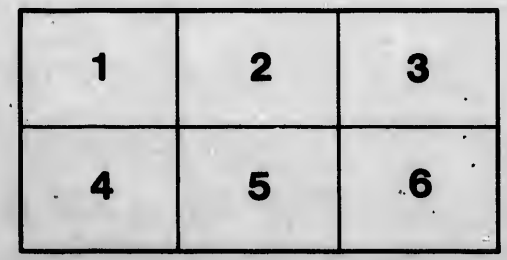

LETTERS

TO THE

RIGHT HON. EARL OF CHATHAM,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMIRALTY.

PREFACED BY

AN ADDRESS

TO THE CAPTAINS OF THE ROYAL NAVY;

AND CONCLUDING WITH

AN APPEAL

TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

"*Tempt not the brave and needy to despair.*"—JUVENAL.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDGWAY, NO. 1, YORK-STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.

December 1790.

PREFATORY ADDRESS

TO THE

CAPTAINS OF THE BRITISH NAVY.

GENTLEMEN,

THE veneration I feel for the navy of this kingdom, occaſions me to obſerve, particularly, every thing which occurs relative to it. I have long regretted the neglect, ingratitude, and indignity, with which its officers have been treated. On viewing an advertiſement from the Admiralty to the lieutenants of the navy, (in my opinion, as diſgraceful to the Board from whence it iſſued, as inſulting to the valuable men to whom it is addreſſed) and a letter, inſerted in ſeveral of the daily papers as an anſwer thereto, ſigned "*Hundreds of Half Pay Lieutenants,*" both of which I ſhall herein inſert, I was induced to publiſh my ſentiments on the ſubject. To whom could I ſo properly addreſs myſelf, on ſuch an occaſion, as the *Firſt Lord of the Admiralty*; the man, who from his official ſituation, and the obligations his family are under to the navy, is, of all others, at this time, the propereſt perſon to

ſtand forward their advocate, and to procure them that relief they have hitherto pleaded for in vain? The Letters, which I have addreſſed to that noble Lord, in one of the public prints, having been ſeen and approved of by ſeveral officers in the ſervice, of different ranks, with whom I have the honour to be acquainted, they have requeſted I would republiſh them collectedly, in order that the facts, ſtated in them, being thus brought together, they might be better known and underſtood by the public at large. In complying with their requeſt, I have thought it neceſſary, Gentlemen, to preface them with this addreſs to you.

Had it not been the intention of your corps to make a ſimilar application with the lieutenants, yet, conſidering them as brother officers, in a ſtation through which you muſt all have paſſed to your preſent rank, in which the majority of you muſt have experienced ſimilar difficulties, and have known the neceſſity that exiſted for relief, I am firmly of opinion the buſineſs ought to be a common cauſe.

The truly brave are truly generous; humanity is the characteriſtic of the hero, and draws the diſtinguiſhing line between the rational courage of the man, and the ſenſeleſs ferocity of the brute.

The diſtreſſes of one claſs, and the injuries done

done to it, ought therefore to be felt by the other; it ſhould become a mutual intereſt, and all ſhould unite in obtaining relief and redreſs. If principle did not, general intereſt, if rightly conſidered, would produce that *unanimity*, which, if diſplayed, I will venture to aſſert, there is nothing that you could aſk, which it would not be in your power to obtain. You have the heart of the nation with you; it is the public wiſh that you ſhould *all* enjoy the due reward of your merits and great ſervices. Your happineſs is a public good; and be aſſured, whatever you *unanimouſly* requeſted, no miniſter dared refuſe. It is diſunion alone, and the petty conſideration of private intereſts, that ſubjects the navy to the inſults it has received.

The wound ſo recently inflicted on your honour, by the proud predeceſſor of the preſent Firſt Lord, abetted by the man who is now *fac totum* to the latter, cannot yet be cicatrized. You muſt ſtill ſmart under the indignity, and reflect on the authors with deteſtation. Had *unanimity* prevailed throughout the navy, would the one have *ruled* at the Admiralty Board, and the other have been honoured with the command of the fineſt fleet, this or any other country ever beheld; though unbleſſed with that warm affection, that confidence, eſteem, and reſpect,

which creates vigor and energy in the execution of the orders of a commander in chief.

In writing to you, Gentlemen, I confider myſelf addreſſing you as a body, not individually. I do not expect individuals, who have immediate expectancies, to fly in the face of authority, and forfeit thoſe rewards, which are indeed diſtributed with ſo partial and ſparing an hand; but theſe are few, compared with the whole; yet I truſt that, promotion will not deſtroy thoſe fine feelings, thoſe generous principles, thoſe liberal ideas, which do more honour to the officer, than the lace with which he is adorned.

Though ſubordination and reſpect to rank is the ſpirit of military life, in actual ſervice, yet, at other times, it ſhould ſubſide into urbanity and politeneſs; the pride of the ſuperior ſhould be ſunk in the manners of the gentleman; and a friendly attention in private life, ſuperſede the diſtant demeanour on public duty. I am ſorry that truth obliges me to add, I have, in my intercourſe with naval men of various ranks, too often perceived the ſuperior (to uſe a common ſea phraſe) "*top the officer*," and the inferior diſplay that kind of inferiority not due from one gentleman to another. The conduct of the former has ſeemed to demand this kind of diſtant reſpect, as if, during the *ſolemnity* of his oath, he had ſwallowed an oblivious potation, and loſt the remem-

brance

brance of thoſe gradations, which then led him to the Admiralty altar.

I am certain, Gentlemen, there is not a man amongſt you, but from your own knowledge and experience, will admit the propriety and juſtice of the reaſons alledged in the following paper, ſigned "*Hundreds of Half Pay Lieutenants*," and confeſs, that the hazard they run of being plunged into diſtreſs, by the late ſtate of incertainty, was a well grounded reaſon for not offering their ſervices, until ſome proviſion is made for preventing ſuch diſtreſſing conſequences reſulting from them. That their alarms were juſt, the convention has confirmed, and many muſt now return in the ſituation they repreſent.

The inſult I have mentioned, as offered to your corps, is, in another way, repeated to theirs; menaces, impotent as they are ſhameful, are publicly held out, that they ſhall be "*ſcratched off the* "*liſt*." But for my ſentiments of ſuch conduct, I beg leave to refer you to the ſubſequent letters.

Although the ſubject of the following letters immediately relates only to the corps of lieutenants, I hope, Gentlemen, you will view it in a proper light, and aſſociate for the general good of the navy. Let diſunion no longer weaken your efforts, to obtain what is due to you all.

Recollect, Gentlemen, that it muſt be the deſire of thoſe men, who would dread an union of the

the two corps, to endeavour to promote ſeparate intereſts, to create invidious diſtinctions, and prevent, by the flattering bait promotion, that unanimity, ſo highly neceſſary to your general intereſts, from taking place.

Might not the degrading menace be with as much propriety addreſſed to admirals and captains, as lieutenants? But to have made ſuch an inſult *general*, would have been too great a riſque, and certainly have produced that active unanimity I ſo ſtrongly recommend.

The conduct of his Lordſhip's brother, relative to the exciſe, may poſſibly be a pattern for his own. The attempt of Sir Robert Walpole to eſtabliſh a *general* exciſe, had nearly proved fatal to him. Warned by his example, the more cautious miniſter of the preſent day proceeds by gradations, and impoſes it upon one branch of trade only at one time. This occaſions a trifling diſturbance for the moment, but it ſoons blows over; thoſe not immediately affected by it, hear of it as a man does of a fire at a diſtance from his dwelling; he expreſſes his concern, but becomes not actively aſſiſting to extinguiſh the flames. When thoſe who have experienced a misfortune, view others that have been unaſſiſting, during their difficulties, fallen into ſimilar circumſtances, they generally feel a kind of malicious conſolation, and do not think themſelves under any obligation

obligation to be aiding in the prevention of the conſequences. Thus, from a want of a mutual ſupport to each other, this dreaded monſter may gradually extend its deſtructive powers over every branch of trade.

A diſunion of the naval corps may, in like manner, render that eaſy, which would prove impracticable, if unanimity prevailed. The inſult offered to that body which is the weakeſt, has leſs intereſt, and leſs power of reſiſtance, if quietly ſubmitted to, will, in all likelihood, be hereafter practiſed on your corps. That union of intereſt cannot *then* be expected from thoſe, who have been unſupported by you; yet ſuch an union might be found as requiſite. The only conſolation that I conceive to be left for you, is ſimilar to that which the giant Polyphemus gave Ulyſſes, ——that he ſhould be the laſt to be devoured.

I am well informed, the Lieutenants mean to come forward again, and ſolicit the new parliament for relief to their hardſhips. Had your endeavours been united to theirs ſome time back, I have not a doubt you would have ſucceeded. The preſent is the time; the nation have with attention and ſurpriſe beheld the naval exertions; the hearts of the public glow with gratitude, and they know, that if the *miniſter's vaunts* have any foundation, it is eſtabliſhed on thoſe exertions; that it is *alone* the *vigor* and *ſpirit* of the British

NAVY,

NAVY, that has humbled the haughty Spaniard, to make a temporizing conceſſion, and accede to what, I fear, will eventually prove a *cavilling* "CONVENTION."

With a firm hope that I ſhall ſee a general exertion for the mutual benefit of each corps, I beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf, with every ſentiment of eſteem and reſpect,

Your very obedient humble ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the month of October last the following advertisement appeared in the public papers:

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE.

October 26, 1790.

MY Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, do hereby give notice to the Lieutenants of his Majesty's Navy, who are now unemployed, that they are forthwith to transmit to this office, the names of the places of their respective abode, with their reasons for not offering to serve at this time; and that such of them as do not comply therewith, on, or before the 20*th of next month, will be* STRUCK OF THE LIST.

PHILIP STEPHENS.

The former part of the advertisement, respecting their places of abode is in the usual course, but the *menacing mandate* which follows, very naturally and justly exciting the indignation of some

of the officers it was addreſſed to, ſenſible as they were that unnumbered applications for employment had been unattended to, and that it was ſtill a time of peace; the following letter appeared in ſeveral of the public papers, as an anſwer to the foregoing advertiſement;

To the Right Hon. the LORDS COMMISSIONERS *of the* ADMIRALTY.

MY LORDS:

OUR ſcanty pittance not allowing us to enjoy the *luxury* of a newſpaper either at home or abroad; chance alone has prevented us from incurring a penalty for an unknown crime. The advertiſement from the Admiralty, directing us to tranſmit to the office our places of abode, with our "*reaſons for not offering to ſerve at this time,*" under the penalty of being *ſtruck off the liſt*, might have paſſed without our ſeeing or knowing it. We beg leave, however, thus jointly, to obey your commands; though we think the penalty, did we not comply, would be an arbitrary ſtretch of authority, which the laws of this country would not ſanction. Our reaſons for this aſſertion are—that we deem *ſcratching an officer off the liſt*, to be the ſame as *breaking him*; which cannot be done without a court-martial:—That until we are actually in full pay and employed, we

are

are not ſubject to military law :—That if it is meant to threaten us with a deprivation of our half pay, it cannot be done. The law has declared that the half pay is not given as a *retainer*, but as a *reward for paſt ſervices.*

But, my Lords, not to employ too much of your time, which at this period muſt be precious, we proceed to give you ſome of our reaſons.

We do not apply for employment—

BECAUSE we remember the *contemptuous indignity* with which the miniſter thought fit to treat our "*modeſt*" application (as Mr. Sheridan juſtly termed it) to have our grievances and diſtreſſes heard by Parliament;

BECAUSE we are, at a certainty, if employed, of being put to a very heavy expence, for which, if war ſhould not take place, no reſtitution will be made us;

BECAUSE, if a war does take place, we muſt leave our wives and families to poverty and diſtreſs. The expences we muſt incur, at leaſt equal to half a year's pay, will ever be a dead weight about our necks, unleſs we may be fortunate enough to take prizes, which is a great caſualty;

BECAUSE our *full* pay is (except in three-deck ſhips) only *one ſhilling* per day more than our ſcanty half pay; for which we are at the expence

of a table, that costs nearly double that sum, exclusive of all other unavoidable extra expences;

Because many of us must travel some hundreds of miles to take up our commissions and join our ships, without being allowed one shilling for our expences; whereas, when ordered on the impress, or other service, the *old* establishment of ninepence per mile is allowed;

Because, whilst we view so many thousands lavished on the Quixote schemes of a *Richmond*, in building a palace for his relative, and in granting pensions; we must be convinced that no necessity of the country can be justly pleaded for preventing our distresses being alleviated;

Because the obligations in civil society are mutual, and we do not think we are in justice or honour bound to risque our lives, and resign those domestic comforts we have a natural right to enjoy in common with our fellow-subjects, in defence of a state which does not reward us as such sacrifices merit; or in the protection of that wealth, which is wantonly lavished on the ignominious slaves of power;

Because we see the governments of all maritime kingdoms, but Great Britain, giving every encouragement to their naval officers, rewarding their services and merits, and preventing their spirits being damped by the chill hand of penury;

and

and becauſe we are ſenſible that no nation, upon earth, has equal reaſon to preſerve that ardor and energy of mind in her officers; as there is no nation which requires ſuch a dependance to be placed on the ſtrength and vigor of her navy;

We humbly hope, my Lords, the foregoing "*reaſons for not* offering to ſerve," will prove ſatisfactory from

Your Lordſhips' moſt obedient ſervants,

HUNDREDS

OF HALF PAY LIEUTENANTS.

The facts contained in the foregoing anſwer are ſo generally known, the reaſons given are ſo obvious, and the arguments contained in it ſo well founded, that, upon the peruſal of them, I was inſtinctively led to aſſume the character of an advocate for that truly deſerving body of men. I am ſorry a more able pen has not undertaken the taſk; but the nature of the cauſe I eſpouſe is ſuch, and the arguments, I make uſe of, having the ſolid foundation of Truth for their ſupport; powerful abilities, will not, I truſt, be found neceſſary to enforce them. The ſentiments of a plain ſeaman are thus ſubmitted for public obſervation on a ſubject, intereſting to every wellwiſher to the ſafety and glory of the nation. If the end he has in view, the relief of diſtreſſed merit, is effected, he is indifferent either

to

to applauſe or cenſure, except as to his motive. That end obtained would be, indeed, a gratification, if he could flatter himſelf that his endeavours have in the leaſt tended to its accompliſhment.

LETTERS

LETTERS

TO THE

RIGHT HON. EARL OF CHATHAM,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMIRALTY,

LETTER I.

MY LORD,

HAVING ſeen a letter in ſeveral of the papers, signed, " *Hundreds of half pay Lieutenants*;" and many of the facts which it contains having been repeatedly ſtated to me by ſeveral naval Lieutenants, with whom I have the ſatisfaction to be intimately acquainted, I cannot help taking up my pen to make ſome obſervations in conſequence of them, not, I truſt, wholly unworthy your Lordſhip's attention.

Being bred to the ſea, my Lord, and having formerly ſpent ſome part of my time in his Majeſty's ſervice, I ſtill reſpect it; I revere the navy as the bulwark of the nation; and I honour thoſe

brave

brave men, who are the ſprings to put the great machine in motion.

Your Lordſhip's ſituation is a peculiar one—You are brother to the miniſter; and no other reaſon can be aſſigned why you are placed at the head of that Board, which regulates and directs this chief engine of defence to the kingdom.

Educated in the *army*, and not conſpicuous either in the field, or in the ſenate, men have wondered at the temerity of your brother, in placing you in a ſtation which ought to be filled by talents of a very ſuperior kind.

The knowledge which a firſt Lord of the Admiralty ought to poſſeſs, is of a very complicated nature. It ſhould comprehend, at leaſt, a general knowledge of politics, ſeamanſhip, naval architecture, and every thing, in ſhort, which is involved in naval concerns: with a fund of information of the nature and diſcipline of the naval power of other maritime ſtates. Though it ſeldom happens that ſuch knowledge is combined in any individual, yet a total ignorance muſt certainly diſqualify any perſon for ſo eminent and arduous an office. A man ought, at any rate, to poſſeſs ſuch a portion of knowledge, as would enable him to form a judgment of the advice and opinions of thoſe profeſſional men who are placed in a ſubordinate capacity, merely to give him aſ-

ſiſtance;

ſiſtance; ſelf ſufficiency, a defect in profeſſional knowledge, and private intereſt, may otherwiſe miſlead, and produce a prejudice to the national ſervice.

When a man is not poſſeſſed of theſe requiſite qualifications, and is placed by adventitious circumſtances in ſuch a ſituation, he ſhould conduct himſelf with the niceſt circumſpection. As ſome compenſation for ſuch deficiency, he ſhould, by every means in his power, evince that the good of the ſervice ſuperſedes every private conſideration; he ſhould promote each circumſtance which can tend to the general benefit of the navy; he ſhould be perfectly impartial in his promotion of officers; and let merit take place of particular intereſts. Such a conduct, and ſuch only, can counteract the prejudices, which will naturally ariſe, where there is a defect of official knowledge.

The general opinion has been, hitherto, rather favourable towards your Lordſhip, and that ſentiment has ariſen from your not having done any thing actually reproachable; but, my Lord, it is not certain that this kind of negative official virtue will cheriſh that favourable diſpoſition, or indeed ſuffer it long to exiſt. Your ſtation requires activity; you muſt give poſitive proofs to the world of your care and attention to the welfare of the navy and its component parts.

The late promotion of officers has been puffed off by your panegyrists rather to your disadvantage. There were some instances, in which merit met its reward, without much solicitation; but the ministerial writers would have persuaded us, that such an attention was *general*. Promotion makes men conspicuous; their professional conduct becomes a topic of conversation; it is scrutinized into, and weighed against its rewards. If it be found not to merit singular attention, promotion must be placed to the account of private interest. Unless those, who undertake to establish your impartiality, could have fixed it on a sound basis, they should not have attempted it; the superstructure not being alike firm in every point, naturally fell, and exposed the weakness of the particular parts. Had they been silent, no shades would have dimmed the light which might have reflected on your conduct in that instance. In my next, I shall attend more closely to the subject which caused me to take up my pen.

I am, My Lord,
With due respect,
Your Lordship's obedient servant,
AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

IN my firſt letter I took the liberty of remarking to your Lordſhip, the neceſſity that exiſts for an official man, not poſſeſſed of a knowledge of the duties of his office, to be particularly attentive to his conduct, and, by his actions, evincing ſuch an integrity of the heart, as may, in ſome degree, compenſate for the deficiencies of the head. I hope and truſt that the conduct of the Earl of Chatham will, in the fulleſt extent, be guided by this indiſpenſable line of rectitude, and let the virtues of the man caſt a veil over the partiality which appointed him a miniſter.—— Your noble father, my Lord, well knew the conſequence and value of the Britiſh navy. Without the leaſt reflection towards the army, I will be bold to ſay, he was principally indebted to the navy for that celebrity, to which, alone, your brother owes his elevation, and, through him, your Lordſhip your preſent high and lucrative appointment.

The navy, my Lord, for the above reaſon, juſtly demands your care, your veneration. It has peculiar claims upon you. It has a claim of

respect upon you, from the recollection of your noble father; it has a claim of gratitude upon you, as a man; it has a claim of justice upon you, as a statesman and a minister. Assert your dignity, my Lord; display your independency; follow the example of your glorious predecessor; be not the abject instrument of a younger brother; stand forth, publicly, the champion of the navy, and popularity (that idol of your patron) will follow. I would, however, wish to make the distinction between his popularity, and that which you would acquire. He possesses it, principally, in the mouths of a credulous rabble; your Lordship should possess it in the hearts of the nation at large. Every man of understanding and public virtue; nay, every man whose private interests are connected with the public safety and welfare, would applaud your conduct in support of the true and only real defence of the kingdom; they would bestow their benedictions on this natural offspring of real patriotism, as lavishly as they have vented their execrations against the interested abortions, teeming from the brain of an engineering lunatic.

The present moment, my Lord, affords you the fairest opportunity for pursuing the only road to real greatness; to signalize yourself by unequivocal proofs of the sincerity of your attachment to that bulwark of the kingdom, over which

your

your Lordſhip preſides. The miniſterial hirelings have lately taken much pains to ſhew the inefficacy of the French navy at preſent, by telling the public, what in fact every one already knew; that a number of ſhips *alone*, were no ways formidable. This truiſm, my Lord, I ſhall only make uſe of to point out, that no great merit can be aſcribed to the Admiralty, merely for iſſuing orders to fit out a number of ſhips. Such orders are ſoon prepared and iſſued. It is no more than a manufacturer directing buildings to be erected for carrying on his work. It is in the internal buſineſs his knowledge is diſplayed; the perfection to which he brings the component parts, that are to give action to his machines, is the criterion which diſcovers his judgment and his induſtry. So, my Lord, with reſpect to the navy. It is not the building and preparing the mere hulls, but a due attention to preſerve that ardor and energy which are to give life and motion to the operations of our fleets.

Though every part of the navy requires a proper attention, and there are very numerous circumſtances which demand inveſtigation and amendment, I ſhall at preſent only advert to what (I have previouſly informed your Lordſhip) occaſioned me to take up my pen; the anſwer to the Admiralty advertiſement, which lately appeared

peared in ſeveral of the papers, ſigned "*Hundreds* "*of Half Pay Lieutenants.*"

I wiſh thoſe brave men had a better advocate. It is a ſevere ſarcaſm on every naval man in the late Houſe of Commons, that not one had the virtue, or the feeling, to ſtand up and ſecond the motion of Mr. Sheridan for relief to their brother officers.

My Lord, I beg leave to obſerve that, had your brother liſtened to the dictates of humanity, good policy, or juſtice, when a petition, ſigned by more than *ſeven hundred* of thoſe moſt uſeful men, to have their diſtreſſes heard, was preſented to Parliament by Mr. Baſtard, and afterwards by Mr. Sheridan; had he not treated them with a ſhameful neglect and contumely, no neceſſity would have exiſted for ſo degrading an advertiſement in the public papers. Had they been treated with that reſpectful attention which their great merits and the ſacrifices they make to the national honor and ſecurity demand, you would not have wanted (what you now have done) Lieutenants to ſupply your ſhips; commiſſions would not have lain idle at the Admiralty, to the mortification of thoſe who participate in the ſcandalous tax impoſed on the officer, when he receives it; and what is of more importance, there would not have been ſuch delay of the pub-

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lic ſervice. I ſhall ſpeedily reſume the ſubject, my Lord, and am,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER III.

MY LORD,

MEN, in high office, may affect to despise the animadversions contained in the daily publications: but the public well know it is merely affectation. They judge from their own feelings, and consider the effect it would have upon themselves. The very idea of real insensibility would be a perfect condemnation. The minister, whose mind is steeled against advice, whose breast is callous to just reproof, and impervious to conviction, must be ill suited to the important trusts reposed in him.

It is undoubtedly true, my Lord, that the malevolence of party may frequently misrepresent and exaggerate; yet, in general, there is some positive fact or truth whereon to ground the attack. On the other hand, is there not equal misrepresentation and exaggeration from the panegyrizing partizans of ministers? In short, it may be compared to viewing a portrait, drawn by different artists, employed on different subjects; the features of the person are discoverable in both, to the eyes of men of judgment; though in one, they

they are ſoftened with the benignity of an angel; in the other, they are diſtorted with the fury of a fiend.

It is an unfortunate circumſtance, attending thoſe in power, that they can alone ſeek for truths amidſt the thorny paths of reprobation; but there is much more danger lurking in the ſmooth walks of flattery and diſſimulation in which they daily tread. Do not, therefore, my Lord, let this error of affectation lead you to be inattentive to the voice of Truth, though conveyed (if I may be allowed a nautical metaphor) through the *ſpeaking trumpet* of the preſs. I herd not with courtly men, but I mix with the public, and can aſſure your Lordſhip, that the facts ſtated in the pointed anſwer to the Admiralty advertiſement, have been the ſubject of general converſation, amongſt thoſe men, to whom, my Lord, the moſt attention ſhould be paid; ſince they are thoſe who give the greateſt ſupport to the exigencies of the ſtate; I mean the commercial part of the world. This claſs of the public ſeverely reprobate thoſe in power, whoſe duty it was to have prevented the juſt complaints contained in the anſwer. It would, indeed, have been extraordinary, if mercantile people, whoſe particular intereſts are ſo much concerned in the welfare of the navy, had not peculiarly felt for the diſtreſsful ſituation of men who are the protectors of thoſe intereſts, to

whom this country owes ſo much, who are ſo hardly treated, ſo ſcandalouſly neglected.

As the naval miniſter, my Lord, you ought not to be ignorant of what has paſſed, relative to that claſs of officers, the *Lieutenants of the Navy*; nay, I can aſſert it as a fact, that, if you have not been guilty of unpardonable inattention and neglect, you ſhould be a perfect maſter of the ſubject; ſince I know that, at your firſt coming into office, the moſt minute information was conveyed to you.

You have, my Lord, what, in the navy, is termed *a nurſe*; when young boys of high intereſt are preferred to command, and a grey headed veteran appointed their firſt officer. You have the aſſiſtance of a man, who, profeſſionally, is capable of giving you every intelligence, and piloting you through the dark miſts of ignorance. This *naval Lord*, who, in his election cruize, indeed, diſcovered himſelf to be a bad political pilot and ran himſelf a ground on the quickſands of popular reſentment, is nevertheleſs thoroughly qualified to adminiſter knowledge and advice to your Lordſhip. It is to be hoped that Lord has been convinced, by experience, how much the navy is the idol of the people. His baſe ingratitude in the Houſe towards that claſs of men, who had aſſiſted in elevating him to his preſent dignities (by the ſupport he gave to the execrated meaſures

of

of that hated naval miniſter, your immediate predeceſſor) was then remembered; to his conduct reſpecting thoſe brave and injured men, the rejected captains, did he owe the loſs of his election, more than to the popularity of the man whoſe intereſt oppoſed him. I truſt it will be an uſeful leſſon to him, and that he will, from a remembrance of what he once was himſelf, and from a ſenſe of contrition for his paſt miſconduct, make ſome retribution, by future attention to the good of the ſervice, and the encouragement of thoſe, whoſe deſervings, in their ſituation, will, if ſcrutinized into, be found, at leaſt, equal to his own.

His Lordſhip ſhould remember (though titles and power are too apt to caſt an oblivious ſhade over former inſignificance) that high honours did not always preſent him with even a *ſhadow* of repect, nor affluence open to him the door of luxury. He ſhould recollect, that adventitious circumſtances, more favourable to him than to men of equal merit, who ſtill remain on the lieutenants' liſt, have elevated him to that rank and ſituation, which beſtow, what to a virtuous and generous mind is the moſt gratifying luxury in life—the power of adminiſtering relief to the diſtreſſed; of conferring acts of beneficence on a fellow-creature.

This official *Mentor* can inform your Lordſhip,

fully, of the nature of a lieutenant's duty; and that the merit of celerity, in the dispatch of naval business, is principally ascribable to his judgment, his diligence, his alacrity. Though the honour generally falls to the chief in command, it is the lieutenant who is the active instrument of execution. To the lieutenants, my Lord, to their exertions, are we principally indebted, for the extraordinary dispatch, which at the commencement of the present armament, equipped so powerful a fleet, in such a short period, as must have created astonishment in surrounding nations; yet are these men degradingly advertised for, like runaway apprentices, that are forced from home by ill usage, and threatened with punishment if they do not return.

The public papers inform us, that a promotion of young men is to take place, and that there will be an addition of *two hundred* to the list of lieutenants. I rejoice, my Lord, that such attention is to be paid to a class of meritorious young men, whose services have ever been so much unattended to; but I must, notwithstanding, observe, that there is more necessity for making an adequate provision for those already upon the list (a number sufficient to supply the whole navy, according to the present regulation) than to make so large an addition. The additional expences hereby created, would go a great way towards that which would

would be neceſſary to give relief to many *old* officers. I do not mean to hint a wiſh that the promotion ſhould not take place; far from it; but I think the ſervices of an old ſervant require equal attention with that of a new one.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordſhip's obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

MY LORD,

WHEN your Lordſhip, your brother, and the reſt of your relatives and connections, who, through his power and influence, enjoy ſo many thouſands, relinquiſh thoſe emoluments, and labour through the *vaſt* fatigues of office, without remuneration; we may be led to ſuppoſe, that a love for your country, or what is termed *Patriotiſm*, is the ſole motive which animates your breaſts. On the other hand, ſhould we perceive but little attention paid to the true intereſts of the country, the real buſineſs of the various departments negligently attended to, and the time, which ought to be employed in diſpatching it, ſacrificed to ſelf-conſideration, and the ſupport of individual intereſts, amidſt the ſtrife of contending parties; it muſt prove impoſſible to conclude otherwiſe, than that the *amor pecuniæ* ſuperſedes the *amor patriæ*, and influences all your actions. In ſhort, my Lord, that antiquated virtue, ſo much boaſted of in Rome, and other ſtates, was, I fear, known to as few, in thoſe periods, as I believe it may be in modern times. However pleaſing the picture

picture in imagination, it is a *rara avis* in nature. Many boaſt of an acquaintance with this diſintereſted virtue, but few claim an intimacy with it. Inveſtigate the actions of mankind from the monarch to the peaſant, we ſhall find that *ſelf-love* is the predominant principle. If this prevailing paſſion did not counteract that heavenly mandate, which "bad *ſelf-love and ſocial be the ſame*," why has mankind ſeen the graſping hand of royalty hoarding millions, whilſt the tools of aggrandizing power have ſhut the doors of commiſeration againſt the complaints of poverty and injured merit? Why do we ſee the purſe-proud dignitaries, who ſhould give us living examples of apoſtolic purity, meekneſs, and charity, labouring to engroſs the good things of this life, and live in luxurious indolence; whilſt their ſlaviſh hirelings enforce, by their wan appearance, the doctrines of abſtinence, which they preach to a neglected flock? Why does the treacherous ſenator betray thoſe rights he is choſen to protect;—the ſoldier "*ſeek the bubble reputation, even in the* "*cannon's mouth?*" Why does the glib-tongued lawyer ſupport the cauſe his conſcience muſt condemn; the grave phyſician quit his downy bed, to viſit the manſions of loathſome diſeaſe? Why does the wily trader humbly crouch to inſolence and pride; the peaſant ſweat beneath the toils of induſtry, to gratify the appetites of pomp and luxury

luxury?——The love of *ſelf*, my Lord;—this intuitive principle is proved in all.

With ſuch invariable conviction, eternally preſented to us, what are we to conclude?—That unbiaſſed patriotiſm is the mere phantom of imagination, a meteor of pretence, that frequently flaſhes to the fancy, but does not warm the heart.

It was common intereſt, and mutual wants, that firſt formed communities, and ſtill bind ſociety together. All men are, by nature, equal; neceſſity created, and power ſupports diſtinctions. Still, however, from the greateſt to the leaſt, we are, in fact, hirelings to each other. In uncivilized ſocieties, uncommon merit, and ſuperior abilities, in contracted ſpheres of action, acquire rank and conſequence; in civilized ſtates, this juſt ſelection gives place to the influence of wealth and power, to the too frequent excluſion of thoſe claims. Look in the private walks of life, we ſee the individual receives a due and equable exchange of good offices, according to his rank. In the public paths, it is otherwiſe; the returns from the ſtate to its immediate ſervants, are not diſtributed in fair proportion, with reſpect to their ſituation, their merit, and the nature of their ſervices. Who, for inſtance, that beholds the *puiſne* Lords of the Admiralty (for I exclude the *ſevere* duty of your Lordſhip) rolling

ing in their chariots to the Board, to undergo the vaſt fatigue of, merely, giving their ſignatures: —fattening on a THOUSAND POUNDS a year, whilſt the diſmembered veteran, after a hard ſervice of thirty or forty years, expoſed to every clime and every danger, is in vain ſoliciting attention, and continues ſtarving on a paltry pittance of FIFTY? Who, my Lord, that beholds this, can refrain from allowing the juſtice of my obſervation, and exclaiming againſt the ingratitude, cruelty, and injuſtice, which admit of the diſproportion.

If good reſults from any action, it is, perhaps, unneceſſary to ſearch too minutely into the motive which gave birth to it; yet I cannot help, on this occaſion, avowing, I am firmly perſuaded, that what influences men, in a military life, is intereſt and ambition united. Take away advantage and fame, and I fear *Patriotiſm* would be left in the lurch. I do not mean this as a reflection, becauſe I really do not conceive any ſolid reaſon can be aſſigned, why a man ſhould feel an extraordinary predilection for a peculiar ſpot, merely, becauſe he caſually drew his firſt breath upon it; or ſhould feel attachment to a particular ſociety, for no other reaſon than that he happens to make one of the number, when he is deprived of a fair participation of the advantages ariſing from his efforts to produce a general benefit.

That it is the *duty* of every man to ſupport the intereſt and welfare of the ſtate of which he is a ſubject, I willingly allow; but I muſt alſo inſiſt, that there is a reciprocal *duty* due from the ſtate to ſupport that ſubject. This duty, inſtinctively, leads the individual to encounter a public enemy, and to purſue to death a fellow-creature whom he never ſaw before, and who never, individually, offended him. Except a very few individuals, he is *naturally* as much related to thoſe he attempts to deſtroy, as thoſe he endeavours to protect. This duty which impels him, proceeds from a kind of *ſocial compact*, a general contract, which, if broken on one part, releaſes the other. However the ardor of enterprize, or the heat of battle, may excite men, during the moment of action; retirement and cool reflection will produce arguments in the mind, ſuch as I have ſtated, and which I doubt not have given riſe to that reluctance to ſerve, whence, I verily believe, the idea has originated of the promotion of ſuch a number of hitherto neglected young men to be lieutenants. This idea was probably nouriſhed by an expectation that popularity would reſult to your Lordſhip from ſuch a meaſure. But, though the circumſtance may be approved of; your Lordſhip may not gain the full credit, you would wiſh, for the motive. To convince the public of your good intentions towards the navy, there muſt be a con-

ſiſtency

ſiſtency of conduct; no partial attention, or what carries with it the appearance of courtly policy, will ever procure your Lordſhip that eſtimation from thoſe over whom you have the honour to preſide, which that you may, by your conduct, obtain, is the ſincere wiſh of,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER V.

MY LORD,

FROM what I have written in the preceding letters, if my arguments are well founded, this conclusion must evidently be drawn; that a reciprocity of interests being the links which hold society together, it is a duty incumbent on those who preside over it, to take especial care that the chain be not broken. If the interests of the individuals are neglected, if they are curtailed of their equitable and due proportion of advantages, the compact is dissolved, and they are freed from that obligation, they were previously under, to render services in support of those advantages. The *Lieutenants of the Navy*, considered as members of the society in which we live, stand exactly in this predicament; their interests are unattended to—their claims on that society are withholden—and consequently their social obligation is void. The benefits they should receive, ought to be proportionate to the benefits they confer; but is that the case, my Lord? No: the disproportion is great. As circumstances change, as the value of money diminishes, and that of the necessaries of life encreases in a regular *ratio*; so should the stipends

of

of thoſe who ſerve the public be encreaſed in due proportion. The income of almoſt all other parts of ſociety regularly increaſes, from the landholder to the labourer. Rank and ſubordination are neceſſary for the ſupport of government; but every gradation of rank ſhould have its due maintenance. The peer and the peaſant are by nature the ſame; yet the former would be miſerable on the luxuries of the latter. The queſtion therefore is, not what thoſe men, who make ſuch ſacrifices for the public benefit, can merely *exiſt* upon; but what will ſupport them in that rank and ſituation which they hold in the ſtate? Will you, my Lord, pretend to ſay, that the poor pittance, of which they ſo juſtly complain, is adequate to the ſupport of that rank they hold? Their King has thought their ſervices and their merit entitled them to rank with the captains of his army. Upon ſervice, on ſhore, if the dates of their commiſſions are older, they precede them in command, and ever ſo on board the ſhips. The captain of the army, or marines, paſſes his time without fatigue or trouble—his reſt unbroken by a weary watch—his perſon unexpoſed to the impetuous wintry blaſt; yet he poſſeſſes *ten ſhillings a day*, and an equal ſhare of prizes.—The Lieutenant of the Navy experiencing every toil of duty, amidſt the howling tempeſt and inclement ſeaſon, has only *four* allotted him, except

cept in first and second rates, where he has one shilling in addition.

When a deputation from the body of Lieutenants waited upon your brother, my Lord, he, with all his *sang froid*, could not avoid feeling the force of their complaints; but he had not virtue enough to stand forward their advocate, though he absolutely acknowledged the justice of their claims. An excuse, for declining what the dictates of equity and humanity would have enforced, he thought necessary; but the insufficiency and absurdity of that which he gave, was, from him, who has such a facility of "*making the worse appear the better reason*," the strongest conviction, that he ought to have complied. He was fearful, if he complied with their requisition, it would create a similar application from the army. My Lord, if the complaints of the army were as well founded, they ought equally to be attended to; but it is clear they could not have a like foundation; and therefore it was not probable. The officers of the army well know (I blush for the degraded dignity of the country whilst I write it, to think that honours should be made a trade) they well know that *their* entrance into his Majesty's service, and the attainment to the rank they hold, is by *bargain and sale*. They come to a public market; they treat as they would with a broker; and they purchase an annuity at a particular price, and under

under particular terms; which, whenever they pleaſe, they can carry to market, and again put up to ſale. No man under ſuch circumſtances can poſſibly complain. Such is the caſe of the army officer; but that of the naval officer is quite the reverſe. To uſe the words of an hireling print (of which I ſhall ſoon take notice) "to "qualify himſelf for a commiſſion, a midſhip-"man muſt drudge for ſix years at leaſt, perhaps "longer, through the ſubordinate and laborious "duties of a ſhip of war." The writer might have added, at an expence equal to that which would purchaſe a commiſſion in the army.

My firſt introduction to a ſeafaring life, my Lord, was in the navy. I was three years before I became a rated midſhipman. The firſt year I was on the books as *captain's ſervant*, which your naval aſſiſtant can tell your Lordſhip was a common circumſtance; during that time I, of courſe, received no wages; the ſecond year I was rated *ordinary ſeaman*, and received *ſeveuteen ſhillings* per month; and the third year *able ſeaman*, at twenty-two ſhillings. In theſe three years, my receipts were about *twenty-five* pounds, and the expence to my parents was at leaſt ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY. During this time it was neceſſary I ſhould be ſupported as a gentleman. The addition to my pay, when a midſhipman, only *ſix ſhillings* per month, being in a frigate, it muſt be evident

evident to your Lordſhip, could not cover the neceſſary expence. During my continuance in the ſervice as a midſhipman, it coſt me, *communibus annis*, excluſive of my pay, from *thirty* to *fifty* pounds per annum. No rank (for a midſhipman has none) can be obtained in the navy without intereſt; and a man whoſe intereſt is not great, may be in the navy *many* years, before he attains that ſituation which will entitle him to the *full* pay of *four ſhillings*, and to the half-pay of *three ſhillings* per day. He cannot, if he poſſeſſes the means, remove himſelf higher by purchaſe, and may continue, if he has not friends, in this dear-bought ſituation, to the lateſt period of his exiſtence, provided he behaves well, and does not, by a neglect of "*giving his reaſons for not offering his* "*ſervice*" in time of peace, procure himſelf to be "*ſtruck off the liſt.*" I will venture to aſſert, that there is no officer in the navy who would not, if he had employed a ſum of money equal to that which, during his ſervice, he has neceſſarily expended, in the purchaſe of a proportionate annuity, have found himſelf, in a pecuniary point of view, infinitely better ſituated than he is at preſent.

The juſtice of their claim to attention and relief is as evident, as that your Lordſhip is in a ſituation to which, in the opinion of ſome, your pretenſions are far from being unequivocal; and the abſurdity of your brother's plea, at that period,

riod, could only be equalled by his arrogant rejection of their petition, when it was presented, by Mr. Sheridan, to the House of Commons.

I am, my Lord,

Your very obedient servant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER VI.

MY LORD,

THE paragraph I alludêd to in my laſt letter, was one which I that day perceived in the "ORACLE" of Adminiſtration, and was headed "LIEUTENANTS OF THE NAVY." Whether the paragraph was inſerted by permiſſion of the Board, I cannot aſcertain, but it ſeemingly came forward from authority. After deſcribing the nature of the PEREMPTORY order, it adds; "this day the "time allowed for due obedience expires. *It* "*is*, we learn, *the firm intention* of the Admiralty "to *execute their threats*; by which means thoſe "Lieutenants who have kept back, *will be depriv-* "*ed of their commiſſions.* Our information ſtates, "that the Lords of the Admiralty intend to fill "the vacancies on the Lieutenants' liſt, thus "made, by the promotion of Midſhipmen, who "have ſerved their time, and have paſſed for "Lieutenants. There are of this deſcription "upwards of 200 on Lord Chatham's liſt."

My Lord; the anſwer to the ſhameful Admiralty advertiſement, which firſt occaſioned me thus to addreſs your Lordſhip, ſigned "*Hundreds* "*of Half Pay Lieutenants*," aſſerts what is a fact—

that

that you have not power to put ſuch threats in force, nor to deprive them of their pay or their *rank*; for "*commiſſions*," let the ignorant hireling of authority be informed, they have not.

I cannot help remarking in this place, that what are called commiſſions in the navy, are derogatory to the rank of an officer and a gentleman. The officers in the army are honored with the King's ſign manual, and the language that of truſt and confidence; the officers of the navy have their commiſſions, or rather *warrants*, ſigned by *ſubjects* commiſſioned to fill the office of a *ſubject*. The army is directed by the *War Office*, though the commiſſions are ſigned by the King; why, therefore, could not the navy officers derive their authority from the ſame honorable ſource. At preſent their authority more reſembles that given by a ſheriff to his officers.—If old eſtabliſhed forms are pleaded, why the innovation of an uniform? Theſe have have not been worn many years; and if one is thought neceſſary to create reſpectability, why not the other?

But to proceed. Impotent threats only reflect ridicule and contempt on thoſe who utter them. Probably ſuch threats were dictated by the ſame adviſer, who counſelled a refuſal to the application of the city of London for the liberation of impreſſed freemen. You would, my Lord, were

ſuch threats enforced, be convinced by an *Engliſh Jury*, as you will be in the latter caſe, that Admiralty power muſt dwindle into inſignificance before the aweful authority of the laws of the land. But even, if not thus protected, can your Lordſhip imagine ſuch indignity would be tamely ſubmitted to—As the anſwer juſtly obſerves; "*ſcratching off the liſt*," is the ſame as breaking an officer; and breaking him implicates diſgrace. The acts of the Admiralty Board, my Lord, are, in general, eſteemed the acts of the *Firſt Lord*; the reſt, it is well known, are looked upon as mere *Automatons*, placed there for the purpoſe of tracing the characters of their names on papers, to give them a formal validity. The implication of ſuch diſgrace would therefore be placed to your Lordſhip's account. The injury would be done to men of *high ſpirit*, though perhaps unmerited penury and diſtreſs may have lulled it into a temporary lethargy; it would be done to men, many of whom have often drawn their ſwords and ſhed their blood to avenge the wrongs of their country, and to ſupport the juſtice of its claims. I ſhould not be ſurpriſed to hear, on ſome future occaſion, that individuals amongſt them, who felt themſelves galled by the barb of ingratitude and injuſtice, ſhould, on finding public and general applications ineffectual, vindicate their own honor, and perſonally require redreſs,

redreſs, where they imagined reſponſibility ought to reſt.

Few men, and eſpecially thoſe in official employments can bear the acknowledgement of error. What Miniſter has been more frequently obliged to retract than your brother, and who has done it with ſo ill a grace?

I am informed, my Lord, however you may attempt to diſguiſe it, that your Lordſhip and your co-adjutors are really aſhamed of the advertiſement, although you continued it till the laſt day. I am not ſurpriſed at it; for there certainly never was a more ſhameful, a more inſulting, a more derogatory notice addreſſed from a public board to a body of gentlemen, who are an honour to their country.

The Admiralty dependants have endeavoured to ſoften it, by cauſing it to be reported, that the meaſure was adopted, in order to aſcertain the number of *effective* officers in the ſervice. If it had originated from this proper motive, might it not have been effected, as well, by REQUIRING *all thoſe officers, who were incapable of ſervice, to ſend notice to the Admiralty, with the reaſons for their incapacity?* This would, there is no doubt, have been readily complied with. No impotent, degrading threats would have been neceſſary to enforce compliance. The reaſon, which is thus promulged, does not, however, appear to have been

been in your idea at the time. The fact was, that numbers of the commiſſions were found to be uſeleſs pieces of parchment, and your notices of their being iſſued were of no avail. Many *would* not take them up for the well-founded reaſons aſſigned in the anſwer. Their fears are verified, and your brother's condemned Convention has plunged them into the difficulties which the anſwer points out. Many, however, did not take up commiſſions for a worſe reaſon; they *could* not do it; they were prevented from doing it, by being *immured within the walls of a priſon.* It is a melancholy fact, my Lord, that a very great number of theſe gallant, deſerving men are thus unfortunately ſituated, and the country, had a war taken place, would have been deprived of their ſervices. Let your emiſſaries ſearch thoſe repoſitories of diſtreſs, they will find my aſſertion to be true. An honourable naval commander, who is a courtier, can inform you, that (much to the credit of his philanthropy) he relieved moſt of his Lieutenants in a ſecond rate ſhip of war, from the horrors of confinement.

Some of your hireling ſcribblers will probably aſſert, that this ſituation was brought upon them by extravagance; but, my Lord, ſuch an aſſertion would, excepting, perhaps, a very few inſtances, be a falſehood. It has been, in general, produced by abſolute neceſſity, ariſing from their

paltry

paltry pay, and the consequence of the former armament. If prevention is not used, the numbers now confined, and who cannot appear for the dread of it, will be increased, by the expences incurred during the present armament.

I beg leave to ask your Lordship, whether a *Lieutenant* in the navy ought not, for the credit of the kingdom, and the dignity of the service, to have the appearance, and to live as a gentleman? What would be the consequence of an officer in the army appearing shabby and dirty, and not supporting his mess? He would be despised, and thought a disgrace to his regiment. The expences of equipment for a naval officer are much heavier; he, from the nature of the service, is obliged to have a larger stock of every thing.

There was a time, during the American war, when the necessity of calculation might have been more evident to your Lordship, than at present, and your *observation*, I doubt not, then convinced you, that the difficulty of an officer's raising the *necessary supplies*, was as perplexing a business, as your brother now experiences it to be in his ministerial character.

My Lord, let gratitude to Providence, who has placed you in power and affluence, induce you to exert yourself in behalf of men for whom you ought to have a *sympathetic* sensation. Let me remind you, my Lord, that a large number of

that

that body, to whom you have iſſued ſuch an imperious, peremptory mandate, have expended *forty* or *fifty* pounds, or upwards, in conſequence of being commiſſioned. In what manner can this be done by men, who are emerging from a ſolitary retirement of years, on THREE SHILLINGS per day? It muſt be by contracting debts, which, if they are not hurried into a goal for, the ſtricteſt œconomy of years cannot ſolve. They have been called from their wives and famlies to riſque their lives, and hazard the happineſs of all that is dear to man, to plunge themſelves into inſolvency and diſtreſs; for what—for the additional ſum of *one ſhilling* per day, except a few in firſt and ſecond rates. It is evident that this addition will not diſcharge even the coſts of the outfit, in leſs than THREE years. Facts, my Lord are ſtubborn things, which will not bend to ſophiſtry. This is a fact, as incontrovertible as that your Lordſhip receives 3000l. per annum of the national money, beſides the *et cæteras* of office, for doing—what *Lord Hood* has 1000l. per annum more for *inſtructing* you to do.

I am, My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

MY LORD,

THREE cauſes may be aſſigned for that ſcarcity of Lieutenants, which induced the threatning mandate from the Admiralty. The firſt is, that numbers are pent up in priſons, or dare not appear for the dread of them. The next is, that many have been driven by neceſſity, by cruel and impolitic neglect, into the ſervice of merchants; and, what is worſe, into the ſervice of *Foreign States*. In the one ſituation they are uſeful to the country; in the other, they are unintentionally doing eſſential injury. The third cauſe is the dread of being plunged into the ſame ſituation with the firſt, by the heavy expence attending their unavoidable equipment.

With reſpect to the firſt claſs, could it create ſurpriſe if our priſons were crouded with them; when the inſufficiency of the ſum, allowed them for exiſtence is conſidered, and the ſcandalous protraction in the payment of even that ſcanty proviſion? To the ſhame of thoſe in power, who have the management of it, there is, at this moment, ELEVEN MONTHS PAY DUE to thoſe in-

jured men *. The officers in commiſſion have been borrowing money, at intereſt, to purchaſe the neceſſaries which cannot be diſpenſed with; and thoſe not in commiſſion, under circumſtances of diſtreſs, whilſt the ſources of their ſupport are dammed up by inattention and neglect.

It is a fact, my Lord, that an officer, on enquiry at the Admiralty, for the cauſe of this ſcandalous detention, was informed that the clerk, whoſe buſineſs it is, *had not had time to make out the liſt*. Gracious Heaven!—ſhall the conveniency of a clerk in office, my Lord, whoſe ſituation, compared with that of the neglected officers, is eaſe, grandeur, and opulence, be admitted as a reaſon for accumulating diſtreſs on our brave protectors? If the late hurry of buſineſs employed more of his time than uſual, is making out the liſt a buſineſs of ſuch intricacy, that it could not be done by others? Cannot extra clerks be had in caſes of emergency? Should any buſineſs indeed ſuperſede that important one? Juſtice and humanity ſhould direct the payment to be made *immediately* on its becoming due.

I muſt here, my Lord, take notice of what fell from your Lordſhip's brother, when he ſo ſhamefully rejected the Lieutenant's petition, two years

* The half pay was not advertiſed for payment, when this Letter was publiſhed, the *4th of December*.

ago

ago. His words, in the Houſe of Commons, were, " *If there were any inconveniencies which might* " *reſult to the officers, and which executive govern-* " *ment could remedy, it ſhould be done.*"—How well he has fulfilled his promiſe, the preſent detention of the pay ſufficiently evidences.

But perhaps, my Lord, the procraſtnation was a paltry propoſition of puniſhment, recommended as a means of forcing them into ſervice. If ſo, the puniſhment fell alike on all. Thoſe, in ſervice, wanted the pay towards their equipment; thoſe out of ſervice, for the exiſtence of themſelves and families, or for relief under the miſeries of confinement.

The ſecond cauſe I have aſſigned for a ſcarcity of Lieutenants, from ſo long a liſt, is, in the latter part of it, of a very ſerious nature, and claims the ſtricted attention of government to prevent it. This can be only done by *encouragement* at home; for what is the forfeiture of a Lieutenant's pay and rank in the Britiſh ſervice, to the encouragement which nautical ſkill and merit meet with in that of foreign ſtates. Leave will not be aſked for, when diſappointment and neglect have ſtung the ſoul. When, on one hand, the proſpect is clouded by adverſity, and on the other brightened by the expectancy of profit and honour, can we doubt which path the active mind will purſue?

The laſt cauſe is particularly pointed out in the anſwer to the Admiralty advertiſement, namely, the fear and certainty of incurring a heavy expence. I borrow from a morning paper the account which an officer gives of his expenditure, as it contains the articles, which every officer muſt have; though it is certain every officer cannot have them, however neceſſary it may be, on ſo extenſive a ſcale. From hence your Lordſhip may at leaſt form an eſtimate.

To the EDITOR *of the* MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

THE following are the exact expences of a Lieutenant of his Majeſty's Navy, who lived three hundred miles North of London, and received orders to join his ſhip at Plymouth.

	£.	s.	d.
From his own houſe to London, being out of the great road to London — —	13	17	7
From London to Plymouth — —	4	4	6
At Plymouth — — —	0	10	6
To Dock — — —	0	1	6
Two weeks lodging and board at Dock —	2	0	0
To take up his commiſſion — —	1	1	0
To a new ſuit of uniform — —	7	15	0
To fourteen new ſhirts — —	15	0	0
To a great coat — — —	3	3	0

To

	£.	s.	d.
To a gold-laced hat — — —	2	14	0
Twelve pair of cotton ſtockings — —	2	8	0
Six pair of ſhoes, and one pair of boots —	2	13	0
One ſpy-glaſs — — —	3	13	0
One ſword and belt — — —	2	2	0
One ſpeaking-trumpet — —	0	5	0
Six pound of hair powder — —	0	6	0
Stationary, pens, ink, paper, &c. — —	0	14	0
To three inſide waiſtcoats, and three pair of breeches to ſuit the Weſt-Indies, with two pair of muſkito trowſers — —	4	17	9
One round white hat — — —	0	18	6
Caſh to buy furniture for the ward-room —	6	18	0
Ditto to purchaſe ſea ſtock — —	10	10	0
Caſh to take in his pocket — —	5	5	0
Total	£ 90	17	10½

	£	s.	d.
One year's Lieutenant's pay, at 4s. per day — —	72	0	0
The good officers, when he hath ſerved one whole year in defence of his King and country, his clothes worn out, and ſtock exhauſted, finds himſelf in debt	18	17	10½
	£ 90	17	10½

There are ſome articles in the foregoing account, which, though to a gentleman, poſſeſſing ability

ability, cannot be deemed extravagant; yet, as neceſſity compels the generality of the officers to retract as much as poſſible, if we take one third of the amount for the foregoing inventory, I believe the remainder will be allowed to be a very moderate ſupply; ſtill however it is ſuch as but very few can accompliſh. This extra expence amounts, then, to about ſixty pounds. Reducing it, however, to one half, which will come much nearer to the compaſs of the general ability, what is the caſe of the numbers now diſcharging? His Majeſty has been graciouſly pleaſed to order that they ſhall receive *three* months extra pay. This amounts to about *ſixteen pounds*, which being deducted, will leave them about *thirty pounds* in debt; a debt equal at leaſt to one-half of the year's income they are now to retire upon, and which income they will, probably, not receive, without anticipation, by means of paying an agent, for ten or eleven months afterwards, as is the caſe at this very period.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

MY LORD,

THE paragraphiſt, whoſe obſervations I have noticed in a preceding letter, after informing us, that your Lordſhip's liſt contained two hundred names of *midſhipmen*, which were to ſupply the vacancies made in the Lieutenant's liſt, by ſuppoſed or expected diſobedience to the Admiralty mandate, proceeds thus :—" the policy of " this meaſure is obvious—many valuable young " officers, who, as midſhipmen, would, by get- " ting into other ſervices, be loſt to the *Britiſh* " *navy*, will thus be kept in readineſs to officer " the fleet upon any occaſion."

Let me aſk this *intelligent* Admiralty Advocate, where is the *policy* of abandoning officers of tried knowledge and experience, and of long ſervice, and thereby forcing them to adopt the very paths which he tells us the *midſhipmen* will purſue; and then ſupplying our navy with young men of leſs experience, who, in their turn, will meet the ſame hardſhips, and be driven by ſimilar diſtreſs to ſimilar means of redreſs? When the eyes of theſe men

men are no longer dazzled by the meteor of promotion, when they too have tasted the embittered cup which poverty lifts to the mouth of rank; when they have also experienced neglect and degradation, the sting of insult added to distress; can it be imagined those men will display more readiness than the present to "*officer the fleet?*" Will they not, in their turn, be disgusted, and, if they can, seek that relief in foreign service they cannot find at home?

His conclusion, my Lord, is too contemptible to merit any animadversion, where he asserts, the Lieutenants "cannot justly complain of a measure "which has only for its object the *public good.*"—After what I have written, I submit to public opinion, whether such a measure is calculated for the "*public good.*"

In a subsequent paper, devoted to administration, an attempt is made to meliorate the menace, by informing us, that these injured men "will "not be deprived of their pay, but are to be "put on the HOUSE LIST, as retired from ser-"vice, and excluded from promotion; while an "equal number of Lieutenants will be made in "their room."

I have not a doubt, my Lord, but there are numerous lists at the Admiralty,—as the *Court List*, the *Borough List*, the *Admirals' List*, the *Black List*, and many others; but, I am led to believe, that

that the "HOUSE LIST," (the very mention of which gives the paragraph an air of *official* authority) is a new invented List; probably so christened by the naval Lord your assistant. As I believe his Lordship does not deal much in India stock, I cannot conceive that he borrowed the appellation from the India "*House List*;" therefore, I think it would have been more in his own way, and with respect to the people whose *names* are to be inserted in it, might have been more aptly denominated the "*Short Allowance List.*" The writer seems to imply a merit resulting to the Admiralty, when he says, they "*will not be de-*" *prived of their pay.*" But no merit can be ascribed to us for not doing, what we have not the power to do.

The Observer

My Lord, remember the fate of your predecessor; his attempt to lay deserving officers upon the shelf, and depriving them of the rank due to them, lost him his official situation, though supported by royal patronage. You have, at present, a body of somewhat less power, it is true, to cope with; but, my Lord, I am not without hopes, their cause will be a general cause, and a system so injurious to them will be deemed injurious to the navy at large. If, indeed, the point can be carried, if you are not prevented, as your predecessor was, by parliamentary resistance, your

future ſucceſſors in office will have reaſon to thank you, as you will open a wide field for a conſtant ſucceſſion of patronage. I hope, however, to ſee union eſtabliſhed throughout the navy; that the Captains will feel an injury done to the Lieutenants, as an injury done to themſelves; otherwiſe, they may hereafter find, that the ſhameful tranſaction, I have alluded to, during your predeceſſor's adminiſtration, is only a prelude to further innovation. There are now many great mens' ſons and relatives in the navy, who muſt be *grey headed rear admirals*, by the fair rotation of ſervice. Miniſters may hereafter attempt ſome ſpeedier means to bring them forward. To admit precedents being formed, is dangerous. If one innovation is allowed, others will follow; and the well-tried veteran, may, hereafter, ſee the youngſter of yeſterday, waving his cheap-earned honours, over his ſnowy head. Many will find themſelves involuntarily placed on a liſt, which may as juſtly be termed a "*Houſe Liſt*," ſince they will be deemed to be "*retired from ſervice*."

Theſe reflections naturally lead me to the promotions, which, it is ſaid, are intended to be made *. Time, my Lord, will ſhew us, whether

* They had not taken place, when this Letter was originally publiſhed.

this promotion, ſo much the theme of panegyric for its extent, amongſt the Admiralty runners, and in the miniſterial prints, is intended as a complimentary encouragement to the navy at large, or a partial promotion by particular intereſts. The mode, and not the magnitude, will be the criterion, from which the public judgment will be formed of your intentions. If meant as an encouragement to the navy, the ſelection ſhould be made from long ſervice, and conſpicuous merit only; but, if regularly confined to thoſe who have the good fortune to have flag officers their friends, the promotion will, then, juſtly be deemed partial, that it was made merely to compliment the flag officers, and ſerve particular perſons. Government can derive no credit from ſuch a promotion, nor can the navy at large be ſenſible of any obligation or encouragement from the attention paid to individuals, who are more fortunately circumſtanced than the generality.

That the promotion is to take place, I am rejoiced to hear, as I will believe the majority have merit to deſerve promotion; but ſtill it does not alter my poſition, that partiality dictates the choice. If it was impartial, the officers employed ſhould be called upon to give in their claims, and the preference ſhould be given to ſeniority, ſuperior abilities, and eminent ſervice. I could point

out many inſtances where theſe have been neglected; and though the parties have ſolicited to ſerve, are unemployed. This very circumſtance, if application was made, would probably be given as a reaſon for not preferring them. A particular inſtance at this moment ſtrikes my recollection, and is well worthy your Lordſhip's attention. There is a maſter and commander in the ſervice, who I believe has not been employed, though from his activity I doubt not he has applied. This officer, whoſe hiſtory I had related to me ſome time ago, has been near forty years in the ſervice, was at the ſieges of Louiſbourg, Belliſle, and the Havannah; in the general actions with De la Clue and Conflans; and has been at the the taking of near forty ſail of men of war. He was wounded at the Havannah; and at the commencement of the late war, by the veſſel he commanded being detained, was a priſoner for two years. This officer, after ſervices, which probably ſcarce two in the navy can equal, has been, I perceive by the liſt, EIGHT years *maſter and commander*, and will probably continue ſo during life. Numerous proofs of great ſervice, though not equal perhaps to this, might be adduced to ſhew how little attention is paid to it. When ſuch men are promoted, independent of an Admiral's, or any other intereſt, the public will then

believe

believe it is "*a measure calculated for the public* "*good.*"

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient ſervant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

MY LORD,

THE confirmation of my aſſertions relative to the late naval armament (the aſtoniſhing alacrity, ſolicitude, and unwearied aſſiduity which marked the exertions of all ranks, employed in effecting it) from the declaration lately made in Parliament by *Admiral Sir John Jervis*, gave me the higheſt ſatisfaction. The univerſal favourable ſentiments which are, ſo juſtly, entertained of the honourable Admiral's integrity, profeſſional knowledge, and independent principles, muſt give weight to whatever he aſſerts, ſtamp conviction on the minds of his auditors, and guide the opinion of the nation at large. That gallant and good officer, more calculated for other wars than that of words, in a ſpeech, like his actions, vigorous and effectual, not only recommended to the attention of the Houſe the extraordinary exertions during the equipment, but alſo pointed out the claim which the navy has upon the gratitude of the nation; the neceſſity for rewards being conferred, equivalent to its merits, and the inadequacy of the propoſed paltry indemnity, againſt the

the unavoidable heavy expences which the officers have incurred.

In ſetting forth particular merits, it may, to men unacquainted with naval affairs, ſeem extraordinary, that the honourable Admiral did not equally particularize that corps for whom I am at preſent an advocate. His very ſilence is, however, the ſtrongeſt confirmation of what I have advanced relative to the Lieutenants. His knowledge that the weight of the ſervice *always* reſted on them, made it appear unneceſſary to him to notice what every one, verſed in the nature of it, well knew; it was only requiſite to point out thoſe acts of ſingularity which marked the late occaſion, and had not been cuſtomary in former equipments. He, therefore, with great judgment, concluded, that he did more honour to that corps by a *ſilent* eulogy, than all he could have ſpoken. Perhaps, in addition to that ſatisfaction which is ever experienced by a generous mind, and which I firmly believe the honourable Admiral felt, in having the opportunity of illuſtrating the merits of his brother officers, and endeavouring to promote their honour and welfare, (if I might flatter myſelf that my former letters have been honoured with his attention) he perhaps imagined it might be thence neceſſary to explain, than an *unuſual* aſſiduity and *perſonal* attention had been uſed by the other ranks of officers during the

late

late equipment, which, I have obſerved, had not been cuſtomary on former occaſions.

If the high eſtimation in which *Sir John Jervis* is held throughout the navy, can admit of any increaſe, his preſent conduct in Parliament (a conduct as ſingular as it is honourable) muſt ſtill endear him more to every rank. The navy wants ſtaunch *naval* advocates in Parliament; it has had many *naval* enemies, and a few lukewarm *naval* friends. I truſt, my Lord, it has now got an advocate, whoſe diſintereſted principles riſe ſuperior to partial conſiderations—whoſe generous mind will embrace the whole—whoſe conſequence, from independency and public confidence, muſt give efficacy to his laudable and truly patriotic intentions, and whoſe honourable example may convert the intereſted or indolent inactivity of other *naval* members, and ſtimulate them to what, I conceive, is a profeſſional and parliamentary duty. For what purpoſe *ought* naval men to be elected as Repreſentatives in Parliament, if not to give profeſſional information, and, by promoting the real intereſts of the navy, to promote the intereſts of the nation, which are as inſeparable as life and heat.

The honourable Admiral very properly obſerved, that the Admirals, from their elevated ſituation, could not receive that compenſation for the extraordinary expence they had neceſſarily been

been put to, and their great exertions, which he thought the other officers entitled to; but that they might, and were to be remunerated by being allowed the recommendation of particular officers for preferment. My ſentiments are entirely coincident, reſpecting the propriety of the meaſure, as it particularly relates to the Admirals; eſpecially as, I truſt, the Admirals, as the honourable ſpeaker added, would ſelect only thoſe who are, from their merit, proper claimants for attention and promotion.

What I have obſerved, my Lord, in the preceding Letter, alluding to the intended promotion, is in no way affected by the above declaration; for however I may agree as to the propriety and juſtice, indeed, of ſhewing ſuch a mark of reſpectful attention to the ſervices of the flag officers; yet my aſſertion ſtills holds good, that it is by no means a circumſtance of *general* encouragement to the navy; it is a compliment paid to individuals. Men of infinite merit, and very long ſervice, that have not fortunately had the patronage of Admirals who have been employed, can feel no ſtimulus to future activity, from ſuch preferment. On the contrary, muſt not the veteran, of twenty or thirty years ſtanding, view, with jealouſy and diſguſt, the young man of yeſterday, though poſſeſſing acknowledged merit, but wanting the recommendation of years and experience, lifted

over his head; becauſe he happens to have the countenance of an Admiral.

I ſhall confine myſelf, my Lord, to the promotion of the corps, which is the particular ſubject of my Letters. Whilſt I am writing, I have before me a paper, containing the names of thoſe *Lieutenants*, who are, it aſſerts, to be made *Maſters* and *Commanders*. I have reaſon to imagine the liſt is authentic, as, excepting two, the names of the ſhips they belong to, with their ſtations, are annexed, and are thoſe of the flag officers of the fleet both at home and on the foreign ſtations. I again repeat, my Lord, that I moſt heartily coincide with the idea of attending to the Admiral's recommendations, and doubt not of the propriety of them in general; yet, in ſupport of my argument, I muſt make ſome obſervations, without meaning the leaſt invidious reflection to any individual, contained in the liſt; I ſincerely congratulate them on their proſpect, and take a pleaſure in viewing it.

This account, my Lord, contains the names of *twenty-ſeven* Lieutenants. I have examined their ſituation on the navy liſt, and, to my ſurprize, have only found FOUR of the officers, who have not about FIVE HUNDRED above them upon the liſt; and thoſe have near FOUR HUNDRED; that there are only SIX who have not upwards of EIGHT HUNDRED before them, and that there are

SEVEN-

SEVENTEEN, who have from ONE THOUSAND to FIFTEEN HUNDRED preceding them. Of these last, *five* have been only *nine* years Lieutenants; *four* about *eight* years; *one* is of *seven* years standing; *one* about *five*; *two* of *three* years; and FIVE from TWO years to a few months; and nearly the whole in a time of peace.

Is it possible, my Lord, that the *thousand* Lieutenants, who view this promotion of *youths*, whom they have remembered infants, whilst they were officers, can consider it as a compliment to the naval service—as an encouragement to merit, and an incitement to the renewal of those exertions, now so much applauded, on any future emergency? It would be folly in the extreme to suppose it. My opinion is, my Lord, that exclusive of this complimentary promotion to the Admirals, there should be a liberal offering made on the altar of merit and hard service. It would, in some measure, be a peace-offering—an atonement for the injurious treatment that corps have received—the navy would rejoice, and the voice of the nation would applaud.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
AN OLD SEAMAN.

LETTER X.

MY LORD,

GOOD and evil are ſo blended in human affairs, that no ſituation in life can exempt us from a participation of each. If your Lordſhip enjoys the honours and emoluments of high office, your reſponſibility renders your conduct open to animadverſion, and the diſagreeable ſenſations which may ariſe, if truths bring conviction to your mind. It is an unfavourable circumſtance for you, my Lord, that from your well-known inexperience in your preſent official buſineſs, though you are in *appearance* the principal director, yet you cannot poſſibly be any other, in fact, than the oſtenſible agent of another man, poſſeſſing that information and knowledge of which you are deficient. Although this is a matter well underſtood, it unfortunately happens, that if your Lordſhip does any thing, from whence you ought to claim approbation, you are deprived of it, from the ſuppoſition that the idea is ſuggeſted by your Lordſhip's naval aſſiſtant. On the contrary, ſhould any thing occur which reflects cenſure, though he may be the adviſer,

your

your reſponſibility, as the Firſt Lord, renders you liable to the obloquy which follows. For the above reaſon it is, that I am juſtified in addreſſing my Letters to you, my Lord, in your official capacity. The diſgraceful paper, which produced the anſwer, that has occaſioned my animadverſions, muſt, publicly, be ſuppoſed to proceed from you; although, privately, I readily acquit your Lordſhip of being the author of ſuch an unworthy idea; and can, without regret, place it to the account of a man, who has ſo notoriouſly proved himſelf inimical to the navy, by his conduct reſpecting the Captains.

Reflection, my Lord, if amidſt the cabals of courtiers, the preſervation of places, and the intrigues of intereſt, you are allowed a moment of reflection; if it can occur, reflection will preſent to your Lordſhip the injury your fame muſt ſuſtain from being ſuppoſed the author of ſuch an idea; it would convince you how derogatory the thought muſt be, to the dignity of a repreſentative of the *illuſtrious* CHATHAM.

Though many more arguments might be advanced to ſupport and confirm the facts and reaſoning contained in the anſwer to the Admiraly Advertiſement, I hope, and truſt they are not neceſſary; that your Lordſhip's underſtanding will be convinced, and your feelings affected. Nothing can be more evident than that this claſs

of

of uſeful officers have been contumelioufly treated, their ſervices neglected, their diſtreſſes unattended to. Humanity calls aloud on your ſenſibility, and juſtice and good policy point out the neceſſity for affording them relief.

"Who can all ſenſe of other's ills eſcape
"Is but a brute, at beſt, in human ſhape."

I will not harbour the moſt diſtant idea, that the words of the pointed ſatiriſt, which I have above quoted, are in the leaſt applicable to your Lordſhip; I give your full credit for the poſſeſſion of ſentiments of humanity. The beſt minds may, however, be affected by ill-advice, eſpecially, where neceſſity creates a reliance; and judging of the preſent from what has previouſly occurred, we cannot form the moſt flattering opinion of that advice, which is communicated to your Lordſhip. That an official ſtigma, in conſequence of the advertiſement, now reſts upon your Lordſhip, is moſt certain; no man has read it, but what condemns it.

By acting from yourſelf, without a blind ſubmiſſion to the advice of thoſe whoſe principles may, even candidly, be conſidered as leſs unſullied than your own, you will not barely eſcape reprehenſion, but acquire the approbation of all good men. If it was not in your inclination, (which I will not believe) it is your intereſt at this

this period to ſtand forth the friend of the naval officers in queſtion. It would not only be a virtue to anticipate their intended application; but it would, as reſpecting yourſelf, my Lord, be good policy to prevent the neceſſity.

No application having been made, ſince your Lordſhip has held a ſhare in the Adminiſtration, your ſentiments cannot therefore be known. You have now as fair an occaſion as could poſſibly preſent itſelf, to eſtabliſh what your panegyriſts advance, that "*the navy has not for many years had* "*ſuch a friend.*" Believe me, my Lord, there muſt be ſomething more ſolid than a few partial promotions, or the frothy flattery of miniſterial ſcribes, to eſtabliſh ſo high a character as that of a *true friend to the navy.* Words alone will never create a favourable opinion; it is action that muſt ſtamp conviction on the mind. My ſentiments on this ſubject are perfectly *Hudibraſtic*, and I believe the general ſentiment concurs with them, that

> "No argument like matter of fact is;
> "And we are, beſt of all, led to
> "Mens' *principles*,—by *what they do.*"

There never was a moment, my Lord, in which the ſentiments of the public could more heartily concur in approving a generous attention to the navy. No propoſition which your moſt liberal ideas

ideas could give birth to, would, at this period of grateful recollection, meet with cenſure or diſapprobation. On the contrary, it is the wiſh of the country, that ſome plan of general relief ſhould be adopted.

A publication, which appeared about two years ago, entitled, "*An Addreſs to the Sovereign "on the Miniſter's conduct, in rejecting the petition "of the Lieutenants of the Royal Navy,*" was, I am certain, from my knowledge of the author, at the time your Lordſhip came into office, conveyed to you. From its containing animadverſions on the conduct of ſo near a relative, and a ſubject ſo immediately connected with your official ſituation, I doubt not it was honoured with your Lordſhip's attention; if not, I moſt ſincerely recommend the peruſal, as it contains much uſeful information reſpecting the ſituation of the Lieutenants of the Navy. The author has not only entered very minutely into every circumſtance relating to the corps, forcibly pointing out their diſtreſſes, the hard neglect of them, and the neceſſity for an alleviation; but has alſo ſtated a mode of relief, and means to eſtabliſh it, that entirely correſpond with my opinion. For theſe reaſons, I ſhall only trouble your Lordſhip with a very ſummary ſtatement of what, I conclude, ought to be done for ſo reſpectable a body of men. In few words, my Lord, I would humbly

bly propose for your Lordship's consideration the following particulars:

An enlargement of the *Superannuated List*. When there were only about 300 Lieutenants on the naval list, the former contained a *tenth* part, now the latter is increased nearly to 1500, it contains only a *fiftieth* part.

A similar extention of the *second List*, called the *Three and sixpenny List*; but the pay of which should be, I think, enlarged to *five shillings*, and in this should be included all those whose age or infirmities render them unfit for future service, but whose standing in the navy would not otherwise entitle them.

A general encrease of the *whole* and *half pay*, in some proportion to the rank they possess. All ships laid up, to be commanded by Lieutenants, to be appointed for *three years*, with an undeviating attention to fair rotation of service, but still left optional on the part of the next Lieutenant in succession.

The Lieutenants commanding to have only the encreased half pay, and to be allowed a servant.

All vessels in the revenue service to be also commanded by Lieutenants in rotation. King's ships and vessels are employed on a similar service, and therefore no good reason can be assigned why the revenue should not be entirely protected by

All half pay to be paid up when being recommissioned.

King's officers. It might, indeed, in some measure, affect borough interest; but it would prevent many fraudulent abuses.

Such regulations, as I have mentioned, would at once set the corps of lieutenants above the reach of want and distress: they would be able to support the dignity of the service, and be ready on all emergencies. There would be then no more occasion for degrading threats. Such encouragement, added to a prospect of fair and impartial promotion, would render the British service an object of ambition. Sorry am I to say, a sad reverse is the case at present. Nothing can recommend it, but a powerful and partial interest.

My Lord: I now draw to a conclusion. If I have taken a liberty in addressing myself to you, in this *public* manner; it is not from a motive of private interest, but *public* benefit. If I have, in any part, written with severity; that severity has been the result of my feelings for injured merit, and not the offspring of party malevolence. If I have presumed to dictate, that presumption is founded on the privilege of long experience, a knowledge of those circumstances which I have an apprehension are concealed from you, and a benevolent motive towards my fellow-subjects and brother seamen.

It has been rumoured, my Lord, that you are

going

going to retire from your present conspicuous situation, into one of obscure inactivity. I hope the report is not well-founded; but should you recede from the bustle of public office, think my Lord, of the choice which now presents itself. You have the power of making an honourable, a glorious secession; of having, by an active interference in the cause of humanity, rendered a lasting service to the kingdom, by a permanent support to its chief strength; the name of CHATHAM will be rendered still more illustrious; the Navy will adore you and posterity honour your memory. Delicacy will not permit me, my Lord to paint the reverse; nor can I think it necessary, having a confidence that your Lordship cannot hesitate in the choice, but will pursue the path marked out by justice, humanity, and every private and public virtue. My Lord, I now take my leave, and have the honour to be, with all respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

AN OLD SEAMAN.

AN APPEAL

TO

THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN, &c.

THE conſequence of the Britiſh Navy, and the dependence which this empire reſts upon it, is a matter ſo well underſtood, that it would be ſuperfluous to dwell upon it; ſince every man muſt be ſenſible that with it, the Britiſh dominions muſt ſtand or fall. As the fate of the kingdom depends upon our naval ſtrength, the maintenance of that ſtrength is certainly one of the moſt important duties of a Britiſh adminiſtration; and the neglect of that duty, might not unjuſtly be conſtrued a kind of treaſon to the ſtate.

We have a recent proof, in a neighbouring kingdom, that the poſſeſſion of a large number of ſhips, though it may make a great appearance of force on paper; yet, that part of a navy is but a mere ſhadow of real ſtrength. To give motion, vigour, and effect to this mechanic body, requires *genius*, *ſkill*, and *intrepidity*. The cultivation of

theſe

theſe is, or ought to be, the primary conſideration with every marine miniſter. Superiority in theſe indiſpenſable requiſites has hitherto eſtabliſhed the ſtrength, importance and fame of the Britiſh Navy; and preſerved to us ſafety, wealth, and dominion, amidſt an hoſt of envious and powerful foes, combined to deſtroy us. Whilſt our navy can boaſt this ſuperiority, no combination of power can, under Providence, affect us; when once we loſe it, when once our conſequence as a maritime ſtate is no more; our ſun of glory muſt ſet, the light of liberty muſt depart from us, and a gloomy night of ſlaviſh dependence muſt ſucceed. As this ſuperiority is, then, the moſt valuable gem in the Britiſh diadem; it behoves every man, who has either an intereſt in, or a wiſh for the national good, to watch that the neglect of the ſervants of the crown, ſhould not ſully its luſtre.

What renders an extraordinary attention to this important concern more requiſite at this period, is the encreaſe of knowledge, which has of late years been manifeſted, in rival maritime ſtates; an object of jealouſy and alarm to this kingdom. France, Spain, and Ruſſia, have, within a ſhort period, not only enlarged their marine, and improved the conſtruction of their ſhips, by means of moſt eminent artiſts, whoſe abilities had been neglected in this kingdom;

but

but have alſo adopted new modes in their internal regulations, and diſplayed a vaſt acquiſition of ſkill in naval tactics.

The political ſituation of a neighbouring kingdom, at this period, being not yet extricated from anarchy and internal commotion; has probably been the means of preventing our having occaſion to try how far we yet hold that ſuperiority.

The aſtoniſhing alacrity with which the late armament was equipped; the ardor and ſpirit which pervaded all ranks, ſhould indeed give us ſome hope, that we have not yet loſt our reſpectability; but are we ſure we ſhall long preſerve it?

Nothing can be more palpable, than that genius and ſkill require the nurture of encouragement to preſerve and cheriſh them; and that the ardour and energy of ſpirit ſo neceſſary to ſupport the mind and prepare it to bear with and encounter the difficulties, perils and enterpriſe of a naval life, muſt be deadened and deſtroyed under the preſſure of neglect and poverty.

If we take a retroſpective view of the treatment the navy has met with for ſome years paſt, we need not be ſurpriſed ſhould we find *diſguſt* ſupply the place of noble emulation, and ignorance, inexperience, and indifference making

haſty

haſty ſtrides to the deſtruction of our naval glory.

A very few years back we had the mortification to behold the high honour of commanding a large Britiſh fleet *rejected.* So precarious was that elevated ſituation made, by courtly intrigues, that not a man of any note would accept it, though we had many active, brave and good officers on the liſt of admirals.

The repeated indignities offered to the captains are notorious. Need I call to your remembrance the attempt made about twenty years ago, to ſet aſide ſix gallant officers, to give a late deſpiſed commander in chief his firſt flag; when the candid and manly conduct of the firſt lord of the admiralty, *Sir Edward Hawke,* loſt him his ſeat at that board? Has not this indignity been repeated with the moſt violent aggravation? Only two years back, the very man, whoſe own promotion had occaſioned ſo much murmur and diſcontent, that the rejected captains at that period were preferred, on the matter being taken up in the Houſe of Commons; and the then firſt lord loſt his place, as I have obſerved, in conſequence; this very man, then placed at the head of the admiralty, at one ſtroke, ſwept SIXTY captains off the liſt, in order to create, *unneceſſarily,* SIXTEEN new admirals. Every perſon muſt remember the ſhameful rejection of the able

able and experienced officers, whoſe cauſe was then brought forward, in both Houſes of Parliament, and that this very man was, for the ſame reaſon, alſo obliged to reſign.

The next claſs of officers, (whoſe cauſe I have taken up in the preceding Letters) as their injuries are as great, and their neceſſities more ſevere; ſo have they more reaſon for complaint. Twice have they attempted the conſtitutional means of obtaining relief, by petitioning Parliament; and as oft have their humble applications been contumelioufly rejected, by the preſent miniſter; though he acknowledged the hardſhip of their caſe, and the juſtice of their claim. They have been treated with inſulting threats, that they ſhould "*be ſcratched off the Liſt*:"—For what,—for not plunging themſelves into more diſtreſs, than they at preſent labour under; for not doing that, which a majority of thoſe who have done it, may repent *in a goal.*

Can we be ſurpriſed at finding men heſitate, or even refuſe to ſerve, under circumſtances which preſent diſtreſs, if not ruin, to themſelves, and perhaps a dependant family? Will not the threat, held out to them, appear an act of ſtudied cruelty, unworthy of men who would wiſh to be thought poſſeſſed of the feelings of humanity? Can it be conſtrued into any other ſenſe than ſaying,—"We command you to come from your obſcure

"retire-

" retirements, where neceſſity has compelled you
" to retreat; to quit thoſe domeſtic comforts,
" that can alone ſoften the rude reflections which
" poverty gives birth to; ſtand forth again the
" defenders of a ſtate, which already owes your
" merit much; incur accumulated difficulties
" and diſtreſs, and again riſque your lives, and
" the happineſs of your families, in ſupport of
" thoſe who have been deaf to your entreaties
" for relief: who have denied you juſtice, who
" have treated you with indifference and diſre-
" ſpect.——If you diſobey this *merciful* man-
" date, you ſhall be excluded from the hope of
" ever emerging from thoſe difficulties, thoſe
" diſtreſſes, by the chance of being preferred to
" a rank, which long ſervice, hardſhips, and
" perhaps wounds entitle you to expect; and to
" an income, which however inadequate to that
" rank, might yet lift you from poverty to a de-
" cent ſupport."—This, my countrymen, is the
ſpirit of the Advertiſement.

The diſtreſsful ſituation of thoſe who have ſtood forward on the late occaſion, whoſe ſervices are a theme of public eulogy, is a ſubject of melancholy reflection to every feeling mind. Their complaints are loud and numerous; the very hall of the Admiralty reſounds with them, and they are daily encreaſing, as the diſarmament proceeds. Let the naval agents declare it, for they

 know

know it well.—Collectively, they cannot ſpeak; but, individually, you muſt hear it; it comes from the mouths of your ſons, your brothers, and other relatives and friends.

The caſe of the maſters and ſurgeons is equally diſtreſſing; both diſcharged without any reward for their ſervices. The firſt claſs, the utility of which is only known to naval men, are left to ſhift in the merchants' ſervice, or where they can get employ, and no more thought of, until the ſervice again ſeverely feels their loſs.

Every one muſt conceive the high value of good ſurgeons; the charge they have upon them, and the ſkill that is neceſſary. Men poſſeſſed of ſkill in phyſic and ſurgery, muſt have had an expenſive education, and ought to have appointments adequate thereto. When a man has got a comfortable ſettlement in buſineſs, can he be expected to quit it, to his certain loſs, on the mere hope of living to make one of the very few who receive a gratuity. Yet is this expectancy indulged, and the diſappointment creates a neceſſity for filling the vacancies with raw, unexperienced young men, to the loſs of life in numbers of his Majeſty's ſubjects, and to the prejudice of the ſervice and the ſtate, by ſuch loſs.

The mates and midſhipmen are next to be conſidered, although they can purſue employments, which the lieutenants cannot, as mates of

ſhips,

ſhips, or in other profeſſions; ſtill however the very ſervice they have left is often an objection with the merchants.

In ſhort, all ranks feel neglect and hardſhip; for the promotion of a few cannot affect the many. When long ſervice and merit is paſſed unnoticed; old officers laid on the ſhelf, their claims unattended to, and *infants* (for ſuch the law would term them) preferred over their heads; the pitiful pittance of half-pay, allowed for ſupport, withheld for near *twelve months*, the caſe at this period; numbers immured in priſons, and greater numbers pining under the dread of a like ſituation;—when we ſee theſe things, can we wonder at the ſcarcity of officers, which produced the official menace; can we be ſurpriſed, if numbers fly from miſery and diſtreſs, to protection and honour. Muſt we not be ſenſible of the juſtice of their complaints?

"It is hard in one that feels no wrong,
"For patient duty to employ his tongue;
"Oppreſſion makes men mad; and from their breaſts,
"All reaſon and all ſenſe of duty wreſts."

JUVENAL.

Thus, truly, ſays the ſatiriſt; and what reaſoning, or what duty can we expect from thoſe, who merit ſo much, yet are ſo hardly treated. Hence it is we perceive the ſeeds of naval great-

nefs, in foreign ftates, fown in the Britifh navy, and tranfplanted by the hand of cruel neglect. Recollect, my countrymen, for a moment, the more than mortal, the godlike heroifm of the Britifh captains, who fell in the fatal action between the Swedes and Ruffians. A monument fhould be here erected to their memory; at which every Englifhman fhould kneel, and deprecate the fatal policy, which loft to the Britifh nation intrepidity and merit, feldom equalled, and never furpaffed in naval hiftory.

As in the foregoing Letters I have particularly attended to the promotion, I fhall here only add, that evident partiality and intereft may be traced through the whole. It is not a mark of honour to the navy, but an extenfion of patronage; and it now feems the maxim of the naval Lord, at the Admiralty, who, in fact, guides the whole; that long fervice, which was ever held a recommendation, fhould now operate as a feclufion from preferment, and that the only claim to it fhould be youth and inexperience.

Preferment, was it impartially beftowed, though it would certainly be an incitement to emulation, yet, with refpect to the general fituation of naval officers, is only like healing a limb, when the entire frame is confumptive. Nothing but a remedy, which will operate univerfally on the whole body, can ever have effect.

In

In proportion as ingratitude and neglect have ſpread their baneful influence over the marine of this kingdom, liberality and honours have infuſed a ſpirit of ardour and emulation in thoſe of other ſtates. To the great encouragement given, to the high reſpect paid to the meritorious, though abandoned officers of the Britiſh navy, does the aſpiring *Catharine* owe the preſent conſequence of her marine; a conſequence which now requires an armament to be kept on foot; and which, there is a probability, will, in a few months (I aſſert it as a fact, that ſuch is the apprehenſion of adminiſtration) give occaſion for again calling upon thoſe men, who are now, to uſe their own language, publicly ſpoken at the Admiralty, *groaning under the oppreſſion of kindneſs, in having been employed.*

The ordonnance, iſſued in France, in the year 1762, immediately on the cloſe of a diſaſterous and unſucceſsful war, ſhews the different policy our wiſer neighbours thought proper to adopt, reſpecting their marine. I ſhall here quote the order.

" His Majeſty being fully informed of the " rules and orders of the eſtabliſhment of his ſea " officers, *and having conſidered that ſuch appoint-* " *ments were inadequate and inſufficient,* and deſiring " to animate them with a true ſenſe of national " glory, and that they may not be ESTRANGED

" OR

" OR COMPELLED TO SEEK APPOINTMENTS IN
" ANY OTHER SERVICE; *or be* DIVERTED BY
" ANY OTHER VIEWS FROM A TRUE ZEAL AND
" ATTACHMENT TO THEIR COUNTRY; it is his
" royal pleaſure to grant an augmentation to
" their pay throughout the marine department;
" THAT HIS OFFICERS MAY BE BETTER ENA-
" BLED TO SUPPORT THEIR RANK BECOMING
" THE DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE
" NAVAL SERVICE."

Gratitude, benevolence, patriotiſm, and ſound policy, is diſcoverable in every line of the foregoing ordonnance. How admirably contraſted to the pitiful œconomy, which ſhuts the doors of compaſſion againſt the complaints of men, equally deſerving, in this country. Can we admit the plea of ſtate neceſſity in this kingdom; the ſtate of whoſe finances is repreſented, under the auſpices of the preſent Miniſter, to be ſo flouriſhing; when we reflect on the ſtate of France at the above period. The ſubſequent war, her powerful fleet, and the general conduct of her marine confirmed the wiſdom of the meaſure. Can you poſſibly, my fellow citizens, reflect on the ſituation of our brave officers, can you hear the well-grounded and univerſal diſcontent which prevails, and liſten to *ſtate neceſſity* as a plea, for not following the examples of our politic rivals, when at the ſame time we tamely ſee ſuch immenſe ſums laviſhed

on

on vain and idle ſchemes, on uſeleſs placemen, penſioners, and ſinecures, to the encreaſe of corruption, and extenſion of miniſterial power and influence. Hence a double evil accrues; in proportion as the natural ſtrength of the kingdom is diminiſhed, ſo does the progreſs of venality encreaſe, and tend to the diminution of our natural liberties.

In confirmation of the well grounded policy, which dictated the foregoing ordonnance, let us advert to the conduct of the government of this kingdom before corruption had become a ſyſtem, and patronage had only conſpicuous merit for its object.

" HENRY VIII. it is recorded, gave every poſ-
" ſible bounty to officers and ſeamen. He gave
" them proper appointments *becoming the wealth*
" *and ſovereignty of the nation*; that *they ought not*
" *impoveriſh their private fortunes when abroad; to*
" *maintain their credit, and ſupport the honour of the*
" *Britiſh flag.*

" QUEEN ELIZABETH, when ſhe ſaw her crown,
" and the Proteſtant religion eſtabliſhed, by the
" prowes of her *naval* power, gave an inſtance
" of magnanimity and gratitude worthy of ſo
" great a character. She granted NINE THOU-
" SAND A-YEAR, OUT OF HER OWN REVENUE,
" which at that time was a very large ſum, and
" more than adequate to what would, at this pe-
" riod,

riod, be nearly ſufficient to afford, from the national purſe, the relief which the officers have requeſted.

KING WILLIAM, ſoon after he was eſtabliſhed on the throne, in recompence of their ſervices, *doubled the pay of his ſea-officers*, and granted them *half-pay*, which in proportion to the times, was infinitely ſuperior to the preſent.

QUEEN MARY, his conſort, was ſo well pleaſed with the gallant behaviour of the fleet, during the action by which the victory at *La Hogue* was obtained; that ſhe was graciouſly pleaſed to ſend THIRTY THOUSAND POUNDS to be diſtributed among the officers and ſeaman, as a reward *in part* for their faithful ſervices.

How different was the conduct of our anceſtors! We have no *queens* in theſe times to *beſtow thouſands out of their own revenue*, as a reward for bravery and meritorious ſervice. The only encouragement, in theſe parſimonious days, are a royal review of a naval pageant, and afew partial preferments to boys and favourites.

I beg leave in this place to quote a paſſage from a former publication on this ſubject, wherein the diſtinction is made between this *falſe* ſpecies of œconomy and the *true* one. Alluding to theſe, in our miniſterial ſyſtem of management, the writer obſerves, it is " ſimilar to that of a " ſpendthrift, who from a ſtate of profuſion and

" prodi-