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Impartially Stated.

He that has Ears to hear, let Him hear!

By a Gentleman of the Inner-Temple.

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THE CASE OF THE OPPOSITION.

HERE is a single Point in which all Parties, how much soever they differ about other Things, unanimously agree; and it is this, that nothing can be of more dangerous Consequence at this critical Juncture, to this Nation, than the continuing of our Divisions. Indeed there requires no great Penetration to discern this, since every body knows and confesses, that our Debts, our Taxes, and in reality every other Evil, the Weight of which we feel, and of the Burthen of which we complain, have been all brought upon us by our Divisions. It cannot therefore but be an acceptable Thing to state the Case truly, and to shew the Grounds of our present Divisions, that every honest Man may know which Side to chuse, and by going over to that Side, preponderate the Scale of Justice and Equity, since
what Solon made a Law in Athens, will remain a true political Maxim amongst every free People; that in Debates which regard the Constitution, every Man ought to take either the one Side or the other. In Matters of small Moment, we may be indifferent; but here, where both Parties confess our ALL is at Stake, we are bound to make our Choice. To be Lukewarm in the Cause of our Country, is to be against it.

It is now somewhat more than twenty Years; that a certain Party hath subsisted amongst us, under the Title of the Opposition; they have at certain Times been composed of very different People, and consequently have been considered in different Lights; but the proper Characteristic of the Party, and that from which it derives it's Name, is the Opposing of Power, or endeavouring to circumscribe in Parliament the Grants of Money and Extention of Authority, which have from Time to Time been demanded by several Administrations. Now, if this Scheme of Opposition has been right with Regard to the Interest of the Nation, that is to say, if the People of Great-Britain would have been Gainers, by putting in Practice what the Persons from Time to Time concerned in this Opposition propos'd, then, without Question, the Design of the Opposition is right upon the whole, though at particular Times, and by particular Persons, it might be prosecuted on wrong Motives.

It is necessary to make this Distinction between the Scheme supported by the Party, who have formed the Opposition for so many Years, and the private Views of particular Persons, who have at certain Times engaged therein, because the common Topick
Topick of Reproach into which the Writers on the Side of Power unanimously run, is this; that Men have often contradicted themselves, and notwithstanding the Language they have made, Use of when \emph{out}, have avowed quite opposite Doctrines when \emph{in}. Now the plain meaning of this, is no more than that particular Persons have had great Failings, and have in \textit{different Scituations}, contended with equal Vehemence for \textit{different Things}. That this may, and ought to affect \textit{them} I do not deny; but certainly their Behaviour could no way affect \textit{Things} themselves. If the Demands of the Administration for so many Years past, were just and reasonable, then all \textit{Opposition} was unjust and unreasonable from whatever Quarter it came; and on the other Hand, if the proposing a strict Examination into publick Affairs, a narrow Inspection of all the Pretences on which either Money or Power were demanded by Men at the Helm, was with respect to the Interest of this Nation \textit{fit} and \textit{right}, then the \textit{Opposition} was always a \textit{good Thing}, though possibly all who were concerned in it might not be \textit{good Men}.

Such as have endeavoured to set the Conduct of those in the \textit{Opposition} constantly in a \textit{bad Light}, have found themselves under a Necessity of misrepresenting the Thing, and therefore the first Step to be taken in order to give such as are impartial a just insight into this Matter, is to render these Misrepresentations \textit{manifest}, which is the Design of this Paper. \textit{Opposition} in the Stile of some People, is a \textit{Term} Synonymous with \textit{Disaffection}, and great Pains has been taken to make the World believe, that none ever \textit{oppose} a Government, who \textit{wished well} to...
to it. But this is certainly begging the Question, and by proving too much, proves nothing. If we consider the Reason of the Thing, and take for our Guide a Maxim in which all Parties at present agree, viz. That the End of Government is the Good of the Subject, then it will appear very possible for such as mean the Government well, to oppose such as are in the Administration of it, unless it can be shewn, that Men vested with Power, have never aimed at violating their Trust, or that according to the Principles of our Constitution, such as have the executive Part of the Government in their Hands, are the only fit Judges how they ought to use it. But as these are Notions absolutely repugnant to Liberty and Common Sense, so they have been long ago exploded; and therefore as I said before, all Circumstances taken in, it must be allowed that Opposition is not malum in se, or a direct and conclusive Proof of Disaffection, but quite the contrary.

Experience has verified this in all Reigns, and if we go no higher than the Restauration, it will be no hard Task to prove, that the best Friends of every Government, have at certain Times found themselves under a Necessity of opposing it. Every Body knows that the Cavaliers in the Reign of King Charles II. were against the Earl of Clarendon's Administration, and yet nobody ever imagined that they were Enemies to that King, or that they intended by their Conduct in this Point, any Prejudice, either to his Majesty's Person or Government. The Earl of Clarendon was certainly a very great, and a very deserving Man; but he was likewise a very over-bearing, and a very opiniative Minister. I do not pretend to enter into the Merits
Merits of that Opposition; it might be right in some Respects, and wrong in others: I mention it only to prove, that the best Friends to a Prince may think themselves obliged even by their being so, to oppose his Ministers. The Cavaliers in the same Reign, acted the same Part with respect to another Ministry, filed the Cabal, and from the very same Motives. In the succeeding Reign, such as wished the King well, and suffer'd afterwards for their Affection to him, oppos'd his Measures with the greatest Firmness, and never thought themselves, nor have been thought by Posterity the worse Subjects, but the better upon that Account. They foresaw that the Steps the King and his Ministers were taking, would prove fatal to the Nation and to him, and therefore they did all that lay in their Power to prevent their taking Effect; but they did this in a legal Way, either by an Opposition in Parliament, or by dutifully expressing their Sentiments in Petitions to his Majesty, when no Parliament was subsisting; and though they were blam'd and persecuted for this, at the Time they did it, yet their Conduct was justified by the Event.

After the Revolution, when the Nation was effectually cured of some political Prejudices, equally dangerous to Prince and People, there frequently appeared a Spirit of the same Kind among the best Friends to the Government, as it was then established. They remember'd what Measures were thought oppressive and unjust in former Reigns, and they oppos'd them in this. Mr. Trenchard, who wrote the History of standing Armies, was undoubtedly as true a Friend to the Revolution, and as desirous of supporting King William's Government, as any Man in the Nation
Nation, and yet he thought himself at Liberty to cross as far as lay in his Power, the Designs of some of that King's Ministers, and to express as great a Concern for what he took to be the true Interest of his Country, as if the Revolution, in which he heartily concurred, had never happen'd. It must be confessed, and great Advantages have been taken from it, that there were at that Time Abundance of People who join'd in opposing the Government, because they were disaffected to it; but this bad Design of theirs could not operate on such Measures as were right in themselves; but they remain'd still right, though these People maintained them to be so from wrong Motives. Without Question, the opposing standing Armies; Increase of publick Debts, and making secret and suspicious Treaties with foreign Powers, were Acts very laudable in themselves, and not at all the less so because ill Men concurred in them. We live at such a Distance of Time as enables us to see that in these Points they thought justly and reason'd right. The Things they attempted to prevent, have had very fatal Consequences, and therefore it had been happy for the Nation if they had been prevented. To say that all who were embark'd in this Opposition were Patriots, would be certainly false; but then it would be as false to assert, that none were engaged in that Opposition but Jacobites. There will be honest Men and bad Men, sincere and insincere, of all Parties; but the true Way to judge of the Merit of any Party, is to consider its Principles.

In Queen ANNE's Time, there were several Oppositions, and these carried on with great Heat and Passion; and yet such as were concerned in them, insisted
inlisted, and many of them I believe with Justice, that none wished better to the Queen and her Government, than they did. In short, if we should pretend to take it for granted, that all such as have opposed the Administration were at least concealed Enemies to the Government under which they lived, we must run into a very gross Mistake, since none shewed greater Fidelity to the Crown at that Time, than such as acted against its Ministers. To sum up all, as no set of Men amongst us have scrupled to oppose at some time or other the Administrations under which they lived; this is a convincing Argument, that all Parties have thought it lawful, just, and expedient, no way derogatory to their Duty, no sort of Blemish to their Loyalty, and therefore we ought in this Respect, to prefer their concurring Testimonies to the warm Declamations of prejudic’d Persons, who would have us believe, that Spite appears in no Dress, more commonly than in that of publick Spirit. If therefore we must condemn all Parties, if we condemn Opposition in general, it is better to acquit all, and to confess that Opposition, as well as Attachment, is govern’d by Circumstances, and that as it is not impossible Men may betray a Government they serve, so on the other Hand, it is not improbable that Zeal for the publick Service may induce Men to oppose the Measures of such as are intrusted with the Management of publick Affairs.

From what has been said, it clearly and evidently appears, that there can be nothing more groundless than those Insinuations which we so frequently hear thrown out, as if Opposition could proceed from nothing else but a Dislike to the Prince upon
upon the Throne: whereas, generally speaking, it may with much greater Propriety be referred to a high Concern for his Safety. Besides, according to our Constitution, and as we ought always to be consider'd, as a free People, Respect to the Nation, is Loyalty to the King; for such as pretend to make any Difference between his Interests, and those of his Subjects, may be his Minions, but can never possibly be his Friends. Such Persons for their own Interest may mislead him; but it does by no means follow, that because they deceive him, it becomes the Part of every good Subject to shut his Eyes; it having been long ago determined here, that Kings are to be consider'd in their political Capacity, in which as the Law supposes they do no wrong; so it must be understood, not to lay the People under any Necessity of suffering Wrong. These are Maxims that may be gathered from the unrepealable Parts of our Constitution, such as the Bill of Rights, and therefore in adhering to these it cannot, it ought not to be surmised, that Men depart from their Duty, since that would imply a Distinction between Loyalty, and the Love of one's Country, which can never happen under a limited Monarchy. The plain Meaning of the Term, being this, that the Power of the Sovereign is restrained by those Laws which have been thought necessary for the common Benefit of his People.

If we carry these Speculations a little farther, we shall soon meet with incontestable Proofs of their being just and right. The Happiness of a Prince can consist in only these two Points, being easy at Home, and respected Abroad. Now nothing can be clearer than that an impoverished, corrupted and
and vicious People must render their Monarch uneasy, because they can neither support his Dignity in a proper Manner, nor can he rely upon their Fidelity; and as plain it is, that a King in such Circumstance at Home, can never be considered as a useful Ally, or a formidable Enemy by his Neighbours. Whatever therefore contributes to the reducing any Nation into such a Condition, must contribute at the same time to the Weakening the Authority of the Prince. Forms and Appearances may possibly be preserved for a little while; but Time and Accidents will inevitably betray the true State of Things at last, and therefore the opposing such Measurers as have a Tendency to exhausting the Wealth, breaking the Spirits, or corrupting the Manners of a whole Nation, is doing the highest Service to the Sovereign; however, he or his Ministers may conceive it, and such as pursue this Track, will sooner or later be known for his best and truest Friend, however they may be belied or misrepresented by Court-Flatterers, who have been always too frequent, and in too great Favour with such Kings as have given the Reins to their Passions, and endeavoured rather to gratify their own Inclinations, than to consult the Interest of themselves and their Posterity, which however, is a Duty incumbent upon them, as well as other Men.

These Things being premised, we shall next proceed to give a short Account of the Rise and Progress of the present Opposition. After the Affair of the South-Sea, abundance of Country Gentlemen who had no other Business in Parliament than to serve their Constituents, began to have their Heads full of melancholy Apprehensions, when they saw what
what a Turn that Affair took, and how the Justice of the Nation was eluded. They were surprized to see the Eafe with which Men united, to serve their own Interests, who but a little while before, had torn each other's Characters, and express'd a Desire of tearing one another's Persons in Pieces. They thought it was a strange Time for such as had put themselves at the Head of the Patriots, to accept of Places, and began to have little Hopes of reaching the Criminals, when they saw the Patrons of those Criminals become both their Prosecutors and their Judges. The Manner of Mr. Knight's going off, alarmed them then as much as his coming home ought to surprize us now. In short, they saw through, and defpised this Juggling, and from that Time to this, have had a strong Aversion to Screens.

These Reflections led them to suspect, that publick Affairs were not like to be managed with the utmost Prudence, while in certain Hands. This induced them to be very affiduous in examining the annual Proposals to Parliament for granting Money, increasing the Power of ministerial Officers, and approving such Treaties as were made with foreign Princes. They knew the Nation laboured under a heavy Load of Debts and Taxes, and they were willing, if they had been able, to have paid off Part of the one, or to have taken somewhat from the other; but in this they hardly ever prevailed. They expressed a great Apprehension of penal Laws, because they saw that by an Extension of the Excife, the Tools of every Ministry would be the Masters of the Secrets, and consequently of the Credit of all the trading Part of the Nation. They grew
the more jealous of these Laws, when they per-
ceive'd, that they were very negligently executed,
because this very plainly shewed they were procured
for other Purposes, than those which were pretended,
since otherwise, such as press'd the passing, would
have look'd with equal Care to their Execution.
They were not a little suspicious, that the new
Trade of Negotiating would be far from proving
Advantageous to the Nation, and they were very
much confirm'd in this Notion, when they saw some
Men made Choice of for Ministers abroad, who
could not so much as make a Bow; and others who
had not Capacity enough to write a common Letter.
Their Fears increased, when they found us med-
ling in every Thing, and they were equally Sollici-
tous about the Honour and Safety of the Kingdom,
while its most important Affairs were intrusted to
such a Set of strange Politicians. Such was the Rise
of this Opposition, and such the Motives that en-
gaged the Gentlemen who originally embarked there-
in, many of whom are still living, to resolve to
exert themselves with Zeal and Diligence in the
Service of their Country, without much Regard to
their crossing the Designs of those by whom they
thought she was very ill served.

At first setting out, this Opposition was consider-
able, only from the known Characters of those who
composed it; their great Fortunes, and extensive In-
fluence in their respective Countries; but by De-
grees, it received considerable Accessions, and to-
wards the End of the last Reign, it was become
very formidable in point of Numbers. At the be-
inning, Gentlemen could scarce conceive that Per-
sions of high Rank, and who were look'd upon as
Men
Men of great Parts, could stoop to such low and little Things as were frequently charg'd upon the Administration; but when they saw with how much Industry all Enquires were avoided, with what an Air of Insolence the Loss of a whole Branch of the publick Revenue, merely through Negligence, was stiled a pedling Affair, and what a Point was made of bringing off, or screening every little Offender; they began to open their Eyes, and to discover an Inclination of looking more nicely than had been customary for many Years past into publick Accompts, which Inclination of theirs excited such a Vigilance on the other Side, as shew'd plainly this was a faire Place, and would not bear touching.

The Affair of the publick Debts seemed to be a Matter of such mighty Consequence, that all Proposals relating to them, were well heard by all who meant well to their Country, of what Party soever, and yet abundance of rational Proposals for putting them into a better Train of Payment were rejected upon plausible Pretences, till at length the People in Power, by a dextrous Application to the Passions of Men in the monied and in the landed Interest, brought Things into such a Method, as plainly shewed they never intended to Pay them at all. By applying the Produce of the Sinking-Fund to the Service of the current Year, this End was attained, and though the Nation suffered, a great Part of the Nation was made easy. This shewed the Consequence of raising Taxes lightly, and imperceptibly; for as it defended us from a Land-Tax, it drew many of the Country Gentlemen to think favourably of it; and as it defended such as drew large
large Interest from the publick Funds, against the Danger to which they were expos'd, of being paid off, in case that Fund had remain'd untouched; they too were very well pleased, and thus a Stop was put to the only Thing that could have saved us from deep Distress, by lessening our Debts, and allowing us ease in our Taxes, and at the same Time an immense Revenue was left in the Hands of Ministers which enabled them to provide for, and increase their Dependents, till by degrees they became so numerous, and were so well posted, that their servile Echo's to their Masters Demands came to be almost as loud and significant too, as the Voice of the Nation.

The exposing of Abundance of dirty Attempts to get Money, and the pursuing even successful Attempts in Parliament, by Hue and Cry from the Press, till their Iniquity was made manifest to the meanest Capacity, brought Numbers to think more coolly and consistently than they would otherwise have done, and for'd them, whether they would or not, to discern how low some great Men would stoop, and what vast Loads were to be heaped on the already overloaded People, in case the Majority of their Representatives continued to lend their Assistance in laying them upon their Backs. These Disputes, by being frequently repeated, enlarged even ordinary Understanding, and brought the Arcana Imperii within the Comprehension of the common Sort of People. This was complained of as a Kind of Sacrilege, a Breach of all Decorum, and a subverting the very Foundation of Government. Whereas, in Truth it was no more than delivering the People from that Sort of Egyptian Darkness, which
which State Conjurers so well know how to raise, in order to cover themselves. It was explaining a Mystery in which the People had a high Concern; it was shewing them how their Money went, and how they were fleeced, without feeling the Shears. In short, it was doing by them, what any honest Man would do by a young Heir; it was setting the Arts of these smooth Cozeners, in a proper Light, and taking Care to give the Nation fair Warning of the Hands they were in. A Practice every way laudable, notwithstanding its Tendency to destroy the Respect generally paid to great Men. Neither was this a Fault or an Inconvenience, but rather an Advantage; for Respect is only due to Benefactors; when the Great turn Plunderers, a free People owe them somewhat else.

In Time too, the penal Law began to be known by their Fruit; all the fine Promises that had been made as to their destroying Smuggling, came to nothing; since it was found, that those Hardships which bore so heavy on honest Men, never reach'd such as they were said to be intended for. It was frequently observed, that the sharpest of these Arts would sleep quietly for several Years, and wake regularly at the Approach of an Election. The Trading Part of the World, who at first promised themselves Relief from these subtile Contrivances, which they fancied would at least defend them from Interlopers, and put all who paid the Duty, on the same Foot, though a hard one, were quickly undeceived, and taught to their Cost, that Hardships once submitted to, are never to be shook off, though Conditions were talk'd of at the Time of the Impostion. A Concurrence of these Circumstances, occasioned Bills of this Nature.
ture to find a flower Passage than usual, there being none ready to support them, except such as found their Account in them.

Foreign Affairs took their turn in publick Examinations, and though at first it was hardly believ'd that a British Administration would enter into Treaties burthensome to Britain, yet when Sessions after Sessions, Measures of this Kind were expos'd, their Motives explained, and their Consequences foretold, many who found the Gentlemen in the Opposition, true Prophets, began to think them good Politicians, especially when they saw that we frequently chang'd Sides, and that in Spight of these Changes, we were always on the same Side with France, though till then our Interests were held irreconcileable. Thus was that Strength gained, which render'd the Opposition so considerable at the Close of the late King's Reign, at the very Point of Time when some think he began to see Things in the same Light with the Gentlemen in the Opposition.

The Dawn of a new Reign inclined every Body to think, that Things would take a new turn, especially as they were now generally understood, and the King was known to be a steady Lover of Honour and Justice. Upon this, the Opposition laid down their Arms, and went with as great Eagerness to pay their Obedience to the new Monarch, as if they had been sure of those Places, which they never expected. They manifested their Concern, and even their Complaisance in many other Respects, purely to shew that their former Conduct was the Effect of Principle, not of Prejudice or Selfishness. But when it clearly appeared that the same Measures were still pursued, when a Profession of public Money
Money was demanded as a Proof of Affection for the Crown, they readily return'd to the Service of their Country, and sacrificing all Hopes of Favour, refumed their former Opposition of whatever appeared to them injurious to the Interests of their Constituents.

The Force of this Opposition, was now so sensibly felt, that there was no longer any trusting to the old Arts of Management; but Recourse was had to bolder Expedients, and this with such Success for a Time, that it bid fair for destroying all Opposition, and for eradicating the Hopes of all who expected to redress Grievances by a legal Method. But as Success is very apt to make bad Men insolent, so many who earn their Wages, were Fools enough to grow proud of their Service, and to declare themselves as much the Dependents of one Man, as if they had worn his Livery. This Imprudence contributed to the Safety of the Society, and like an Eruption in an Epidemic Fever, shewed plainly, that the State was sick at Heart. The Expence of maintaining such a Multitude of craving Creatures, grew daily greater and greater, and the Manner in which they earned their own Livings, came at last to be so notorious, that all who had a reasonable Share of Wisdom, and the least remains of Honesty, revolted at once, and by a happy Choice of proper Representatives, brought the Matter to a fair Issue, and demonstrated that the Sense of the Opposition was so far from being the Clamour of a handful of idle disaffected, or discontented Men, that it was in reality the Voice of the People, the Judgment of the uncorrupted, undeceived Part of the Nation, and this one would have thought, had been the Period of the
the Opposition, for hitherto the English History affords us no Instance of the Heads of a victorious Party going over to the Vanquished, adopting the Maxims they disclaim'd, disavowing their old Principles, and acting without Shame or Concern those Parts, which for many Years together they had made it their Business to expose. This Wonder was reserv'd for our Time, and the Language it has provoked, will in all Probability prevent such a strange Sight from being ever seen by our Posterity.

If the Opposition had been what many have affected to represent it, a violent Spirit rais'd against a particular Person, it ought naturally to have determined when that Person was removed from Power; but as it had in reality quite another Foundation, to those who are thoroughly acquainted therewith, cannot be much surprized at seeing this Event produce no considerable Change in this Respect. It may, however, be of very great Service to the Generality of the People of England, to explain this Matter thoroughly; and as I pretend to set the present Opposition in a true Light, I shall first shew how this Notion of its being particularly directed against one Man, came to be so commonly received: I shall next prove the Weakness and Folly of giving in to such a Story; and I shall afterwards account fairly for the true Views of the Opposition; which having once done, I shall think my Task perform'd, and leave it, as I apprehend, every political Controversy ought to be left to the free and unbiass'd Judgment of my Countrymen.

When one considers how great a Part of Mankind are govern'd by Appearances, and how few, how very few, are capable of looking to the Bottom
in such kind of Disputes as these, it is far from being difficult to conceive how this false Opinion came so generally to prevail. Two Things there were which gave so strong a Colour to this Notion, as might easily afford it Credit with the Multitude. In the first Place, this single Person had been in a Manner at the Head of the Administration, from the Time this Opposition began, and as the Measures they all along opposed, were strictly and properly speaking, his Measures, there is no great Wonder to be made, that with many, or most People, this Opposition might be thought directed against him. On the other Side, it must be allowed, that there was a second Reason, still stronger than the first; the Discovery of which we owe to Time, and it is this, That a considerable Party who had join’d the Opposition, and by their forwardness therein, in some measure, set themselves at it’s Head, had really no other View than this, as appears by their deserting the Opposition as soon as it was accomplished; but that this never was the Sentiments of the Party in general, will appear to those who consider the Pains they took to expose Measures, not Men, and the remarkable Instance they gave of their being void of all personal Resentments.

The Instance I mean, is the famous Affair of the MOTION, which has been so often canvassed, and set in so many different Lights, though it was never yet perhaps considered in the true one. It was a measure, certainly well calculated, to serve the Purpose for which it was intended; it would have removed, had it succeeded, the Man who block’d up the Way of some other Men to Power. And it had at the same Time, an Appearance of serving
serving the Opposition, so strong an Appearance, that many were drawn into it, who certainly meant well, and did not perceive the real Tendency of that extraordinary Step. But the wiser and firmest Men in the Opposition, could not be drawn into such a Desertion of their Principles. They could not be reconciled to a wrong Method of doing a right Thing. They were afraid of countenancing arbitrary Power, by such an Act of their own, and therefore chose to leave Things to Time, and the Judgment of the Nation in a new Election, rather than push a particular Man in such a Way, as might seem to determine their Dislike to Him and his Measures, rather than to the Measures themselves, by whomsoever pursued. In this, they were certainly right, and this Mark of their high Spirit, true Generosity, and admirable good Sense, ought for ever to stop the Mouths of those, who would resolve their Opposition into an inveterate Aversion to a single Person.

There could not certainly be any Thing wiser in such as had the Safety of this single Person at Heart, than to propagate to the utmost of their Power this Notion, that the Opposition was form'd against Him, and against Him only. The British Nation in general, are too generous, too honest a People to take Pleasure in the persecuting from private Prejudices a great Man, merely because he is Great, and therefore the considering the Opposition in this Light, weaken'd its Force, and abated its Credit considerably. The same People took also a great deal of Pains to place this in still a stronger View, by representing the private Character of the Person they supposed to be the But of the Opposition, as every way aimable. He was in their Language, the
the most humane, the most beneficient, the most courteous Man living; and above all Things, they magnified that Decency and Moderation, with which he treated his Antagonist, and the Calmness he constantly preferred in Spite of all the rude Attacks that were made upon him. Add to this, that even an Error in their Conduct, contributed not a little to the Success of their Design; for instead of defending Measures, they constantly defended him, and by perpetually repeating this Story of the Opposition’s being personal, which they were perhaps weak enough to believe, they at last hammer’d it into the Head of many, and at the same Time obliged the Chiefs of the other Side to act in such a Manner, as if the Facts they related, had been true. But the Instance I have mention’d, clearly refutes all these Pretences, and justifies the Opposition from any Imputation on this Head, since those who supported the Motion from Principle, did it upon this Distinction; that Places were no Man’s Birthright, and consequently an Attempt to remove a Man from them, was no Attack upon his Person; while on the other Hand, such of the Opposition as were against the Motion, were against it, because they thought it personal, and in that Light, repugnant to their Principles.

The Defeat of this Scheme of the Motion, which the Friends of the late Administration, who were certainly no very penetrating Politicians, look’d upon as the Ruin of the Opposition, in reality restored it, and proved, as they might easily have foreseen, the Ruin of themselves. When Gentlemen came to consider seriously, and without Passion, on what Motives they had acted in that Affair, it appear’d clearly, that the Project of the Motion stood upon
too narrow a Bottom; since in reality their Business was to condemn a Series of destructive Measures, rather than to strike at a single Man, either in his personal, or ministerial Capacity. The former was altogether consistent with their Principles, as an Opposition; but the latter had such an Air of private Prejudice, as gave all their Proceedings an Appearance of Faction. It was therefore, no Wonder that after debating this Matter thoroughly among themselves, the Issue of the Dispute was a closer Union than ever. For when Men see that they All mean right in the Main, and that the Points about which they differ are prejudicial to their common Interest, it necessarily engages them to concur with their utmost Force in those Things in which they are clear, and to avoid differing in lesser Matters at least till the main Thing be carried. This then was the Result of their Conferences on that Disappointment, and thus borrowing Strength from their late Defeat, the Opposition became firmer and more formidable than ever, and this at a Time when some short-sighted Politicians consider'd them as broken beyond a Possibility of rallying, and thus they gained a double Advantage from the Wisdom of their own Conduct, and the weak Judgment of those whom they opposed.

The Event as I observed before, fully justified this Method of reasoning, and sufficiently shew'd the Difference between a Personal and a National Opposition. The Resolutions that had been taken to stick entirely to the latter, and to reject whatever carried the least Aspect of the former, operated at the very Beginning of the Sessions, and to the Amazement of such as expected to have seen the
the Patriots acting like Hussars, by sudden and violent Excursions, they appear'd a steady, well compacted Phalanx, which no Art could divide, and which no Force could break. All their Motions were equally regular, and well conducted, they stood firm upon every Attack, and push'd all at once whenever they gave the Assault. Instead of smart and lively Harangues, they confin'd themselves to short and weighty Speeches; they no longer dwelt on the Oversights and Miscarriages of particular Persons, but upon the Concerns of the People; in short, they brought about a Change in the Ministry, by pressing for a Change in Affairs. While they continued in this Situation, they bore all before them, Ministerial Arts, and that kind of Science which I am ashamed to call by the Name fixed upon it, by the greatest Master therein, Parliamentary Craft, signified nothing, Victory declared on their Side, and the Mighty who had been so long used to Conquest, were forced to turn all their Thoughts on a Retreat. Such were the Effects of an Opposition acting upon Principle, governing all their Motions by a steady Adherence to the public Interest, and as steady a Contempt of private and particular Advantages. But alas! we must soon shift this Scene.

As too much Success had rendered the Great careless, and in the End impotent, so this sudden Reverse of Fortune brought them back to their Wits, and though it could not bring them back to Power, yet it did what was thought next to impossible, it broke their Fall. The Sight of approaching Ruin engaged them to change their former Manner of acting, and now they disclaim'd in
in their Turn all personal Affection, and pretended an extraordinary Zeal for the Public Interest. This, whether well or ill founded had a mighty Effect, it introduced a new Spirit, which supplied Courage to their fainting Troops, it engaged many to appear warmly in their Service, who were before indifferent, and if it did not dispose, it at least gave a Colour for some to come over to them who had fought fiercely on the other Side. As these Advantages were gain’d by a Stroke of rational Policy, so they were managed with the utmost Dexterity; and I am sorry to say, that Men who had never shewn any great Abilities, while in the public Service, discover’d extraordinary Capacity when in this critical Conjuncture, they were reduc’d to think only of serving themselves. The Point most proper for this Purpose was, that which they pitch’d upon, for with great Address they shifted their Defeat from the late Stand of the Opposition, to the almost forgotten Attempt of the Motion; and as if that had produc’d this surprizing Alteration, the Leaders of a rejected Project were set at the Head of Affairs. This tho’ it might satisfy them, satisfied no Body else, and the Nation was exceedingly amazed to see what once happen’d in Italy, when the late King of Sardinia was General in chief both of the French and confederate Armies, happen again in Britain, the same Men at the same Time being at the Head of the Administration, and of the Opposition.

It is not easy to describe the Effects of so strange a Revolution. In all great Parties there will be a considerable Number of Persons who from want of sound Sense, or sound Principles, will follow their Leaders.
Leaders at the Expence of their Cause, and go as their Chiefs direct, instead of obeying or perhaps examining the Dictates of their Consciences. This was the Case here, and a strange Confusion ensued, sometimes we saw a strong Detachment of Patriots charging on the Side of Power, and sometimes a formidable Body of Courtiers making a noble Stand in Defence of Liberty. In short, this was a Season when wise Men knew not what to say, and therefore we need not wonder, that weak Men knew not what to do. On the whole however this is certain, that some Men's Heads were more effectually turn'd by the Acquisition of Power, than the Hearts of others were dejected with the Loss of it. Yet to shew how variable Men are, and how much the greatest are govern'd by the ebbing and flowing of their Spirits, it may not be amiss to observe, that this little Gleam of Success distracted one who had recover'd his Reputation as to Capacity, by the firmness he had shewn on his late Defeat. Affecting Airs of Triumph at going out are as distasteful, and consequently as dangerous as the wearing an Air of Insolence when in, and the not adverting to this plain Maxim, produced such a Spirit as nothing else could have produced, and prevented that Flame from being extinguish'd, which he had so artfully, and hitherto so successfully laboured to subdue. I know I have deliver'd myself somewhat obscurely, but the Facts are too recent for me to run any Risque of being misunderstood.

A Miscarriage like this, which all but thorough Politicians would have esteemed a flight one, gave once more a new Turn to Affairs. The Body of the
the Opposition had again drawn themselves into pretty good Order, and this Accident brought back their Heads, or at least determin'd them to decline going entirely off so soon as they had first intended; but at the same Time, that this gave the Opposition some Advantage, by preserving its Strength, it likewise did it not a little Prejudice by diverting its Measures. In short, the Dispute became Personal again, and instead of inquiring by what wrong Steps the Nation had been injured, it was resolved to enquire what wrong Steps could be fix'd upon a certain Person. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that he suffer'd much less by this, than the Opposition itself. There was a great deal of Time wasted to very little Purpose, and in this Time that generous Spirit which had hitherto actuated the Opposition vanished by Degrees. Not to dwell too long on so disagreeable a Subject, the Issue of what at first was esteem'd a national Affair, became entirely personal, and that which had for a Time been consider'd as the most solemn Scene that had ever appear'd on a political Theatre, dwindled at length into a downright Farce. Great Men may be angry when they see themselves made the Sport, even of little People, but this will always be the Case while the People remain free, and their great Men descend to do little Things.

After running thro' as succinctly as we might the History of the Opposition, and setting the principal Events which have distinguish'd it from other Oppositions in their proper Lights, we come now to what is more material, and of far greater Consequence to the Public, viz. the Examination of the Ends of this Opposition, or to borrow for once the Lawyer's Phrase, we are now to look into
into the *Merits* of the *Cause*, and with that Earnestness which becomes *honest* Men, and that Fund of good Sense which has ever been allow'd us as Britons, to enquire whether the *Principles* of this *Opposition* conduce to disturb and distress this Nation; or whether properly pursued, they have not the strongest Tendency to free us from all our Misfortunes, and to silence the Noise, by taking away the Causes of our Complaints. This is to be the Business of the succeeding Pages, and this I shall treat as clearly and plainly as the Subject will bear, without straining *Facts*, or using a *declamatory Stile*, which very little become an Advocate for Truth, whose Charms like those of a perfect Beauty, cannot be heightened, but may be easily abated by the Interposition of Art.

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As to the first of these political Maladies, the Symptoms which usually attend it are universal Un easiness, a general Distract of Power, and a want of all Reverence towards every Rank of Magistrates. The ancient History of the Hebrews affords
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us a short and excellent Definition of this Mischief; for whenever it reign’d amongst that People the Phrase used to express it is, there was no King in Israel, that is, no Ruler whose Authority was regarded, or whose Decrees were held sacred. In the ancient Greek Republics, there were Magistrates assign’d by the Constitution to watch over it, with a View to prevent this dangerous Disease of State. In Athens they were stiled Archons, in Sparta, Ephori, and so long as these did their Duty, the People never failed in theirs. But when these forgot their Characters, and endeavour’d to apply the Power vested in them to private Purposes, instead of the public Service, they soon lost their Credit, and the State its Being. The like happen’d to the Romans, when the Tribunes affected to be their Princes, instead of their Protectors, and brought the Weight of the People to bear intolerably hard upon that Frame of Government, which it had been their Interest to support. When the Names and Shadows of useful Offices only remain, and the Ends for which they were instituted are neglected, Authority is lost of Course, nor is there any Method of proving that Government was instituted for the Sake of the governed, more plain than this, that whenever it ceases to promote this End, it becomes the Object either of Hatred or Contempt. Of Hatred, if supported by an armed Force, of Contempt, if it be destitute of that Guard. This is a fair and candid Account of the Matter, drawn from Reason and Experience, by which Men arrive at Certainty, and not an artful Deduction of a precarious Proposition by the Help of Rhetorical Flourishes.
As to the *second Diſtemper* I have mention'd, it commonly discovers itself by a boundless Propen-
sity to Pleasure, a prodigious Relaxation of Prin-
ciples, and an Epidemic Corruption of Manners. The
old Book I cited before has a wondrous pathetic
Phrase for this Grievance, for as often as the Peo-
ple were in this Condition, they are said to have
done every Man what was right in his own Eyes.
How accurate, how expressive this Description!
To follow the Dictates of private Interest, to pur-
sue the *Projec'ts* plann'd by our Passions, to run
wildly into the Gratification of every fenſual Appet-
tite, or every idle Whim of a diſtemper'd Im-
agination, merely to indulge ourselves without Re-
ſpect to Society, is that kind of Diſorder which I
meant to trace. When the Bulk of any Nation comes
to be agitated by such a Spirit, it must necessarily
follow, that however excellent their Laws, they
must stand repealed in Fact, though they retain
their Places still in their Statute Books. It was so
at Athens, when she boasted herself the politelſt and
the freſt State in Greece. The City was adorn'd
with the nobleſt Buildings, her Citizens were re-
ver'd abroad, and appeared with the greatest Eclat
at home; her Commerce was most extensive, her
Fame at its highest Pitch when Alcibiades then a
Boy, gave Pericles this wise Advice, that since it
puzzled him to make up the public Accompts, he had
best study how he might avoid making them up at all.
The Corruption of the Times made it easy for him
to carry this Scheme into Execution, and he es-
caped by plunging his Country into the Peloponne-
sian War, by which she was undone for ever. At
Rome the Cafe was the fame, when the great Men
began to value themselves on a fine Taste, and an
immense
immense Expence, instead of that unblemish'd Probity and illustrious Poverty by which their Ancestors were distinguished, Things quickly took a new Turn, and that glorious Common-wealth which had been the Mistress of Nations, and the Sovereign of the World, sunk into Slavery, the meanest and basest Slavery, becoming a Prey to the most unworthy of her Subjects.

As to the last of the Cases hinted at before, it's Marks are the most evident of all. A People affected thereby, feel the Pangs of Poverty, without discerning its true Cause; because those who ought to enquire into, and redress their Grievances, employ all their Skill and Pains either to stifle or Disguise them. Such a Nation, sensible of declining Trade, ascribe it now to one Thing, then to another, and by injudicious Attempts to rid them of supposed Burdens, render themselves still more incapable of bearing that Load which they want the Judgment to shake off. Instead of virtuous Industry, there prevails amongst them a fraudulent Dexterity in coining artificial Riches, which serve to conceal their true Condition from themselves, and to defend for a while the most cunning amongst them, from the Miseries felt by the most Worthy. We have no Examples of this kind in antient History, but the Instances which occur in the Memoirs of later Ages, are too numerous to be so much as mention'd. The great Kingdom of Spain, has long groaned under this kind of Oppression. The two famous States of Venice and Genoa, have suffer'd their Glories to fade, and their Strength to be exhausted, by not attending in Time to this Canker, and I could name another Republic, which is at last
laft become fenfible of this Evil, though somewhat of the latest. Before I dismiss this Subject, I must obferve, that this Sort of Consumption is unknown to arbitrary Governments. Under them, Opprefsion is a Feaver, the Acutenefl of which quickly obliges their Rulers to have Recourfe to proper Remedies, how little Pity foever they may have in their own Natures. There muft be some kind of Liberty to nourish this lingering Disease, and to feed the Patient with Hopes till the Distemper preys upon the Vitals.

If therefore the Symptoms, infeperable from these Maladies, are undeniably to be met with amongst us, we may very safely conclude, that our Condition is very dangerous, and that nothing can prevent it from becoming desperate, but timely Attention, and a speedy and vigorous Application of proper Remedies. For, as it is certainly falf Practice, when State Physicians feed the Humour of their Patients, and encourage them in taking unnecessary Medicines, by favouring vulgar Mistakes, and nursing imaginary Diseases; fo on the other Hand, it is as inexcufable to poffefs them with falf Notes of their own Strength, and by furnishing them with artificial Spirits to keep them in perpetual Exercise, too violent perhaps for them even when in full Health, till their Constitutions are quite exhausted, and Death and Dejpair surprize them at once. When a Nation is in fuch Circumstances, tho' who flatter them leaft, are undoubtedly their best Friends, and fuch as are for going to the Bottom of Things, better Physicians than tho' who for the Sake of their own Profit, and perhaps
a pretty large Share of present Applause, would content themselves with a palliative Cure.

In applying what has been already said to the State of our own Nation, I shall make Use of all that Tenderness and Precaution which so nice a Subject requires. In the first Place, then it is certain, that from the Revolution to this Time, the People have upon very many Occasions, betrayed a great Disrespect towards their Governors, and this not only against particular Administrations, but against the Legislature itself. The Pretence has always been the ill Conduct of their Governors, and that this in all Cases has not been a mere Pretence, will sufficiently appear if we consider that in some Part of King William’s Reign, their Disatisfaction to the Ministry was countenanced by the House of Commons, as in the latter Part of that Reign, their Dislike to the House of Commons was approved and applauded by the Court, and they were encouraged to take such Liberties with their Representatives, as appear surprizing to us, who live in later and calmer Times. In the Reign of Queen Anne, the People had such a Veneration for the Church, that they were thought deficient in their Regard to the Ministry, the Queen, and the Parliament itself, but in time they fully justified themselves to her Majesty, by resenting that State of Dependance, in which she was held by some great Men, and carrying their Point at last, what had been Faction for so many Years together, was taken for Sterling Loyalty, which was capable of bearing every Test. In the four last Years of the Queen, a great Part of the Nation grew out of Humour with the Measures she pursued, and re-

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fleeced severely on the Parliament which supported them. This Conduct of theirs, was fully justified by a Parliamentary Enquiry in the last Reign, the Severity of which in a great Measure recovered the Credit of that August Assembly, and taught the People to honour as became them, the great Council of the Nation, the natural Trustees of our Properties, and the legal Guardians of our Liberty.

By Degrees, however, this Awe wore off again, and in process of Time, there grew up a strong Spirit of Jealousy and Discontent, especially after the South-Sea Scheme took Place, and on it's Detection, the Criminals were countenanced by those to whom it belonged of right to have punished the Misdemeanours they had committed. Thence forward, the Common People grew afraid of those who ought to have been their surest Refuge, and began to murmur, that the Senate took too large a Share of Power to themselves, and left too little to those from whom they derived it. Stung with these Apprehensions, and Daily provoked with what they took, for Instances of that Disposition, which gave Distaste, they lost all Temper, and fell exactly into those Notions, which we have shewn to be most Dangerous to a free Government.

In this Situation, Things were, when the Authors of the present Opposition, proposed their Plan, for restoring the Spirit of the Constitution, and Eradicating these Fears, from the Breasts of the People, whom they were willing to have gratified in two Points, Viz. The Shortening the Duration of Parliaments, and the excluding such Persons, from Seats there, as might be Suspected of having particular Interests, incompatible with Public Trust. This
Project of theirs was so plausible, that we need not wonder a very great Part of the Nation gave into it, especially when we consider, that the wisest Persons in the Kingdom, even those who in this critical Juncture have been advanced to the Helm, approved these Proposals, and contended warmly for their being carried into Execution. It must be owned, that notwithstanding many Years Struggle, and an Opposition carried on with equal Spirit and Industry, they were still baffled, by Dint of Voices however, and not of Argument; for these great Patriots most judiciously insinuated, that their not being able to carry these Points, was the fullest Proof of their Rectitude, since they were defeated by Men who had visibly an Interest in keeping Parliaments long on Foot, and thought themselves bound to defend the Innocency of Places, because they enjoyed them. Now, upon this Subject it is difficult to pronounce, for beyond Question the People are as to it still dissatisfied, and with Respect to the Seasonableness of the Remedy, we can say nothing against it which will not justify those whom the Voice of the Nation condemn'd last Year, and at the same Time reflect on the Judgment of our present great Men, who so strenuously maintain'd the Expediency, and so often divided in favour of a Law to repeal the Septennial Act, and for a comprehensive Place-Bill.

We must indeed allow, that they have chang'd their Sentiments since, and that as they are older, they ought consequently to be wiser. But then here lies the Misfortune, they have now an Interest in long Parliaments, which they had not before, and they have swallow'd those Places for which
which they declared they had no Appetite. Upon this sudden Turn in their Conduct, two very hard Questions have been moved, the first is, whether this Departure from their Principles, does not deprive their present Reasonings of all Authority; for how can we take their Words now, for what the other Day they denied? The other is, whether their own Example is not the clearest Demonstration that can be demanded of the Validity of their former Arguments; for must not such Things be excessively dangerous to a free People, as have produced such strange Effects upon their Friends. These Gentlemen were very lately owned the wisest and ablest Persons in the Kingdom, and when they were so acknowledg'd, they told us, that Placemen were dangerous in Parliament, because their Places influenced their Conduct, do not their Actions teach us so still? Would any sober Man be persuaded out of his Love of Temperance, by hearing a Philosopher declaim in Favour of Drunkenness, if he saw that contrary to Custom the Sage had got a Cup in his Head?

To speak farther to this Point with Candour and Decency. We must acknowledge, that unbounded Licence reigns amongst us, that the common People have lost Respect for Dignity, and that the middle Sort are full of Jealousies and Suspicions. The Court Writers are continually complaining of the former, and their own Instructions sufficiently testify the Sense of the latter. The Fact then is out of Dispute, we are certainly sick of this dangerous Disease; the next Thing to be enquired is, whether we ought to follow the Advice of those who propose to us a Method of eradicating the Cause of
the Distemper, or whether we shall let it take its Course, because our Quondam Doctors are become above their Business. If they have chang'd their Language, they must be very popular indeed to introduce their new Dialect in so short a Time too throughout the Nation, and to talk of forcing the People to alter their Tone would be likewise a little hard, since they are but Parrots of their own teaching. What may be now stiled the Clamour of the Mob, was t'other Day the Voice of the Nation, and so avow'd to be by the Folks of whom I am speaking, and as to the Business of instructing, the Form, is all that belongs to the Places from whence they come, they take their Matter from your own Report. This is the plain, the naked Truth, I have kept strictly to my Promise, I have not either coined a Fact, or heightened any Matter of Fact by my manner of relating it.

The Merit then of the Opposition in this Respect lies here. They have proposed to secure the Freedom of Parliament, by restraining the unwarrantable Practices of returning Officers, of which we have had such flagrant as well as such recent Examples, and which left even the Mob without a Doubt, that one of the most solemn Acts in our Government, might through the Iniquity of a very insignificant Instrument be turned into a downright Farce. Having thus secured the Door, they next proposed sweeping the House, and this by a full and comprehensive Place-Bill. The Reason of the Thing has been over and over determined by the Legislature, the single Point now in Question is, whether these Acts shall be living Laws, or dead Letters, whether they shall be Things for Show, or
or for Ufe? When this Provision was made, the Opposition were for going one Step farther, and having provided against the known Methods of affecting the Freedom of Parliaments, they were desirous of assigning a Remedy too for the Mischiefs that might be introduced by the intriguing Heads of bad Ministers in succeeding Times, and with this View they insisted on the Repeal of the Septennial Act. Will any Man say, that this Scheme is at all inconsistent, or that it is calculated to serve private Purposes; or is there any Reason, that they should give it up, when the great Men who were very lately in the same Sentiments, have not thought fit to prescribe any other Method for the Cure of that Disease, which they still acknowledge, and which they seem to be apprehensive, may some Time or other become fatal to themselves, as well as to the State.

As to the second Point, the Libertinism of our Morals is to the full as notorious as the Licentiousness of our Speech. We are become as remarkable for Corruption, as we were formerly for our public Spirit. This is confessed by ourselves, and published through all the World, and therefore one would think, that every Man who is free from this Taint, should be desirous of seeing such a national Reflection wiped off. I will not say that the Source of this great Mischief has been the Conduct of People in Power; but most certain it is, that if Corruption once reigns in high Life, the Reformation must begin there. It is a vain Thing to expect that the Vulgar should be honest, when Honesty is laughed at by their Beter, and it is ridiculous to suppose, that the Laces should answer their
their Ends in common Affairs, when it is evident, that they have lost their Power in those of a superior Nature. To speak the Truth, which can never be a Crime amongst free People, every Nation is guided by the Examples of such as are most distinguished therein by Birth, by Fortune, or by Office, and if there be no Religion, no respect to Principle, no regard to public Good visible amongst them, we cannot expect to find it among such as in the Nature of Things, must be their Dependents.

We may easily illustrate this, by a too well known Example. When a Man of Rank takes it into his Head to alter the Nature of our Constitution, by making himself Master of a Country Corporation, and turning a Town vested with a Right of sending Members to Parliament into his Borough, the Methods that he takes, will go near to ruin the Morals, as well as to subvert the Freedom of such a Place. In the first Place, the Notions of the Inhabitants must be vitiated, they must be taught to prefer their own Interest, to that of the Public, and when they have done this, what shall hinder them from preferring their own Interest to every other Man's? By this Step, the very Basis of fair Dealing, is undermined, and a Man loses his Principles for ever. Next, he must be brought to believe that Attachment to the great Man's Interest, is a Point of Honour, and thus he is in the Situation of a Highwayman, who substitutes fair Dealing to the Gang, instead of Obedience to the Laws, and fancies himself after repeated Acts of Villainy, a Man of Honour forsooth, because he is not faithless to his Fellows. Lastly, every such Person is bound to hate and deride, to counteract and misrepres
present all who are not in his great Man's Interest. By proceeding in this Road, he loses the Dignity of a free-born Briton, and becomes as much a Vassal as his Forefathers, who by the Name of Villains, were fold together with the Estate, and a Lord transferred them with as little Ceremony, as the Trees that grew upon it. Such is the Progress of Knavery, Deceit, and Corruption; by such swift Strides, it passes from one End of a Country to another, and the bad Examples of a few, become sufficient to mislead sometimes the greater Part of a Nation.

Every Mayor, Bailiff, or other Head Officer, of a little Borough, acts entirely on the same Principles with a Prime Minister. If he is a Man of Integrity, and wishes well to his Country, and has withal a clear Head, and good natural Parts, he will procure many Advantages to the Place where he presides; if on the other Hand, he be a weak Man, he will do less good indeed; but then he will do no hurt. But if such a Person be a venal and corrupt Man, he will be able to disseminate his Vices through the whole Extent of his Jurisdiction, he will quickly either find or make fit Instruments for his sinister Purposes, and when he has once brought Men to think as he does, it will require an Age to purge out that Villainy which he will introduce in a Year. When once Men come to treat the public Interest lightly, they soon run into the grossest Disrespect; for the whole System of Morality is built on a political Basis, and when we lose all Reverence for the whole, respect for Individuals can never hold us long. It may be true, that some great Men have behaved well in private Life, though wickedly in
in their public Characters; but then on a strict Review, this will be found either the Effect of a natural Disposition, for which no Man deserves Praise, or of a refined Policy, that the amiable benefts of his private Character, may screen him from public Justice. But in the common Course of Things, the Case is quite otherwise, and a bad Man in Office, is a bad Man in every other Respect.

But when these Machiavilean Motions have prevailed for some time, they spread themselves so far, and meet with so many Defenders, that Honestly is put quite out of Countenance, and a Man who pretends to feel any Thing like a Sense of Virtue or public Spirit, is treated as a Hypocrite, or an Enthusiast. It is when Things are come to this pass, that a Country is in the utmost Danger; that the Inhabitants stand on the very brink of Ruin, and can be saved only by frightening them so much, as to make them start back. I will not say, that this is our Case, and yet a certain Report has said it, and that Report we know was framed by the Friends of those great Folks, who are now ready to frown if you mention Corruption. Yet, alas! if that Report be true, as we all know it is but too true, there never was such a Sink of Corruption as this Island, and to think that displaying this Filth, is equivalent to cleansing it, or that changing one Set of Names for another, is sufficient to atone for such a Series of Offences against the Public, is to believe what Mr. Voltaire lays is true, viz. That we are no more like our Forefathers, than the modern Italians are like the old Romans, of which, if I were once convinced, I should not only think Writing, but Living, to little Purpose.

Having
Having shewn that the Great, and the Opposition are thus far agreed, that Corruption hath made a fatal Progress amongst us, we are next to consider, what both Parties have proposed, in order to remove so black a Stain, and to cure so dangerous an Evil. The Opposition have been for examining this Matter to the bottom, for laying all these Practices open, and for punishing such as have been concerned in them. This would certainly be an efficacious Remedy, it would convince the Nation of two Things; first, that injuring the Public, contriving the Ruin of our Government, and debasing the Minds of the People, are really Crimes, and not Arcana Imperii, the lawful Practices of Ministers, and such as their Trade requires, which some have not scrupled to give out. Secondly, it would shew all the World, that we are still found at Heart, that we have yet Probity enough to start at such Iniquities, and that we do not want Courage or Power to punish them. These Reflections I must own, I have borrowed from the Report itself, and as it is the only Quotation I shall make, I beg Leave to give it the Reader as it stands there, that he may be convinced of the eminent Peril we are in, and learn from thence to discover whether there be yet a Possibility of our escaping or not. Thus speaks the Report.

"This Method of Corruption is as sure, and therefore your Committee apprehends as criminal a Way of subverting the Constitution, as by an armed Force; it is a Crime productive of a total Destruction of the very Being of this Government, and is so high and unnatural, that nothing but the Powers of Parliament can reach it,"
the Opposition had again drawn themselves into pretty good Order, and this Accident brought back their Heads, or at least determin'd them to decline going entirely off so soon as they had first intended; but at the same Time, that this gave the Opposition some Advantage, by preserving its Strength, it likewise did it not a little Prejudice by diverting its Measures. In short, the Dispute became Personal again, and instead of inquiring by what wrong Steps the Nation had been injured, it was resolved to enquire what wrong Steps could be fix'd upon a certain Person. It would be no difficult Thing to shew that he suffer'd much less by this, than the Opposition itself. There was a great deal of Time wafted to very little Purpose, and in this Time that generous Spirit which had hitherto actuated the Opposition vanished by Degrees. Not to dwell too long on so disagreeable a Subject, the Issue of what at first was esteem'd a national Affair, became entirely personal, and that which had for a Time been consider'd as the most solemn Scene that had ever appear'd on a political Theatre, dwindled at length into a downright Farce. Great Men may be angry when they see themselves made the Sport, even of little People, but this will always be the Case while the People remain free, and their great Men descend to do little Things.

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into the *Merits* of the *Cause*, and with that Earnestness which becomes *honest Men*, and that Fund of good Sense which has ever been allow'd us as *Britons*, to enquire whether the Principles of this *Opposition* conduce to disturb and distress this Nation; or whether properly pursued, they have not the strongest Tendency to free us from all our Misfortunes, and to silence the Noise, by taking away the *Causes* of our *Complaints*. This is to be the Business of the succeeding Pages, and this I shall treat as clearly and plainly as the Subject will bear, without straining *Facts*, or using a *declamatory Stile*, which very little become an Advocate for *Truth*, whose *Charms* like those of a perfect Beauty, cannot be heightened, but may be easily abated by the Interposition of *Art*.

In the first Place then, we must learn to satisfy ourselves, whether the Nation really suffers under any *Difficulties*, or whether (as a very artful Writer would persuade us) we are only troubled with *political Spleen*. Now a Nation suffers, or at least may suffer several Ways; but particularly by these three, when respect to its Government declines, when it's best *Laws* are worse executed, and when greater *Sums* are levied for the public Service, than the *Fortunes* of *private People* can bear. By any, much more all of these Nation may be enervated, and brought to the *Brink of Ruin*, as the History of every one great *Monarchy* or flourishing *State* that is now decayed will sufficiently prove.

As to the first of these *political Maladies*, the Symptoms which usually attend it are *universal Uncertainty*, a general *Distaste* of Power, and a want of all *Reverence* towards every *Rank* of *Magistrates*. The ancient History of the *Hebrews* affords us
us a short and excellent Definition of this Mischief; for whenever it reign'd amongst that People the Phrase used to express it is, there was no King in Israel, that is, no Ruler whose Authority was regarded, or whose Decrees were held sacred. In the ancient Greek Republics, there were Magistrates assign'd by the Constitution to watch over it, with a View to prevent this dangerous Disease of State. In Athens they were called Archons, in Sparta, Ephors, and so long as these did their Duty, the People never failed in theirs. But when these forgot their Characters, and endeavour'd to apply the Power vested in them to private Purposes, instead of the public Service, they soon lost their Credit, and the State its Being. The like happen'd to the Romans, when the Tribunes affected to be their Princes, instead of their Protectors, and brought the Weight of the People to bear intolerably hard upon that Frame of Government, which it had been their Interest to support. When the Names and Shadows of useful Offices only remain, and the Ends for which they were instituted are neglected, Authority is lost of Course, nor is there any Method of proving that Government was instituted for the Sake of the governed, more plain than this, that whenever it ceases to promote this End, it becomes the Object either of Hatred or Contempt. Of Hatred, if supported by an armed Force, of Contempt, if it be destitute of that Guard: This is a fair and candid Account of the Matter, drawn from Reason and Experience, by which Men arrive at Certainty, and not an artful Deduction of a precarious Proposition by the Help of Rhetorical Flourishes.
As to the second Distemper I have mention'd, it commonly discovers itself by a boundless Propensity to Pleasure, a prodigious Relaxation of Principles, and an Epidemic Corruption of Manners. The old Book I cited before has a wondrous pathetic Phrase for this Grievance, for as often as the People were in this Condition, they are said to have done every Man what was right in his own Eyes. How accurate, how expressive this Description! To follow the Dictates of private Interest, to pursue the Projects plan'd by our Passions, to run wildly into the Gratification of every sensual Appetite, or every idle Whim of a distemper'd Imagination, merely to indulge ourselves without Respect to Society, is that kind of Disorder which I meant to trace. When the Bulk of any Nation comes to be agitated by such a Spirit, it must necessarily follow, that however excellent their Laws, they must stand repealed in Fact, though they retain their Places still in their Statute Books. It was so at Athens, when she boasted herself the politest and the freest State in Greece. The City was adorn'd with the noblest Buildings, her Citizens were rever'd abroad, and appeared with the greatest Eclat at home; her Commerce was most extensive, her Fame at its highest Pitch when Alcibiades then a Boy, gave Pericles this wise Advice, that since it puzzled him to make up the public Accounts, he had best study how he might avoid making them up at all. The Corruption of the Times made it easy for him to carry this Scheme into Execution, and he escaped by plunging his Country into the Peloponnesian War, by which she was undone for ever. At Rome the Case was the same, when the great Men began to value themselves on a fine Taste, and an immense
immense Expence; instead of that unblemish'd Probity and illustrious Poverty by which their Ancestors were distinguished, Things quickly took a new Turn, and that glorious Common-wealth which had been the Mistress of Nations, and the Sovereign of the World, sunk into Slavery, the meanest and basest Slavery, becoming a Prey to the most unworthy of her Subjects.

As to the last of the Cases hinted at before, it's Marks are the most evident of all. A People affected thereby, feel the Pangs of Poverty, without discerning its true Cause; because those who ought to enquire into, and redress their Grievances, employ all their Skill and Pains either to stifle or disguise them. Such a Nation, sensible of declining Trade, ascribe it now to one Thing, then to another, and by injudicious Attempts to rid them of supposed Burdens, render themselves still more incapable of bearing that Load which they want the Judgment to shake off. Instead of virtuous Industry, there prevails amongst them a fraudulent Dexterity in coining artificial Riches, which serve to conceal their true Condition from themselves, and to defend for a while the most cunning amongst them, from the Miseries felt by the most Worthy. We have no Examples of this kind in antient History, but the Instances which occur in the Memoirs of later Ages, are too numerous to be so much as mention'd. The great Kingdom of Spain, has long groaned under this kind of Oppression. The two famous States of Venice and Genoa, have suffered their Glories to fade, and their Strength to be exhausted, by not attending in Time to this Canker, and I could name another Republic, which is at last
laft become fenfible of this Evil, though somewhat of the latest. Before I dismis this Subject, I muft observe, that this Sort of Consumption is unknown to arbitrary Governments. Under them, Oppreffion is a Fever, the Acutenefs of which quickly obliges their Rulers to have Recourfe to proper Remedies, how little Pity foever they may have in their own Natures. There must be fome kind of Liberty to nourifh this lingering Disease, and to feed the Patient with Hopes till the Diftemper preys upon the Vitals.

If therefore the Symptoms, inseperable from these Maladies, are undeniably to be met with among us, we may very safely conclude, that our Condition is very dangerous, and that nothing can prevent it from becoming desperate, but timely Attention, and a speedy and vigorous Application of proper Remedies. For, as it is certainly falf Practice, when State Physicians feed the Humour of their Patients, and encourage them in taking unnecessary Medicines, by favouring vulgar Mistakes, and nursing imaginary Diseases; fo on the other Hand, it is as inexcufable to poffefs them with falf Notes of their own Strength, and by furnishing them with artificial Spirits to keep them in perpetual Exercise, too violent perhaps for them even when in full Health, till their Constitutions are quite exhausted, and Death and Despair surprize them at once. When a Nation is in fuch Circumstances, thofe who flatter them leaft, are undoubtedly their leaft Friends, and fuch as are for going to the Bottom of Things, better Physicians than thofe, who for the Sake of their own Profit, and perhaps
a pretty large Share of present Applause, would content themselves with a palliative Cure.

In applying what has been already said to the State of our own Nation, I shall make Use of all that Tenderness and Precaution which so nice a Subject requires. — In the first Place, then it is certain, that from the Revolution to this Time, the People have upon very many Occasions, betrayed a great Disrespect towards their Governors, and this not only against particular Administrations, but against the Legislature itself. The Pretence has always been the ill Conduct of their Governors, and that this in all Cases has not been a mere Pretence, will sufficiently appear if we consider that in some Part of King William's Reign, their Disatisfaction to the Ministry was countenanced by the House of Commons, as in the latter Part of that Reign, their Dislike to the House of Commons was approved and applauded by the Court, and they were encouraged to take such Liberties with their Representatives, as appear surprizing to us, who live in later and calmer Times. In the Reign of Queen Anne, the People had such a Veneration for the Church, that they were thought deficient in their Regard to the Ministry, the Queen, and the Parliament itself, but in time they fully justified themselves to her Majesty, by resenting that State of Dependance, in which she was held by some great Men, and carrying their Point at last, what had been Faction for so many Years together, was taken for Sterling Loyalty, which was capable of bearing every Test. In the four last Years of the Queen, a great Part of the Nation grew out of Humour with the Measures she pursued, and reflected
fleoted severely on the Parliament which supported them. This Conduct of theirs, was fully justified by a Parliamentary Enquiry in the last Reign, the Severity of which in a great Measure recovered the Credit of that August Assembly, and taught the People to honour as became them, the great Council of the Nation, the natural Trustees of our Properties, and the Legal Guardians of our Liberty.

By Degrees, however, this Awe wore off again, and in process of Time, there grew up a strong Spirit of Jealousy and Discontent, especially after the South-Sea Scheme took Place, and on it's Detection, the Criminals were countenanced by those to whom it belonged of right to have punished the Misdemeanours they had committed. Thence forward, the Common People grew afraid of those who ought to have been their surest Refuge, and began to murmur, that the Senate took too large a Share of Power to themselves, and left too little to those from whom they deriv'd it. Stung with these Apprehensions, and Daily provok'd with what they took, for Instances of that Disposition, which gave Dislike, they lost all Temper, and fell exactly into those Notions, which we have shewn to be most Dangerous to a free Government.

In this Situation, Things were, when the Authors of the present Opposition, proposed their Plan, for restoring the Spirit of the Constitution, and Eradicating those Fears, from the Breasts of the People, whom they were willing to have gratified in two Points, Viz. The Shortening the Duration of Parliaments, and the excluding such Persons, from Seats there, as might be Suspected of having particular Interests, incompatible with Public Trust. This Project...
dustrious Part of the Nation, if they think fit to stay in it, will work as hard as they can work, not for themselves — but for the Idle. And yet these idle People will, ten to one, continue to believe that they are the best Sort of Folks in the Nation.

That we may draw to a Conclusion in some Time, and not dwell too long on such disagreeable Subjects, I will mention but one Argument more, and that shall be the several Methods taken to supply the Deficiency of real Wealth, by Tallies, Bonds, Notes, and many other Contrivances. These are understood to be great Helps to Trade, and so I confess they might be, if they were circulated only among Traders, for then we might be pretty certain, that the real Value of these circulating Certificates existed somewhere, which we know is not the Case at present, for if it were, the Approach of War, or the Rumour of an Invasion, could not so easily, or so deeply affect them, as we know it has done and would do. On this Account, we may lay it down as a Thing certain, that as Lotteries give a Check to Trade, so the circulating of this kind of Paper Treasure serves to conceal our Circumstances, and to prevent our Feeling the gradual Decay of our Wealth, as well as to serve the Purposes of sly Politicians, and to administer to all the Ends of Luxury. In short, there is not that Difference between private and public Affairs which some crafty Writers would make us believe; they are generally speaking, govern’d by the same Maxims, and ought therefore to be judg’d by the same Rules: Frugality, Industry, and a virtuous Behaviour, is as necessary to make the State flourish, as to better the Circum-
stances of it's meanest Subject and Profusion; Idle-
nesc, and a total Corruption of Manners, will as
certainly beggar a Kingdom, as it would bankrupt
any Man in it.

There may be, in all probability, a Set of car-
ping Critics, who will take Exception at this Man-
ner of stating Facts, and pretend, that to catch the
Vulgar, I write down to their Taste, and by giving
a new Turn to Political Subjects, endeavour to render
such Things ridiculous, as ought to be the Objects
of Reverence, and to make those People Judges,
who in the Nature of Things, can never be brought
to apprehend the Matters of which I would have
them judge. But to this I answer, that familiar
Comparisons best explain all Subjects, and when
used with Decency and Discretion, contribute more
towards the spreading true Science, than all the
methodical Systems that ever were published. I say
farther, that I use them, because I seek to be under-
stood, and these solemn Gentlemen disclaim them for
the contrary Reason, because they would keep their
real Sentiments in the Dark, and delude the People
with Speeches that seem to have a contrary meaning.
They would persuade them, that Taxes only serve
to circulate Money, that the Funds are so many salu-
tary Contrivances for the Maintainance of Widows
and Orphans, without exposing them to the Plague
of doing something to get their Bread, as was the
barbarous Custom of former Ages; that Lotteries are
thought of, purely to surprize good Subjects, with
great Estates, without giving them the Trouble of
getting them; that public Companies are for the Be-
nefit of Trade, or at least of Traders, because so
many Citizens are provided for as Directors, and
that
that the Liberty such odd Fellows as I, are allowed of talking against these public Benefits, is preferable to the Freedom our Fore-fathers enjoyed, when Taxes, Debts and Lotteries were Things unheard of, when a Merchant of London contested Customs with the Crown, and the Word Excise, if pronounced in Parliament, would have drawn a Reprimand, at least if not a Commitment.

Another civilier Sort of Critics, will furnish out a new Set of Objections, such as the Inexpediency of making these Things known to the Vulgar, the Danger of laying open to them the Secrets of Government, and the Folly of putting it into the Power of that bot-mouth’d Beast the Multitude, to take the Bit in its Mouth, and run away with its Rider. But these soft spoken Gentlemen ought to consider that Exceptions of this Sort are a little out of Date, for as Government concerns every Man, so it seems but natural that every Man should concern himself about Government, and as the lowest Fellow in the Kingdom contributes out of what he gets to the public Service, so it seems but just that he should, if he has a Mind, know what he pays for, and see, if he can see, whether the Public is well served or not. If the meaner Sort of People were spared in public Impositions, and only Men of a certain Estate paid towards the Expences of Government, there would be some Colour of Justice in talking of Rabble and Mob, and exclaiming against the Insolence of the Dregs of the People. But while it is as it is, that every Man from the Crown of his Hat that covers his Head, to the Sole of the Shoe that he treads under Foot, wears nothing, out of which he does not pay towards the
Support of the State, and therefore cannot escape paying, unless he goes naked, and while it is impossible for a Man to live, though it were upon brown Bread and Small-Beer, without contributing to the Maintenance of those who rule him. I should be glad to know how consistently with Justice and Equity any Creature that breaths the British Air, should be deprived of his Right of enquiring and judging whether we are well or ill governed, while we call ourselves a free People.

The Mischiefs that are supposed to flow from these Doctrines, are meer Bugbears and Chimera's, a Sort of Rawheads and Bloodybones, invented by political Nurses to fright their Children from squalling, when they are too lazy or too proud to undress and pull out the Pins that prick them. While a People may enquire, they will never rebel; but the surest Way to make them all is to forbid them to talk, as if you attempt to tye a Man's Hands, or to gag him, he naturally supposes that you intend to cut his Throat, or at least to make free with his Pockets. In such a Country as this, the People need not recur to Insurrections, those are fit Remedies only under arbitrary Governments. We are free by our Laws, and therefore must have a legal Remedy for every Evil. The single Enquiry then is under what Evils we suffer, what Remedies are most like to give us Relief, and by whom those Remedies have been proposed, since questionless they are our Physicians. On this Subject, therefore, I shall offer a few free Thoughts as they rise in my Mind, and so leave my Readers to their own Reflections;
It must be acknowledged on all Hands, that the Opposition have constantly and uniformly exclaimed against the Waste of public Treasure, the Squandering People's Money, increasing the Number of their Taxes, and declining all Thoughts of decreasing their Debts. It must be likewise own'd, that they have upon every Occasion opposed such Measures as have had a Tendency to these Mischiefs; they have been against indefinite Grants, Votes of Credit, Sums given without Account, raising unnecessary Troops, or raising necessary Troops, in too expensive a Way, against Negotiations without End, and Armaments that hurt none, but ourselves. They have earnestly pressed for retrenching our annual Expences, for a Commission to review the management of the Revenue for several Years past, and another to settle and state the Debts of the Nation. They have more than once proposed, that some Method should be taken to stop these at least, till a way could be found to pay them, and they have always protested against applying any other Way the sinking Fund, the only Method that ever was thought of for paying it. They have for twenty Years together expostulated with the Friends of the Ministry, whenever they have attempted to create new Taxes, or to continue old ones for new Terms; they have bewailed the Misfortune of the People to be continually feeling fresh Weight, without receiving any Addition either of Strength or Spirits. In a Word, they have manifested their Concert, and avowed their Dislike of what they conceived would be fatal to their Country, and this they have done at the Expence of their Characters and Fortunes. In the former, they have suffered by the Imputati-
of being dissatisfied; the latter has been impaired not only by their constant serving the Nation at their own Expense, but by their being obliged to spend their own Money against that of the Nation, in order to have the Honour to serve it at their own Expense, and to be able to propose their Doubts, to lay open their Jealousies, and to expose to the People's Representatives whatever they took to be Grievances on the People.

As to any Propositions, made by the Great, either for lessening our Charge, for lowering our Impressions, or for putting our Debts into a Train of Payment, I must say it frankly, I know of none. They frequently speak indeed in very pathetic Terms of supporting the Honour and Dignity of the Crown, of furnishing Supplies for the public Service, and of making good the Deficiencies of former Grants. They commonly display their Eloquence, in support of Laws for securing and increasing the Revenue, for appointing and ascertaining new Funds, and as in the Case of the Gin-Act, for preventing the Crown's Loss by the People's Gain, though in the Event, the Terms were reversed, for the People got nothing, and the Crown all. No doubt if these worthy Persons would apply themselves as assiduously to the Points which the Patriots pretend to make their Care, they might succeed as happily in them, as they do in their Expedients for raising those vast Sums, which they find annually requisite for the Service of a Nation, which it is to be feared, may sometime or other be unable to reward such able Servants, at least as amply as she has hitherto done. Dr. Davenant foretold this above forty Years ago, and told us
us very prophetically in a Book he published about that Time, that as we could never hope to thrive or grow rich as a Nation, while the Expenses of our Government exceeded two Millions three Hundred Pounds per Annum, so if we went on in the Train we were then, of giving a Loose to our Expenses, and contracting Debts without Bowsels for Posterity, we might at length come to raise six or seven Millions a Year as long as it would last. As we have fulfilled the latter Part of this Prediction, somethinks it is high Time we took the first into our Consideration, for without Question, the Time is not far off, when even the most consummate Politicians will find it surpass their Skill to draw Water out of an empty Well.

We have now run through the Rise, Progress and several Fates of the Opposition; we have seen it feeble in its Beginning, and despised for its Feebleness; we have seen it continually growing, notwithstanding all the Pains taken to depress it. We have known it thrive upon Defeats, and we now see it in a worse Condition for its Victory. From this Prospect of the Events which have attended it, we have learned to distinguish between the Pretences of some who are, or have been engaged in it, and the Principles of the Opposition itself. The former we have discovered to be sometimes iniquitous, and always irregular, the latter perfectly just, and eternally the same. This has explained to us the Folly of conceiving amiss of Opposition through the Conduct of such as have been at the Head of it, and this has taught, or ought to teach us, that an Opposition never suffers by the Loss
Loss of such Heads. A Faction cannot be without Leaders, because the Design of a Faction, is to bring those who compose it, into Power, and there is no managing a War without a Commander in Chief, and subordinate Officers. But an Opposition it quite another Thing, it aims at a Change of Measures, and not of Men, and therefore is never in a greater Probability of succeeding, than when such as compose it, are bound to each other by no other Tie than that of sameness of Sentiment, and propound nothing more to themselves than obliging others to act right.

We have still done more than all this, we have examined the Grounds and Reasons of the Opposition. We have considered the Nature of those Things of which they complain, independent of their Relation to ourselves, and we have seen that they are real and not imaginary Evils; that they are productive of ruinous Consequences, and that as all this is discoverable by Common Sense, so it has been justified likewise by constant Experience. We have then enquired into the Evidence in Proof of these Mischiefs actually subsisting amongst us, and after these necessary Steps, we have taken a View of the Remedies proposed, and of the Arguments offered to shew that they would radically cure these Mischiefs. Thus we have gone through the whole of what we proposed, and if we have committed any Error in the Course of our Reasonings, upon so many and so intricate Subjects, the whole lies still before us, and we may easily trace that Error back to its Source, and consequently have it in our Power to rectify our Notions. All this we have done without
out Heat or Passion, without Prejudice or personal Resentment, we have pursued Truth and not Opinion; we have prosecuted national Advantages, and not sought to recommend the Designs of any Party; we have united the free-thinking of the Whigs, with the Public Spirit of the Tories, and we have shewn that a rational Opposition comprehends all that is good, and rejects all that is evil in every Party.

Upon the whole, we have made it manifest that the Opposition, strictly speaking, hath nothing in it of Disaffection or Disloyalty, but has a direct Tendency to increase the Power of the Crown, by procuring the Good of the Subject. We have made it clear, that the mixing these noble Views with personal Resentments, is the only means by which they can be defeated, and this has enabled us to explain what to so many has seemed inexplicable, the short turn made by those who in the midst of their Professions of their intending only the former, were in their Hearts resolved to proceed no farther than the latter. By doing this, we have done our utmost to establish the Opposition for the future on its proper Basis, to point out the Advantages it may procure to the Nation, and the Necessity there is of procuring them some way or other, if we mean well to the Nation, and therefore we presume, that we have effectually executed what our Title promised, and that within the narrow Compass of this Discourse, the candid Reader will find the Case of the Opposition impartially stated.

FINIS.