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## Considerations for Competitors and Electors of Representatives in Parliament.

**T**RUSTS are things, which all men agree, *nemine contradicente*, ought to be performed with all Faithfulness, and for that purpose with all the care and diligence, that the nature, importance or difficulty of the matter doth require. Hence it is that Honest men, who make Conscience of the due performance of their Obligations, are not easily perswaded into such Undertakings, unless where near Relation, intimate Friendship, great Charity upon some special advantage and need of their assistance doth move, and in some sort oblige them to it; much less are they apt to intrude into such Employments, or offer themselves, except where there is apparent need of their assistance, and upon due consideration of their own abilities to discharge what they undertake: And therefore when men are without any such special motives found to thrust themselves into such Employments, or stand in competition with men as well, or better qualified for the business than themselves, this is generally looked upon as a just Cause of suspicion of some sinister Ends and Designs in them.

This being so in Private Trusts, Why is it not, or should it not be much more so in Publick, since they are of greater Importance? And yet it is not always in these? The reason is this: Of *Publick Offices* of Trust, some are also *Offices of Profit*, and reason good they should be so, being *Offices* of great Skill and Pains, and requiring the expence of living proportionable to the Dignity of the Office: And such as Providence hath left to get their Livings by their Labour, may reasonably desire such honest Employments as they are duly qualified for. But in this there are usually great faults committed, as 1. When men, who are in a competent, decent, and convenient way of living, are not contented therewith, but Ambitiously aspiring, or Insatiably gaping, after greater and higher Matters: These are not, nor cannot be either compleat Christians, or truly good Men, and when the Temptation comes, do usually shew themselves. 2. When they seek such Places meerly for the Profit, and are not sufficiently qualified

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duly to discharge the Office and Trust. 3. When by their Interest or Friends, they interpose to keep out better or fitter Men than themselves; in both which cases they do Prejudice to the Publick, and are Obstacles and Impediments to its Service.

Other Offices and Employments are of great Trust, Honour and Authority, but of little or no Profit, but rather occasion of Expence. These; I conceive, are neither to be sought for the Honour or Authority by any, nor to be refused for their trouble or expence, by such as are well qualified for them, when they are regularly called to that Service. But of all Publick Trusts in this Nation, there is none, taken singly, of greater weight and concern than that of Enquiring, Consulting and Acting, in Parliament; of which I shall speak a little more particularly, as to the Persons to be Chosen for Representatives of the Commons, and the Duty of the Electors. Each of these hath a double Trust reposed in him, the one by the Electors for the special good of the place for which he is chosen, the other by the Constitution of our Government for the good of the whole Nation, wherein the Religion, Lives, Liberties, Properties, and whole concern of all that is valuable is comprehended, and many times great concerns of other Nations also: And in this the Representative of the meanest Borough hath an equal share with a Knight of the largest County.

The *Qualifications of a Person* to be chosen for such a Service, ought to be proportionable and agreeable to the Extent and Weight of the Trust, which is to be reposed in him. As 1. *Integrity*, and such Integrity as is not to be mov'd by any prospect of Profit, Honour, or Fear of the Faces of Men. 2. *Knowledge* and good Understanding in that variety of Matters, which may occur, and are there to be consider'd, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, the Principles of Laws and Government in general, and the Laws and Government of *England* in particular, and many other matters, with a good Sagacity, Prospect and Foresight, into the remote consequences of things. 3. *Diligence and Industry*, to attend and consider, and prepare and forward matters of Importance to the Publick. These are necessary, if not indispensable qualifications; to which may be added two others, of great use, that is, 4. *Elocution*, so as to speak pertinently and closely to business, and 5. *Reputation* of Integrity and good Judgment which usually makes what is spoken by such a Person to be

be the more regarded by the rest. These five qualifications are as requisite to a compleat Parliament Man, as are the five Senses to a Compleat Man.

Such indeed are to be desired, to be sought for, to be preferred and chosen, where they may be had. But where persons thus qualified in all particulars, and in the highest degree, are not to be had, in such case they that come nearest are to be chosen, especially at such times when matters of great moment and concern are to be ordered. This is plain and evident, because the End, which all men in such cases are by the Laws of God and Nature obliged to intend, is the publick Good, and by consequence are likewise obliged to make choice of the most just and proper means and Instruments for the attaining of that End; and such only are those who have most of the principal qualifications aforesaid, and in the highest degree.

And by this Rule may all such, both Competitors and Electors, who are more concerned to discharge their Duty and serve their Country, than to gratify their Ambition or serve a private interest, easily direct their Actions, and judge of the actions of others. And therefore 1. for Competitors, whoever, because of his Quality, his Estate and Ability to spend most Money, or his interest among his neighbours upon any other score than the qualifications aforesaid, shall oppose another better qualified in those respects for this purpose than himself, does certainly either Act upon mistaken Principles, or is transported with a vain Ambition, or has not that Affection for his Country, and Sense of his Duty, as he ought to have. And this may be further demonstrated from a familiar Instance, for there is no Wise and Considerate Man, but in his private matters of Law, in matters relating to his Health, in matters of Dealings with other Men, and the like, will seek assistance from such as are of more Ability in those respects than himself; and therefore in matters of greatest moment to himself to his Posterity, and whole Country, not to do the like, is inconsistent both with common Prudence, and that sense of Duty, and of the weight of his undertaking, which every Honest man hath in the acceptance of but a private Trust; and certainly mens so forward intruding into a Trust of so great Importance, deserves no other Construction than it doth, and usually hath, in the case of a Private Trust, under the like Circumstances.

By the same Rule also may the *Electors* as easily direct their choice,

if they intend the Just and Honest discharge of their Duty ; that is, if they regard only or principally the true and proper qualifications of the Person for the business for which he is to be chosen, and lay aside all by respects and private concerns. Some men pretend that a good *Estate* is a necessary, or principal qualification, to oblige the person to be the more concern'd for so considerable an Interest, but that is but a meer Fallacy ; for a Covetous or Ambitious Man will be apt to use that as a step to Sacrifice the Interest of his Country, to the satisfaction of his Humour, which soever it is, whereas an honest man contented with his condition, will be no less careful to preserve the little he hath, than he that hath more. Others are carried on upon the consideration of *Friendship*, which is as unreasonable as if a man instead of an able Lawyer or Physician, should make choice of a person but meanly Skilled in either of those Sciences because he is his Friend: and as absurd and unreasonable it is for any man to take it ill from his Friend, who chooseth the assistance of a more proper Man in a special case than himself. The first of these does plainly prefer his private Friendship before the publick good of his Country, and the latter his own Interest or humour before either. A like mistake is very common in Cities and Boroughs, where they think themselves obliged to choose their actual or expected *Benefactors*, and they again expect to be chosen. Of these we may judge by what is said of the last. In the Country many are swayed by *Fear of the displeasure* of their Landlords or great Neighbours, and they as unreasonably expect their compliance. The former do in a matter of greater importance, the choice of Trustees for their Country, what they would not do in a less, the choice of Trustees for a small Estate of their own: And the latter take from their Neighbours that Freedom, which they would not have taken from themselves; or having basely given up their own, would injuriously Usurp their Neighbours Right, as hath often been the case of late times. For *that Rabble* of Brutes who are ready to Sacrifice all to their Bellies, they are scarce capable of hearing Reason, *Venter non habet aures*, but if any of them have so much humanity left as to listen to it, the Rule before expressed may direct them.







