

When Alexander ordered all the exiles to be restored throughout all the cities, it was found, that the whole amounted to 20,000 men; <sup>b</sup> the remains probably of still greater slaughters and massacres. What an astonishing multitude in so narrow a country as ancient Greece! And what domestic confusion, jealousy, partiality, revenge, heart-burnings, must have torn those cities, where factions were wrought up to such a degree of fury and despair!

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Greece. There were banished from Sybaris 500 of the nobles and their partisans; lib. xii. p. 77. *ex edit. Rhodomanni.* Of Chiana, 600 citizens banished; lib. xiii. p. 189. At Ephesus, 340 killed, 1000 banished; lib. xiii. p. 223. Of Cyrenians, 500 nobles killed, all the rest banished; lib. xiv. p. 263. The Corinthians killed 120, banished 500; lib. xiv. p. 304. Phæbidas the Spartan banished 300 Bœotians; lib. xv. p. 342. Upon the fall of the Lacedæmonians, democracies were restored in many cities, and severe vengeance taken of the nobles, after the Greek manner. But matters did not end there. For the banished nobles, returning in many places, butchered their adversaries at Phialæ, in Corinth, in Megara, in Phliasia. In this last place they killed 300 of the people; but these again revolting, killed above 600 of the nobles, and banished the rest; lib. xv. p. 357. In Arcadia 1400 banished, besides many killed. The banished retired to Sparta and to Pallantium: The latter were delivered up to their countrymen, and all killed; lib. xv. p. 373. Of the banished from Argos and Thebes, there were 500 in the Spartan army; *id.* p. 374. Here is a detail of the most remarkable of Agathocles's cruelties from the same author. The people, before his usurpation, had banished 600 nobles; lib. xix. p. 655. Afterwards that tyrant, in concurrence with the people, killed 4000 nobles, and banished 6000; *id.* p. 647. He killed 4000 people at Gela; *id.* p. 741. By Agathocles's brother 8000 banished from Syracuse; lib. xx. p. 757. The inhabitants of Ægesta, to the number of 40,000, were killed, man, woman, and child; and with tortures, for the sake of their money; *id.* p. 802. All the relations, to wit, father, brother, children, grandfather, of his Libyan army, killed; *id.* p. 803. He killed 7000 exiles after capitulation; *id.* p. 816. It is to be remarked, that Agathocles was a man of great sense and courage, and is not to be suspected of wanton cruelty, contrary to the maxims of his age.

\* Diod. Sic. lib. xviii.

It would be easier, says Isocrates to Philip, to raise an army in Greece at present from the vagabonds than from the cities.

Even when affairs came not to such extremities (which they failed not to do almost in every city twice or thrice every century), property was rendered very precarious by the maxims of ancient government. Xenophon, in the Banquet of Socrates, gives us a natural unaffected description of the tyranny of the Athenian people. 'In my poverty,' says Charmides, 'I am much more happy than I ever was while possessed of riches: as much as it is happier to be in security than in terrors, free than a slave, to receive than to pay court, to be trusted than suspected. Formerly I was obliged to caress every informer; some imposition was continually laid upon me; and it was never allowed me to travel, or be absent from the city. At present, when I am poor, I look big, and threaten others. The rich are afraid of me, and show me every kind of civility and respect; and I am become a kind of tyrant in the city.'<sup>o</sup>

In one of the pleadings of Lysias,<sup>4</sup> the orator very coolly speaks of it, by the by, as a maxim of the Athenian people, that whenever they wanted money, they put to death some of the rich citizens as well as strangers, for the sake of the forfeiture. In mentioning this, he seems not to have any intention of blaming them, still less of provoking them, who were his audience and judges.

Whether a man was a citizen or a stranger among that people, it seemed indeed requisite, either that he should impoverish himself, or that the people would

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<sup>o</sup> Pag. 865, ex edit. Leunclav.

<sup>4</sup> Orat. 29, in Nicom.

impoverish him, and perhaps kill him into the bargain. The orator last mentioned gives a pleasant account of an estate laid out in the public service; \* that is, above the third of it in raree-shows and figured dances.

I need not insist on the Greek tyrannies, which were altogether horrible. Even the mixed monarchies, by which most of the ancient states of Greece were governed, before the introduction of republics, were very unsettled. Scarcely any city, but Athens, says Isocrates, could show a succession of kings for four or five generations. †

Besides many other obvious reasons for the instability of ancient monarchies, the equal division of property among the brothers of private families, must, by a

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\* In order to recommend his client to the favour of the people, he enumerates all the sums he had expended. When *χωρηγος* 30 minas; Upon a chorus of men 20 minas; *ισοπυρριχισταίς*, 8 minas; *ανδρασι χορηγων*, 50 minas; *κυλικω χωρα*, 3 minas: Seven times trierarch, where he spent 6 talents: Taxes, once 30 minas, another time 40; *γυμνασιαρχων*: 12 minas; *χωρηγος παιδικω χωρα*, 15 minas: *κομοδοις χορηγων*, 18 minas; *πυρριχισταίς*, *αγνισιοις*, 7 minas; *τριηρι αμιλλομενος*, 15 minas; *αρχιθεωρος*, 30 minas: In the whole ten talents 38 minas. An immense sum for an Athenian fortune, and what alone would be esteemed great riches, *Orat.* 20. It is true, he says, the law did not oblige him absolutely to be at so much expense, not above a fourth. But without the favour of the people, nobody was so much as safe; and this was the only way to gain it. See farther, *Orat.* 24, *de pop. statu*. In another place, he introduces a speaker, who says that he had spent his whole fortune, and an immense one, eighty talents, for the people; *Orat.* 25 *de Prob. Evandri*. The *μειραις*, or strangers, find, says he, if they do not contribute largely enough to the people's fancy, that they have reason to repent it; *Orat.* 30. *contra Phil.* You may see with what care Demosthenes displays his expenses of this nature, when he pleads for himself *de corona*; and how he exaggerates Midias's stinginess in this particular, in his accusation of that criminal. All this, by the by, is a mark of a very iniquitous judicature: And yet the Athenians valued themselves on having the most legal and regular administration of any people in Greece.

† Panath.

necessary consequence, contribute to unsettle and disturb the state. The universal preference given to the elder by modern laws, though it increases the inequality of fortunes, has, however, this good effect, that it accustoms men to the same idea in public succession, and cuts off all claim and pretension of the younger.

The new settled colony of Heraclea, falling immediately into faction, applied to Sparta, who sent Heripidas with full authority to quiet their dissensions. This man, not provoked by any opposition, not inflamed by party rage, knew no better expedient than immediately putting to death about 500 of the citizens; <sup>a</sup> a strong proof how deeply rooted these violent maxims of government were throughout all Greece.

If such was the disposition of men's minds among that refined people, what may be expected in the commonwealths of Italy, Africa, Spain, and Gaul, which were denominated barbarous? Why otherwise did the Greeks so much value themselves on their humanity, gentleness, and moderation, above all other nations? This reasoning seems very natural. But unluckily the history of the Roman commonwealth, in its earlier times, if we give credit to the received accounts, presents an opposite conclusion. No blood was ever shed in any sedition at Rome till the murder of the Gracchi. Dionysius Halicarnassæus, <sup>b</sup> observing the singular humanity of the Roman people in this particular, makes use of it as an argument that they were originally of Grecian extraction: Whence we may conclude, that the factions and revolutions in the barbarous republics were usually more violent than even those of Greece above mentioned.

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<sup>a</sup> Diod. Sic. lib. xiv.

<sup>b</sup> Lib. i.

If the Romans were so late in coming to blows, they made ample compensation after they had once entered upon the bloody scene; and Appian's history of their civil wars contains the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures, that ever was presented to the world. What pleases most, in that historian, is, that he seems to feel a proper resentment of these barbarous proceedings; and talks not with that provoking coolness and indifference which custom had produced in many of the Greek historians.<sup>1</sup>

The maxim of ancient politics contain, in general, so little humanity and moderation, that it seems superfluous to give any particular reason for the acts of violence committed at any particular period. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that the laws, in the later period of the Roman commonwealth, were so absurdly contrived, that they obliged the heads of parties to have recourse to these extremities. All capital punishments

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<sup>1</sup> The authorities above cited are all historians, orators, and philosophers, whose testimony is unquestioned. It is dangerous to rely upon writers who deal in ridicule and satire. What will posterity, for instance, infer from this passage of Dr Swift? 'I told him, that in the kingdom of Tribnia (Britain), by the natives called Langdon (London), where I had sojourned some time in my travels, the bulk of the people consist, in a manner, wholly of discoverers, witnesses, informers, accusers, prosecutors, evidences, swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern instruments, all under the colours, the conduct, and pay of ministers of state and their deputies. The plots in that kingdom are usually the workmanship of those persons,' &c. *Gulliver's Travels*. Such a representation might suit the government of Athens, not that of England, which is remarkable, even in modern times, for humanity, justice, and liberty. Yet the Doctor's satire, though carried to extremes, as is usual with him, even beyond other satirical writers, did not altogether want an object. The Bishop of Rochester, who was his friend, and of the same party, had been banished a little before by a bill of attainder, with great justice, but without such a proof as was legal, or according to the strict forms of common law.

were abolished: However criminal, or, what is more, however dangerous any citizen might be, he could not regularly be punished otherwise than by banishment: And it became necessary, in the revolutions of party, to draw the sword of private vengeance; nor was it easy, when laws were once violated, to set bounds to these sanguinary proceedings. Had Brutus himself prevailed over the *triumvirate*; could he, in common prudence, have allowed Octavius and Antony to live, and have contented himself with banishing them to Rhodes or Marseilles, where they might still have plotted new commotions and rebellions? His executing C. Antonius, brother to the *triumvir*, shows evidently his sense of the matter. Did not Cicero, with the approbation of all the wise and virtuous of Rome, arbitrarily put to death Catiline's accomplices, contrary to law, and without any trial or form of process? and if he moderated his executions, did it not proceed, either from the clemency of his temper, or the conjunctures of the times? A wretched security in a government which pretends to laws and liberty!

Thus one extreme produces another. In the same manner as excessive severity in the laws is apt to beget great relaxation in their execution; so their excessive lenity naturally produces cruelty and barbarity. It is dangerous to force us, in any case, to pass their sacred boundaries.

One general cause of the disorders, so frequent in all ancient governments, seems to have consisted in the great difficulty of establishing any aristocracy in those ages, and the perpetual discontents and seditious of the people, whenever even the meanest and most beggarly were excluded from the legislature and from public offices. The very quality of *freemen* gave such a rank,

being opposed to that of slave, that it seemed to entitle the possessor to every power and privilege of the commonwealth. Solon's <sup>k</sup> laws excluded no freemen from votes or elections, but confined some magistracies to a particular *census*; yet were the people never satisfied till those laws were repealed. By the treaty with Antipater,<sup>1</sup> no Athenian was allowed a vote whose *census* was less than 2000 *drachmas* (about 60*l.* Sterling). And though such a government would to us appear sufficiently democratical, it was so disagreeable to that people, that above two-thirds of them immediately left their country.<sup>m</sup> Cassander reduced that *census* to the half;<sup>n</sup> yet still the government was considered as an oligarchical tyranny, and the effect of foreign violence.

Servius Tullius's <sup>o</sup> laws seem equal and reasonable, by fixing the power in proportion to the property; yet the Roman people could never be brought quietly to submit to them.

In those days there was no medium between a severe, jealous aristocracy, ruling over discontented subjects, and a turbulent, factious, tyrannical democracy.<sup>68</sup> At present, there is not one republic in Europe, from one extremity of it to the other, that is not remarkable for justice, lenity, and stability, equal to, or even beyond Marseilles, Rhodes, or the most celebrated in antiquity. Almost all of them are well tempered aristocracies.

But, *thirdly*, There are many other circumstances in which ancient nations seem inferior to the modern, both for the happiness and increase of mankind. Trade,

<sup>k</sup> Plutarch. in vita Solon.

<sup>1</sup> Diod. Sic. lib. xviii.

<sup>m</sup> Id. *ibid.*

<sup>n</sup> Id. *ibid.*

<sup>o</sup> Tit. Liv. lib. i. cap. 43.

<sup>68</sup> This sentence was not in the Editions prior to O.

manufactures, industry, were no where, in former ages, so flourishing as they are at present in Europe. The only garb of the ancients, both for males and females, seems to have been a kind of flannel, which they wore, commonly white or grey, and which they scoured as often as it became dirty. Tyre, which carried on, after Carthage, the greatest commerce of any city in the Mediterranean, before it was destroyed by Alexander, was no mighty city, if we credit Arrian's account of its inhabitants.<sup>p</sup> Athens is commonly supposed to have been a trading city; but it was as populous before the Median war as at any time after it, according to Herodotus;<sup>q</sup> yet its commerce at that time was so inconsiderable, that, as the same historian observes,<sup>r</sup> even the neighbouring coasts of Asia were as little frequented by the Greeks as the Pillars of Hercules, for beyond these he conceived nothing.

Great interest of money, and great profits of trade, are an infallible indication, that industry and commerce are but in their infancy. We read in Lysias<sup>s</sup> of 100 *per cent.* profit made on a cargo of two talents, sent to no greater distance than from Athens to the Adriatic; nor is this mentioned as an instance of extraordinary profit. Antidorus, says Demosthenes,<sup>t</sup> paid three talents and a half for a house, which he let at a talent a year; and the orator blames his own tutors for not employing his money to like advantage. My fortune,

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<sup>p</sup> Lib. ii. There were 8000 killed during the siege, and the captives amounted to 30,000. Diodorus Siculus, lib. xvii. says only 13,000; but he accounts for this small number by saying, that the Tyrians had sent away beforehand part of their wives and children to Carthage,

<sup>q</sup> Lib. v. he makes the number of the citizens amount to 30,000.

<sup>r</sup> *Ib.* v.

<sup>s</sup> Orat. 33. advers. Diagit.    <sup>t</sup> *Contra Aphob.* p. 25. ex edit. Aldi.



says he, in eleven years' minority, ought to have been tripled. The value of 20 of the slaves left by his father, he computes at 40 minas, and the yearly profit of their labour at 12.<sup>a</sup> The most moderate interest at Athens (for there was higher<sup>x</sup> often paid), was 12 *per cent.*,<sup>y</sup> and that paid monthly. Not to insist upon the high interest to which the vast sums distributed in elections had raised money<sup>z</sup> at Rome, we find, that Verres, before that factious period, stated 24 *per cent.* for money which he left in the hands of the publicans; and though Cicero exclaims against this article, it is not on account of the extravagant usury, but because it had never been customary to state any interest on such occasions.<sup>a</sup> Interest, indeed, sunk at Rome, after the settlement of the empire; but it never remained any considerable time so low as in the commercial states of modern times.<sup>b</sup>

Among the other inconveniences which the Athenians felt from the fortifying of Decelia by the Lacedæmonians, it is represented by Thucydides,<sup>c</sup> as one of the most considerable, that they could not bring over their corn from Eubœa by land, passing by Oropus, but were obliged to embark it, and to sail round the promontory of Sunium; a surprising instance of the imperfection of ancient navigation, for the water-carriage is not here above double the land.

I do not remember a passage in any ancient author, where the growth of a city is ascribed to the establishment of a manufacture. The commerce, which is said to flourish, is chiefly the exchange of those commodities,

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<sup>a</sup> Id. p. 19.

<sup>x</sup> Id. *ibid.*

<sup>y</sup> Id. *ibid.* and *Æschines contra Ctesiph.*

<sup>z</sup> *Epist. ad Attic. lib. iv. epist. 15.*

<sup>a</sup> *Contra Verr. Orat. 3.*

<sup>b</sup> See *Essay IV.*

<sup>c</sup> *Lib. vii.*

for which different soils and climates were suited. The sale of wine and oil into Africa, according to Diodorus Siculus,<sup>d</sup> was the foundation of the riches of Agrigentum. The situation of the city of Sybaris, according to the same author,<sup>e</sup> was the cause of its immense populousness, being built near the two rivers Crathys and Sybaris. But these two rivers, we may observe, are not navigable, and could only produce some fertile valleys for agriculture and tillage; an advantage so inconsiderable, that a modern writer would scarcely have taken notice of it.

The barbarity of the ancient tyrants, together with the extreme love of liberty which animated those ages, must have banished every merchant and manufacturer; and have quite depopulated the state, had it subsisted upon industry and commerce. While the cruel and suspicious Dionysius was carrying on his butcheries, who, that was not detained by his landed property, and could have carried with him any art or skill to procure a subsistence in other countries, would have remained exposed to such implacable barbarity? The persecutions of Philip II. and Louis XIV. filled all Europe with the manufactures of Flanders and of France.

I grant, that agriculture is the species of industry chiefly requisite to the subsistence of multitudes; and it is possible that this industry may flourish, even where manufactures and other arts are unknown and neglected. Switzerland is at present a remarkable instance, where we find, at once, the most skilful husbandmen, and the most bungling tradesmen; that are to be met with in Europe. That agriculture flourished in Greece and Italy, at least in some parts of them, and at some

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<sup>d</sup> Lib. xiii.

<sup>e</sup> Lib. xii.

periods, we have reason to presume; and whether the mechanical arts had reached the same degree of perfection, may not be esteemed so material, especially if we consider the great equality of riches in the ancient republics, where each family was obliged to cultivate, with the greatest care and industry, its own little field, in order to its subsistence.

But is it just reasoning, because agriculture may, in some instances, flourish without trade or manufactures; to conclude, that, in any great extent of country, and for any great tract of time, it would subsist alone? The most natural way, surely, of encouraging husbandry, is, first, to excite other kinds of industry, and thereby afford the labourer a ready market for his commodities, and a return for such goods as may contribute to his pleasure and enjoyment. This method is infallible and universal; and, as it prevails more in modern governments than in the ancient, it affords a presumption of the superior populousness of the former.

Every man, says Xenophon, ' may be a farmer: No art or skill is requisite: All consists in industry, and in attention to the execution; a strong proof, as Columella hints, that agriculture was but little known in the age of Xenophon.

All our later improvements and refinements, have they done nothing towards the easy subsistence of men, and consequently towards their propagation and increase? Our superior skill in mechanics; the discovery of new worlds, by which commerce has been so much enlarged; the establishment of posts; and the use of bills of exchange: These seem all extremely useful to the encouragement of art, industry; and populousness.

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' Oecon.

Were we to strike off these, what a check should we give to every kind of business and labour, and what multitudes of families would immediately perish from want and hunger? And it seems not probable, that we could supply the place of these new inventions by any other regulation or institution.

Have we reason to think, that the police of ancient states was any wise comparable to that of modern, or that men had then equal security, either at home, or in their journeys by land or water? I question not, but every impartial examiner would give us the preference in this particular.\*

Thus, upon comparing the whole, it seems impossible to assign any just reason, why the world should have been more populous in ancient than in modern times. The equality of property among the ancients, liberty, and the small divisions of their states, were indeed circumstances favourable to the propagation of mankind: But their wars were more bloody and destructive, their governments more factious and unsettled, commerce and manufactures more feeble and languishing, and the general police more loose and irregular. These latter disadvantages seem to form a sufficient counterbalance to the former advantages; and rather favour the opposite opinion to that which commonly prevails with regard to this subject.

But there is no reasoning, it may be said, against matter of fact. If it appear that the world was then more populous than at present, we may be assured that our conjectures are false, and that we have overlooked some material circumstance in the comparison. This I readily own: All our preceding reasonings I

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\* See Part I. Essay XI.

acknowledge to be mere trifling, or, at least, small skirmishes and frivolous rencounters, which decide nothing. But unluckily the main combat, where we compare facts, cannot be rendered much more decisive. The facts delivered by ancient authors are either so uncertain or so imperfect as to afford us nothing positive in this matter. How indeed could it be otherwise? The very facts which we must oppose to them, in computing the populousness of modern states, are far from being either certain or complete. Many grounds of calculation proceeded on by celebrated writers are little better than those of the emperor Heliogabalus, who formed an estimate of the immense greatness of Rome from ten thousand pounds weight of cobwebs which had been found in that city.<sup>a</sup>

It is to be remarked, that all kinds of numbers are uncertain in ancient manuscripts, and have been subject to much greater corruptions than any other part of the text, and that for an obvious reason. Any alteration in other places commonly affects the sense of grammar, and is more readily perceived by the reader and transcriber.

Few enumerations of inhabitants have been made of any tract of country by any ancient author of good authority, so as to afford us a large enough view for comparison.

It is probable that there was formerly a good foundation for the number of citizens assigned to any free city, because they entered for a share in the government, and there were exact registers kept of them. But as the number of slaves is seldom mentioned, this

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<sup>a</sup> *Ælii Lamprid. in vita Heliogab. cap. 26.*

leaves us in as great uncertainty as ever with regard to the populousness even of single cities.

The first page of Thucydides is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history. All preceding narrations are so intermixed with fable, that philosophers ought to abandon them, in a great measure, to the embellishment of poets and orators. <sup>1</sup>

With regard to remoter times, the numbers of people assigned are often ridiculous, and lose all credit and authority. The free citizens of Sybaris, able to bear arms, and actually drawn out in battle, were 300,000. They encountered at Siagra with 100,000 citizens of Crotona, another Greek city contiguous to them, and were defeated.—This is Diodorus Siculus's <sup>2</sup> account, and is very seriously insisted on by that historian. Strabo <sup>1</sup> also mentions the same number of Sybarites.

Diodorus Siculus, <sup>m</sup> enumerating the inhabitants of Agrigentum, when it was destroyed by the Carthaginians, says that they amounted to 20,000 citizens, 200,000 strangers, besides slaves, who, in so opulent a city as he represents it, would probably be at least as numerous. We must remark, that the women and the children are not included; and that, therefore, upon

<sup>1</sup> In general, there is more candour and sincerity in ancient historians, but less exactness and care, than in the moderns. Our speculative factions, especially those of religion, throw such an illusion over our minds, that men seem to regard impartiality to their adversaries and to heretics as a vice or weakness. But the commonness of books, by means of printing, has obliged modern historians to be more careful in avoiding contradictions and incongruities. Diodorus Siculus is a good writer, but it is with pain I see his narration contradict, in so many particulars, the two most authentic pieces of all Greek history, to wit, Xenophon's expedition, and Demosthenes's orations. Plutarch and Appian seem scarce ever to have read Cicero's epistles.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. xii.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. vi.

<sup>m</sup> Lib. xiii.

the whole, this city must have contained near two millions of inhabitants. <sup>a</sup> And what was the reason of so immense an increase? They were industrious in cultivating the neighbouring fields, not exceeding a small English county; and they traded with their wine and oil to Africa, which at that time produced none of these commodities.

Ptolemy, says Theocritus <sup>o</sup> commands 33,339 cities. I suppose the singularity of the number was the reason of assigning it. Diodorus Siculus <sup>p</sup> assigns three millions of inhabitants to Egypt, a small number: But then he makes the number of cities amount to 18,000; an evident contradiction.

He says, <sup>q</sup> the people were formerly seven millions. Thus remote times are always most envied and admired.

That Xerxes's army was extremely numerous, I can readily believe; both from the great extent of his empire, and from the practice among the eastern nations of encumbering their camp with a superfluous multitude: But will any rational man cite Herodotus's wonderful narrations as any authority? There is something very rational, I own, in Lysias's <sup>r</sup> argument upon this subject. Had not Xerxes's army been incredibly numerous, says he, he had never made a bridge over the Hellespont: It had been much easier to have transported his men over so short a passage with the numerous shipping of which he was master.

Polybius says <sup>s</sup> that the Romans, between the first and second Punic wars, being threatened with an invasion from the Gauls, mustered all their own forces,

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<sup>a</sup> Diogenes Laertius (in vita Empedoclis) says, that Agrigentum contained only 800,000 inhabitants.

<sup>o</sup> Idyll 17.

<sup>p</sup> Lib. i.

<sup>q</sup> Id. ibid.

<sup>r</sup> Orat. de Funeribus.

<sup>s</sup> Lib. ii.

and those of their allies, and found them amount to seven hundred thousand men able to bear arms; a great number surely, and which, when joined to the slaves, is probably not less, if not rather more, than that extent of country affords at present.<sup>†</sup> The enumeration too seems to have been made with some exactness; and Polybius gives us the detail of the particulars. But might not the number be magnified, in order to encourage the people?

Diodorus Siculus<sup>‡</sup> makes the same enumeration amount to near a million. These variations are suspicious. He plainly too supposes, that Italy, in his time, was not so populous; another suspicious circumstance. For who can believe that the inhabitants of that country diminished from the time of the first Punic war to that of the *triumvirates*?

Julius Cæsar, according to Appian,<sup>§</sup> encountered four millions of Gauls, killed one million, and made another million prisoners.<sup>¶</sup> Supposing the number of the enemy's army and that of the slain could be exactly assigned, which never is possible, how could it be known how often the same man returned into the armies, or how distinguish the new from the old levied soldiers? No attention ought ever to be given to such loose, exaggerated calculations, especially where the author does not tell us the mediums upon which the calculations were founded.

Paterculus<sup>‡</sup> makes the number of Gauls killed by

<sup>†</sup> The country that supplied this number was not above a third of Italy, viz. the Pope's dominions, Tuscany, and a part of the kingdom of Naples: But perhaps in those early times there were very few slaves, except in Rome, or the great cities.      <sup>‡</sup> Lib. ii.      <sup>§</sup> Celtica.

<sup>¶</sup> Plutarch (in vita Cæsa.) makes the number that Cæsar fought with amount to three millions; Julian (in Cæsaribus) to two.

<sup>‡</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 47.



Cæsar amount only to 400,000; a more probable account, and more easily reconciled to the history of these wars given by that conqueror himself in his Commentaries. <sup>a</sup> The most bloody of his battles were fought against the Helvetii and the Germans.

One would imagine, that every circumstance of the life and actions of Dionysius the elder might be regarded as authentic, and free from all fabulous exaggeration, both because he lived at a time when letters flourished most in Greece, and because his chief historian was Philistus, a man allowed to be of great genius, and who was a courtier and minister of that prince. But can we admit that he had a standing army of 100,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and a fleet of 400 galleys? <sup>b</sup> These, we may observe, were mercenary forces, and subsisted upon pay, like our armies in Europe, for the citizens were all disarméd; and when Dion afterwards invaded Sicily, and called on his countrymen to vindicate their liberty, he was obliged to bring arms along with him, which he distributed among those who joined him. <sup>c</sup> In a state where agriculture alone flourishes, there may be many inhabitants; and if these be all armed and disciplinéd, a great force may be called out upon occasion: But great bodies of mercenary troops can never be maintained without either great trade and numerous manu-

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<sup>a</sup> PLINY, lib. vii. cap. 25. says, that Cæsar used to boast, that there had fallen in battle against him one million one hundred and ninety-two thousand men, besides those who perished in the civil wars. It is not probable that that conqueror could ever pretend to be so exact in his computation. But allowing the fact, it is likely that the Helvetii, Germans and Britons, whom he slaughtered, would amount to near a half of the number.

<sup>b</sup> Diod. Sic. lib. ii.

<sup>c</sup> Plutarch. in vita Dionys.

factures, or extensive dominions. The United Provinces never were masters of such a force by sea and land as that which is said to belong to Dionysius; yet they possess as large a territory, perfectly well cultivated, and have much more resources from their commerce and industry. Diodorus Siculus allows, that, even in his time, the army of Dionysius appeared incredible; that is, as I interpret it, was entirely a fiction; and the opinion arose from the exaggerated flattery of the courtiers, and perhaps from the vanity and policy of the tyrant himself.<sup>59</sup>

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59 'The critical art may very justly be suspected of temerity, when it pretends to correct or dispute the plain testimony of ancient historians by any probable or analogical reasonings: Yet the license of authors upon all subjects, particularly with regard to numbers, is so great, that we ought still to retain a kind of doubt or reserve, whenever the facts advanced depart in the least from the common bounds of nature and experience. I shall give an instance with regard to modern history. Sir William Temple tells us, in his Memoirs, that having a free conversation with Charles the II., he took the opportunity of representing to that monarch the impossibility of introducing into this island the religion and government of France, chiefly on account of the great force requisite to subdue the spirit and liberty of so brave a people. 'The Romans,' says he, 'were forced to keep up twelve legions for that purpose' (a great absurdity), \* 'and Cromwell left an army of near eighty thousand men.' Must not this last be regarded as unquestioned by future critics, when they find it asserted by a wise and learned minister of state contemporary to the first, and who addressed his discourse, upon an ungrateful subject, to a great monarch who was also contemporary, and who himself broke those very forces about fourteen years before? Yet, by the most undoubted authority, we may insist that Cromwell's army, when he died, did not amount to half the number here mentioned. †

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\* Strabo, lib. iv. says, that one legion would be sufficient, with a few cavalry; but the Romans commonly kept up somewhat a greater force in this island, which they never took the pains entirely to subdue.

† It appears that Cromwell's parliament, in 1656, settled but 1,300,000

It is a usual fallacy to consider all the ages of antiquity as one period, and to compute the numbers contained in the great cities mentioned by ancient authors as if these cities had been all contemporary. The Greek colonies flourished extremely in Sicily during the age of Alexander; but in Augustus's time they were so decayed, that almost all the produce of that fertile island was consumed in Italy.<sup>d</sup>

Let us now examine the numbers of the inhabitants assigned to particular cities in antiquity; and, omitting the numbers of Nineveh, Babylon, and the Egyptian Thebes, let us confine ourselves to the sphere of real history, to the Grecian and Roman states. I must own, the more I consider this subject, the more am I inclined to scepticism with regard to the great populousness ascribed to ancient times.

Athens is said by Plato<sup>e</sup> to be a very great city; and it was surely the greatest of all the Greek<sup>f</sup> cities, except Syracuse, which was nearly about the same

pounds a year on him for the constant charges of government in all the three kingdoms. See Scobel, chap. 31. This was to supply the fleet, army, and civil list. It appears from Whitelocke, that in the year 1649, the sum of 80,000 pounds a month was the estimate for 40,000 men. We must conclude, therefore, that Cromwell had much less than that number upon pay in 1656. In the very instrument of government, 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse are fixed by Cromwell himself, and afterwards confirmed by parliament, as the regular standing army of the commonwealth. That number, indeed, seems not to have been much exceeded during the whole time of the Protectorship. See farther Thurlo, Vol. II. pp. 413, 499, 568. We may there see, that though the Protector had more considerable armies in Ireland and Scotland, he had not sometimes more than 4000 or 5000 men in England.—EDZIONS F, G, H.

<sup>d</sup> Strabo, lib. vi.

<sup>e</sup> Apolog. Socr.

<sup>f</sup> Argos seems also to have been a great city; for Lysias contents himself with saying, that it did not exceed Athens. Orat. 34.

size in Thucydides's <sup>a</sup> time, and afterwards increased beyond it. For Cicero <sup>b</sup> mentions it as the greatest of all the Greek cities in his time, not comprehending, I suppose, either Antioch or Alexandria under that denomination. Athenæus <sup>c</sup> says, that, by the enumeration of Demetrius Phalereus, there were in Athens 21,000 citizens, 10,000 strangers, and 400,000 slaves. This number is much insisted on by those whose opinion I call in question, and is esteemed a fundamental fact to their purpose: But, in my opinion, there is no point of criticism more certain than that Athenæus and Ctesicles, whom he quotes, are here mistaken, and that the number of slaves is at least augmented by a whole cypher, and ought not to be regarded as more than 40,000.

*First*, When the number of citizens are said to be 21,000 by Athenæus, <sup>d</sup> men of full age are only understood. For, 1. Herodotus says, <sup>e</sup> that Aristogoras, ambassador from the Ionians, found it harder to deceive one Spartan than 30,000 Athenians; meaning, in a loose way, the whole state, supposed to be met in one popular assembly, excluding the women and children. 2. Thucydides <sup>f</sup> says, that, making allowance for all the absentees in the fleet, army, garrisons, and for people employed in their private affairs, the Athenian assembly never rose to five thousand. 3. The forces enumerated by the same historian <sup>g</sup> being

<sup>a</sup> Lib. vi. See also Plutarch in vita Nicæ.

<sup>b</sup> *Orat. contra Verrem*, lib. iv. cap. 52. Strabo, lib. vi. says, it was twenty-two miles in compass. But then we are to consider, that it contained two harbours within it, one of which was a very large one, and might be regarded as a kind of bay.

<sup>c</sup> Lib. vi. cap. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Demosthenes assigns 20,000, contra Aristag.

<sup>e</sup> Lib. v.

<sup>f</sup> Lib. viii.

<sup>g</sup> Lib. ii. Diodorus Siculus's account perfectly agrees, lib. xii.

all citizens, and amounting to 13,000 heavy-armed infantry, prove the same method of calculation; as also the whole tenor of the Greek historians, who always understand men of full age when they assign the number of citizens in any republic. Now, these being but the fourth of the inhabitants, the free Athenians were by this account 84,000; the strangers 40,000; and the slaves, calculating by the smaller number, and allowing that they married and propagated at the same rate with freemen, were 160,000; and the whole of the inhabitants 284,000; a number surely large enough. The other number, 1,720,000, makes Athens larger than London and Paris united.

*Secondly*, There were but 10,000 houses in Athens.<sup>o</sup>

*Thirdly*, Though the extent of the walls, as given us by Thucydides,<sup>p</sup> be great (to wit, eighteen miles, beside the seacoast), yet Xenophon<sup>q</sup> says there was much waste ground within the walls. They seem indeed to have joined four distinct and separate cities.<sup>r</sup>

*Fourthly*, No insurrection of the slaves, or suspicion of insurrection, is ever mentioned by historians, except one commotion of the miners.<sup>s</sup>

*Fifthly*, The treatment of slaves by the Athenians is said by Xenophon,<sup>t</sup> and Demosthenes,<sup>u</sup> and Plau-

<sup>o</sup> Xenophon Mem. lib. ii.    <sup>p</sup> Lib. ii.    <sup>q</sup> De Ratione Red.

<sup>r</sup> We are to observe, that when Dionysius Halicarnassæus says, that if we regard the ancient walls of Rome, the extent of that city will not appear greater than that of Athens, he must mean the Acropolis and high town only. No ancient author ever speaks of the Pyræus, Phalerus, and Munychia, as the same with Athens. Much less can it be supposed, that Dionysius would consider the matter in that light, after the walls of Cimon and Pericles were destroyed, and Athens was entirely separated from these other towns. This observation destroys all Vossius's reasonings, and introduces common sense into these calculations.

<sup>s</sup> Athen. lib. vi.

<sup>t</sup> De Rep. Athen.

<sup>u</sup> Philip. 3.

tus, <sup>a</sup> to have been extremely gentle and indulgent; which could never have been the case, had the disproportion been twenty to one. The disproportion is not so great in any of our colonies; yet we are obliged to exercise a rigorous and military government over the negroes.

*Sixthly*, No man is ever esteemed rich for possessing what may be reckoned an equal distribution of property in any country, or even triple or quadruple that wealth. Thus, every person in England is computed by some to spend sixpence a day; yet he is esteemed but poor who has five times that sum. Now, Timarchus is said by Æschines' to have been left in easy circumstances; but he was master only of ten slaves employed in manufactures. Lysias and his brother, two strangers, were proscribed by the Thirty for their great riches, though they had but sixty a piece: <sup>a</sup> Demosthenes was left very rich by his father, yet he had no more than fifty-two slaves. <sup>a</sup> His workhouse of twenty cabinet-makers is said to be a very considerable manufactory. <sup>b</sup>

*Seventhly*, During the Decelian war, as the Greek historians call it, 20,000 slaves deserted, and brought the Athenians to great distress, as we learn from Thucydides. <sup>c</sup> This could not have happened had they been only the twentieth part. The best slaves would not desert.

*Eighthly*, Xenophon <sup>d</sup> proposes a scheme for maintaining by the public 10,000 slaves: And that so great a number may possibly be supported, any one will be convinced, says he, who considers the numbers we possessed before the Decelian war; a way of speaking

<sup>a</sup> Sticho.    <sup>y</sup> Contra Timarch.    <sup>z</sup> Orat. II.    <sup>z</sup> Contra Aphob.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid.    <sup>c</sup> Lib. vii.    <sup>d</sup> De Rat. Red.

altogether incompatible with the larger number of Athenæus.

*Ninthly*, The whole *census* of the state of Athens was less than 6000 talents. And though numbers in ancient manuscripts be often suspected by critics, yet this is unexceptionable; both because Demosthenes,<sup>e</sup> who gives it, gives also the detail, which checks him; and because Polybius<sup>f</sup> assigns the same number, and reasons upon it. Now, the most vulgar slave could yield by his labour an *obolus* a day, over and above his maintenance, as we learn from Xenophon,<sup>g</sup> who says, that Nicias's overseer paid his master so much for slaves, whom he employed in mines. If you will take the pains to estimate an *obolus* a day, and the slaves at 400,000, computing only at four years' purchase, you will find the sum above 12,000 talents; even though allowance be made for the great number of holidays in Athens. Besides, many of the slaves would have a much greater value from their art. The lowest that Demosthenes estimates any of his<sup>h</sup> father's slaves is two minas a head. And upon this supposition, it is a little difficult, I confess, to reconcile even the number of 40,000 slaves with the *census* of 6000 talents.

*Tenthly*, Chios is said by Thucydides,<sup>i</sup> to contain more slaves than any Greek city, except Sparta. Sparta then had more than Athens, in proportion to the number of citizens. The Spartans were 9000 in the town, 30,000 in the country.<sup>k</sup> The male slaves, therefore, of full age, must have been more than 780,000; the whole more than 3,120,000; a number impossible to

<sup>e</sup> De Classibus.

<sup>f</sup> De Rat. Red.

<sup>g</sup> Lib. viii.

<sup>h</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 62.

<sup>i</sup> Contra Aphobum.

<sup>k</sup> Plutarch. in vita Lycurg.

be maintained in a narrow barren country, such as Laconia, which had no trade. Had the Helotes been so very numerous, the murder of 2000, mentioned by Thucydides,<sup>1</sup> would have irritated them, without weakening them.

Besides, we are to consider, that the number assigned by Athenæus,<sup>m</sup> whatever it is, comprehends all the inhabitants of Attica, as well as those of Athens. The Athenians affected much a country life, as we learn from Thucydides;<sup>n</sup> and when they were all chased into town, by the invasion of their territory during the Peloponnesian war, the city was not able to contain them; and they were obliged to lie in the porticos, temples, and even streets, for want of lodging.<sup>o</sup>

The same remark is to be extended to all the other Greek cities; and when the number of citizens is assigned, we must always understand it to comprehend the inhabitants of the neighbouring country, as well as of the city. Yet even with this allowance, it must be confessed that Greece was a populous country, and exceeded what we could imagine concerning so narrow a territory, naturally not very fertile, and which drew no supplies of corn from other places. For, excepting Athens, which traded to Pontus for that commodity, the other cities seem to have subsisted chiefly from their neighbouring territory.<sup>p</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lib. iv.

<sup>m</sup> The same author affirms, that Corinth had once 460,000 slaves; Ægina 470,000. But the foregoing arguments hold stronger against these facts, which are indeed entirely absurd and impossible. It is however remarkable, that Athenæus cites so great an authority as Aristotle for this last fact: And the scholiast on Pindar mentions the same number of slaves in Ægina.

<sup>n</sup> Lib. ii.

<sup>o</sup> Thucyd. lib. ii.

<sup>p</sup> DEMOST. *contra LÆRT.* The Athenians brought yearly from Pontus 400,000 medimni or bushels of corn, as appeared from the customhouse



Rhodes is well known to have been a city of extensive commerce, and of great fame and splendour; yet it contained only 6000 citizens able to bear arms when it was besieged by Demetrius.\*

Thebes was always one of the capital cities of Greece;† but the number of its citizens exceeded not those of Rhodes.‡ Phliasia is said to be a small city by Xeno-

books. And this was the greater part of their importation of corn. This, by the by, is a strong proof that there is some great mistake in the foregoing passage of Athenæus. For Attica itself was so barren of corn, that it produced not enough even to maintain the peasants. Tit. Liv. lib. xliii. cap. 6. And 400,000 medimni would scarcely feed 100,000 men during a twelvemonth. Lucian, in his *navigium sive vota*, says, that a ship, which, by the dimensions he gives, seems to have been about the size of our third rates, carried as much corn as would maintain Attica for a twelvemonth. But perhaps Athens was decayed at that time; and, besides, it is not safe to trust to such loose rhetorical calculations.

\* Diod. Sic. lib. xx.

† Isocr. paneg.

‡ Dion. Sic. lib. xvii. When Alexander attacked Thebes, we may safely conclude that almost all the inhabitants were present. Whoever is acquainted with the spirit of the Greeks, especially of the Thebans, will never suspect that any of them would desert their country when it was reduced to such extreme peril and distress. As Alexander took the town by storm, all those who bore arms were put to the sword without mercy, and they amounted only to 6000 men. Among these were some strangers and manumitted slaves. The captives, consisting of old men, women, children, and slaves, were sold, and they amounted to 30,000. We may therefore conclude, that the free citizens in Thebes, of both sexes and all ages, were near 24,000, the strangers and slaves about 12,000. These last, we may observe, were somewhat fewer in proportion than at Athens, as is reasonable to imagine from this circumstance, that Athens was a town of more trade to support slaves, and of more entertainment to allure strangers. It is also to be remarked, that 36,000 was the whole number of people, both in the city of Thebes and the neighbouring territory. A very moderate number, it must be confessed; and this computation, being founded on facts which appear indisputable, must have great weight in the present controversy. The above mentioned number of Rhodians, too, were all the inhabitants of the island who were free, and able to bear arms.

phon,<sup>6</sup> yet we find that it contained 6000 citizens.<sup>7</sup> I pretend not to reconcile these two facts. Perhaps Xenophon calls Phliasia a small town, because it made but a small figure in Greece, and maintained only a subordinate alliance with Sparta; or perhaps the country belonging to it was extensive, and most of the citizens were employed in the cultivation of it, and dwelt in the neighbouring villages.

Mantineia was equal to any city in Arcadia.<sup>8</sup> Consequently it was equal to Megalopolis, which was fifty stadia, or six miles and a quarter in circumference.<sup>9</sup> But Mantineia had only 3000 citizens.<sup>10</sup> The Greek cities, therefore, contained only fields and gardens, together with the houses; and we cannot judge of them by the extent of their walls. Athens contained no more than 10,000 houses; yet its walls, with the sea-coast, were above twenty miles in extent. Syracuse was twenty-two miles in circumference; yet was scarcely ever spoken of by the ancients as more populous than Athens. Babylon was a square of fifteen miles, or sixty miles in circuit; but it contained large cultivated fields and inclosures, as we learn from Pliny. Though Aurelian's wall was fifty miles in circumference,<sup>11</sup> the circuit of all the thirteen divisions of Rome, taken apart, according to Publius Victor, was only about forty-three miles. When an enemy invaded the country, all the inhabitants retired within the walls of the ancient cities, with their cattle and furniture, and instruments of husbandry: and the great height to which the walls were raised, enabled a small number to defend them with facility.

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<sup>6</sup> Hist. Græc. lib. vii.

<sup>7</sup> Id. lib. vii.

<sup>8</sup> Polyb. lib. ii.

<sup>9</sup> Polyb. lib. ix. cap. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Lysias, Orat. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Vopiscus in vita Aurel.



ed only to 150,000. \* Yet Epirus might be double the extent of Yorkshire.

Justin<sup>1</sup> tells us, that when Philip of Macedon was declared head of the Greek confederacy, he called a congress of all the states, except the Lacedemonians, who refused to concur; and he found the force of the whole, upon computation, to amount to 200,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry. This must be understood to be all the citizens capable of bearing arms. For as the Greek republics maintained no mercenary forces, and had no militia distinct from the whole body of the citizens, it is not conceivable what other medium there could be of computation. That such an army could ever, by Greece, be brought into the field, and be maintained there, is contrary to all history. Upon this supposition, therefore, we may thus reason. The free Greeks of all ages and sexes were 860,000. The slaves, estimating them by the number of Athenian slaves as above, who seldom married or had families, were double the male citizens of full age, to wit, 430,000. And all the inhabitants of ancient Greece, excepting Laconia, were about one million two hundred and ninety thousand; no mighty number, nor exceeding what may be found at present in Scotland, a country of not much greater extent, and very indifferently peopled.

We may now consider the numbers of people in Rome and Italy, and collect all the lights afforded us by scattered passages in ancient authors. We shall find, upon the whole, a great difficulty in fixing any opinion on that head; and no reason to support those exaggerated calculations, so much insisted on by modern writers.

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\* Tit. Liv. lib. xlv. cap. 34.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ix. cap. 5.

Dionysius Halicarnassæus<sup>m</sup> says, that the ancient walls of Rome were nearly of the same compass with those of Athens, but that the suburbs ran out to a great extent; and it was difficult to tell where the town ended, or the country began. In some places of Rome, it appears, from the same author,<sup>n</sup> from Juvenal,<sup>o</sup> and from other ancient writers,<sup>p</sup> that the houses were high, and families lived in separate stories, one above another: But is it probable that these were only the poorer citizens, and only in some few streets? If we may judge from the younger Pliny's<sup>q</sup> account of his own house, and from Bartoli's plans of ancient buildings, the men of quality had very spacious palaces: and their buildings were like the Chinese houses at this day, where each

<sup>m</sup> Lib. iv.

<sup>n</sup> Lib. x.

<sup>o</sup> Satyr. iii. l. 269, 270.

<sup>p</sup> Strabo, lib. v. says, that the Emperor Augustus prohibited the raising houses higher than seventy feet. In another passage, lib. xvi., he speaks of the houses of Rome as remarkably high. See also to the same purpose Vitruvius, lib. ii. cap. 8. Aristides the sophist, in his oration *εἰς Πρωμν*, says, that Rome consisted of cities on the top of cities; and that if one were to spread it out and unfold it, it would cover the whole surface of Italy. Where an author indulges himself in such extravagant declamations, and gives so much into the hyperbolical style, one knows not how far he must be reduced. But this reasoning seems natural: If Rome was built in so scattered a manner as Dionysius says, and ran so much into the country, there must have been very few streets where the houses were raised so high. It is only for want of room that any body builds in that inconvenient manner.

<sup>q</sup> Lib. ii. epist. 16. lib. v. epist. 6. It is true, Pliny there describes a country-house; but since that was the idea which the ancients formed of a magnificent and convenient building, the great men would certainly build the same way in town. 'In laxitatem ruris excurrunt,' says Seneca of the rich and voluptuous, epist. 114. Valerius Maximus, lib. iv. cap. 4. speaking of Cincinnatus's field of four acres, says, 'Auguste se habitare nunc putat, cujus domus tantum patet quantum Cincinnati rura patuerant.' To the same purpose see lib. xxxvi. cap. 15; also lib. xviii. cap. 2.

apartment is separated from the rest, and rises no higher than a single story. To which if we add, that the Roman nobility much affected extensive porticoes, and even woods<sup>7</sup> in town, we may perhaps allow Vossius (though there is no manner of reason for it), to read the famous passage of the elder Pliny<sup>8</sup> his own

<sup>7</sup> Vitruv. lib. v. cap. 11. Tacit. Annal. lib. xi. cap. 3. Sueton. in vita Octav. cap. 72, &c.

<sup>8</sup> 'Moenia ejus (Romæ) collegere ambitu imperatoribus, censoribusque Vespasianis, A. U. C. 828. pass. xiii. MCC. complexa motes septem, ipsa dividitur in regiones quatuordecim, compita earum 265. Ejusdem spatii mensura, currente a Milliaro in capite Rom. Fori statuto, ad singulas portas, quæ sunt hodie numero 37, ita ut duodecim portas semel numerentur, prætereanturque ex veteribus septem, quæ esse deciderunt, efficit passuum per directum 30,775. Ad extrema vero tectorum cum castris prætorii ab eodem Milliaro, per vicos omnium viarum, mensura collegit paulo amplius septuaginta millia passuum. Quo si quis altitudinem tectorum addat, dignam profecto, æstimationem concipiat, fateaturque nullius urbis magnitudinem in toto orbe potuisse ei comparari.' Plin. lib. iii. cap. 5.

All the best manuscripts of Pliny read the passage as here cited, and fix the compass of the walls of Rome to be thirteen miles. The question is, What Pliny means by 30,775 paces, and how that number was formed? The manner in which I conceive it is this. Rome was a semicircular area of thirteen miles circumference. The Forum, and consequently the Milliarum, we know, was situated on the banks of the Tyber, and near the centre of the circle, or upon the diameter of the semicircular area. Though there were thirty-seven gates to Rome, yet only twelve of these had straight streets leading from them to the Milliarum. Pliny, therefore, having assigned the circumference of Rome, and knowing that that alone was not sufficient to give us a just notion of its surface, uses this farther method. He supposes all the streets leading from the Milliarum to the twelve gates, to be laid together into one straight line, and supposes we run along that line, so as to count each gate once; in which case, he says, that the whole line is 30,775 paces, or, in other words, that each street or radius of the semicircular area is upon an average two miles and a half; and the whole length of Rome is five miles, and its breadth about half as much, besides the scattered suburbs.

way, without admitting the extravagant consequences which he draws from it.

The number of citizens who received corn by the public distribution in the time of Augustus were two

Bere Hardouin understands this passage in the same manner, with regard to the laying together the several streets of Rome into one line, in order to compose 30,775 paces; but then he supposes that streets led from the Milliarium to every gate, and that no street exceeded 800 paces in length. But, 1st, A semicircular area, whose radius was only 800 paces, could never have a circumference near thirteen miles, the compass of Rome as assigned by Pliny. A radius of two miles and a half forms very nearly that circumference. 2d, There is an absurdity in supposing a city so built as to have streets running to its centre from every gate in its circumference, these streets must interfere as they approach. 3d, This diminishes too much from the greatness of ancient Rome, and reduces that city below even Bristol or Rotterdam.

The sense which Vossius, in his *Observationes variae*, puts on this passage of Pliny, errs widely in the other extreme. One manuscript of no authority, instead of thirteen miles, has assigned thirty miles for the compass of the walls of Rome. And Vossius understands this only of the curvilinear part of the circumference; supposing that, as the Tyber formed the diameter, there were no walls built on that side. But, 1st, This reading is allowed to be contrary to almost all the manuscripts. 2d, Why should Pliny, a concise writer, repeat the compass of the walls of Rome in two successive sentences? 3d, Why repeat it with so sensible a variation? 4th, What is the meaning of Pliny's mentioning twice the Milliarium, if a line was measured that had no dependence on the Milliarium? 5th, Aurelian's wall is said by Vopiscus to have been drawn *largiore ambitu*, and to have comprehended all the buildings and suburbs on the north side of the Tyber, yet its compass was only fifty miles; and even here critics suspect some mistake or corruption in the text, since the walls which remain, and which are supposed to be the same with Aurelian's, exceed not twelve miles. It is not probable that Rome would diminish from Augustus to Aurelian. It remained still the capital of the same empire; and none of the civil wars in that long period, except the tumults on the death of Maximus and Balbinus, ever affected the city. Caracalla is said by Aurelius Victor to have increased Rome. 6th, There are no remains of ancient buildings which mark any such greatness of Rome. Vossius's reply to this objection seems absurd, that the rubbish would sink sixty or seventy feet under ground.

hundred thousand. † This one would esteem a pretty certain ground of calculation; yet it is attended with such circumstances as throw us back into doubt and uncertainty.

Did the poorer citizens only receive the distribution? It was calculated, to be sure, chiefly for their benefit. But it appears from a passage in Cicero † that the rich might also take their portion, and that it was esteemed no reproach in them to apply for it.

To whom was the corn given; whether only to heads of families, or to every man, woman and child? The portion every month was five *modii* to each † (about five-sixths of a bushel.) This was too little for a family, and too much for an individual. A very accurate antiquary, † therefore, infers, that it was given to every man of full age: But he allows the matter to be uncertain.

It appears from Spartian (*in vita Severi*) that the five mile-stone is *via Lavicana* was out of the city. 7th, Olympiodorus and Publius Victor fix the number of houses in Rome to be betwixt forty and fifty thousand. 8th, The very extravagance of the consequences drawn by this critic, as well as Lipsius, if they be necessary, destroy the foundation on which they are grounded, that Rome contained fourteen millions of inhabitants, while the whole kingdom of France contains only five, according to his computation, &c.

The only objection to the sense which we have affixed above to the passage of Pliny, seems to lie in this, that Pliny, after mentioning the thirty-seven gates of Rome, assigns only a reason for suppressing the seven odd ones, and says nothing of the eighteen gates; the streets leading from which terminated, according to my opinion, before they reached the Forum. But as Pliny was writing to the Romans, who perfectly knew the disposition of the streets, it is not strange he should take a circumstance for granted which was so familiar to every body. Perhaps, too, many of these gates led to wharfs upon the river.

† Ex monument. Ancyr.

‡ Tusc. Quæst. lib. iii. cap. 48.

§ Licinius apud Sallust. Hist. Frag. lib. iii.

¶ Nicolaus Hortensius De Re Frumentaria Roman.



Was it strictly inquired, whether the claimant lived within the precincts of Rome? or was it sufficient that he presented himself at the monthly distribution? This last seems more probable.\*

Were there no false claimants? We are told,\* that Cæsar struck off at once 170,000, who had crept in without a just title; and it is very little probable that he remedied all abuses.

But, lastly, what proportion of slaves must we assign to these citizens? This is the most material question, and the most uncertain. It is very doubtful whether Athens can be established as a rule for Rome. Perhaps the Athenians had more slaves, because they employed them in manufactures, for which a capital city, like Rome, seems not so proper. Perhaps, on the other hand, the Romans had more slaves on account of their superior luxury and riches.

There were exact bills of mortality kept at Rome; but no ancient author has given us the number of burials, except Suetonius,† who tells us, that in one season there were 30,000 names carried to the temple of Libitina: But this was during a plague, which can afford no certain foundation for any inference.

The public corn, though distributed only to 200,000 citizens, affected very considerably the whole agriculture of Italy;‡ a fact nowise reconcilable to some

\* Not to take the people too much from their business, Augustus ordained the distribution of corn to be made only thrice a year: But the people, finding the monthly distributions more convenient (as preserving, I suppose, a more regular economy in their family), desired to have them restored. Sueton. August. cap. 40. Had not some of the people come from some distance for their corn, Augustus's precaution seems superfluous.

† Sueton. in Jul. cap. 41.

‡ In vita Neronia.

• Sueton. Aug. cap. 42.

modern exaggerations with regard to the inhabitants of that country.

The best ground of conjecture I can find concerning the greatness of ancient Rome is this : We are told by Herodian, <sup>d</sup> that Antioch and Alexandria were very little inferior to Rome. It appears from Diodorus Siculus <sup>e</sup> that one straight street of Alexandria, reaching from gate to gate, was five miles long ; and as Alexandria was much more extended in length than breadth, it seems to have been a city nearly of the bulk of Paris ; <sup>f</sup> and Rome might be about the size of London.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. iv. cap. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Lib. xvii.

<sup>f</sup> Quintus Curtius says, its walls were ten miles in circumference, when founded by Alexander, lib. iv. cap. 8. Strabo, who had travelled to Alexandria as well as Diodorus Siculus, says it was scarce four miles long, and in most places about a mile broad, lib. xvii. Pliny says it resembled a Macedonian cassock, stretching out in the corners, lib. v. cap. 10. Notwithstanding this bulk of Alexandria, which seems but moderate, Diodorus Siculus, speaking of its circuit as drawn by Alexander (which it never exceeded, as we learn from Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxii. cap. 16.) says it was *μυγίβη διασπορρα*, extremely great ibid. The reason which he assigns for its surpassing all cities in the world (for he excepts not Rome) is, that it contained 800,000 free inhabitants. He also mentions the revenues of the kings, to wit, 6000 talents, as another circumstance to the same purpose ; no such mighty sum in our eyes, even though we make allowance for the different value of money. What Strabo says of the neighbouring country, means only that it was peopled, *οικουμένη γαρ*. Might not one affirm, without any great hyperbole, that the whole banks of the river, from Gravesend to Windsor, are one city ? This is even more than Strabo says of the banks of the lake Mareotis, and of the canal to Canopus. It is a vulgar saying in Italy, that the king of Sardinia has but one town in Piedmont, for it is all a town. Agrippa, in *Josephus de bello Judaic.* lib. ii. cap. 16. to make his audience comprehend the excessive greatness of Alexandria, which he endeavours to magnify, describes only the compass of the city as drawn by Alexander ; a clear proof that the bulk of the inhabitants were lodged there, and that the neighbouring country was no more than what might be expected about all great towns, very well cultivated, and well peopled.

There lived in Alexandria, in Diodorus Siculus's time, <sup>a</sup> 300,000 free people, comprehending, I suppose, women and children. <sup>b</sup> But what number of slaves? Had we any just ground to fix these at an equal number with the free inhabitants, it would favour the foregoing computation.

There is a passage in Herodian which is a little surprising. He says positively, that the palace of the Emperor was as large as all the rest of the city. <sup>1</sup> This was Nero's golden house, which is indeed represented by Suetonius <sup>2</sup> and Pliny as of an enormous extent; <sup>3</sup> but no power of imagination can make us conceive it to bear any proportion to such a city as London.

We may observe, had the historian been relating Nero's extravagance, and had he made use of such an expression, it would have had much less weight; these rhetorical exaggerations being so apt to creep into an author's style, even when the most chaste and correct.

<sup>a</sup> Lib. xvii.

<sup>b</sup> He says ελευθεροι not πολιται, which last expression must have been understood of citizens alone, and grown men.

<sup>1</sup> Lib. iv. cap. l. *οσαυτα οσλησε*. Politian interprets it, 'adibus majoribus etiam reliqua urbe.'

<sup>2</sup> He says (in Nerone, cap. 30.) that a portico or piazza of it was 3000 feet long; 'tanta laxitas ut porticus triplices milliarias haberet.' He cannot mean three miles; for the whole extent of the house, from the Palatine to the Esquiline, was not near so great. So when Vopisc. in Aureliano mentions a portico in Sallust's gardens, which he calls *porticus milliariensis*, it must be understood of a thousand feet. So also Horace.

<sup>3</sup> Nulla decempedis

Metata privatae opacum

Porticus excipiebat Arcton.' Lib. ii. Ode 15.

So also in lib. i. satyr 8.

'Mille pedes in fronte, trecentos cippus in agrum

Hic dabat.'

<sup>1</sup> Plinius, lib. xxxvi. cap. 15. 'Bis vidimus urbem totam cingi domibus principum, Cali ac Neronis.'

But it is mentioned by Herodian only by the by, in relating the quarrels between Geta and Caracalla.

It appears from the same historian,<sup>m</sup> that there was then much land uncultivated, and put to no manner of use; and he ascribes it as a great praise to Pertinax, that he allowed every one to take such land, either in Italy or elsewhere, and cultivate it as he pleased, without paying any taxes. *Lands uncultivated, and put to no manner of use!* This is not heard of in any part of Christendom, except in some remote parts of Hungary, as I have been informed: And it surely corresponds very ill with that idea of the extreme populousness of antiquity so much insisted on.

We learn from Vopiscus,<sup>n</sup> that there was even in Etruria much fertile land uncultivated, which the emperor Aurelian intended to convert into vineyards, in order to furnish the Roman people with a gratuitous distribution of wine; a very proper expedient for depopulating still farther that capital, and all the neighbouring territories.

It may not be amiss to take notice of the account which Polybius<sup>o</sup> gives of the great herds of swine to be met with in Tuscany and Lombardy, as well as in Greece, and of the method of feeding them which was then practised. 'There are great herds of swine,' says he, 'throughout all Italy, particularly in former times, through Etruria and Cisalpine Gaul; and a herd frequently consists of a thousand or more swine. When one of these herds in feeding meets with another, they mix together; and the swine-herds have no other expedient for separating them than to go to different

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<sup>m</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 15.

<sup>n</sup> In Aurelian, cap. 48.

<sup>o</sup> Lib. xii. cap. 2.

quarters, where they sound their horn; and these animals, being accustomed to that signal, run immediately each to the horn of his own keeper. Whereas in Greece, if the herds of swine happen to mix in the forests, he who has the greater flock takes cunningly the opportunity of driving all away. And thieves are very apt to purloin the straggling hogs, which have wandered to a great distance from their keeper in search of food.'

May we not infer, from this account, that the north of Italy, as well as Greece, was then much less peopled, and worse cultivated than at present? How could these vast herds be fed in a country so full of enclosures, so improved by agriculture, so divided by farms, so planted with vines and corn intermingled together? I must confess, that Polybius's relation has more the air of that economy which is to be met with in our American colonies, than the management of an European country.

We meet with a reflection in Aristotle's<sup>p</sup> Ethics, which seems unaccountable on any supposition, and, by proving too much in favour of our present reasoning, may be thought really to prove nothing. That philosopher, treating of friendship, and observing, that this relation ought neither to be contracted to a very few, nor extended over a great multitude, illustrates his opinion by the following argument: 'In like manner,' says he, 'as a city cannot subsist, if it either have so few inhabitants as ten, or so many as a hundred thousand; so is there mediocrity required in the number of friends; and you destroy the essence of friendship by running into either extreme.' What! impossible that

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<sup>p</sup> Lib. ix. cap. 10. His expression is *Ἀθηναῖος*, not *πολίτης*, inhabitant, not citizen.

a city can contain a hundred thousand inhabitants! Had Aristotle never seen nor heard of a city so populous? This, I must own, passes my comprehension.

Pliny<sup>a</sup> tells us, that Seleucia, the seat of the Greek empire in the East, was reported to contain 600,000 people. Carthage is said by Strabo<sup>b</sup> to have contained 700,000. The inhabitants of Pekin are not much more numerous. London, Paris, and Constantinople, may admit of nearly the same computation; at least, the two latter cities do not exceed it. Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, we have already spoken of. From the experience of past and present ages, one might conjecture that there is a kind of impossibility that any city could ever rise much beyond this proportion. Whether the grandeur of a city be founded on commerce or on empire, there seem to be invincible obstacles which prevent its farther progress. The seats of vast monarchies, by introducing extravagant luxury, irregular expense, idleness, dependence, and false ideas of rank and superiority, are improper for commerce. Extensive commerce checks itself, by raising the price of all labour and commodities. When a great court engages the attendance of a numerous nobility, possessed of overgrown fortunes, the middling gentry remain in their provincial towns, where they can make a figure on a moderate income. And if the dominions of a state arrive at an enormous size, there necessarily arise many capitals, in the remoter provinces, whether all the inhabitants, except a few courtiers, repair for education, fortune, and amusement.<sup>c</sup> London, by uniting exten-

<sup>a</sup> Lib. vi. cap. 28.

<sup>b</sup> Lib. xvii.

<sup>c</sup> Such were Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, Ephesus, Lyons, &c. in the Roman empire. Such are even Bourdeaux, Tholouse, Dijon, Rennes, Rouen, Aix, &c. in France; Dublin, Edinburgh, York, in the British dominions.

sive commerce and middling empire, has perhaps arrived at a greatness which no city will ever be able to exceed.

Choose Dover or Calais for a centre: Draw a circle of two hundred miles radius: You comprehend London, Paris, the Netherlands, the United Provinces, and some of the best cultivated parts of France and England. It may safely, I think, be affirmed, that no spot of ground can be found, in antiquity, of equal extent, which contained near so many great and populous cities, and was so stocked with riches and inhabitants.

To balance, in both periods, the states which possessed most art, knowledge, civility, and the best police, seems the truest method of comparison.

It is an observation of L'abbé du Bos, that ' Italy is warmer at present than it was in ancient times. ' The annals of Rome tell us, ' says he, ' that in the year 480 ab U. C. the winter was so severe that it destroyed the trees. The Tyber froze in Rome, and the ground was covered with snow for forty days. When Juvenal<sup>u</sup> describes a superstitious woman, he represents her as breaking the ice of the Tyber, that she might perform her ablutions :

*Hybernum fracta glacie descendet in amnem,  
Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur.*

He speaks of that river's freezing as a common event. Many passages of Horace suppose the streets of Rome full of snow and ice. We should have more certainty with regard to this point, had the ancients known the use of thermometers: But their writers, without intending it, give us information sufficient to convince us, that the winters are now much more temperate at Rome

<sup>u</sup> Vol. II. sec. 16.

<sup>v</sup> Sat. 6. l. 521.

than formerly. At present, the Tyber no more freezes at Rome than the Nile at Cairo. The Romans esteem the winters very rigorous if the snow lie two days, and if one see for eight-and-forty hours a few icicles hang from a fountain that has a north exposure.'

The observation of this ingenious critic may be extended to other European climates. Who could discover the mild climate of France in Diodorus Siculus's<sup>x</sup> description of that of Gaul? 'As it is a northern climate,' says he, 'it is infested with cold to an extreme degree. In cloudy weather, instead of rain there fall great snows; and in clear weather, it there freezes so excessive hard, that the rivers acquire bridges of their own substance; over which, not only single travellers may pass, but large armies, accompanied with all their baggage and loaded waggons. And there being many rivers in Gaul, the Rhone, the Rhine, &c. almost all of them are frozen over; and it is usual, in order to prevent falling, to cover the ice with chaff and straw at the places where the road passes.' *Colder than a Gallic winter*, is used by Petronius as a proverbial expression. Aristotle says, that Gaul is so cold a climate that an ass could not live in it.'

North of the Cevennes, says Strabo,<sup>z</sup> Gaul produces not figs and olives: And the vines, which have been planted, bear not grapes that will ripen.

Ovid positively maintains, with all the serious affirmation of prose, that the Euxine Sea was frozen over every winter in his time; and he appeals to Roman governors, whom he names, for the truth of his assertion.<sup>a</sup> This seldom or never happens at present in the

<sup>x</sup> Lib. iv.

<sup>y</sup> De Generat. Anim. lib. ii.

<sup>z</sup> Lib. iv.

<sup>a</sup> Trist. lib. iii. eleg. 9. De Ponto, lib. iv. eleg. 7, 9, 10.



latitude of Tomi, whither Ovid was banished. All the complaints of the same poet seem to mark a rigour of the seasons, which is scarcely experienced at present in Petersburg or Stockholm.

Tournefort a *Provençal*, who had travelled into the same country, observes, that there is not a finer climate in the world: And he asserts, that nothing but Ovid's melancholy could have given him such dismal ideas of it. But the facts mentioned by that poet are too circumstantial to bear any such interpretation.

Polybius<sup>b</sup> says, that the climate in Arcadia was very cold, and the air moist.

'Italy,' says Varro,<sup>c</sup> 'is the most temperate climate in Europe. The inland parts,' (Gaul, Germany, and Pannonia, no doubt) 'have almost perpetual winter.'

The northern parts of Spain, according to Strabo,<sup>d</sup> are but ill inhabited, because of the great cold.

Allowing, therefore, this remark to be just, that Europe is become warmer than formerly; how can we account for it? Plainly by no other method than by supposing, that the land is at present much better cultivated, and that the woods are cleared, which formerly threw a shade upon the earth, and kept the rays of the sun from penetrating to it. Our northern colonies in America become more temperate in proportion as the woods are felled<sup>e</sup>; but, in general, every one may remark, that cold is still much more severely felt, both in

<sup>b</sup> Lib. iv. cap. 21.

<sup>c</sup> Lib. i. cap. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. iii.

<sup>e</sup> The warm southern colonies also become more healthful: And it is remarkable, that in the Spanish histories of the first discovery and conquest of these countries, they appear to have been very healthful, being then well peopled and cultivated. No account of the sickness or decay of Cortes's or Pizarro's small armies.

North and South America, than in places under the same latitude in Europe.

Saserna, quoted by Columella, <sup>f</sup> affirmed, that the disposition of the heavens was altered before his time, and that the air had become much milder and warmer ; as appears hence, says he, that many places now abound with vineyards and olive plantations, which formerly, by reason of the rigour of the climate, could raise none of these productions. Such a change, if real, will be allowed an evident sign of the better cultivation and peopling of countries before the age of Saserna ; <sup>g</sup> and if it be continued to the present times, is a proof that these advantages have been continually increasing throughout this part of the world.

Let us now cast our eye over all the countries which are the scene of ancient and modern history, and compare their past and present situation: We shall not, perhaps, find such foundation for the complaint of the present emptiness and desolation of the world. Egypt is represented by Maillet, to whom we owe the best account of it, as extremely populous, though he esteems the number of its inhabitants to be diminished. Syria and the Lesser Asia, as well as the coast of Barbary, I can readily own to be desert in comparison of their ancient condition. The depopulation of Greece is also obvious. But whether the country now called Turkey in Europe may not, in general, contain more inhabitants than during the flourishing period of Greece, may be a little doubtful. The Thracians seem then to have lived like the Tartars at present,

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<sup>f</sup> Lib. i. cap. 1.

<sup>g</sup> He seems to have lived about the time of the younger Africanus, lib. i. cap. 1.

by pasturage and plunder.<sup>a</sup> The Getes were still more uncivilized,<sup>b</sup> and the Illyrians were no better.<sup>c</sup> These occupy nine-tenths of that country: And though the government of the Turks be not very favourable to industry and propagation, yet it preserves at least peace and order among the inhabitants, and is preferable to that barbarous, unsettled condition in which they anciently lived.

Poland and Muscovy in Europe are not populous, but are certainly much more so than the ancient Sarmatia and Scythia, where no husbandry or tillage was ever heard of, and pasturage was the sole art by which the people were maintained. The like observation may be extended to Denmark and Sweden. No one ought to esteem the immense swarms of people which formerly came from the North, and overran all Europe, to be any objection to this opinion. Where a whole nation, or even half of it, remove their seat, it is easy to imagine what a prodigious multitude they must form, with what desperate valour they must make their attacks, and how the terror they strike into the invaded nations will make these magnify, in their imagination, both the courage and multitude of the invaders! Scotland is neither extensive nor populous; but were the half of its inhabitants to seek new seats, they would form a colony as numerous as the Teutons and Cimbri, and would shake all Europe, supposing it in no better condition for defence than formerly.

Germany has surely at present twenty times more inhabitants than in ancient times, when they cultivated no ground, and each tribe valued itself on the exten-

<sup>a</sup> Xenoph. Exp. lib. vii. Polyb. lib. iv. cap. 45.

<sup>b</sup> Ovid. passim, &c. Strabo, lib. vii.

<sup>c</sup> Polyb. lib. ii, cap. 12.

sive desolation which it spread around, as we learn from Caesar,<sup>k</sup> and Tacitus,<sup>l</sup> and Strabo;<sup>m</sup> a proof that the division into small republics will not alone render a nation populous; unless attended with the spirit of peace, order, and industry.

The barbarous condition of Britain in former times is well known; and the thinness of its inhabitants may easily be conjectured, both from their barbarity, and from a circumstance mentioned by Herodian,<sup>n</sup> that all Britain was marshy, even in Severus's time, after the Romans had been fully settled in it above a century.

It is not easily imagined, that the Gauls were antiently much more advanced in the arts of life than their northern neighbours, since they travelled to this island for their education in the mysteries of the religion and philosophy of the Druids.<sup>o</sup> I cannot, therefore, think that Gaul was then near so populous as France is at present.

Were we to believe, indeed, and join together, the testimony of Appian, and that of Diodorus Siculus, we must admit of an incredible populousness in Gaul. The former historian<sup>p</sup> says, that there were 400 nations in that country; the latter<sup>q</sup> affirms, that the largest of the Gallic nations consisted of 200,000 men, besides women and children, and the least of 50,000. Calculating, therefore, at a medium, we must admit of near 200,000,000 of people in a country which we esteem populous at present, though supposed to contain

<sup>k</sup> De Bello Gallico, lib. vi.

<sup>l</sup> De Moribus Germ.

<sup>m</sup> Lib. vii.

<sup>n</sup> Lib. iii. cap. 47.

<sup>o</sup> Caesar de Bello Gallico, lib. vi. Strabo, lib. vii. says, the Gauls were not much more improved than the Germans.

<sup>p</sup> Celt. pars 1.

<sup>q</sup> Lib. v.

little more than twenty.\* Such calculations, therefore, by their extravagance, lose all manner of authority. We may observe, that the equality of property, to which the populousness of antiquity may be ascribed, had no place among the Gauls.† Their intestine wars also, before Cæsar's time, were almost perpetual.‡ And Strabo § observes, that though all Gaul was cultivated, yet was it not cultivated with any skill or care; the genius of the inhabitants leading them less to arts than arms, till their slavery under Rome produced peace among themselves.

Cæsar ¶ enumerates very particularly the great forces which were levied in Belgium to oppose his conquests; and makes them amount to 208,000. These were not the whole people able to bear arms; for the same historian tells us, that the Bellovaci could have brought a hundred thousand men into the field, though they engaged only for sixty. Taking the whole, therefore, in this proportion of ten to six, the sum of fighting men in all the states of Belgium was about 350,000; all the inhabitants a million and a half. And Belgium being about a fourth of Gaul, that country might contain six millions, which is not near the third of its present inhabitants.‡ We are informed by Cæsar,

\* Ancient Gaul was more extensive than modern France.

† Cæsar de Bello Gallico, lib. vi.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

§ Lib. iv.

¶ De Bello Gallico, lib. ii.

‡ It appears from Cæsar's account, that the Gauls had no domestic slaves, who formed a different order from the *Plebes*. The whole common people were indeed a kind of slaves to the nobility, as the people of Poland are at this day; and a nobleman of Gaul had sometimes ten thousand dependents of this kind. Nor can we doubt that the armies were composed of the people as well as of the nobility. An army of 100,000 noblemen, from a very small state, is incredible. The fighting men among the Helvetii were the fourth part of the inhabitants, a clear

that the Gauls had no fixed property in land; but that the chieftains, when any death happened in a family, made a new division of all the lands among the several members of the family. This is the custom of *Tanistry*, which so long prevailed in Ireland, and which retained that country in a state of misery, barbarism, and desolation.

The ancient Helvetia was 250 miles in length, and 180 in breadth, according to the same author; \* yet contained only 360,000 inhabitants. The canton of Berne alone has, at present, as many people.

After this computation of Appian and Diodorus Siculus, I know not whether I dare affirm that the modern Dutch are more numerous than the ancient Batavi.

Spain is perhaps decayed from what it was three centuries ago; but if we step backward two thousand years, and consider the restless, turbulent, unsettled condition of its inhabitants, we may probably be inclined to think that it is now much more populous. Many Spaniards killed themselves when deprived of their arms by the Romans. \* It appears from Plutarch, † that robbery and plunder were esteemed honourable among the Spaniards. Hirtius ‡ represents, in the same light, the situation of that country in Cæsar's time; and he says, that every man was obliged to

proof that all the males of military age bore arms. See *Cæsar de Bello Gall.* lib. i.

We may remark, that the numbers in Cæsar's Commentaries can be more depended on than those of any other ancient author, because of the Greek translation, which still remains, and which checks the Latin original.

\* De Bello Gallico, lib. i.

† Titi Livii, lib. xxxiv. cap. 17.

‡ In vita Marii.

§ De Bello Hisp.

live in castles and walled towns for his security. It was not till its final conquest under Augustus that these disorders were repressed.<sup>4</sup> The account which Strabo<sup>5</sup> and Justin<sup>6</sup> give of Spain corresponds exactly with those above mentioned. How much, therefore, must it diminish from our idea of the populousness of antiquity, when we find that Tully, comparing Italy, Africa, Gaul, Greece, and Spain, mentions the great number of inhabitants as the peculiar circumstance which rendered this latter country formidable?<sup>7</sup>

Italy, however, it is probable, has decayed: But how many great cities does it still contain? Venice, Genoa, Pavia, Turin, Milan, Naples, Florence, Leghorn, which either subsisted not in ancient times, or were then very inconsiderable? If we reflect on this, we shall not be apt to carry matters to so great an extreme as is usual with regard to this subject.

When the Roman authors complain that Italy, which formerly exported corn, became dependent on all the provinces for its daily bread, they never ascribe this alteration to the increase of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage and agriculture;<sup>8</sup> a natural effect of that pernicious practice of importing corn, in order to distribute it *gratis* among the Roman citizens, and a very bad means of multiplying the inhabi-

<sup>4</sup> Vell. Patere. lib. ii. § 90.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. iii.

<sup>6</sup> Lib. xlv.

<sup>7</sup> 'Nec numero Hispanos, nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Pœnos, nec artibus Græcos, nec denique hoc ipso hujus gentis, ac terræ domestico nativoque sensu, Italos ipsos ac Latinos—superavimus.' De Harusp. Resp. cap. 9. The disorders of Spain seem to have been almost proverbial: 'Nec impacatos a tergo horrebis Iberos.' Virg. Georg. lib. iii. The Iberi are here plainly taken, by a poetical figure, for robbers in general.

<sup>8</sup> Varro De Re Rustica, lib. ii. præf. Columella præf. Sueton. August. cap. 42.

tants of any country. The *sportula*, so much talked of by Martial and Juvenal, being presents regularly made by the great lords to their smaller clients, must have had a like tendency to produce idleness, debauchery, and a continual decay among the people. The parish rates have at present the same bad consequences in England.

Were I to assign a period when I imagined this part of the world might possibly contain more inhabitants than at present, I should pitch upon the age of Trajan and the Antonines; the great extent of the Roman empire being then civilized and cultivated, settled almost in a profound peace, both foreign and domestic, and living under the same regular police and government. <sup>1</sup> But we are told that all extensive go-

<sup>1</sup> Though the observations of L'Abbé du Bos should be admitted, that Italy is now warmer than in former times, the consequence may not be necessary, that it is more populous or better cultivated. If the other countries of Europe were more savage and woody, the cold winds that blew from them might affect the climate of Italy.

<sup>2</sup> The inhabitants of Marseilles lost not their superiority over the Gauls in commerce and the mechanic arts, till the Roman dominion turned the latter from arms to agriculture and civil life, see Strabo, lib. iv. That author, in several places, repeats the observation concerning the improvement arising from the Roman arts and civility; and he lived at the time when the change was new, and would be more sensible. So also Pliny: 'Quis enim non, communicato orbe terrarum, majestate Romani imperii, profecisse vitam putet, commercio rerum ac societate festis pacis, omniaque etiam, quæ occultas antea fuerant, in promiscuo usu facta. Lib. xiv. proœm. Numine deûm electa (speaking of Italy) quæ cælum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia, ritusque molliret, et tot populorum discordes, ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia, et humanitatem homini daret; breviterque, una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret,' lib. ii. cap. 5. Nothing can be stronger to this purpose than the following passage from Tertullian, who lived about the age of Severus. 'Certè quidem ipse orbis in promptu est, cultior de die et instructor pristino. Omnia jussu



vernments, especially absolute monarchies, are pernicious to population, and contain a secret vice and poison, which destroy the effect of all these promising

pervia, omnia nota, omnia negotiosa. Solitudines famosas retro fundi amoenissimi obliteraverunt, silvas arva domuerunt, seras pecora fugaverunt; arenas seruntur, saxa panguntur, paludes eliquantur, tantæ urbes, quantæ non case quondam. Jam nec insulæ horrent, nec scopuli terrent; ubique domus, ubique populus, ubique respublica, ubique vita. Summum testimonium frequentis humanæ, onerosi sumus mundo, vix nobis elementa sufficiunt; et necessitates arctiores, et quætelæ apud omnes, dum jam nos natura non sustinet.' De anima, cap. 30. The air of rhetoric and declamation which appears in this passage diminishes somewhat from its authority, but does not entirely destroy it. The same remark may be extended to the following passage of Aristides the sophist, who lived in the age of Adrian. 'The whole world,' says he, addressing himself to the Romans, 'seems to keep one holiday; and mankind, laying aside the sword which they formerly wore, now betake themselves to feasting and to joy. The cities, forgetting their ancient animosities, preserve only one emulation, which shall embellish itself most by every art and ornament: Theatres every where arise, amphitheatres, porticos, aqueducts, temples, schools, academies; and one may safely pronounce, that the sinking world has been again raised by your auspicious empire. Nor have cities alone received an increase of ornament and beauty; but the whole earth, like a garden or paradise, is cultivated and adorned: Inasmuch, that such of mankind as are placed out of the limits of your empire (who are but few) seem to merit our sympathy and compassion.'

It is remarkable, that though Diodorus Siculus makes the inhabitants of Egypt, when conquered by the Romans, amount only to three millions, yet *Joseph. de Bello Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 16. says, that its inhabitants, excluding those of Alexandria, were seven millions and a half, in the reign of Nero: And he expressly says, that he drew this account from the books of the Roman Publicans, who levied the poll-tax. Strabo, lib. xvii. praises the superior police of the Romans with regard to the finances of Egypt, above that of its former monarchs: And no part of administration is more essential to the happiness of a people. Yet we read in Athenæus (lib. i. cap. 25.), who flourished during the reign of the Antonines, that the town Marcia, near Alexandria, which was formerly a large city, had dwindled into a village. This is not, properly speaking, a contradiction. Suidas (August.) says, that the Emperor

appearances.<sup>1</sup> To confirm this, there is a passage cited from Plutarch,<sup>2</sup> which, being somewhat singular, we shall here examine it.

That author, endeavouring to account for the silence of many of the oracles, says, that it may be ascribed to the present desolation of the world, proceeding from former wars and factions; which common calamity, he adds, has fallen heavier upon Greece than on any other country, insomuch that the whole could scarcely at present furnish three thousand warriors; a number which, in the time of the Median war, was supplied by the single city of Megara. The gods, therefore, who affect works of dignity and importance, have suppressed many of their oracles, and deign not to use so many interpreters of their will to so diminutive a people.

I must confess, that this passage contains so many difficulties, that I know not what to make of it. You may observe, that Plutarch assigns, for a cause of the decay of mankind, not the extensive dominion of the Romans, but the former wars and factions of the several states, all which were quieted by the Roman arms. Plutarch's reasoning, therefore, is directly contrary to the inference which is drawn from the fact he advances.

Polybius supposes that Greece had become more prosperous and flourishing after the establishment of

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Augustus, having numbered the whole Roman empire, found it contained only 4,101,017 men (*αυδπισς*). There is here surely some great mistake, either in the author or transcriber. But this authority, feeble as it is, may be sufficient to counterbalance the exaggerated accounts of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus with regard to more early times.

<sup>1</sup> L'Esprit de Loix, liv. xxiii. chap. 19.

<sup>2</sup> De Orac. Defectus.

the Roman yoke; <sup>a</sup> and though that historian wrote before these conquerors had degenerated, from being the patrons to be the plunderers of mankind, yet as we find from Tacitus, <sup>o</sup> that the severity of the emperors afterwards corrected the license of the governors, we have no reason to think that extensive monarchy so destructive as it is often represented.

We learn from Strabo <sup>p</sup> that the Romans, from their regard to the Greeks, maintained, to his time, most of the privileges and liberties of that celebrated nation; and Nero afterwards rather increased them. <sup>q</sup> How, therefore, can we imagine that the Roman yoke was so burdensome over that part of the world? The oppression of the proconsuls was checked; and the magistracies in Greece being all bestowed, in the several cities, by the free votes of the people, there was no necessity for the competitors to attend the emperor's court. If great numbers went to seek their fortunes in Rome, and advance themselves by learning or eloquence, the commodities of their native country, many of them would return with the fortunes which they had acquired, and thereby enrich the Grecian commonwealths.

But Plutarch says that the general depopulation had been more sensibly felt in Greece than in any other

<sup>a</sup> Lib. ii. cap. 62. It may perhaps be imagined, that Polybius, being dependent on Rome, would naturally extol the Roman dominion. But, in the *first* place, Polybius, though one sees sometimes instances of his caution, discovers no symptoms of flattery. *Secondly*, This opinion is only delivered in a single stroke, by the by, while he is intent upon another subject; and it is allowed, if there be any suspicion of an author's insincerity, that these oblique propositions discover his real opinion better than his more formal and direct assertions.

<sup>o</sup> Annal. lib. 1. cap. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Lib. viii. and ix.

<sup>q</sup> Plutarch. De his qui sero a Numine puniuntur.

country. How is this reconcileable to its superior privileges and advantages ?

Besides, this passage, by proving too much, really proves nothing. *Only three thousand men able to bear arms in all Greece!* Who can admit so strange a proposition, especially if we consider the great number of Greek cities, whose names still remain in history, and which are mentioned by writers long after the age of Plutarch? There are there surely ten times more people at present, when there scarcely remains a city in all the bounds of ancient Greece. That country is still tolerably cultivated, and furnishes a sure supply of corn, in case of any scarcity in Spain, Italy, or the south of France.

We may observe, that the ancient frugality of the Greeks, and their equality of property, still subsisted during the age of Plutarch, as appears from Lucian.\* Nor is there any ground to imagine, that the country was possessed by a few masters, and a great number of slaves.

It is probable, indeed, that military discipline, being entirely useless, was extremely neglected in Greece after the establishment of the Roman empire; and if these commonwealths, formerly so warlike and ambitious, maintained each of them a small city guard, to prevent mobbish disorders, it is all they had occasion for; and these, perhaps, did not amount to 3000 men throughout all Greece. I own, that if Plutarch had this fact in his eye, he is here guilty of a gross paralogism, and assigns causes nowise proportioned to the effects. But is it so great a prodigy that an author should fall into a mistake of this nature? †

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\* De mercede conductis.

† I must confess that that discourse of Plutarch, concerning the silence

But whatever force may remain in this passage of Plutarch, we shall endeavour to counterbalance it by as remarkable a passage in Diodorus Siculus, where the historian, after mentioning Ninus's army of 1,700,000 foot, and 200,000 horse, endeavours to support the credibility of this account by some posterior facts; and adds, that we must not form a notion of the ancient populousness of mankind from the present emptiness and depopulation which is spread over the world. Thus an author, who lived at that very pe-

of the oracles, is in general of so odd a texture and so unlike his other productions, that one is at a loss what judgment to form of it. It is written in dialogue, which is a method of composition that Plutarch commonly but little affects. The personages he introduces advance very wild, absurd, and contradictory opinions, more like the visionary systems or ravings of Plato, than the plain sense of Plutarch. There runs also through the whole an air of superstition and credulity, which resembles very little the spirit that appears in other philosophical compositions of that author. For it is remarkable, that though Plutarch be an historian as superstitious as Herodotus or Livy, yet there is scarcely, in all antiquity, a philosopher less superstitious, excepting Cicero and Lucian. I must therefore confess, that a passage of Plutarch, cited from this discourse, has much less authority with me, than if it had been found in most of his other compositions.

There is only one other discourse of Plutarch liable to like objections, to wit, that *concerning those whose punishment is delayed by the Deity*. It is also writ in dialogue, contains like superstitious, wild visions, and seems to have been chiefly composed in rivalry to Plato, particularly his last book *De Republica*.

And here I cannot but observe, that Mons. Fontenelle, a writer eminent for candour, seems to have departed a little from his usual character, when he endeavours to throw a ridicule upon Plutarch on account of passages to be met with in this dialogue concerning oracles. The absurdities here put into the mouths of the several personages are not to be ascribed to Plutarch. He makes them refute each other; and, in general, he seems to intend the ridiculing of those very opinions which Fontenelle would ridicule him for maintaining.—See *Histoire des Oracles*.

\* Lib. ii.

riod of antiquity which is represented as most populous, " complains of the desolation which then prevailed, gives the preference to former times, and has recourse to ancient fables as a foundation for his opinion. The humour of blaming the present, and admiring the past, is strongly rooted in human nature, and has an influence even on persons endued with the profoundest judgment and most extensive learning.

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<sup>a</sup> He was contemporary with Cæsar and Augustus.

## ESSAY XII.

## OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT.

As no party, in the present age, can well support itself without a philosophical or speculative system of principles annexed to its political or practical one, we accordingly find, that each of the factions into which this nation is divided has reared up a fabric of the former kind, in order to protect and cover that scheme of actions which it pursues. The people being commonly very rude builders, especially in this speculative way, and more especially still when actuated by party zeal, it is natural to imagine that their workmanship must be a little unshapely, and discover evident marks of that violence and hurry in which it was raised. The one party, by tracing up government to the Deity, endeavour to render it so sacred and inviolate, that it must be little less than sacrilege, however tyrannical it may become, to touch or invade it in the smallest article. The other party, by founding government altogether on the consent of the people, suppose that there is a kind of *original contract*, by which the subjects have tacitly reserved the power of resisting their sovereign,

whenever they find themselves aggrieved by that authority with which they have, for certain purposes, voluntarily intrusted him. These are the speculative principles of the two parties, and these, too, are the practical consequences deduced from them.

I shall venture to affirm, *That both these systems of speculative principles are just, though not in the sense intended by the parties : And, That both the schemes of practical consequences are prudent, though not in the extremes to which each party, in opposition to the other, has commonly endeavoured to carry them.*

That the Deity is the ultimate author of all government, will never be denied by any, who admit a general providence, and allow, that all events in the universe are conducted by an uniform plan, and directed to wise purposes. As it is impossible for the human race to subsist, at least in any comfortable or secure state, without the protection of government, this institution must certainly have been intended by that beneficent Being, who means the good of all his creatures : And as it has universally, in fact, taken place in all countries, and all ages, we may conclude, with still greater certainty, that it was intended by that omniscient Being, who can never be deceived by any event or operation. But since he gave rise to it, not by any particular or miraculous interposition, but by his concealed and universal efficacy, a sovereign cannot, properly speaking, be called his vicegerent in any other sense than every power or force, being derived from him, may be said to act by his commission. Whatever actually happens is comprehended in the general plan or intention of Providence ; nor has the greatest and most lawful prince any more reason, upon that account, to plead a peculiar sacredness or inviolable authority,



than an inferior magistrate, or even an usurper, or even a robber and a pirate. The same Divine Superintendent, who, for wise purposes, invested a Titus or a Trajan with authority, did also, for purposes no doubt equally wise, though unknown, bestow power on a Borgia or an Angria. The same causes, which gave rise to the sovereign power in every state, established likewise every petty jurisdiction in it, and every limited authority. A constable, therefore, no less than a king, acts by a divine commission, and possesses an indefeasible right.

When we consider how nearly equal all men are in their bodily force, and even in their mental powers and faculties, till cultivated by education, we must necessarily allow, that nothing but their own consent could at first associate them together, and subject them to any authority. The people, if we trace government to its first origin in the woods and deserts, are the source of all power and jurisdiction, and voluntarily, for the sake of peace and order, abandoned their native liberty, and received laws from their equal and companion. The conditions upon which they were willing to submit, were either expressed, or were so clear and obvious, that it might well be esteemed superfluous to express them. If this, then, be meant by the *original contract*, it cannot be denied, that all government is, at first, founded on a contract, and that the most ancient rude combinations of mankind were formed chiefly by that principle. In vain are we asked in what records this charter of our liberties is registered. It was not written on parchment, nor yet on leaves or barks of trees. It preceded the use of writing, and all the other civilized arts of life. But we trace it plainly in the nature of man, and in the equality, or something approach-

ing equality, which we find in all the individuals of that species. The force, which now prevails, and which is founded on fleets and armies, is plainly political, and derived from authority, the effect of established government. A man's natural force consists only in the vigour of his limbs, and the firmness of his courage; which could never subject multitudes to the command of one. Nothing but their own consent, and their sense of the advantages resulting from peace and order, could have had that influence.

Yet even this consent was long very imperfect, and could not be the basis of a regular administration. The chieftain, who had probably acquired his influence during the continuance of war, ruled more by persuasion than command; and till he could employ force to reduce the refractory and disobedient, the society could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government. No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission; an idea far beyond the comprehension of savages: Each exertion of authority in the chieftain must have been particular, and called forth by the present exigencies of the case: The sensible utility, resulting from his interposition, made these exertions become daily more frequent; and their frequency gradually produced an habitual, and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary, and therefore precarious, acquiescence in the people.

But philosophers who have embraced a party (if that be not a contradiction in terms), are not contented with these concessions. They assert, not only that government in its earliest infancy arose from consent, or rather the voluntary acquiescence of the people; but also that, even at present, when it has attained its full maturity, it rests on no other foundation. They affirm,

that all men are still born equal, and owe allegiance to no prince or government, unless bound by the obligation and sanction of a *promise*. And as no man, without some equivalent, would forego the advantages of his native liberty, and subject himself to the will of another, this promise is always understood to be conditional, and imposes on him no obligation, unless he meet with justice and protection from his sovereign. These advantages the sovereign promises him in return; and if he fail in the execution, he has broken, on his part, the articles of engagement, and has thereby freed his subject from all obligations to allegiance. Such, according to these philosophers, is the foundation of authority in every government, and such the right of resistance possessed by every subject.

But would these reasoners look abroad into the world, they would meet with nothing that, in the least, corresponds to their ideas, or can warrant so refined and philosophical a system. On the contrary, we find every where princes who claim their subjects as their property, and assert their independent right of sovereignty, from conquest or succession. We find also every where subjects who acknowledge this right in their prince, and suppose themselves born under obligations of obedience to a certain sovereign, as much as under the ties of reverence and duty to certain parents. These connexions are always conceived to be equally independent of our consent, in Persia and China, in France and Spain, and even in Holland and England, wherever the doctrines above mentioned have not been carefully inculcated. Obedience or subjection becomes so familiar, that most men never make any inquiry about its origin or cause, more than about the principle of gravity, resistance, or the most universal laws of na-

ture. Or if curiosity ever move them, as soon as they learn that they themselves and their ancestors have, for several ages, or from time immemorial, been subject to such a form of government or such a family; they immediately acquiesce, and acknowledge their obligation to allegiance. Were you to preach, in most parts of the world, that political connexions are founded altogether on voluntary consent or a mutual promise, the magistrate would soon imprison you as seditious for loosening the ties of obedience; if your friends did not before shut you up as delirious, for advancing such absurdities. It is strange that an act of the mind, which every individual is supposed to have formed, and after he came to the use of reason too, otherwise it could have no authority; that this act, I say, should be so much unknown to all of them, that over the face of the whole earth, there scarcely remain any traces or memory of it.

But the contract, on which government is founded, is said to be the *original contract*; and consequently may be supposed too old to fall under the knowledge of the present generation. If the agreement, by which savage men first associated and conjoined their force, be here meant, this is acknowledged to be real; but being so ancient, and being obliterated by a thousand changes of government and princes, it cannot now be supposed to retain any authority. If we would say any thing to the purpose, we must assert, that every particular government which is lawful, and which imposes any duty of allegiance on the subject, was, at first, founded on consent and a voluntary compact. But, besides that this supposes the consent of the fathers to bind the children, even to the most remote generations (which republican writers will never allow), besides this,

I say, it is not justified by history or experience in any age or country of the world.

Almost all the governments which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent or voluntary subjection of the people. When an artful and bold man is placed at the head of an army or faction, it is often easy for him, by employing, sometimes violence, sometimes false pretences, to establish his dominion over a people a hundred times more numerous than his partisans. He allows no such open communication, that his enemies can know, with certainty, their number or force. He gives them no leisure to assemble together in a body to oppose him. Even all those who are the instruments of his usurpation may wish his fall; but their ignorance of each other's intention keeps them in awe, and is the sole cause of his security. By such arts as these many governments have been established; and this is all the *original contract* which they have to boast of.

The face of the earth is continually changing, by the increase of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there any thing discoverable in all these events but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of?

Even the smoothest way by which a nation may receive a foreign master, by marriage or a will, is not extremely honourable for the people; but supposes them to be disposed of like a dowry or a legacy, according to the pleasure or interest of their rulers.

But where no force interposes, and election takes

place; what is this election so highly vaunted? It is either the combination of a few great men, who decide for the whole, and will allow of no opposition; or it is the fury of a multitude, that follow a seditious ring-leader, who is not known, perhaps, to a dozen among them, and who owes his advancement merely to his own impudence, or to the momentary caprice of his fellows.

Are these disorderly elections, which are rare too, of such mighty authority as to be the only lawful foundation of all government and allegiance?

In reality there is not a more terrible event than a total dissolution of government, which gives liberty to the multitude, and makes the determination or choice of a new establishment depend upon a number, which nearly approaches to that of the body of the people: For it never comes entirely to the whole body of them. Every wise man, then wishes to see, at the head of a powerful and obedient army, a general who may speedily seize the prize, and give to the people a master which they are so unfit to choose for themselves; so little correspondent is fact and reality to those philosophical notions.

Let not the establishment at the Revolution deceive us, or make us so much in love with a philosophical origin to government, as to imagine all others monstrous and irregular. Even that event was far from corresponding to these refined ideas. It was only the succession, and that only in the regal part of the government, which was then changed: And it was only the majority of seven hundred, who determined that change for near ten millions. I doubt not, indeed, but the bulk of those ten millions acquiesced willingly in the determination: But was the matter left, in the least,

to their choice? Was it not justly supposed to be, from that moment, decided, and every man punished, who refused to submit to the new sovereign? How otherwise could the matter have ever been brought to any issue or conclusion?

The republic of Athens was, I believe, the most extensive democracy that we read of in history: Yet if we make the requisite allowances for the women, the slaves, and the strangers, we shall find, that that establishment was not at first made, nor any law ever voted, by a tenth part of those who were bound to pay obedience to it; not to mention the islands and foreign dominions, which the Athenians claimed as theirs by right of conquest. And as it is well known that popular assemblies in that city were always full of license and disorder, notwithstanding the institutions and laws by which they were checked; how much more disorderly must they prove, where they form not the established constitution, but meet tumultuously on the dissolution of the ancient government, in order to give rise to a new one? How chimerical must it be to talk of a choice in such circumstances?

The Achæans enjoyed the freest and most perfect democracy of all antiquity; yet they employed force to oblige some cities to enter into their league, as we learn from Polybius.\*

Harry IV. and Harry VII. of England, had really no title to the throne but a parliamentary election; yet they never would acknowledge it, lest they should thereby weaken their authority. Strange, if the only real foundation of all authority be consent and promise?

It is in vain to say that all governments are, or should

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\* Lib. ii. cap. 38.

be, at first founded on popular consent, as much as the necessity of human affairs will admit. This favours entirely my pretension. I maintain, that human affairs will never admit of this consent, seldom of the appearance of it; but that conquest or usurpation, that is, in plain terms, force, by dissolving the ancient governments, is the origin of almost all the new ones which were ever established in the world. And that in the few cases where consent may seem to have taken place, it was commonly so irregular, so confined, or so much intermixed either with fraud or violence, that it cannot have any great authority.

My intention here is not to exclude the consent of the people from being one just foundation of government. Where it has place, it is surely the best and most sacred of any. I only contend, that it has very seldom had place in any degree, and never almost in its full extent; and that, therefore, some other foundation of government must also be admitted.

Were all men possessed of so inflexible a regard to justice, that of themselves they would totally abstain from the properties of others; they had for ever remained in a state of absolute liberty, without subjection to any magistrate or political society: But this is a state of perfection of which human nature is justly deemed incapable. Again, were all men possessed of so perfect an understanding as always to know their own interests, no form of government had ever been submitted to but what was established on consent, and was fully canvassed by every member of the society: But this state of perfection is likewise much superior to human nature. Reason, history, and experience show us, that all political societies have had an origin much less accurate and regular; and were one to choose a pe-



riod of time when the people's consent was the least regarded in public transactions, it would be precisely on the establishment of a new government. In a settled constitution their inclinations are often consulted; but during the fury of revolutions, conquests and public convulsions, military force or political craft usually decides the controversy.

When a new government is established, by whatever means, the people are commonly dissatisfied with it, and pay obedience more from fear and necessity, than from any idea of allegiance or of moral obligation. The prince is watchful and jealous, and must carefully guard against every beginning or appearance of insurrection. Time, by degrees, removes all these difficulties, and accustoms the nation to regard, as their lawful or native princes, that family which at first they considered as usurpers or foreign conquerors. In order to found this opinion, they have no recourse to any notion of voluntary consent or promise, which, they know, never was, in this case, either expected or demanded. The original establishment was formed by violence, and submitted to from necessity. The subsequent administration is also supported by power, and acquiesced in by the people, not as a matter of choice, but of obligation. They imagine not that their consent gives their prince a title: But they willingly consent, because they think, that, from long possession, he has acquired a title, independent of their choice or inclination.

Should it be said, that, by living under the dominion of a prince which one might leave, every individual has given a *tacit* consent to his authority, and promised him obedience; it may be answered, that such an implied consent can only have place where a man imagines that the matter depends on his choice. But

where he thinks (as all mankind do who are born under established governments) that, by his birth, he owes allegiance to a certain prince or certain form of government; it would be absurd to infer a consent or choice, which he expressly, in this case, renounces and disclaims.

Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artisan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives, from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean and perish, the moment he leaves her.

What if the prince forbid his subjects to quit his dominions; as in Tiberius's time, it was regarded as a crime in a Roman knight that he had attempted to fly to the Parthians, in order to escape the tyranny of that emperor? Or as the ancient Muscovites prohibited all travelling under pain of death? And did a prince observe, that many of his subjects were seized with the frenzy of migrating to foreign countries, he would, doubtless, with great reason and justice, restrain them, in order to prevent the depopulation of his own kingdom. Would he forfeit the allegiance of all his subjects by so wise and reasonable a law? Yet the freedom of their choice is surely, in that case, ravished from them.

A company of men, who should leave their native country, in order to people some uninhabited region, might dream of recovering their native freedom, but

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<sup>y</sup> Tacit. Ann. lib. vi. cap. 14.

they would soon find, that their prince still laid claim to them, and called them his subjects, even in their new settlement. And in this he would but act conformably to the common ideas of mankind.

The truest *tacit* consent of this kind that is ever observed, is when a foreigner settles in any country, and is beforehand acquainted with the prince, and government, and laws, to which he must submit: Yet is his allegiance, though more voluntary, much less expected or depended on, than that of a natural born subject. On the contrary, his native prince still asserts a claim to him. And if he punish not the renegade, when he seizes him in war with his new prince's commission; this clemency is not founded on the municipal law, which in all countries condemns the prisoner; but on the consent of princes, who have agreed to this indulgence, in order to prevent reprisals.

Did one generation of men go off the stage at once, and another succeed, as is the case with silk worms and butterflies, the new race, if they had sense enough to choose their government, which surely is never the case with men, might voluntarily, and by general consent, establish their own form of civil 'polity, without any regard to the laws or precedents which prevailed among their ancestors. But as human society is in perpetual flux, one man every hour going out of the world, another coming into it, it is necessary, in order to preserve stability in government, that the new brood should conform themselves to the established constitution, and nearly follow the path which their fathers, treading in the footsteps of theirs, had marked out to them. Some innovations must necessarily have place in every human institution; and it is happy where the enlightened genius of the age give these a direction to

the side of reason, liberty, and justice : But violent innovations no individual is entitled to make : They are even dangerous to be attempted by the legislature : More ill than good is ever to be expected from them : And if history affords examples to the contrary, they are not to be drawn into precedent, and are only to be regarded as proofs, that the science of politics affords few rules, which will not admit of some exception, and which may not sometimes be controlled by fortune and accident. The violent innovations in the reign of Henry VIII. proceeded from an imperious monarch, seconded by the appearance of legislative authority : Those in the reign of Charles I. were derived from faction and fanaticism ; and both of them have proved happy in the issue. But even the former were long the source of many disorders, and still more dangers ; and if the measures of allegiance were to be taken from the latter, a total anarchy must have place in human society, and a final period at once be put to every government.

Suppose that an usurper, after having banished his lawful prince and royal family, should establish his dominion for ten or a dozen years in any country, and should preserve so exact a discipline in his troops, and so regular a disposition in his garrisons, that no insurrection had ever been raised, or even murmur heard against his administration : Can it be asserted that the people, who in their hearts abhor his treason, have tacitly consented to his authority, and promised him allegiance, merely because, from necessity, they live under his dominion ? Suppose again their native prince restored, by means of an army, which he levies in foreign countries : They receive him with joy and exultation, and show plainly with what reluctance they

had submitted to any other yoke. I may now ask, upon what foundation the prince's title stands? Not on popular consent surely: For though the people willingly acquiesce in his authority, they never imagine that their consent made him sovereign. They consent, because they apprehend him to be already, by birth, their lawful sovereign. And as to tacit consent, which may now be inferred from their living under his dominion, this is no more than what they formerly gave to the tyrant and usurper.

When we assert that all lawful government arises from the consent of the people, we certainly do them a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire from us. After the Roman dominions became too unwieldy for the republic to govern them, the people over the whole known world were extremely grateful to Augustus for that authority which, by violence, he had established over them; and they showed an equal disposition to submit to the successor whom he left them by his last will and testament. It was afterwards their misfortune, that there never was, in one family, any long regular succession; but that their line of princes was continually broken, either by private assassinations or public rebellions. The *praetorian* bands, on the failure of every family, set up one emperor; the legions in the East a second; those in Germany, perhaps, a third; and the sword alone could decide the controversy. The condition of the people in that mighty monarchy was to be lamented, not because the choice of the emperor was never left to them, for that was impracticable, but because they never fell under any succession of masters who might regularly follow each other. As to the violence, and wars, and

bloodshed, occasioned by every new settlement, these were not blameable, because they were inevitable.

The house of Lancaster ruled in this island about sixty years; yet the partisans of the white rose seemed daily to multiply in England. The present establishment has taken place during a still longer period. Have all views of right in another family been utterly extinguished, even though scarce any man now alive had arrived at the years of discretion when it was expelled, or could have consented to its dominion, or have promised it allegiance?—a sufficient indication, surely, of the general sentiment of mankind on this head. For we blame not the partisans of the abdicated family merely on account of the long time during which they have preserved their imaginary loyalty. We blame them for adhering to a family which we affirm has been justly expelled, and which, from the moment the new settlement took place, had forfeited all title to authority.

But would we have a more regular, at least a more philosophical refutation of this principle of an original contract, or popular consent, perhaps the following observations may suffice.

All *moral* duties may be divided into two kinds. The *first* are those to which men are impelled by a natural instinct or immediate propensity which operates on them, independent of all ideas of obligation, and of all views either to public or private utility. Of this nature are love of children, gratitude to benefactors, pity to the unfortunate. When we reflect on the advantage which results to society from such humane instincts, we pay them the just tribute of moral approbation and esteem: But the person actuated by them

feels their power and influence antecedent to any such reflection.

The *second* kind of moral duties are such as are not supported by any original instinct of nature, but are performed entirely from a sense of obligation, when we consider the necessities of human society, and the impossibility of supporting it, if these duties were neglected. It is thus *justice*, or a regard to the property of others, *fidelity*, or the observance of promises, become obligatory, and acquire an authority over mankind. For as it is evident that every man loves himself better than any other person, he is naturally impelled to extend his acquisitions as much as possible; and nothing can restrain him in this propensity but reflection and experience, by which he learns the pernicious effects of that license, and the total dissolution of society which must ensue from it. His original inclination, therefore, or instinct, is here checked and restrained by a subsequent judgment or observation.

The case is precisely the same with the political or civil duty of *allegiance* as with the natural duties of justice and fidelity. Our primary instincts lead us either to indulge ourselves in unlimited freedom, or to seek dominion over others; and it is reflection only which engages us to sacrifice such strong passions to the interests of peace and public order. A small degree of experience and observation suffices to teach us, that society cannot possibly be maintained without the authority of magistrates, and that this authority must soon fall into contempt where exact obedience is not paid to it. The observation of these general and obvious interests is the source of all allegiance, and of that moral obligation which we attribute to it.

What necessity, therefore, is there to found the duty of *allegiance*, or obedience to magistrates, on that of *fidelity*, or a regard to promises, and to suppose that it is the consent of each individual which subjects him to government, when it appears that both *allegiance* and *fidelity* stand precisely on the same foundation, and are both submitted to by mankind, on account of the apparent interests and necessities of human society? We are bound to obey our sovereign, it is said, because we have given a tacit promise to that purpose. But why are we bound to observe our promise? It must here be asserted, that the commerce and intercourse of mankind, which are of such mighty advantage, can have no security where men pay no regard to their engagements. In like manner may it be said that men could not live at all in society, at least in a civilized society, without laws, and magistrates, and judges, to prevent the encroachments of the strong upon the weak, of the violent upon the just and equitable. The obligation to *allegiance* being of like force and authority with the obligation to *fidelity*, we gain nothing by resolving the one into the other. The general interests or necessities of society are sufficient to establish both.

If the reason be asked of that obedience which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer; *Because society could not otherwise subsist*; and this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind. Your answer is, *Because we should keep our word*. But besides that nobody, till trained in a philosophical system, can either comprehend or relish this answer; besides this, I say, you find yourself embarrassed when it is asked, *Why we are bound to keep our word?* Nor



can you give any answer but what would immediately, without any circuit, have accounted for our obligation to allegiance.

But to whom is allegiance due, and who is our lawful sovereign? This question is often the most difficult of any, and liable to infinite discussions. When people are so happy that they can answer, *Our present sovereign, who inherits, in a direct line, from ancestors that have governed us for many ages*, this answer admits of no reply, even though historians, in tracing up to the remotest antiquity the origin of that royal family, may find, as commonly happens, that its first authority was derived from usurpation and violence. It is confessed that private justice, or the abstinence from the properties of others, is a most cardinal virtue. Yet reason tells us that there is no property in durable objects, such as land or houses, when carefully examined in passing from hand to hand, but must, in some period, have been founded on fraud and injustice. The necessities of human society, neither in private nor public life, will allow of such an accurate inquiry; and there is no virtue or moral duty but what may, with facility, be refined away, if we indulge a false philosophy in sifting and scrutinizing it, by every captious rule of logic, in every light or position in which it may be placed.

The questions with regard to private property have filled infinite volumes of law and philosophy, if in both we add the commentators to the original text; and in the end we may safely pronounce, that many of the rules there established are uncertain, ambiguous, and arbitrary. The like opinion may be formed with regard to the succession and rights of princes, and forms of government. Several cases no doubt occur, especi-

ally in the infancy of any constitution, which admit of no determination from the laws of justice and equity; and our historian Rapin pretends, that the controversy between Edward the Third and Philip de Valois was of this nature, and could be decided only by an appeal to heaven, that is, by war and violence.

Who shall tell me, whether Germanicus or Drusus ought to have succeeded to Tiberius, had he died while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the elder son, because he was born before Drusus; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where he had no advantage in the succession of private families? Ought the Roman empire at that time to be deemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or to the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation?

Commodus mounted the throne after a pretty long succession of excellent emperors, who had acquired their title, not by birth, or public election, but by the fictitious rite of adoption. The bloody debauchee being murdered by a conspiracy, suddenly formed between his wench and her gallant, who happened at that time to be *Prætorian Præfect*, these immediately deliberated about choosing a master to human kind, to speak in the style of those ages; and they cast their eyes on Pertinax. Before the tyrant's death was known, the *Præfect* went secretly to that senator, who, on the

appearance of the soldiers, imagined that his execution had been ordered by Commodus. He was immediately saluted emperor by the officer and his attendants, cheerfully proclaimed by the populace, unwillingly submitted to by the guards, formally recognised by the senate, and passively received by the provinces and armies of the empire.

The discontent of the *Prætorian* bands broke out in a sudden sedition, which occasioned the murder of that excellent prince; and the world being now without a master, and without government, the guards thought proper to set the empire formally to sale. Julian, the purchaser, was proclaimed by the soldiers, recognised by the senate, and submitted to by the people; and must also have been submitted to by the provinces, had not the envy of the legions begotten opposition and resistance. Pescennius Niger in Syria elected himself emperor, gained the tumultuary consent of his army, and was attended with the secret good will of the senate and people of Rome. Albinus in Britain found an equal right to set up his claim; but Severus, who governed Pannonia, prevailed in the end above both of them. That able politician and warrior, finding his own birth and dignity too much inferior to the imperial crown, professed, at first, an intention only of revenging the death of Pertinax. He marched as general into Italy, defeated Julian, and, without our being able to fix any precise commencement even of the soldiers' consent, he was from necessity acknowledged emperor by the senate and people, and fully established in his violent authority, by subduing Niger and Albinus.\*

‘*Inter hæc Gordianus Cæsar*’ (says Capitolinus, speak-

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\* Herodian, lib. ii.

ing of another period) ‘*sublatus a militibus. Imperator est appellatus, quia non erat alius in presenti.*’ It is to be remarked, that Gordian was a boy of fourteen years of age.

Frequent instances of a like nature occur in the history of the emperors; in that of Alexander’s successors; and of many other countries: Nor can any thing be more unhappy than a despotic government of this kind; where the succession is disjointed and irregular, and must be determined on every vacancy by force or election. In a free government, the matter is often unavoidable, and is also much less dangerous. The interests of liberty may there frequently lead the people, in their own defence, to alter the succession of the crown. And the constitution, being compounded of parts, may still maintain a sufficient stability, by resting on the aristocratical or democratical members, though the monarchical be altered, from time to time, in order to accommodate it to the former.

In an absolute government, when there is no legal prince who has a title to the throne, it may safely be determined to belong to the first occupant. Instances of this kind are but too frequent, especially in the eastern monarchies. When any race of princes expires, the will or destination of the last sovereign will be regarded as a title. Thus the edict of Louis XIV., who called the bastard princes to the succession in case of the failure of all the legitimate princes, would, in such an event, have some authority.\* Thus the will of

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\* It is remarkable, that in the remonstrance of the Duke of Bourbon and the legitimate princes, against this destination of Louis XIV., the doctrine of the *original contract* is insisted on, even in that absolute government. The French nation, say they, choosing Hugh Capet and his posterity to rule over them and their posterity, where the former has

Charles the Second disposed of the whole Spanish monarchy. The cession of the ancient proprietor, especially when joined to conquest, is likewise deemed a good title. The general obligation, which binds us to government, is the interest and necessities of society; and this obligation is very strong. The determination of it to this or that particular prince, or form of government, is frequently more uncertain and dubious. Present possession has considerable authority in these cases, and greater than in private property; because of the disorders which attend all revolutions and changes of government.

We shall only observe, before we conclude, that though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy, or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard, by which any controversy can ever be decided. And nothing is a clearer proof, that a theory of this kind is erroneous, than to find, that it leads to paradoxes repugnant to the common sentiments of mankind, and to the prac-

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fails, there is a tacit right reserved to choose a new royal family; and this right is invaded by calling the bastard princes to the throne, without the consent of the nation. But the Comte de Boulainvilliers, who wrote in defence of the bastard princes, ridicules this notion of an original contract, especially when applied to Hugh Capet, who mounted the throne, says he, by the same arts which have ever been employed by all conquerors and usurpers. He got his title, indeed, recognised by the states after he had put himself in possession: But is this a choice or contract? The Comte de Boulainvilliers, we may observe, was a noted republican; but being a man of learning, and very conversant in history, he knew that the people were never almost consulted in these revolutions and new establishments, and that time alone bestowed right and authority on what was commonly at first founded on force and violence. See *Etat de la France*, vol. iii.

tice and opinion of all nations and all ages. The doctrine, which founds all lawful government on an *original contract*, or consent of the people, is plainly of this kind; nor has the most noted of its partisans, in prosecution of it, scrupled to affirm, *that absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society, and so can be no form of civil government at all;*<sup>b</sup> and *that the supreme power in a state cannot take from any man, by taxes and impositions, any part of his property, without his own consent or that of his representatives.*<sup>c</sup> What authority any moral reasoning can have, which leads into opinions so wide of the general practice of mankind, in every place but this single kingdom, it is easy to determine.

The only passage I meet with in antiquity, where the obligation of obedience to government is ascribed to a promise, is in Plato's *Crito*; where Socrates refuses to escape from prison, because he had tacitly promised to obey the laws. Thus he builds a *Tory* consequence of passive obedience on a *Whig* foundation of the original contract.

New discoveries are not to be expected in these matters. If scarce any man, till very lately, ever imagined that government was founded on compact, it is certain that it cannot, in general, have any such foundation.

The crime of rebellion among the ancients was commonly expressed by the terms *contra rem publicam moliri*.

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<sup>b</sup> See Locke on Government, chap. vii. § 90.

<sup>c</sup> Locke on Government, chap. xi. § 138, 139, 140.

## ESSAY XIII.

## OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

IN the former Essay, we endeavoured to refute the *speculative* systems of politics advanced in this nation, as well the religious system of the one party, as the philosophical of the other. We now come to examine the *practical* consequences deduced by each party, with regard to the measures of submission due to sovereigns.

As the obligation to justice is founded entirely on the interests of society, which require mutual abstinence from property, in order to preserve peace among mankind; it is evident that, when the execution of justice would be attended with very pernicious consequences, that virtue must be suspended, and give place to public utility, in such extraordinary and such pressing emergencies. The maxim, *fat Justitia, ruat Cælum*, let justice be performed, though the universe be destroyed, is apparently false, and, by sacrificing the end to the means, shows a preposterous idea of the subordination of duties. What governor of a town makes any scruple of burning the suburbs, when they facilitate the approaches of the enemy? Or what general abstains from plundering a neutral country, when the necessities of

war require it, and he cannot otherwise subsist his army? The case is the same with the duty of allegiance; and common sense teaches us, that as government binds us to obedience, only on account of its tendency to public utility, that duty must always, in extraordinary cases, when public ruin would evidently attend obedience, yield to the primary and original obligation. *Salus populi suprema Lex*, the safety of the people is the supreme law. This maxim is agreeable to the sentiments of mankind in all ages: Nor is any one, when he reads of the insurrections against Nero or Philip the Second, so infatuated with party systems, as not to wish success to the enterprise, and praise the undertakers. Even our high monarchical party, in spite of their sublime theory, are forced, in such cases, to judge, and feel, and approve, in conformity to the rest of mankind.

Resistance, therefore, being admitted in extraordinary emergencies, the question can only be among good reasoners, with regard to the degree of necessity which can justify resistance, and render it lawful or commendable. And here, I must confess, that I shall always incline to their side, who draw the bond of allegiance very close, and consider an infringement of it as the last refuge in desperate cases, when the public is in the highest danger from violence and tyranny. For, besides the mischiefs of a civil war, which commonly attends insurrection, it is certain that, where a disposition to rebellion appears among any people, it is one chief cause of tyranny in the rulers, and forces them into many violent measures which they never would have embraced, had every one been inclined to submission and obedience. Thus, the *tyrannicide*, or assassination, approved of by ancient maxims, instead of keep-



ing tyrants and usurpers in awe, made them ten times more fierce and unrelenting; and is now justly, upon that account, abolished by the laws of nations, and universally condemned as a base and treacherous method of bringing to justice these disturbers of society.

Besides, we must consider, that as obedience is our duty in the common course of things, it ought chiefly to be inculcated; nor can any thing be more preposterous than an anxious care and solicitude in stating all the cases in which resistance may be allowed. In like manner, though a philosopher reasonably acknowledges, in the course of an argument, that the rules of justice may be dispensed with in cases of urgent necessity; what should we think of a preacher or casuist, who should make it his chief study to find out such cases, and enforce them with all the vehemence of argument and eloquence? Would he not be better employed in inculcating the general doctrine, than in displaying the particular exceptions, which we are, perhaps; but too much inclined of ourselves to embrace and to extend?

There are, however, two reasons which may be pleaded in defence of that party among us who have, with so much industry, propagated the maxims of resistance; maxims which, it must be confessed, are, in general, so pernicious and so destructive of civil society. The *first* is, that their antagonists, carrying the doctrine of obedience to such an extravagant height, as not only never to mention the exceptions in extraordinary cases (which might, perhaps, be excusable), but even positively to exclude them; it became necessary to insist on these exceptions, and defend the rights of injured truth and liberty. The *second*, and, perhaps, better reason, is founded on the nature of the British constitution and form of government.

It is almost peculiar to our constitution to establish a first magistrate with such high pre-eminence and dignity, that, though limited by the laws, he is, in a manner, so far as regards his own person, above the laws, and can neither be questioned nor punished for any injury or wrong which may be committed by him. His ministers alone, or those who act by his commission, are obnoxious to justice; and while the prince is thus allured by the prospect of personal safety, to give the laws their free course, an equal security is, in effect, obtained by the punishment of lesser offenders; and, at the same time, a civil war is avoided, which would be the infallible consequence, were an attack at every turn made directly upon the sovereign. But, though the constitution pays this salutary compliment to the prince, it can never reasonably be understood by that maxim to have determined its own destruction, or to have established a tame submission, where he protects his ministers, perseveres in injustice, and usurps the whole power of the commonwealth. This case, indeed, is never expressly put by the laws; because it is impossible for them, in their ordinary course, to provide a remedy for it, or establish any magistrate, with superior authority, to chastise the exorbitances of the prince. But as a right without a remedy would be an absurdity; the remedy, in this case, is the extraordinary one of resistance, when affairs come to that extremity, that the constitution can be defended by it alone. Resistance, therefore, must of course become more frequent in the British government, than in others which are simpler, and consist of fewer parts and movements. Where the king is an absolute sovereign, he has little temptation to commit such enormous tyranny as may justly provoke rebellion. But where he is limited, his imprudent ambition, without any great vices, may run him

into that perilous situation. This is frequently supposed to have been the case with Charles the First; and if we may now speak truth, after animosities are ceased, this was also the case with James the Second. These were harmless, if not, in their private character, good men; but mistaking the nature of our constitution, and engrossing the whole legislative power, it became necessary to oppose them with some vehemence; and even to deprive the latter formally of that authority, which he had used with such imprudence and indiscretion.

## ESSAY XIV.

## OF THE COALITION OF PARTIES.

To abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable in a free government. The only dangerous parties are such as entertain opposite views with regard to the essentials of government, the succession of the crown, or the more considerable privileges belonging to the several members of the constitution; where there is no room for any compromise or accommodation, and where the controversy may appear so momentous as to justify even an opposition by arms to the pretensions of antagonists. Of this nature was the animosity continued for above a century past, between the parties in England; an animosity which broke out sometimes into civil war, which occasioned violent revolutions, and which continually endangered the peace and tranquillity of the nation. But as there have appeared of late the strongest symptoms of an universal desire to abolish these party distinctions, this tendency to a coalition affords the most agreeable prospect of future happiness, and ought to be carefully cherished and promoted by every lover of his country.

There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end, than to prevent all unreasonable in-

sult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame which we bestow on either side. The two former Essays, concerning the *original contract* and *passive obedience*, are calculated for this purpose with regard to the *philosophical* and *practical* controversies between the parties, and tend to show that neither side are in these respects so fully supported by reason as they endeavour to flatter themselves. We shall proceed to exercise the same moderation with regard to the *historical* disputes between the parties, by proving that each of them was justified by plausible topics; that there were on both sides wise men, who meant well to their country; and that the past animosity between the factions had no better foundation than narrow prejudice or interested passion.

The popular party, who afterwards acquired the name of Whigs, might justify, by very specious arguments, that opposition to the crown, from which our present free constitution is derived. Though obliged to acknowledge, that precedents in favour of prerogative had uniformly taken place during many reigns before Charles the First, they thought that there was no reason for submitting any longer to so dangerous an authority. Such might have been their reasoning: As the rights of mankind are for ever to be deemed sacred, no prescription of tyranny or arbitrary power can have authority sufficient to abolish them. Liberty is a blessing so inestimable, that, wherever there appears any probability of recovering it, a nation may willingly run many hazards, and ought not even to

repine at the greatest effusion of blood or dissipation of treasure. All human institutions, and none more than government, are in continual fluctuation. Kings are sure to embrace every opportunity of extending their prerogatives: And if favourable incidents be not also laid hold of for extending and securing the privileges of the people, an universal despotism must for ever prevail amongst mankind. The example of all the neighbouring nations proves, that it is no longer safe to intrust with the crown the same high prerogatives which had formerly been exercised during rude and simple ages. And though the example of many late reigns may be pleaded in favour of a power in the prince somewhat arbitrary, more remote reigns afford instances of stricter limitations imposed on the crown; and those pretensions of the parliament now branded with the title of innovations, are only a recovery of the just rights of the people.

These views, far from being odious, are surely large, and generous, and noble: to their prevalence and success the kingdom owes its liberty: perhaps its learning, its industry, commerce, and naval power: By them chiefly the English name is distinguished among the society of nations, and aspires to a rivalship with that of the freest and most illustrious commonwealths of antiquity. But as all these mighty consequences could not reasonably be foreseen at the time when the contest began, the royalists of that age wanted not specious arguments on their side, by which they could justify their defence of the then established prerogatives of the prince. We shall state the question, as it might have appeared to them at the assembling of that parliament, which, by its violent encroachments on the crown, began the civil wars.

The only rule of government, they might have said, known and acknowledged among men, is use and practice: Reason is so uncertain a guide, that it will always be exposed to doubt and controversy: Could it ever render itself prevalent over the people, men had always retained it as their sole rule of conduct: They had still continued in the primitive unconnected state of nature, without submitting to political government, whose sole basis is, not pure reason, but authority and precedent. Dissolve these ties, you break all the bonds of civil society, and leave every man at liberty to consult his private interest, by those expedients, which his appetite, disguised under the appearance of reason, shall dictate to him. The spirit of innovation is in itself pernicious, however favourable its particular object may sometimes appear; a truth so obvious, that the popular party themselves are sensible of it, and therefore cover their encroachments on the crown by the plausible pretence of their recovering the ancient liberties of the people.

But the present prerogatives of the crown, allowing all the suppositions of that party, have been uncontestedly established ever since the accession of the House of Tudor; a period which, as it now comprehends a hundred and sixty years, may be allowed sufficient to give stability to any constitution. Would it not have appeared ridiculous, in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, to have talked of the republican constitution as the rule of government; or to have supposed, that the former rights of the senate, and consuls and tribunes, were still subsisting?

But the present claims of the English monarchs are much more favourable than those of the Roman emperors during that age. The authority of Augus-

tus was a plain usurpation, grounded only on military violence, and forms such an epoch in the Roman history as is obvious to every reader. But if Henry VII. really, as some pretend, enlarged the power of the crown, it was only by insensible acquisitions, which escaped the apprehensions of the people, and have scarcely been remarked even by historians and politicians. The new government, if it deserves the epithet, is an imperceptible transition from the former; is entirely engrafted on it; derives its title fully from that root; and is to be considered only as one of those gradual revolutions, to which human affairs, in every nation, will be for ever subject.

The house of Tudor; and after them that of Stuart, exercised no prerogatives but what had been claimed and exercised by the Plantagenets. Not a single branch of their authority can be said to be an innovation. The only difference is, that perhaps former kings exerted these powers only by intervals, and were not able, by reason of the opposition of their barons, to render them so steady a rule of administration.<sup>60</sup> But the sole inference from this fact is, that those ancient times were more turbulent and seditious; and that royal authority, the constitution, and the laws, have happily of late gained the ascendant.

Under what pretence can the popular party now speak of recovering the ancient constitution? The for-

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60 The author believes that he was the first writer who advanced, that the family of Tudor possessed in general more authority than their immediate predecessors; an opinion which he hopes will be supported by history, but which he proposes with some diffidence. There are strong symptoms of arbitrary power in some former reigns even after signing of the charters. The power of the crown in that age depended less on the constitution, than on the capacity and vigour of the prince who wore it.—EDITION N.



mer control over the kings was not placed in the commons, but in the barons : The people had no authority, and even little or no liberty ; till the crown, by suppressing these factious tyrants, enforced the execution of the laws, and obliged all the subjects equally to respect each other's rights, privileges, and properties. If we must return to the ancient barbarous and feudal constitution, let those gentlemen, who now behave themselves with so much insolence to their sovereign, set the first example. Let them make court to be admitted as retainers to a neighbouring baron ; and, by submitting to slavery under him, acquire some protection to themselves, together with the power of exercising rapine and oppression over their inferior slaves and villains. This was the condition of the commons among their remote ancestors.

But how far back must we go, in having recourse to ancient constitutions and governments ? There was a constitution still more ancient than that to which these innovators affect so much to appeal. During that period there was no *Magna Charta* : The barons themselves possessed few regular, stated privileges ; and the house of commons probably had not an existence.

It is ridiculous to hear the Commons, while they are assuming, by usurpation, the whole power of government, talk of reviving the ancient institutions. Is it not known, that, though representatives received wages from their constituents, to be a member of the Lower House was always considered as a burden, and an exemption from it as a privilege ? Will they persuade us that power, which of all human acquisitions is the most coveted, and in comparison of which, even reputation, and pleasure, and riches, are slighted, could ever be regarded as a burden by any man ?

The property acquired of late by the Commons, it is said, entitles them to more power than their ancestors enjoyed. But to what is this increase of their property owing but to an increase of their liberty and their security? Let them therefore acknowledge that their ancestors, while the crown was restrained by the seditious barons, really enjoyed less liberty than they themselves have attained, after the sovereign acquired the ascendant: And let them enjoy that liberty with moderation, and not forfeit it by new exorbitant claims, and by rendering it a pretence for endless innovations.

The true rule of government is the present established practice of the age. That has most authority, because it is recent: It is also best known, for the same reason. Who has assured those tribunes that the Plantagenets did not exercise as high acts of authority as the Tudors? Historians, they say, do not mention them. But historians are also silent with regard to the chief exertions of prerogative by the Tudors. Where any power or prerogative is fully and undoubtedly established, the exercise of it passes for a thing of course, and readily escapes the notice of history and annals. Had we no other monuments of Elizabeth's reign than what are preserved even by Camden, the most copious, judicious, and exact of our historians, we should be entirely ignorant of the most important maxims of her government.

Was not the present monarchical government, in its full extent, authorized by lawyers, recommended by divines, acknowledged by politicians, acquiesced in, nay, passionately cherished, by the people in general, and all this during a period of at least a hundred and sixty years, and, till of late, without the smallest murmur or controversy? This general consent surely, dur-

ing so long a time, must be sufficient to render a constitution legal and valid. If the origin of all power be derived, as is pretended, from the people, here is their consent in the fullest and most ample terms that can be desired or imagined.

But the people must not pretend, because they can, by their consent, lay the foundations of government, that therefore they are to be permitted, at their pleasure, to overthrow and subvert them. There is no end of these seditious and arrogant claims. The power of the crown is now openly struck at: The nobility are also in visible peril: The gentry will soon follow: The popular leaders, who will then assume the name of gentry, will next be exposed to danger: And the people themselves, having become incapable of civil government, and lying under the restraint of no authority, must, for the sake of peace, admit, instead of their legal and mild monarchs, a succession of military and despotic tyrants.

These consequences are the more to be dreaded, as the present fury of the people, though glossed over by pretensions to civil liberty, is in reality incited by the fanaticism of religion; a principle the most blind, headstrong and ungovernable, by which human nature can possibly be actuated. Popular rage is dreadful, from whatever motive derived; but must be attended with the most pernicious consequences, when it arises from a principle which disclaims all control by human law, reason, or authority.

These are the arguments which each party may make use of to justify the conduct of their predecessors during that great crisis. The event, if that can be admitted as a reason, has shown, that the arguments of the popular party were better founded; but

perhaps, according to the established maxims of lawyers and politicians, the views of the royalists ought, beforehand, to have appeared more solid, more safe, and more legal. But this is certain, that the greater moderation we now employ in representing past events, the nearer shall we be to produce a full coalition of the parties, and an entire acquiescence in our present establishment. Moderation is of advantage to every establishment: Nothing but zeal can overturn a settled power; and an over active zeal in friends is apt to beget a like spirit in antagonists. The transition from a moderate opposition against an establishment, to an entire acquiescence in it, is easy and insensible.

There are many invincible arguments which should induce the malecontent party to acquiesce entirely in the present settlement of the constitution. They now find, that the spirit of civil liberty, though at first connected with religious fanaticism, could purge itself from that pollution, and appear under a more genuine and engaging aspect; a friend to toleration, and encourager of all the enlarged and generous sentiments that do honour to human nature. They may observe, that the popular claims could stop at a proper period; and, after retrenching the high claims of prerogative, could still maintain a due respect to monarchy, the nobility, and to all ancient institutions. Above all, they must be sensible, that the very principle which made the strength of their party, and from which it derived its chief authority, has now deserted them, and gone over to their antagonists. The plan of liberty is settled; its happy effects are proved by experience; a long tract of time has given it stability; and whoever would attempt to overturn it, and to recall the past government or abdicated family, would, besides other

more criminal imputations, be exposed, in their turn, to the reproach of faction and innovation. While they peruse the history of past events, they ought to reflect, both that those rights of the crown are long since annihilated, and that the tyranny, and violence, and oppression, to which they often give rise, are ills from which the established liberty of the constitution has now at last happily protected the people. These reflections will prove a better security to our freedom and privileges than to deny, contrary to the clearest evidence of facts, that such regal powers ever had an existence. There is not a more effectual method of betraying a cause than to lay the stress of the argument on a wrong place, and, by disputing an untenable post, inure the adversaries to success and victory.

## ESSAY XV.

## OF THE PROTESTANT SUCCESSION.

I SUPPOSE, that if a Member of Parliament, in the reign of King William or Queen Anne, while the establishment of the *Protestant Succession* was yet uncertain, were deliberating concerning the party he would choose in that important question, and weighing, with impartiality, the advantages and disadvantages on each side, I believe the following particulars would have entered into his consideration.

He would easily perceive the great advantage resulting from the restoration of the Stuart family, by which we should preserve the succession clear and undisputed, free from a pretender, with such a specious title as that of blood, which, with the multitude, is always the claim the strongest and most easily comprehended. It is in vain to say, as many have done, that the question with regard to *governors*, independent of *government*, is frivolous, and little worth disputing, much less fighting about. The generality of mankind never will enter into these sentiments; and it is much happier, I believe, for society, that they do not, but rather continue in their natural prepossessions. How

could stability be preserved in any monarchical government (which, though perhaps not the best, is, and always has been, the most common of any), unless men had so passionate a regard for the true heir of their royal family; and even though he be weak in understanding, or infirm in years, gave him so sensible a preference above persons the most accomplished in shining talents, or celebrated for great achievements? Would not every popular leader put in his claim at every vacancy, or even without any vacancy, and the kingdom become the theatre of perpetual wars and convulsions? The condition of the Roman empire, surely, was not in this respect much to be envied; nor is that of the *Eastern* nations, who pay little regard to the titles of their sovereign, but sacrifice them every day, to the caprice or momentary humour of the populace or soldiery. It is but a foolish wisdom, which is so carefully displayed in undervaluing princes, and placing them on a level with the meanest of mankind. To be sure, an anatomist finds no more in the greatest monarch than in the lowest peasant or day-labourer; and a moralist may, perhaps, frequently find less. But what do all these reflections tend to? We all of us still retain these prejudices in favour of birth and family; and neither in our serious occupations, nor most careless amusements, can we ever get entirely rid of them. A tragedy that should represent the adventures of sailors, or porters, or even of private gentlemen, would presently disgust us; but one that introduces kings and princes, acquires in our eyes an air of importance and dignity. Or should a man be able, by his superior wisdom, to get entirely above such prepossessions, he would soon, by means of the same wisdom, again bring himself down to them for the sake of society, whose

welfare he would perceive to be intimately connected with them. Far from endeavouring to undeceive the people in this particular, he would cherish such sentiments of reverence to their princes, as requisite to preserve a due subordination in society. And though the lives of twenty thousand men be often sacrificed to maintain a king in possession of his throne, or preserve the right of succession undisturbed, he entertains no indignation at the loss, on pretence that every individual of these was, perhaps, in himself, as valuable as the prince he served. He considers the consequences of violating the hereditary right of kings; consequences which may be felt for many centuries, while the loss of several thousand men brings so little prejudice to a large kingdom, that it may not be perceived a few years after.

The advantages of the Hanover succession are of an opposite nature, and arise from this very circumstance, that it violates hereditary right, and places on the throne a prince to whom birth gave no title to that dignity. It is evident, from the history of this Island, that the privileges of the people have, during near two centuries, been continually upon the increase, by the division of the church lands, by the alienations of the barons' estates, by the progress of trade, and above all by the happiness of our situation, which, for a long time, gave us sufficient security, without any standing army or military establishment. On the contrary, public liberty has, almost in every other nation of Europe, been, during the same period, extremely on the decline; while the people were disgusted at the hardships of the old feudal militia, and rather chose to intrust their prince with mercenary armies, which he easily turned against themselves. It was nothing ex-



traordinary, therefore, that some of our British sovereigns mistook the nature of the constitution, at least the genius of the people; and as they embraced all the favourable precedents left them by their ancestors, they overlooked all those which were contrary, and which supposed a limitation in our government. They were encouraged in this mistake, by the example of all the neighbouring princes, who, bearing the same title or appellation, and being adorned with the same ensigns of authority, naturally led them to claim the same powers and prerogatives. It appears from the speeches and proclamations of James I., and the whole train of that prince's actions, as well as his son's, that he regarded the English government as a simple monarchy, and never imagined that any considerable part of his subjects entertained a contrary idea. This opinion made those monarchs discover their pretensions, without preparing any force to support them; and even without reserve or disguise, which are always employed by those who enter upon any new project, or endeavour to innovate in any government.<sup>61</sup> The flattery of cour-

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<sup>61</sup> King James told his Parliament plainly, when they meddled in state affairs, '*Ne sutor ultra crepidam?*' He used also, at his table, in promiscuous companies, to advance his notions in a manner still more undisguised, as we may learn from a story told in the life of Mr Waller, and which that poet used frequently to repeat. When Mr Waller was young, he had the curiosity to go to Court, and he stood in the circle and saw King James dine; where, amongst other company, there sat at table two Bishops. The King openly and aloud proposed this question, *Whether he might not take his subjects' money when he had occasion for it, without all this formality of Parliament.* The one Bishop readily replied, '*God forbid you should not, for you are the breath of our nostrils.*' The other Bishop declined answering, and said he was not skilled in Parliamentary cases. But upon the King's urging him, and saying he would admit of no evasion, his Lordship replied very pleasantly, '*Why, then, I think your Majesty may lawfully take my brother's money, for he offers it.*' In

tiers farther confirmed their prejudices; and, above all, that of the clergy, who, from several passages of *Scripture*, and these wrested too, had erected a regular and avowed system of arbitrary power. The only method of destroying, at once, all these high claims and pretensions, was to depart from the true hereditary line, and choose a prince, who, being plainly a creature of the public, and receiving the crown on conditions, expressed and avowed, found his authority established on the same bottom with the privileges of the people. By electing him in the royal line, we cut off all hopes of ambitious subjects, who might, in future emergencies, disturb the government by their cabals and pretensions: By rendering the crown hereditary in his family, we avoided all the inconveniences of elec-

Sir Walter Raleigh's Preface to the History of the World, there is this remarkable passage. '*Philip the II., by strong hand and main force, attempted to make himself not only an absolute monarch over the Netherlands, like unto the kings and sovereigns of England and France, but, Turk like, to tread under his feet all their natural and fundamental laws, privileges, and ancient rights.*' Spencer, speaking of some grants of the English Kings to the Irish corporations, says, 'All which, though at the time of their first grant they were tolerable and perhaps reasonable, yet now are most unreasonable and inconvenient. But all these will easily be cut off with the superior power of her Majesty's prerogative, against which her own grants are not to be pleaded or enforced.' *State of Ireland*, page 1537, Edit. 1706.

As these were very common, though not, perhaps, the universal notions of the times, the two first Princes of the House of Stuart were the more excusable for their mistake. And Rapin, the most judicious of historians, \* seems sometimes to treat them with too much severity upon account of it.

\* In Editions H, N, the words '*the most judicious of historians,*' which stood in Editions F, G, are changed to '*suitable to his usual malignity and partiality.*'

tive monarchy: and by excluding the lineal heir, we secured all our constitutional limitations, and rendered our government uniform, and of a piece. The people cherish monarchy, because protected by it: The monarch favours liberty, because created by it: And thus every advantage is obtained by the new establishment, as far as human skill and wisdom can extend itself.

These are the separate advantages of fixing the succession, either in the house of Stuart, or in that of Hanover. There are also disadvantages in each establishment, which an impartial patriot would ponder and examine, in order to form a just judgment upon the whole.

The disadvantages of the Protestant succession consist in the foreign dominions which are possessed by the princes of the Hanover line, and which, it might be supposed, would engage us in the intrigues and wars of the Continent, and lose us, in some measure, the inestimable advantage we possess, of being surrounded and guarded by the sea, which we command. The disadvantages of recalling the abdicated family consist chiefly in their religion, which is more prejudicial to society than that established among us; is contrary to it, and affords no toleration, or peace, or security, to any other communion.

It appears to me, that these advantages and disadvantages are allowed on both sides; at least, by every one who is at all susceptible of argument or reasoning. No subject, however loyal, pretends to deny, that the disputed title and foreign dominions of the present royal family are a loss. Nor is there any partisan of the Stuarts but will confess, that the claim of hereditary, indefeasible right, and the Roman Catholic religion, are also disadvantages in that family. It belongs,

therefore, to a philosopher alone, who is of neither party, to put all the circumstances in the scale, and assign to each of them its proper poise and influence. Such a one will readily at first acknowledge, that all political questions are infinitely complicated, and that there scarcely ever occurs in any deliberation, a choice which is either purely good, or purely ill. Consequences, mixed and varied, may be foreseen to flow from every measure: And many consequences, unforeseen, do always, in fact, result from every one. Hesitation, and reserve, and suspense, are therefore the only sentiments he brings to this essay or trial. Or, if he indulges any passion, it is that of derision against the ignorant multitude, who are always clamorous and dogmatical, even in the nicest questions, of which, from want of temper, perhaps still more than of understanding, they are altogether unfit judges.

But to say something more determinate on this head, the following reflections will, I hope, show the temper, if not the understanding, of a philosopher.

Were we to judge merely by first appearances, and by past experience, we must allow that the advantages of a parliamentary title in the house of Hanover are greater than those of an undisputed hereditary title in the house of Stuart, and that our fathers acted wisely in preferring the former to the latter. So long as the house of Stuart ruled in Great Britain, which, with some interruption, was above eighty years, the government was kept in a continual fever, by the contention between the privileges of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. If arms were dropped, the noise of disputes continued: Or if these were silenced, jealousy still corroded the heart, and threw the nation into an unnatural ferment and disorder. And while we were thus

occupied in domestic disputes, a foreign power, dangerous to public liberty, erected itself in Europe, without any opposition from us, and even sometimes with our assistance.

But during these last sixty years, when a parliamentary establishment has taken place; whatever factions may have prevailed, either among the people or in public assemblies, the whole force of our constitution has always fallen to one side, and an uninterrupted harmony has been preserved between our princes and our parliaments. Public liberty, with internal peace and order, has flourished almost without interruption: Trade and manufactures, and agriculture, have increased: The arts, and sciences, and philosophy, have been cultivated. Even religious parties have been necessitated to lay aside their mutual rancour; and the glory of the nation has spread itself all over Europe; derived equally from our progress in the arts of peace, and from valour and success in war. So long and so glorious a period no nation almost can boast of: Nor is there another instance in the whole history of mankind, that so many millions of people have, during such a space of time, been held together, in a manner so free, so rational, and so suitable to the dignity of human nature.

But though this recent experience seems clearly to decide in favour of the present establishment, there are some circumstances to be thrown into the other scale; and it is dangerous to regulate our judgment by one event or example.

We have had two rebellions during the flourishing period above mentioned, besides plots and conspiracies without number. And if none of these have produced any very fatal event, we may ascribe our escape chiefly to the narrow genius of those princes who disputed our

establishment; and we may esteem ourselves so far fortunate. But the claims of the banished family, I fear, are not yet antiquated; and who can foretell, that their future attempts will produce no greater disorder?

The disputes between privilege and prerogative may easily be composed by laws, and votes, and conferences, and concessions, where there is tolerable temper or prudence on both sides, or on either side. Among contending titles, the question can only be determined by the sword, and by devastation, and by civil war.

A prince, who fills the throne with a disputed title, dares not arm his subjects; the only method of securing a people fully, both against domestic oppression and foreign conquest.

Notwithstanding our riches and renown, what a critical escape did we make, by the late peace, from dangers, which were owing not so much to bad conduct and ill success in war, as to the pernicious practice of mortgaging our finances, and the still more pernicious maxim of never paying off our encumbrances? Such fatal measures would not probably have been embraced, had it not been to secure a precarious establishment. <sup>69</sup>

But to convince us, that an hereditary title is to be embraced rather than a parliamentary one, which is not supported by any other views or motives, a man needs only transport himself back to the era of the Restoration, and suppose that he had had a seat in that parliament which recalled the royal family, and put a period to the greatest disorders that ever arose from the oppo-

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<sup>69</sup> Those who consider how universal this pernicious practice of funding has become all over Europe, may perhaps dispute this last opinion. But we lay under less necessity than other states.—*Note in Editions F, G, H, N.*

site pretensions of prince and people. What would have been thought of one that had proposed, at that time, to set aside Charles II. and settle the crown on the Duke of York or Gloucester, merely in order to exclude all high claims, like those of their father and grandfather? Would not such a one have been regarded as an extravagant projector, who loved dangerous remedies, and could tamper and play with a government and national constitution, like a quack with a sickly patient. <sup>65</sup>

In reality, the reason assigned by the nation for excluding the race of Stuart, and so many other branches of the royal family, is not on account of their hereditary title, (a reason which would, to vulgar apprehensions, have appeared altogether absurd, but on account of their religion, which leads us to compare the disadvantages above mentioned in each establishment.

I confess that, considering the matter in general, it were much to be wished that our prince had no foreign dominions, and could confine all his attention to the government of the island. For not to mention some real inconveniences that may result from territories on the Continent, they afford such a handle for calumny and defamation, as is greedily seized by the people, al-

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<sup>65</sup> 'The advantages which result from a parliamentary title, preferably to an hereditary one, though they are great, are too refined ever to enter into the conception of the vulgar. The bulk of mankind would never allow them to be sufficient for committing what would be regarded as an injustice to the Prince. They must be supported by some gross, popular, and familiar topics; and wise men, though convinced of their force, would reject them, in compliance with the weakness and prejudices of the people. An encroaching tyrant, or deluded bigot alone, by his misconduct, is able to enrage the nation, and render practicable what was always, perhaps, desirable.—EDMUNDS F, G, H, N.

ways disposed to think ill of their superiors. It must, however, be acknowledged, that Hanover is, perhaps, the spot of ground in Europe the least inconvenient for a King of England. It lies in the heart of Germany, at a distance from the great powers, which are our natural rivals: It is protected by the laws of the empire, as well as by the arms of its own sovereign: And it serves only to connect us more closely with the House of Austria, our natural ally. <sup>64</sup>

The religious persuasion of the house of Stuart is an inconvenience of a much deeper die, and would threaten us with much more dismal consequences. The Roman Catholic religion, with its train of priests and friars, is more expensive than ours; even though unaccompanied with its natural attendants of inquisitors, and stakes, and gibbets, it is less tolerating; And, not content with dividing the sacerdotal from the regal office (which must be prejudicial to any state), it bestows the former on a foreigner, who has always a separate interest from that of the public, and may often have an opposite one.

But were this religion ever so advantageous to society, it is contrary to that which is established among

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<sup>64</sup> ' In the last war, it has been of service to us, by furnishing us with a considerable body of auxiliary troops, the bravest and most faithful in the world. The Elector of Hanover is the only considerable prince in the empire who has drove no separate end, and has raised up no stale pretensions, during the late commotions of Europe; but has acted all along with the dignity of a King of Britain. And, ever since the accession of that family, it would be difficult to show any harm we have ever received from the electoral dominions, except that short disgust in 1718 with Charles the 12th, who, regulating himself by maxims very different from those of other princes, made a personal quarrel of every public injury. \*—EDITIONS F, G, H, N.

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\* Note in EDITION N. ' *This was published in 1752.*'



us, and which is likely to keep possession, for a long time, of the minds of the people. And though it is much to be hoped, that the progress of reason will, by degrees, abate the acrimony of opposite religions all over Europe, yet the spirit of moderation has, as yet, made too slow advances to be entirely trusted. <sup>65</sup>

Thus, upon the whole, the advantages of the settlement in the family of Stuart, which frees us from a disputed title, seem to bear some proportion with those of the settlement in the family of Hanover, which frees us from the claims of prerogative; but, at the same time, its disadvantages, by placing on the throne a Roman Catholic, are greater than those of the other establishment, in settling the crown on a foreign prince. What party an impartial patriot, in the reign of King William or Queen Anne, would have chosen amidst these opposite views, may perhaps to some appear hard to determine. <sup>66</sup>

But the settlement in the house of Hanover has actually taken place. The princes of that family, without intrigue, without cabal, without solicitation on their part, have been called to mount our throne, by the united voice of the whole legislative body. They have, since their accession, displayed, in all their actions, the

<sup>65</sup> 'The conduct of the Saxon family, where the same person can be a Catholic King and a Protestant Elector, is perhaps the first instance in modern times of so reasonable and prudent a behaviour: And the gradual progress of the Catholic superstition does even there prognosticate a speedy alteration. After which it is justly to be apprehended, that persecutions will put a speedy period to the Protestant religion in the place of its nativity.'—EDRINGTONS F, G, H, N.

<sup>66</sup> 'For my part, I esteem liberty so invaluable a blessing in society, that whatever favours its progress and security, can scarce be too fondly cherished by every one who is a lover of human kind.'—EDRINGTONS F, G, H, N.

utmost mildness, equity, and regard to the laws and constitution. Our own ministers, our own parliaments, ourselves, have governed us; and if aught ill has befallen us, we can only blame fortune or ourselves. What a reproach must we become among nations, if, disgusted with a settlement so deliberately made, and whose conditions have been so religiously observed, we should throw every thing again into confusion, and, by our levity and rebellious disposition, prove ourselves totally unfit for any state but that of absolute slavery and subjection?

The greatest inconvenience attending a disputed title is, that it brings us in danger of civil wars and rebellions. What wise man, to avoid this inconvenience, would run directly into a civil war and rebellion? Not to mention, that so long possession, secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, in the apprehension of a great part of the nation, have begotten a title in the house of Hanover, independent of their present possession: So that now we should not, even by a revolution, obtain the end of avoiding a disputed title.

No revolution made by national forces will ever be able, without some other great necessity, to abolish our debts and encumbrances, in which the interest of so many persons is concerned. And a revolution made by foreign forces is a conquest, a calamity with which the precarious balance of power threatens us, and which our civil dissensions are likely, above all other circumstances, to bring upon us.



## ESSAY XVI.

## IDEA OF A PERFECT COMMONWEALTH: 67

It is not with forms of government, as with other artificial contrivances, where an old engine may be rejected, if we can discover another more accurate and commodious, or where trials may safely be made, even though the success be doubtful. An established government has an infinite advantage, by that very circumstance, of its being established; the bulk of mankind being governed by authority, not reason, and never attributing authority to any thing that has not the recommendation of antiquity.

To tamper, therefore, in this affair, or try experiments merely upon the credit of supposed argument and philosophy, can never be the part of a wise magistrate, who will bear a reverence to what carries the marks of age; and though he may attempt some im-

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67 'Of all mankind, there are none so pernicious as political projectors, if they have power, nor so ridiculous, if they want it: As, on the other hand, a wise politician is the most beneficial character in nature, if accompanied with authority, and the most innocent, and not altogether useless, even if deprived of it.'—EDRIONS F, G, H, N.

provements for the public good, yet will he adjust his innovations as much as possible to the ancient fabric, and preserve entire the chief pillars and supports of the constitution.

The mathematicians in Europe have been much divided concerning that figure of a ship which is the most commodious for sailing; and Huygens, who at last determined the controversy, is justly thought to have obliged the learned as well as commercial world, though Columbus had sailed to America, and Sir Francis Drake made the tour of the world, without any such discovery. As one form of government must be allowed more perfect than another, independent of the manners and humours of particular men, why may we not inquire what is the most perfect of all, though the common botched and inaccurate governments seem to serve the purposes of society, and though it be not so easy to establish a new system of government, as to build a vessel upon a new construction? The subject is surely the most worthy of curiosity of any the wit of man can possibly devise. And who knows, if this controversy were fixed by the universal consent of the wise and learned, but, in some future age, an opportunity might be afforded of reducing the theory to practice, either by a dissolution of some old government, or by the combination of men to form a new one, in some distant part of the world? In all cases, it must be advantageous to know what is the most perfect in the kind, that we may be able to bring any real constitution or form of government as near it as possible, by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society.

All I pretend to in the present Essay is, to revive this subject of speculation; and therefore I shall de-

liver my sentiments in as few words as possible. A long dissertation on that head would not, I apprehend, be very acceptable to the public, who will be apt to regard such disquisitions both as useless and chimerical.

All plans of government, which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind, are plainly imaginary. Of this nature, are the *Republic* of Plato, and the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. The *Oceana* is the only valuable model of a commonwealth that has yet been offered to the public.

The chief defects of the *Oceana* seem to be these: *First*, Its rotation is inconvenient, by throwing men, of whatever abilities, by intervals, out of public employment. *Secondly*, Its *Agrarian* is impracticable. Men will soon learn the art which was practised in ancient Rome, of concealing their possessions under other people's names, till at last the abuse will become so common, that they will throw off even the appearance of restraint. *Thirdly*, The *Oceana* provides not a sufficient security for liberty, or the redress of grievances. The senate must propose, and the people consent, by which means the senate have not only a negative upon the people, but, what is of much greater consequence, their negative goes before the votes of the people. Were the king's negative of the same nature in the English constitution, and could he prevent any bill from coming into parliament, he would be an absolute monarch. As his negative follows the votes of the houses, it is of little consequence, such a difference is there in the manner of placing the same thing. When a popular bill has been debated in parliament, is brought to maturity, all its conveniences and inconveniences weighed and balanced, if afterwards it be presented for the royal assent, few princes will venture to reject the

unanimous desire of the people. But could the king crush a disagreeable bill in embryo (as was the case for some time in the Scottish parliament, by means of the Lords of the Articles), the British government would have no balance, nor would grievances ever be redressed; and it is certain, that exorbitant power proceeds not in any government from new laws, so much as from neglecting to remedy the abuses which frequently rise from the old ones. A government, says Machiavel, must often be brought back to its original principles. It appears then, that in the *Oceana*, the whole legislature may be said to rest in the senate, which Harrington would own to be an inconvenient form of government, especially after the *Agrarian* is abolished.

Here is a form of government, to which I cannot, in theory, discover any considerable objection.

Let Great Britain and Ireland, or any territory of equal extent, be divided into 100 counties, and each county into 100 parishes, making in all 10,000. If the country proposed to be erected into a commonwealth be of more narrow extent, we may diminish the number of counties; but never bring them below thirty. If it be of greater extent, it were better to enlarge the parishes, or throw more parishes into a county, than increase the number of counties.

68 Let all the freeholders of twenty pounds a year in the county, and all the householders worth 500 pounds in the town parishes, meet annually in the parish

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68 'Let all the freeholders in the country parishes, and those who pay scot and lot in the town parishes, meet annually,' &c.—EDITIONS F, G.

'Let all the freeholders of ten pounds a year in the county, and all the householders worth 200 pounds in the town parishes, meet annually,' &c.—EDITIONS H, N.

church, and choose by ballot, some freeholder of the county for their member, whom we shall call the *county representative*.

Let the 100 county representatives, two days after their election, meet in the county town, and choose by ballot, from their own body, ten county *magistrates*, and one senator. There are, therefore, in the whole commonwealth, 100 senators, 1100 county magistrates, and 10,000 county representatives; for we shall bestow on all senators the authority of county magistrates, and on all county magistrates the authority of county representatives.

Let the senators meet in the capital, and be endowed with the whole executive power of the commonwealth; the power of peace and war, of giving orders to generals, admirals, and ambassadors; and, in short, all the prerogatives of a British king, except his negative.

Let the county representatives meet in their particular counties, and possess the whole legislative power of the commonwealth, the greater number of counties deciding the question; and where these are equal, let the senate have the casting vote.

Every new law must first be debated in the senate; and though rejected by it, if ten senators insist and protest, it must be sent down to the counties. The senate, if they please, may join to the copy of the law their reasons for receiving or rejecting it.

Because it would be troublesome to assemble all the county representatives for every trivial law that may be requisite, the senate have their choice of sending down the law either to the county magistrates or county representatives.

The magistrates, though the law be referred to them,

may, if they please, call the representatives, and submit the affair to their determination.

Whether the law be referred by the senate to the county magistrates or representatives, a copy of it, and of the senate's reasons, must be sent to every representative eight days before the day appointed for the assembling, in order to deliberate concerning it. And though the determination be, by the senate, referred to the magistrates, if five representatives of the county order the magistrates to assemble the whole court of representatives, and submit the affair to their determination, they must obey.

Either the county magistrates or representatives may give, to the senator of the county, the copy of a law to be proposed to the senate; and if five counties concur in the same order, the law, though refused by the senate, must come either to the county magistrates or representatives, as is contained in the order of the five counties.

Any twenty counties, by a vote either of their magistrates or representatives, may throw any man out of all public offices for a year. Thirty counties for three years.

The senate has a power of throwing out any member or number of members of its own body, not to be re-elected for that year. The senate cannot throw out twice in a year the senator of the same county.

The power of the old senate continues for three weeks after the annual election of the county representatives. Then all the new senators are shut up in a conclave like the cardinals; and by an intricate ballot, such as that of Venice or Malta, they choose the following magistrates; a protector, who represents the dignity of the commonwealth, and presides in the se-



nate ; two secretaries of state : the sesix councils, a council of state, a council of religion and learning, a council of trade, a council of laws, a council of war, a council of the admiralty, each council consisting of five persons ; together with six commissioners of the treasury, and a first commissioner. All these must be senators. The senate also names all the ambassadors to foreign courts, who may either be senators or not.

The senate may continue any or all of these, but must re-elect them every year.

The protector and two secretaries have session and suffrage in the council of state. The business of that council is all foreign politics. The council of state has session and suffrage in all the other councils.

The council of religion and learning inspects the universities and clergy. That of trade inspects every thing that may affect commerce. That of laws inspects all the abuses of law by the inferior magistrates, and examines what improvements may be made of the municipal law. That of war inspects the militia and its discipline, magazines, stores, &c. ; and when the republic is in war, examines into the proper orders for generals. The council of admiralty has the same power with regard to the navy, together with the nomination of the captains and all inferior officers.

None of these councils can give orders themselves, except where they receive such powers from the senate. In other cases, they must communicate every thing to the senate.

When the senate is under adjournment, any of the councils may assemble it before the day appointed for its meeting.

Besides these councils or courts, there is another called the court of *competitors* ; which is thus constituted.

If any candidates for the office of senator have more votes than a third of the representatives, that candidate who has most votes, next to the senator elected, becomes incapable for one year of all public offices, even of being a magistrate or representative; but he takes his seat in the court of competitors. Here then is a court which may sometimes consist of a hundred members, sometimes have no members at all; and by that means be for a year abolished.

The court of competitors has no power in the commonwealth. It has only the inspection of public accounts, and the accusing of any man before the senate. If the senate acquit him, the court of competitors may, if they please, appeal to the people, either magistrates or representatives. Upon that appeal, the magistrates or representatives meet on the day appointed by the court of competitors, and choose in each county three persons, from which number every senator is excluded. These, to the number of 300, meet in the capital, and bring the person accused to a new trial.

The court of competitors may propose any law to the senate; and if refused, may appeal to the people, that is, to the magistrates or representatives, who examine it in their counties. Every senator, who is thrown out of the senate by a vote of the court, takes his seat in the court of competitors.

The senate possesses all the judicative authority of the House of Lords, that is, all the appeals from the inferior courts. It likewise appoints the Lord Chancellor and all the officers of the law.

Every county is a kind of republic within itself, and the representatives may make by-laws, which have no authority till three months after they are voted. A copy of the law is sent to the senate, and to every

other county. The senate, or any single county, may at any time annul any by-law of another county.

The representatives have all the authority of the British justices of the peace in trials, commitments, &c.

The magistrates have the appointment of all the officers of the revenue in each county. All causes with regard to the revenue are carried ultimately by appeal before the magistrates. They pass the accounts of all the officers; but must have their own accounts examined and passed at the end of the year by the representatives.

The magistrates name rectors or ministers to all the parishes.

The Presbyterian government is established; and the highest ecclesiastical court is an assembly or synod of all the presbyters of the county. The magistrates may take any cause from this court, and determine it themselves.

The magistrates may try, and depose or suspend any presbyter.

The militia is established in imitation of that of Switzerland, which, being well known, we shall not insist upon it. It will only be proper to make this addition, that an army of 20,000 men be annually drawn out by rotation, paid and encamped during six weeks in summer, that the duty of a camp may not be altogether unknown.

The magistrates appoint all the colonels, and downwards. The senate all upwards. During war, the general appoints the colonel and downwards, and his commission is good for a twelvemonth. But after that, it must be confirmed by the magistrates of the county to which the regiment belongs. The magistrates may

break any officer in the county regiment; and the senate may do the same to any officer in the service. If the magistrates do not think proper to confirm the general's choice, they may appoint another officer in the place of him they reject.

All crimes are tried within the county by the magistrates and a jury; but the senate can stop any trial, and bring it before themselves.

Any county may indict any man before the senate for any crime.

The protector, the two secretaries, the council of state, with any five or more that the senate appoints, are possessed, on extraordinary emergencies, of *dictatorial* power for six months.

The protector may pardon any person condemned by the inferior courts.

In time of war, no officer of the army that is in the field can have any civil office in the commonwealth.

The capital, which we shall call London, may be allowed four members in the senate. It may therefore be divided into four counties. The representatives of each of these choose one senator and ten magistrates. There are therefore in the city four senators, forty-four magistrates, and four hundred representatives. The magistrates have the same authority as in the counties. The representatives also have the same authority; but they never meet in one general court: They give their votes in their particular county or division of hundreds.

When they enact any by-law, the greater number of counties or divisions determines the matter. And where these are equal, the magistrates have the casting vote.

The magistrates choose the mayor, sheriff, recorder, and other officers of the city.

In the commonwealth, no representative, magistrate, or senator as such, has any salary. The protector, secretaries, councils, and ambassadors, have salaries.

The first year in every century is set apart for correcting all inequalities which time may have produced in the representative. This must be done by the legislature.

The following political aphorisms may explain the reason of these orders.

The lower sort of people and small proprietors are good enough judges of one not very distant from them in rank or habitation; and therefore, in their parochial meetings, will probably choose the best, or nearly the best representative: But they are wholly unfit for county meetings, and for electing into the higher offices of the republic. Their ignorance gives the grandees an opportunity of deceiving them.

Ten thousand, even though they were not annually elected, are a basis large enough for any free government. It is true, the nobles in Poland are more than 10,000, and yet these oppress the people. But as power always continues there in the same persons and families, this makes them in a manner a different nation from the people. Besides, the nobles are there united under a few heads of families.

All free governments must consist of two councils, a lesser and greater, or, in other words, of a senate and people. The people, as Harrington observes, would want wisdom without the senate: The senate, without the people, would want honesty.

A large assembly of 1000, for instance, to represent the people, if allowed to debate, would fall into disor-

der. If not allowed to debate, the senate has a negative upon them, and the worst kind of negative, that before resolution,

Here, therefore, is an inconvenience which no government has yet fully remedied, but which is the easiest to be remedied in the world. If the people debate, all is confusion: If they do not debate, they can only resolve; and then the senate carves for them. Divide the people into many separate bodies, and then they may debate with safety, and every inconvenience seems to be prevented.

Cardinal de Retz says, that all numerous assemblies, however composed, are mere mob, and swayed in their debates by the least motive. This we find confirmed by daily experience. When an absurdity strikes a member, he conveys it to his neighbour, and so on till the whole be infected. Separate this great body; and though every member be only of middling sense, it is not probable that any thing but reason can prevail over the whole. Influence and example being removed, good sense will always get the better of bad among a number of people. <sup>69</sup>

There are two things to be guarded against in every *senate*, its combination and its division. Its combination is most dangerous; and against this inconvenience we have provided the following remedies: 1. The great dependence of the senators on the people by annual elections; and that not by an undistinguished rabble, like the English electors, but by men of fortune and education. 2. The small power they are allowed.

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<sup>69</sup> ' Good sense is one thing, but follies are numberless; and every man has a different one. The only way of making a people wise, is to keep them from uniting into large assemblies. '—ERRIENS F, G, H, N.

They have few offices to dispose of. Almost all are given by the magistrates in the counties. 3. The court of competitors, which, being composed of men that are their rivals next to them in interest, and uneasy in their present situation, will be sure to take all advantages against them.

The division of the senate is prevented, 1. By the smallness of their number. 2. As faction supposes a combination in a separate interest, it is prevented by their dependence on the people. 3. They have a power of expelling any factious member. It is true, when another member of the same spirit comes from the county, they have no power of expelling him: Nor is it fit they should, for that shows the humour to be in the people, and may possibly arise from some ill conduct in public affairs. 4. Almost any man, in a senate so regularly chosen by the people, may be supposed fit for any civil office. It would be proper, therefore, for the senate to form some *general* resolutions with regard to the disposing of offices among the members: Which resolutions would not confine them in critical times, when extraordinary parts on the one hand, or extraordinary stupidity on the other, appears in any senator; but they would be sufficient to prevent intrigue and faction, by making the disposal of the offices a thing of course. For instance, let it be a resolution, That no man shall enjoy any office till he has sat four years in the senate: That, except ambassadors, no man shall be in office two years following: That no man shall attain the higher offices but through the lower: That no man shall be protector twice, &c. The senate of Venice govern themselves by such resolutions.

In foreign politics the interest of the senate can

scarcely ever be divided from that of the people ; and therefore it is fit to make the senate absolute with regard to them, otherwise there could be no secrecy or refined policy. Besides, without money no alliance can be executed, and the senate is still sufficiently dependent. Not to mention, that the legislative power, being always superior to the executive, the magistrates or representatives may interpose whenever they think proper.

The chief support of the British government is the opposition of interest : But that, though in the main serviceable, breeds endless factions. In the foregoing plan, it does all the good without any of the harm. The *competitors* have no power of controlling the senate : They have only the power of accusing, and appealing to the people.

It is necessary, likewise, to prevent both combination and division in the thousand magistrates. This is done sufficiently by the separation of places and interests.

But, lest that should not be sufficient, their dependence on the 10,000 for their elections serves to the same purpose.

Nor is that all ; for the 10,000 may resume the power whenever they please, and not only when they all please, but when any five of a hundred please, which will happen upon the very first suspicion of a separate interest.

The 10,000 are too large a body either to unite or divide, except when they meet in one place, and fall under the guidance of ambitious leaders. Not to mention their annual election, by the whole body of the people, that are of any consideration.

A small commonwealth is the happiest government



in the world within itself, because every thing lies under the eye of the rulers: But it may be subdued by great force from without. This scheme seems to have all the advantages both of a great and a little commonwealth.

Every county law may be annulled either by the senate or another county, because that shows an opposition of interest: In which case no part ought to decide for itself. The matter must be referred to the whole, which will best determine what agrees with general interest.

As to the clergy and militia, the reasons of these orders are obvious. Without the dependence of the clergy on the civil magistrates, and without a militia, it is in vain to think that any free government will ever have security or stability.

In many governments, the inferior magistrates have no rewards but what arise from their ambition, vanity, or public spirit. The salaries of the French judges amount not to the interest of the sums they pay for their offices. The Dutch burgo-masters have little more immediate profit than the English justices of peace, or the members of the House of Commons formerly. But lest any should suspect that this would beget negligence in the administration (which is little to be feared, considering the natural ambition of mankind), let the magistrates have competent salaries. The senators have access to so many honourable and lucrative offices, that their attendance needs not be bought. Their is little attendance required of the representatives.

That the foregoing plan of government is practicable, no one can doubt who considers the resemblance that it bears to the commonwealth of the United Pro-

vinces, a wise and renowned government. The alterations in the present scheme seem all evidently for the better. 1. The representation is more equal. 2. The unlimited power of the burgo-masters in the towns, which forms a perfect aristocracy in the Dutch commonwealth, is corrected by a well-tempered democracy, in giving to the people the annual election of the county representatives. 3. The negative, which every province and town has upon the whole body of the Dutch Republic, with regard to alliances, peace and war, and the imposition of taxes, is here removed. 4. The counties, in the present plan, are not so independent of each other, nor do they form separate bodies so much as the seven provinces, where the jealousy and envy of the smaller provinces and towns against the greater, particularly Holland and Amsterdam, have frequently disturbed the government. 5. Larger powers, though of the safest kind, are intrusted to the senate than the States-General possess; by which means the former may become more expeditious and secret in their resolutions than it is possible for the latter.

The chief alterations that could be made on the British government, in order to bring it to the most perfect model of limited monarchy, seem to be the following. *First*, The plan of Cromwell's parliament ought to be restored, by making the representation equal, and by allowing none to vote in the county elections who possess not a property of L.200 value.<sup>70</sup> *Secondly*, As such a House of Commons would be too weighty for a frail House of Lords, like the present, the Bishops, and Scotch Peers, ought to be removed:<sup>71</sup> The num-

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<sup>70</sup> 'Who possess not 100l. a year.'—EDITIONS F, G.

<sup>71</sup> 'The Bishops and Scotch Peers ought to be removed, whose behaviour in FORMER parliaments destroyed entirely the authority of that House.'—EDITIONS F, G, H, N.

ber of the upper house ought to be raised to three or four hundred: The seats not hereditary, but during life: They ought to have the election of their own members; and no commoner should be allowed to refuse a seat that was offered him. By this means the House of Lords would consist entirely of the men of chief credit, abilities, and interest in the nation; and every turbulent leader in the House of Commons might be taken off, and connected by interest with the House of Peers. Such an aristocracy would be an excellent barrier both to the monarchy and against it. At present, the balance of our government depends in some measure on the abilities and behaviour of the sovereign; which are variable and uncertain circumstances.

This plan of limited monarchy, however corrected, seems still liable to three great inconveniences. *First*, It removes not entirely, though it may soften the parties of *court* and *country*. *Secondly*, The king's personal character must still have great influence on the government. *Thirdly*, The sword is in the hands of a single person, who will always neglect to discipline the militia, in order to have a pretence for keeping up a standing army.<sup>72</sup>

We shall conclude this subject, with observing the falsehood of the common opinion, that no large state, such as France or Great Britain, could ever be modelled into a commonwealth, but that such a form of go-

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<sup>72</sup> It is evident that this is a mortal distemper in the British government, of which it must at last inevitably perish. I must, however, confess, that Sweden seems, in some measure, to have remedied this inconvenience, and to have a militia along with its limited monarchy, as well as a standing army, which is less dangerous than the British.—EDMUNDS F, G, H, N.

vernment can only take place in a city or small territory. The contrary seems probable. Though it is more difficult to form a republican government in an extensive country than in a city, there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult and faction. It is not easy for the distant parts of a large state to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person, who, by means of this popular favour, may seize the power, and forcing the more obstinate to submit, may establish a monarchical government. On the other hand, a city readily concurs in the same notions of government, the natural equality of property favours liberty, and the nearness of habitation enables the citizens mutually to assist each other. Even under absolute princes, the subordinate government of cities is commonly republican; while that of counties and provinces is monarchical. But these same circumstances, which facilitate the erection of commonwealths in cities, render their constitution more frail and uncertain. Democracies are turbulent. For, however the people may be separated or divided into small parties, either in their votes or elections, their near habitation in a city will always make the force of popular tides and currents very sensible. Aristocracies are better adapted for peace and order, and accordingly were most admired by ancient writers; but they are jealous and oppressive. In a large government, which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people who may be admitted into the first elections, or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates who direct all the movements. At the same time, the parts are so distant and remote,

that it is very difficult, either by intrigue, prejudice, or passion, to hurry them into any measures against the public interest.

It is needless to inquire, whether such a government would be immortal. I allow the justness of the poet's exclamation on the endless projects of human race, *Man and for ever!* The world itself probably is not immortal. Such consuming plagues may arise as would leave even a perfect government a weak prey to its neighbours. We know not to what length enthusiasm, or other extraordinary movements of the human mind, may transport men to the neglect of all order and public good. Where difference of interest is removed, whimsical unaccountable factions often arise, from personal favour or enmity. Perhaps rust may grow to the springs of the most accurate political machine, and disorder its motions. Lastly, extensive conquests, when pursued, must be the ruin of every free government; and of the more perfect governments sooner than of the imperfect; because of the very advantages which the former possess above the latter. And though such a state ought to establish a fundamental law against conquests, yet republics have ambition as well as individuals, and present interest makes men forgetful of their posterity. It is a sufficient incitement to human endeavours, that such a government would flourish for many ages; without pretending to bestow, on any work of man, that immortality which the Almighty seems to have refused to his own productions.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.