A
DEFENCE
OF THE
MEASURES
OF THE
Present Administration.
BEING AN
Impartial ANSWER
to
What has been objected against it:
IN
A LETTER to ———

Hermes ad Deos nulla re proprius accedunt, quam salutem Hominibus dando.
Cicero de Legibus.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Peele at Locke's Head in Amen-Corner, Pater-noster-row.
MDCCXXXI.
SIR,

SHOULD I agree with you, that the Outcries and Complaints against the present Administration are loud and numerous, yet I can't help thinking them so frivolous and groundless, that, I doubt
I doubt not, without assuming to my self, in any Sort, the Character of an able political Writer, and by Virtue merely of plain Understanding, and Freedom from Prejudice, I shall be able to give you such a clear and honest Account of Things, as, I hope, may prove satisfactory, and what, you will own, ought to convince all Men who have any Candor, as well as put to Silence those, who have none.

In the first place, these Complaints and Outcries are not even so much as a good Foundation for supposing, there have been any Defects whatever in the publick Counsels: For, in a Frame of Government, like ours, there is one Circumstance, will always lessen the Popularity of a Ministry, if not their Authority, which is the Continuance of their Administration. The longer they are in Power, the more, Discontent, Envy, and the Desire of Change strengthen and rise upon them; new Parties and Cabals start up daily; Disappointments that can't be help'd, create Enmities that can't be appeas'd, and Hope and Dependance which were their Supports at first, are chang'd into Despair and
and Revenge, and become their Obstacles at last. Let Faction therefore be ever so headstrong, and bear with what Violence it will against Statesmen, this makes nothing against their Abilities and Merit; 'tis what will happen equally at all Times, whether Affairs are conducted with Wisdom and Success, or not: And that they have indeed been wisely conducted by the present Ministry, I will instantly endeavour to make appear.

In order then, Sir, to give your Judgment the rightest Direction in this Controversy, and remove any disadvantageous Ideas you may have conceiv'd of the Gentlemen now in Power, either from the Malice and Misrepresentation of Writers against them, or the weak and unskilful Defences of some who have appear'd for them, I must beg the Favour of you to look back with me a little, and see what State, Affairs were in some Years ago.

The Peace of Utrecht (exceptionable as it was in the whole) provided however for the Interest of England so far, that it left us in good Terms of Friendship with Spain, the People
People whom of all others, it is our Interest to be well with; nor could we have fail’d to find our Advantage, in the Temper they were then in towards us, had our Affairs been conducted with the Wisdom they might have been: But this was not our good Fortune; Opportunities the most favourable for strengthening this Amity were neglected, and Measures the most destructive of it, were enter’d into. This I take to be the Foundation of the several Perplexities that have since attended us: We lost at once the good Will of a Nation, naturally inclin’d to love us, and who (when left to themselves) prefer our Traffick, to that of every other Country; a Traffick of greater mutual Advantage to both Nations, than that of any other Country can be to either of them respectively.

This Breach with Spain was indeed a little patch’d up, (but far from being cur’d) by the Quadruple Alliance; the Spaniard, full of Hate, was meditating Revenge, when a proper Opportunity should fall in his Way, and he was not long without one.
And to make Matters yet worse, the Power, for whose Sake we had thus incens'd our best Friend, and most natural Ally, for whose Interest alone we had gone into such wild Schemes and Counsels, grew every Hour less kind to us, as I take it, for that very Reason; the more we oblig'd him, the less tractable he was, and the harder to be brought into any thing (tho' ever so reasonable) that was desir'd of him.

The Want of Wisdom in publick Counsels is certainly never more seen; than when we cultivate the Friendship of those Powers, who can do us no Good, and fall out with others, who can do us Mischief; and yet from the Conduct of former Administrations; and the great Wisdom and reputed Learning of those that presided in them, one wou'd imagine, Machiavel, and all the political Writers had affirm'd quite the contrary.

Some other Incidents likewise fell out about this Time, that look'd very unpropitious with regard to England.
This was the State of Affairs when the present Ministry first came into Power.

The unreasonable Malice of disappointed Persons has indeed thought fit to point out One Gentleman, as the whole Administration; but as I do not conceive, there is any such thing, as what they term a Prime Minister in Great Britain, which is purely a Creation of their own fruitful Fancies, in order to vent their particular Spleen and Resentment on that One Person; I shall choose to confine myself to the mentioning Facts only, which, I doubt not, will speak sufficiently for themselves, and leave you, Sir, to place the Merits or Demerits of them, where you judge them to be justly due.

These Gentlemen, then, plainly foresaw from the Complexion of Things, that darken'd yet more and more, that Mischief must be gathering somewhere. To prevent it wholly, was perhaps not possible; the most that could be done was, to find out early of what Nature the Danger was, and in what Maturity, so as not to be surpriz'd and taken at unawares,
unawares, and to make the best Provision that could be, to meet it: To this End therefore, their whole Vigilance was bent, and had such Success, that they effectually trac’d out and discover’d the great Event itself, that soon follow’d, with the several Steps that led to it, (I mean the Alliance between Spain and the Emperor) before it came to be publickly avow’d.

The great Skill of a Politician it must be granted is, to get into the Cabinets of those Princes, from whom any thing is to be fear’d, and timely to create good Dispositions in those, from whom any thing is to be hoped: But to proceed.

Never was there a Crisis of Affairs so ominous for England, as at this Time: The League between these great Powers (the one so formidable by his Armies, the other for his Treasures) was now declar’d and glory’d in, and the main Scope of it, and the principal Matter concerted by it, was a Design to deprive this Nation of some of their Possessions, and valuable Privileges of Trade, to alter the Ballance of Europe, and even to
strike at the present happy Establishment of this Kingdom. It is highly probable, that this was agreed on between them at first, whether it were formally express'd in their Treaty, or can be prov'd to have been so, or not: At least it is certain, that such an Alliance could ultimately tend to nothing else, and that the Nature of Things themselves would at length lead to that Resolution. The Motives that induc'd to a Project so extraordinary, and that at first may seem almost incredible in regard of one of them, will open in the Sequel of these Pages.

In this Situation we had three great Points to gain.

The first of them, and without which we had been destitute of all human Resource, was to keep the French from giving into the View of our Enemies, or warping in the least towards it, and by degrees, to make it less and less expedient or practicable for them to do so. But what Bars, what Obstacles had the English Ministers in their Way! The universal Hopes and wishes of France were against them; the known
Inclinations of some of the Statesmen they had to do with, were also against them; and in a Word, every thing seem'd to thwart so necessary and great a Design.

One would indeed have thought, that no Conduct could easily extricate us from such a Situation. But without enquiring here, by what happy Applications to the Interests; Tempers and Understandings of Men this was effected, that it was effected is most certain: France united in closer Alliance with us, and kept steady to that Alliance, and by doing so, entirely defeated all the secret Designs of those two Powers before-mention'd. The Success of all no doubt depended here, and the best Hopes of the Enemies of the Administration were the Hopes they had conceiv'd of the In­sincerity of the French, and of their not abiding long by their Engagements: but that they flatter'd themselves in this is evident; the Satisfaction lately given in the Affair of Dunkirk (if there were no other) is one good Proof of it; the general Hatred which all the Jacobites in England bear to the Cardinal de Fleury, is a better; that Satis­faction,
faction, given at a Time, when it might so easily have been evaded, shews how firm the French are to our Friendship; and the Jacobites Treatment of his Eminence, shews how much they despair of his.

But what makes the Management of those concern'd in this Particular still more to their Honour is, the Address made Use of, to keep France in this good Temper towards us, thro' the Revolutions that happen'd in their Counsels, and thro' successive Ministries that came into the Direction, with different Views, and variously affecting us.

This was one of the three great Points to be gain'd: Our very Being, as a Protestant and free People, depended on it.

Nor were the Administration while thus employ'd, and in the Progress of such salutary Negotiations, regardless of the Publick in other Respects. Attempts were not forgot to be guarded against, that might in the mean Time be made upon us without the Concurrence of France; and for this End, that
that Fleet under Hofsier was sent to the West Indies. The Scheme was, to disarm a present Enemy; this was necessary: And to leave the Way open for a future Friend; this was politic: The Treasure therefore of the Spaniards was kept back, till it was render'd useless to them, as to all dangerous Purposes, and that it could not be employ'd, with Effect, against our selves, and then permitted to be brought home, still taking Care not to aggravate this Treatment, by any malicious Hostility, or new and needless Provocation, but rather bearing some Violences from them, without making Repri-sals; which Way of acting, let me observe to you Sir, did not spring from want of Magnanimity, but from the best, and weightiest Reasons (as will more fully appear) that Wisdom it self, or the Love of one's Country could dictate: We had before eminently suffer'd, by a rash and undue Exertion of national Prowess and Valour; and we have not now been less Gainers, by the prudent restraining of it.

The next, or second material Point to be gain'd, was, to find Means (if Means could be
be found) to disunite the two Powers, whom Interest had now united against us; nor Interest only, but a stronger Cement even than that, *viz.* Hatred and Revenge working in them both with the same Force, and directed to the same Object. Here indeed was a Task of Difficulty, and, you would say, not to be surmounted; if Prudence, Opportunity, Moderation, could not surmount all Things: At length therefore (as the Series of Affairs shews) even this was effected; such Measures were taken, as to create in the Spaniards first, Jealousies of their new Ally; by Degrees, doubtful and irresolute Counsels, a Slowness in making good their Engagements to him, then a Disposition to abate of their Enmity to us; at last the very Person who made this Alliance is disgrac'd and imprison'd; the Subsidies stipulated to the Emperor; and for some Time punctually paid him, are kept back; and 'tis even likely his Imperial Majesty has had all the Peruvian Gold he will ever get by this Canal.

And thus, what was so necessary (tho' difficult and worth Territories to effect) was
was happily accomplish'd, and cannot, I presume, be said to be among those Things, which any Person might have done as well.

It seems to me rather to be of that kind of Transactions, which Livy says, require Time, and Patience, and Resolution, as well as Skill and Address, to execute, and which do not yield to ordinary Methods of Management, without knowing the * Biases of human Nature it self.

This was the second great Particular to be obtain'd.

You see now in what Train Things are; they go on successfully Abroad, and agreeably to the Aims and Desires of the Administration: But at Home 'tis otherwise; Batteries of all Sorts are continually playing against his Majesty's Measures, they are traduc'd and vilify'd every Week: Libels are fill'd with the Captures of our Ships

* Propensîa Ingeniorum.

C and
and what not? Complaints of Merchants ——
Computations of Losses —— now Peace with
the Expence of War —— now War under
the Inaction of Peace —— and so on ——
nor ever did Faction breathe with so much
Boldness and Defiance.

In this Juncture, Sir, it was, that the Mi-
nistry of England exercis'd a Discretion,
Fortitude, and Sufferance that few Men are
equal to; and despising Loads of Obloquy
and Defamation, continued firm in those
Measures, which alone they knew their
Country in the End could truly profit
by.

We might indeed by insulting the Coasts
of Spain, or some other Act of Hostility,
have gain'd a noisy present Renown; but
that vain Triumph, and the idle Popularity
arising from bombarding a Sea Port, and
bringing home a few Cargoes of Snuff and
Trinkets, was justly despis'd by those, who
were the Guardians of our Welfare: Their
Business who had the Care of a Nation
committed to them, certainly, was not to
encrease the good Will of the Spaniards

to the Imperialists, by increasing their ill Will to England: It could not be for our Interest, to estrange them still more from us, but to endeavour to conciliate them, by a forbearing and temperate Conduct, and to act in every thing, as might most tend to recover the Amity of a Nation so useful to us.

The recovering of this Amity, was the third and last great Point to be carry'd, and what alone could lay the Interest of our Country in sure and solid Foundations: But was this to be done, by reducing Spain by Force of Arms to a faithless, temporary Compliance? Was it to be done by only obliging them to stifle their Enmity for a Season, in order to its breaking out with more Fury afterwards? No surely — blustering Violence, and the Pomp and Terror of Naval Armaments, were Methods the most opposite to this great and desirable End, which could only be brought about, by sinking the Remembrance of Injuries in Acts of Friendship, and by making former Refentments yield to present Obligations.
The securing the Italian Duke doms to Don Carlos, was what the Queen of Spain had above all things at Heart: Here then was an Opportunity of indulging her most darling Passion; this Way she might be courted and won: a Plan is accordingly form'd for that Purpose, the wisest Thing in all its Effects and Consequences, that could be thought on, by a Ministry in such a Situation. This Plan is accepted, and the Means for putting it in Execution agreed on.

And here I shall leave it, only taking Notice on Occasion of what I have been mentioning, that it may be a Doubt, whether political Authors (even the best of them) have not contributed more to the making bad, than good Statesmen; and the Reason I take it is, that the fine Rules and Maxims laid down by them, are only of Use, where they meet with Genius and Judgment to apply them, and to know precisely how far they are true, and where the Exceptions, are to be made. It is, for Instance, a very good general Rule, to go to War.
War rather than suffer Insults; and yet there are many Cafes, in which plainly nothing would be so mischievous as the Observation of it: To overlook small Injuries may be the best Policy at one Time, and the worst at another.

I have shewn you, Sir, in general, the State we were in some Time ago, and that which we are since arriv'd to; the Dangers that threatened us, and the Designs of our Enemies (dreadful as they were) are vanish'd and defeated; the Empire and Spain are divided more effectually, than they could be by Oceans between them; the latter from being an embitter'd Enemy, is growing into a hearty Friend; while the Views and Policy of the French are so interwoven with ours, as probably neither leaves it in their Inclination, or easily or suddenly in their Power, to enter into Schemes prejudicial to us, and in Favour of the Pretender.

As to that Person, the English Nation disclaims him on Account of his Religion, and I believe it will be allow'd me, that no other
other will risque much for him on that Account only.

The general Plan of the Administration, and the three principal Things to be effected by it, have been explain'd.

I will now beg you to take a very short View, of some of the collateral and intermediate Benefits, that have accrued from the Measures, his Majesty has been pleas'd to take.

In the first opening of these Affairs, the Emperor's Power was excessively to be fear'd, especially by the Dutch, who were at that Time in the most defenceless Posture, nor wanted other Reasons (beside the Ambition of this Prince) to add to their Apprehensions of him. The Opposition made to the Oostend East-India Trade, and the bringing of that unfaithful Project to nothing, was what could never be forgiven either to us, or Holland. England remonstrates, and awakens them into a quicker Sense of their Danger; they see it, they feel it, they provide instantly against it, augmenting
menting their Troops, fortifying their Frontiers, and coming unreservedly into all other Measures for the mutual Defence of both Nations.

At the same Time, the North, where the Interest of England is so much concerned on Account of our Trade, was by no means neglected, but our Fleets were sent seasonably for their Deliverance; and by Conventions made with those Princes, new Strength was given to our other Alliances, and the Dominions of Germany, in Friendship with us, prevented from being thrown into Confusion.

All this, it must be own'd, could not be done without Expence; but surely, Sir, it was the best judg'd, and most warrantable Expence that could be: The Protestant Estates of the Empire, and the Powers of the North, are united by common Ties, each the other's Support, and the Support of England; and the suffering any of them to be distress'd or weaken'd, were so far to weaken ourselves, and to take Weight out of the Scale which weighs against Popery.

The
The Charge therefore we have been at in this Particular, was not for the Sake of a small German Duchy, but in reality, for the Safety of the whole Protestant Interest Abroad, which is strictly speaking our own Safety; and the same Measures (supposing us to know, and pursue our true Interest) must equally have been taken, tho' an Elector of Hanover, had not been King of England; the Complaints made on this Head, are surely most unreasonable.

In regard then to the North, we have undoubtedly held the Ballance of Power, which has been said (but very untruly) in other Respects, to have been transfer'd to other Hands, tho' admitting that for Fact, it could not in the Tract we now are, continue there long, but must by a political Necessity, return back to those, in whose keeping it ought to be.

We are told indeed, that thro' this whole Scene we have been a Bubble to France: But how, and which Way? Why truly this great Popish Power has been, and is a great Instrument in protecting the Protestant ones;
their Arms, their Embassies, and their Treasure have been employ'd to our Use and Service, and we have plainly had that Weight and Credit in their Counsels, as to keep them from precipitating a War, and from laying hold of the Opportunity before them of invading the Netherlands, and extending themselves on the Side they could most wish it: This, in my humble Judgment, has not the least Appearance of our having been their Dupes.

And all this while, it must not be unobserv'd, the Power of the Emperor (the reducing of which within due Bounds, was one of the chief Things in View) declin'd insensibly, as it were, and of it self: He was artfully kept in the Apprehension of a War, and harass'd and worn out by marching his Troops, and the Expences requir'd in so doubtfull a Conjuncture; the Hopes too of Supplies of Money, as well from England as Spain, are by no unjust Precaution taken from him, and when his Occasions requir'd it most, he had no Wealth to trust to, but his own: Thus the End of War (which if once begun, no one can tell the Consequence
quence of) was had without it, and all that was aim'd at, in regard to him, obtain'd by Form of Treaty, and the Amusement of Congresses, and Negotiations. These, Sir, are quiet Arts of Conquest, and which have at once been practis'd with the greatest Success, and ridicul'd with the greatest Dullness.

Of this kind, are some of the collateral and intermediate Advantages, that have arose from the British Counsels. To conclude therefore.

What has been said thro' these Pages, is no other, than a plain, unforc'd Deduction from plain Facts; and by it you manifestly see, that the several Accusations brought against the publick Measures, fall of themselves: That by them, at least, England's main Chance is secur'd, and that the Inconvenience we may have suffer'd, bears no Proportion to the Good we have gain'd: You see the Stedfastness, Foresight and Event of the Ministry's Designs, their Dexterity in obviating Mischief, they no Way contributed to, their Application, their Ad
dress
dread and their Knowledge of foreign Interests and Affairs, the Want of which, has been so triumphantly objected to them.

The Sum of all is this ——

Never was the Protestant Cause in general in more Danger, than the Gentlemen now in Power found it, or in greater Safety, than they have brought it to: Never was England nearer its Ruin, than on their coming to the Head of Affairs; nor ever farther from it, than at this Time: Let me assure you, Sir, it is no easy Thing to blunder after this Manner.

What great Politicians did they pass for, who contriv'd the Quarrel with Spain, and the South Sea Project! And how are they abus'd, to whom we owe our Deliverance from the Calamities entail'd on us, by both of them! So egregiously does the World mistake the Talents and Characters of Men.

I do not think it necessary to add any Thing farther in Defence of the Measures themselves: However I will just hint at some
of the very uncommon Difficulties, the Conducters of them had to oppose them at Home, beside those they met with Abroad.

They had been some Years at the Helm, during which Time Affairs seem'd in great Tranquillity thro' Europe, and nothing appear'd to a common Eye, that boded Disturbance: But this Scene chang'd, as you know, of a sudden; and Sedition that had been working before in secret, and making Use of the Opportunities given by a long Administration, to distress and attack it, laid hold of this Opportunity also. In short, the Discontents and Murmurings against the Management of the Gentlemen concern'd, came at length to a great Height, and while they were labouring to rescue us from Evils threatened from Abroad, they saw a fiercer and more malignant Opposition here, than perhaps was ever known; Conspiracies, domestic and foreign, at once united against them.

Soon after this, the Demise of the late King, flatter'd the Enemies of the Administration,
dition, with the Ruin of it: They wildly hop'd, the Royal Successor would take Part in their unreasonable Revenge and personal Dislikes, and were so blinded with their Malice, as not to foresee, that a wise and just Prince (who on all Occasions has shewn himself the true Father of his Country) would continue those highest in his Favour, who had with him constantly pursu’d the sole End in his View, of making the Nation flourishing and happy. You must own they had now, Sir, a difficult Game to play; intricate Pretensions were to be adjusted, Coalitions to be effected, of Parties which private Ends had render’d most opposite; new Factions were to be contended with, and all the Confusion of particular Interests, natural to a beginning Reign: But nothing was insuperable to the Genius of the Ministers; they rose above all the Difficulties, that surrounded them, they baffled the Attacks of their Adversaries, and broke and disappointed them in every Thing they went about.

And now, Sir, what Figure do these Gentlemen make with you? View them from their
their first Entrance into Power; consider the dangerous Men, they have either incapacitated; or render'd insignificant during their Administration; the suspicious, angry Minds, they have soften'd, and won; the Tricksters they have circumvented; the purse-proud Fools they have humbled; the well-meaning good Men they have kept steddy, and the vain and ambitious ones they have kept under.

Judge then of their Abilities, and at the same Time judge of the Discernment, and Wit of those Persons, or of their Sincerity, who have bestow'd upon them every other Distinction and Title, but that which they alone deserve, of wise and upright Men.

As to Imputations that do not affect them in their publick Characters, I owe too much to myself to take Notice of them; they relate generally to their Fortunes, their Families, their Persons; whatever is foreign to the Question itself — and are always either impertinent, or abusive, or dull, or all together. I shall therefore leave such Topicks, to Writers of Talents, like theirs, who furnish them.
There is one particular, not altogether of a personal Nature, which must not be pass'd over here: The most plausible Thing urg'd by the Ministry in the last Years of Queen Anne, for their Justification was, the good Policy of despising the Alliance of the Emperor, and preferring that of Spain. This was then their Defence, and this they now charge upon the present Measures, as a Point not to be defended; the present Ministers have imitated them, in the only imitable Part of their Conduct, and that they defame them for; and what was made the Merit of their own Administration, they would, with uncommon Absurdity, make the Crime of this; but Things change not their Nature with Mens Passions, nor do publick Interests vary with private ones; it always was, and always will be the Interest of England to keep well with Spain, whether Lord B. is in Affairs, or out of them.

I hope, Sir, I have made good the Promise I gave you at my setting out, and convinc'd you, that whatever has been ordinar-
riply objected to his Majesty's Counsels, and the Conduct of his Ministers, is groundless, and of no Weight.

I am,

SIR, &c.