

ESSAYS, MORAL AND POLITICAL

David Hume



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DAVID HUME

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Tros Rutulusve *fuat, nullo discrimine habebo.* [VIRG.](#)



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ADVERTISEMENT

Most of these ESSAY S were wrote with a View of being publish'd as WEEKLY-PAPERS, and were intended to comprehend the Designs both of the SPECTATORS and CRAFTSMEN. But having dropt that Undertaking, partly from LAZINESS, partly from WANT of LEISURE, and being willing to make Trial of my Talents for Writing, before I ventur'd upon any more serious Compositions, I was induced to commit these Trifles to the Judgment of the Public. Like most new Authors, I must confess, I feel some Anxiety concerning the Success of my Work: But one Thing makes me more secure; That the READER may condemn my Abilities, but must approve of my Moderation and Impartiality in my Method of handling POLITICAL SUBJECTS: And as long as my Moral Character is in Safety, I can, with less Anxiety, abandon my Learning and Capacity to the most severe Censure and Examination. Public Spirit, methinks, shou'd engage us to love the Public, and to bear an equal Affection to all our Country-Men; not to hate one Half of them, under Pretext of loving the Whole. This PARTY-RAGE I have endeavour'd to repress, as far as possible; and I hope this Design will be acceptable to the moderate of both Parties; at the same Time, that, perhaps, it may displease the Bigots of both.

THE READER must not look for any Connexion among these ESSAY S, but must consider each of them as a Work apart. This is an Indulgence that is given to all ESSAY -WRITERS, and is an equal Ease both to WRITER and READER, by freeing them from any tiresome Stretch of Attention or Application.

ESSAY I

OF THE DELICACY OF TASTE AND PASSION

There is a certain *Delicacy of Passion*, to which some People are subject, that makes them extremely sensible to all the Accidents of Life, and gives them a lively Joy upon every prosperous Event, as well as a piercing Grief, when they meet with Crosses and Adversity. Favours and Good-offices easily engage their Friendship; while the smallest Injury provokes their Resentment. Any Honour or Mark of Distinction elevates them above Measure; but they are as sensibly touch'd with Contempt. People of this Character have, no doubt, much more lively Enjoyments, as well as more pungent Sorrows, than Men of more cool and sedate Tempers: But, I believe, when every Thing is balanc'd, there is no one, that wou'd not rather chuse to be of the latter Character, were he entirely Master of his own Disposition. Good or ill Fortune is very little at our own Disposal: And when a Person, that has this Sensibility of Temper, meets with any Misfortune, his Sorrow or Resentment takes intire Possession of him, and deprives him of all Relish in the common Occurrences of Life, the right Enjoyment of which forms the greatest Part of our Happiness. Great Pleasures are much less frequent than great Pains; so that a sensible Temper must meet with fewer Trials in the former

Way than in the latter. Not to mention, that Men of such lively passions are apt to be transported beyond all Bounds of Prudence and Discretion, and take false Steps in the Conduct of Life, which are often irretrievable.

THERE is a *Delicacy of Taste* observable in some Men, which very much resembles this *Delicacy of Passion*, and produces the same Sensibility to Beauty and Deformity of every Kind, as that does to Prosperity and Adversity, Obligations and Injuries. When you present a Poem or a Picture to a Man possest of this Talent, the Delicacy of his Feeling or Sentiments makes him be touched very sensibly by every Part of it; nor are the masterly Strokes perceived with a more exquisite Relish and Satisfaction, than the Negligences or Absurdities with Disgust and Uneasiness. A polite and judicious Conversation affords him the highest Entertainment. Rudeness or Impertinence is as great a Punishment to him. In short, Delicacy of Taste has the same Effect as Delicacy of Passion: It enlarges the Sphere both of our Happiness and Misery, and makes us sensible of Pains, as well as Pleasures, that escape the rest of Mankind.

I BELIEVE, however, there is no one, who will not agree with me, that notwithstanding this Resemblance, a Delicacy of Taste is as much to be desir'd and cultivated as a Delicacy of Passion is to be lamented, and to be remedied, if possible. The good or ill Accidents of Life are very little at our Disposal: But we are pretty much Masters what Books we shall read, what Diversions we shall partake of, and what Company we shall keep. The ancient Philosophers endeavour'd to render Happiness intirely independent of every Thing external. That is impossible to be *attain'd*: But every wise Man will endeavour to place his Happiness on such Objects as depend most upon himself: And *that* is not to be *attain'd* so much by any other Means as by this Delicacy of Sentiment. When a Man is possest of that Talent, he is more happy by what pleases his Taste than by what gratifies his Appetites, and receives more Enjoyment from a Poem or a Piece of Reasoning than the most expensive Luxury can afford.

How far the Delicacy of Taste and that of Passion are connected together in the original Frame of the Mind, it is hard to determine. To me there appears to be a very considerable Connexion betwixt them. For we may observe, that Women, who have more delicate Passions than Men, have also a more delicate Taste of the Ornaments of Life, of Dress, Equipage, and the ordinary Decencies of Behaviour. Any Excellency in these hits their Taste much sooner than Ours; and when you please their Taste, you soon engage their Affections.

BUT whatever Connexion there may be originally betwixt these Dispositions, I am persuaded, that nothing is so proper to cure us of this Delicacy of Passion as the cultivating of that higher and more refined Taste, which enables us to judge of the Characters of Men, of Compositions of Genius, and of the Productions of the nobler Arts. A greater or less Relish of those obvious Beauties, that strike the Senses, depends intirely upon the greater or less Sensibility of the Temper: But with regard to the Liberal Arts, a fine Taste is really nothing but strong Sense, or at least depends so much upon it, that they are inseparable. To judge aright of a Composition of Genius, there are so many Views to be taken in, so many Circumstances to be compared, and such a Knowledge of human Nature requisite, that no Man, who is not possest of the soundest Judgment, will ever make a tolerable Critic in such Performances. And this is a new Reason for cultivating a Relish in the Liberal Arts. Our Judgment will strengthen by this Exercise: We shall form truer Notions of Life: Many Things, which rejoice or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our Attention: And we shall lose by Degrees that Sensibility and Delicacy of Passion, which is so incommodious.

BUT perhaps I have gone too far in saying, that a cultivated Taste for the Liberal Arts extinguishes the Passions, and renders us indifferent to those Objects, which are so fondly pursued by the rest of Mankind. When I reflect a little more, I find, that it rather improves our Sensibility for all the tender and agreeable Passions; at the same Time, that it renders the Mind incapable of the rougher and more boist'rous Emotions.

Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes, Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

FOR this, I think there may be assigned two very natural Reasons. In the *first* Place, nothing is so improving to the Temper as the Study of the Beauties, either of Poetry, Eloquence, Musick, or Painting. They give a certain Elegance of Sentiment, which the rest of Mankind are intire Strangers to. The Emotions they excite are soft and tender. They draw the Mind off from the Hurry of Business and Interest; cherish Reflection; dispose to Tranquility; and produce an agreeable Melancholy, which, of all Dispositions of the Mind, is the best suited to Love and Friendship.

IN the *second* Place, a Delicacy of Taste is favourable to Love and Friendship, by consining our Choice to few People, and making us indifferent to the Company and Conversation of the greatest Part of Men. You will very seldom find, that mere Men of the World, whatever strong Sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing of Characters, or in marking those insensible Differences and Gradations, which make one Man preferable to another. Any one, that has competent Sense, is sufficient for their Entertainment. They talk to him of their Pleasures and Affairs, with the same Frankness as they would to any other: And finding many, that are fit to supply his Place, they never feel any Vacancy or Want in his Absence. But to make use of the Allusion of a famous

[1] French Author: The Judgment may be compared to a Clock or Watch, where the most ordinary Machine is sufficient to tell the Hours; but the most elaborate and artificial only can point out the Minutes and Seconds, and distinguish the smallest Differences of Time. One that has well digested his Knowledge both of Books and Men, has little Enjoyment but in the Company of a few select Companions. He feels too sensibly, how much all the rest of Mankind falls short of the Notions he has entertained. And his Affections being thus confined in a narrow Circle, no Wonder he carries them further, than if they were more general and undistinguished. The Gaiety and Frolick of a Bottle-Companion improves with him into a

solid Friendship: And the Ardours of a youthful Appetite become an elegant Passion.

1. ↑ [Mons. Fontenelle](#), *Pluralite des Mondes* Soir 6.

ESSAY II

OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

There is nothing more apt to surprise a Foreigner, than the extreme Liberty we enjoy in this Country, of communicating whatever we please to the Publick, and of openly censuring every Measure which is enter'd into by the King or his Ministers. If the Administration resolve upon War, 'tis affirm'd, that either wilfully or ignorantly they mistake the Interest of the Nation, and that Peace, in the present Situation of Affairs, is infinitely preferable. If the Passion of the Ministers be for Peace, our Political Writers breathe nothing but War and Devastation, and represent the pacifick Conduct of the Government as mean and pusillanimous. As this Liberty is not indulg'd in any other Government, either Republican or Monarchical; in *Holland* and *Venice*, no more than in *France* or *Spain*; it may very naturally give Occasion to these two Questions, *How it happens that Great Britain enjoys such a peculiar Privilege? and, Whether the unlimited Exercise of this Liberty be advantageous or prejudicial to the Publick?*

AS to the *first* Question, Why the Laws indulge us in such an extraordinary Liberty? I believe the Reason may be deriv'd from our mixt Form of Government, which is neither wholly Monarchical, nor wholly Republican. 'Twill be found, if I mistake not, to be a true

Observation in Politicks, That the two Extremes in Government, of Liberty and Slavery, approach nearest to each other; and, that as you depart from the Extremes, and mix a little of Monarchy with Liberty, the Government becomes always the more free; and, on the other Hand, when you mix a little of Liberty with Monarchy, the Yoke becomes always the more grievous and intolerable. In a Government, such as that of *France*, which is entirely absolute, and where Laws, Custom, and Religion, all concur to make the People fully satisfi'd with their Condition, the Monarch cannot entertain the least Jealousy against his Subjects, and therefore is apt to indulge them in great *Liberties* both of Speech and Action. In a Government altogether Republican, such as *Holland*, where there is no Magistrate so eminent as to give *Jealousy* to the State, there is also no Danger in intrusting the Magistrates with very large discretionary Powers; and tho' many Advantages result from such Powers, in the Preservation of Peace and Order; yet they lay a considerable Restraint on Mens Actions, and make every private Subject pay a great Respect to the Government. Thus it is evident, that the two Extremes, of absolute Monarchy and of a Republic, approach very near to each other in the most material Circumstances. In the *first*, the Magistrate has no Jealousy of the People: In the *second*, the People have no Jealousy of the Magistrate: Which want of Jealousy begets a mutual Confidence and Trust in both Cases, and produces a Species of Liberty in Monarchies, and of arbitrary Power in Republics.

To justify the other Part of the foregoing Proposition, that in every Government the Means are most wide of each other, and that the Mixtures of Monarchy and Liberty render the Yoke either more easy or more grievous. I must take Notice of a Remark of [*Tacitus*](#) with regard to the *Romans* under their Emperors, that they neither could bear total Slavery nor total Liberty, *Nec totam servitutem nec totam libertatem pati possunt*. This Remark a famous Poet has translated and applied to the *English* in his admirable Description of Queen *Elizabeth's* Policy and happy Government.

Et fit aimer son joug a l'Anglois indompté, Qui ne peut ni servir, ni vivre en liberté HENRIADE, Liv. 1.

ACCORDING to these Remarks, therefore, we are to consider the *Roman* Government as a Mixture of Despotism and Liberty, where the Despotism prevailed; and the *English* Government as a Mixture of the same Kind, but where the Liberty predominates. The Consequences are exactly conformable to the foregoing Observation; and such as may be expected from those mixed Forms of Government, which beget a mutual Watchfulness and Jealousy. The *Roman* Emperors were, many of them, the most frightful Tyrants that ever disgraced Humanity; and 'tis evident their Cruelty was chiefly excited by their *Jealousy*, and by their observing, that all the great Men of *Rome* bore with Impatience the Dominion of a Family, which, but a little before, was nowise superior to their own. On the other Hand, as the Republican Part of the Government prevails in *England*, tho' with a great Mixture of Monarchy, 'tis obliged, for its own Preservation, to maintain a watchful *Jealousy* over the Magistrates, to remove all discretionary Powers, and to secure every one's Life and Fortune by general and inflexible Laws. No Action must be deemed a Crime but what the Law has plainly determined to be such: No Crime must be imputed to a Man but from a legal Proof before his Judges: And even these Judges must be his Fellow-subjects, who are obliged by their own Interest to have a watchful Eye over the Encroachments and Violence of the Ministers. From these Causes it proceeds, that there is as much Liberty, and even, perhaps, Licence in Britain, as there was formerly Slavery and Tyranny in *Rome*.

THESE Principles account for the great Liberty of the Press in these Kingdoms, beyond what is indulg'd in any other Government. 'Tis sufficiently known, that despotic Power wou'd soon steal in upon us, were we not extreme watchful to prevent its Progress, and were there not an easy Method of conveying the Alarum from one End of the Kingdom to the other. The Spirit of the People must frequently be rous'd to curb the Ambition of the Court; and the Dread of rousing this Spirit must be employ'd to prevent that Ambition. Nothing is so effectual to this Purpose as the Liberty of the Press, by which all the Learning, Wit, and Genius of the Nation may be

employ'd on the Side of Liberty, and every one be animated to its Defence. As long, therefore, as the Republican Part of our Government can maintain itself against the Monarchical, it must be extreme jealous of the Liberty of the Press, as of the utmost Importance to its Preservation.

SINCE therefore the Liberty of the Press is so essential to the Support of our mixt Government; this sufficiently decides the second Question, Whether this Liberty be *advantageous or prejudicial*; there being nothing of greater Importance in every State than the Preservation of the ancient Government, especially if it be a free one. But I wou'd fain go a Step farther, and assert, that such a Liberty is attended with so few Inconveniencies, that it may be claim'd as the common Right of Mankind, and ought to be indulg'd them almost in every Government; except the Ecclesiastical, to which indeed it wou'd be fatal. We need not dread from this Liberty any such ill Consequences as follow'd from the Harangues of the popular Demagogues of *Athens* and Tribunes of *Rome*. A Man reads a Book or Pamphlet alone and coolly. There is none present from whom he can catch the Passion by Contagion. He is not hurry'd away by the Force and Energy of Action. And shou'd he be wrought up to never so seditious a Humour, there is no violent Resolution presented to him, by which he can immediately vent his Passion. The Liberty of the Press, therefore, however abus'd, can scarce ever excite popular Tumults or Rebellion. And as to those Murmurs or secret Discontents it may occasion, 'tis better they shou'd get Vent in Words, that they may come to the Knowledge of the Magistrate before it be too late, in order to his providing a Remedy against them. Mankind, 'tis true, have always a greater Propension to believe what is said to the Disadvantage of their Governors than the contrary; but this Inclination is inseparable from them, whether they have Liberty or not. A Whisper may fly as quick, and be as pernicious as a Pamphlet. Nay it will be more pernicious, where Men are not accusom'd to think freely, or distinguish betwixt Truth and Falshood.

IT has also been found, as the Experience of Mankind increases, that the *People* are no such dangerous Monster as they have been represented, and that 'tis in every Respect better to guide them, like rational Creatures, than to lead or drive them, like brute Beasts. Before the united Provinces set the Example, Toleration was deem'd incompatible with good Government, and 'twas thought impossible, that a Number of religious Sects cou'd live together in Harmony and Peace, and have all of them an equal Affection to their common Country, and to each other. *England* has set a like Example of civil Liberty; and tho' this Liberty seems to occasion some mall Ferment at present, it has not as yet produced any pernicious Effects, and it is to be hoped, that Men, being every Day more accustomed to the free Discussion of public Affairs, will improve in their Judgment of them, and be with greater Difficulty seduced by every idle Rumor and popular Clamour

'Tis a very comfortable Reflection to the Lovers of Liberty, that this peculiar Privilege of *Britain* is of a Kind that cannot easily be wrested from us, and must last as long as our Government remains, in any Degree, free and independent. 'Tis seldom, that Liberty of any Kind is lost all at once. Slavery has so frightful an Aspect to Men accustom'd to Freedom, that it must steal in upon them by Degrees, and must disguise itself in a thousand Shapes, in ordet to be received. But if the Liberty of the Press ever be lost, it must be lost at once. The general Laws against Sedition and Libelling are at present as strong as they possibly can be made. Nothing can impose a farther Restraint, but either the clapping an IMPRIMATUR upon the Press, or the giving very large discretionary Powers to the Court to punish whatever displeases them. But these Concessions would be such a bare-fac'd Violation of Liberty, that they will probably be the last Efforts of a despotic Government. We may conclude, that the Liberty of *Britain* is gone for ever, when these Attempts shall succeed.

ESSAY III

OF IMPUDENCE AND MODESTY

I have always been of Opinion, that the Complaints against Providence have been ill-grounded, and that the good or bad Qualities of Men are the Causes of their good or bad Fortune, more than what is generally imagined. There are, no doubt, Instances to the contrary, and pretty numerous ones too; but few, in Comparison of the Instances we have of a right Distribution of Prosperity and Adversity: Nor indeed could it be otherwise from the common Course of human Affairs. To be endowed with a benevolent Disposition, and to love others will almost infallibly procure Love and Esteem; which is the chief Circumstance in Life, and facilitates every Enterprize and Undertaking; besides the Satisfaction, which immediately results from it. The Case is much the same with the other Virtues. Prosperity is naturally, tho' not necessarily attached to Virtue and Merit; as Adversity is to Vice and Folly.

I MUST, however, confess, that this Rule admits of an Exception with regard to one moral Quality; and that *Modesty* has a natural Tendency to conceal a Man's Talents, as *Impudence* displays them to the utmost, and has been the only Cause why many have risen in the World, under all the Disadvantages of low Birth and little Merit. Such Indolence and Incapacity is there in the Generality of Mankind,

that they are apt to receive a Man for whatever he has a Mind to put himself off for; and admits his over-bearing Airs as Proofs of that Merit, which he assumes to himself. A decent Assurance seems to be the natural Attendant of Virtue; and few Men can distinguish Impudence from it: As, on the other Hand, Diffidence, being the natural Result of Vice and Folly, has drawn Disgrace upon Modesty, which in outward Appearance so nearly resembles it.

I WAS lately lamenting to a Friend of mine, who loves a Conceit, that popular Applause should be bestowed with so little Judgment, and that so many empty forward Coxcombs should rise up to a Figure in the World: Upon which he said there was nothing surprising in the Case. *Popular Fame, says he, is nothing but Breath or Air; and Air very naturally presses into a Vacuum.*

As Impudence, tho' really a Vice, has the same Effects upon a Man's Fortune, as if it were a Virtue; so it is remarkable that it is almost as difficult to be attain'd, and is, in that respect, distinguish'd from all the other Vices, which are acquired with little Pains, and continually encrease upon Indulgence: Many a Man, being sensible that Modesty is extremely prejudicial to him in the making his Fortune, has resolved to be impudent and to put a bold Face upon the Matter: But 'tis observable, that such People have seldom succeeded in the Attempt, but have been obliged to relapse into their primitive Modesty. Nothing carries a Man thro' the World like a true genuine natural Impudence. Its Counterfeit is good for nothing, nor can ever support itself. In any other Attempt, whatever Faults a Man commits and is sensible of, he is so much the nearer his End. But when he endeavours at Impudence, if he ever fail'd in the Attempt, the Remembrance of it will make him blush, and will infallibly disconcert him: After which every Blush is a Cause for new Blushes, 'till he be found out to be an arrant Cheat, and a vain Pretender to Impudence.

IF any thing can give a modest Man more Assurance, it must be some Advantages of Fortune, which Chance procures to him. Riches naturally gain a Man a favourable Reception in the World, and give

Merit a double Lustre, when a Person is endowed with it; and supply its Place, in a great Measure, when it is absent. 'Tis wonderful to observe what Airs of Superiority Fools and Knaves, with large Possessions, give themselves above Men of the greatest Merit in Poverty. Nor do the Men of Merit make any strong Opposition to these Usurpations; or rather seem to favour them by the Modesty of their Behaviour. Their Good Sense and Experience make them diffident of their Judgment, and cause them to examine every thing with the greatest Accuracy: As on the other Hand, the Delicacy of their Sentiments makes them timorous lest they commit Faults, and lose in the Practice of the World that Integrity of Virtue, of which they are so jealous. To make Wisdom agree with Confidence is as difficult as to reconcile Vice to Modesty.

THESE are the Reflections that have occur'd to me upon this Subject of Impudence and Modesty; and I hope the Reader will not be displeased to see them wrought into the following Allegory.

JUPITER, in the Beginning, joined VIRTUE, WISDOM and CONFIDENCE together; and VICE, FOLLY, and DIFFIDENCE: And in that Society set them upon the Earth. But though he thought he had matched them with great judgment, and said that *Confidence* was the natural Companion of *Virtue*, and that Vice deserved to be attended with Diffidence, they had not gone far before Dissension arose among them. *Wisdom*, who was the Guide of the one Company, was always accustomed, before she ventured upon any Road, however beaten, to examine it carefully; to enquire whither it led; what Dangers, Difficulties and Hindrances might possibly or probably occur in it. In these Deliberations she usually consum'd some Time; which Delay was very displeasing to *Confidence*, who was always inclin'd to hurry on, without much Forethought or Deliberation, in the first Road he met. *Wisdom* and *Virtue* were inseparable: But *Confidence* one Day, following his impetuous Nature, advanc'd a considerable Way before his Guides and Companions; and not feeling any Want of their Company, he never enquir'd after them, nor ever met with them more. In like Manner, the other Society, tho' join'd by *Jupiter*, disagreed and separated. As *Folly* saw very little Way before her, she

had nothing to determine concerning the Goodness of Roads, nor cou'd give the Preference to one above another; and this Want of Resolution was encreas'd by *Diffidence*, who with her Doubts and Scruples always retarded the Journey. This was a great Annoyance to *Vice*, who lov'd not to hear of Difficulties and Delays, and was never satisfy'd without his full Career, in whatever his Inclinations led him to. *Folly*, he knew, tho' she hearken'd to *Diffidence*, wou'd be easily manag'd when alone; and therefore, as a vicious Horse throws his Rider, he openly beat away this Controller of all his Pleasures, and proceeded in his Journey with *Folly*, from whom he is inseparable. *Confidence* and *Diffidence* being, after this Manner, both thrown loose from their respective Companies, wander'd for some Time; till at last Chance led them at the same Time to one Village. *Confidence* went directly up to the great House, which belong'd to WEALTH, the Lord of the Village; and without staying for a Porter, intruded himself immediately into the innermost Apartments, where he found *Vice* and *Folly* well receiv'd before him. He join'd the Train; recommended himself very quickly to his Landlord; and enter'd into such Familiarity with *Vice*, that he was enlisted in the same Company along with *Folly*. They were frequent Guests of *Wealth*, and from that Moment inseparable. *Diffidence*, in the mean Time, not daring to approach the Great House, accepted of an Invitation from POVERTY, one of the Tenants; and entering the Cottage, found *Wisdom* and *Virtue*, who being repuls'd by the Land-lord had retir'd thither. *Virtue* took Compassion of her, and *Wisdom* found, from her Temper, that she wou'd easily improve: So they admitted her into their Society. Accordingly, by their Means, she alter'd in a little Time somewhat of her Manner, and becoming much more amiable and engaging, was now call'd by the Name of MODESTY. As ill Company has a greater Effect than good, *Confidence*, tho' more refractory to Counsel and Example, degenerated so far by the Society of *Vice* and *Folly*, as to pass by the Name of IMPUDENCE. Mankind, who saw these Societies as *Jupiter* first join'd them, and knew nothing of these mutual Desertions, are led into strange Mistakes by those Means; and wherever they see *Impudence*, make account of *Virtue* and *Wisdom*,

and wherever they observe *Modesty* call her Attendants *Vice* and *Folly*.

ESSAY IV

THAT POLITICS MAY BE REDUC'D TO A SCIENCE

It is a great Question with several, Whether there be any essential Difference betwixt one Form of Government and another? and, Whether every Form may not become good or bad, according as it is well or ill administred^[1]? Were it once admitted, that all Governments are alike, and that the only Difference consists in the Character and Conduct of the Governors, most political Disputes wou'd be at an End, and all *Zeal* for one Constitution above another must be esteem'd mere Bigotry and Folly. But though I be a profest Friend to *Moderation*, I cannot forbear condemning this Sentiment, and should be sorry to think, that human Affairs admit of no greater Stability, than what they receive from the casual Humours and Characters of particular Men.

'Tis true, those who maintain, that the Goodness of all Government consists in the Goodness of the Administration, may cite many particular Instances in History where the very same Government, in different Hands, varies suddenly into the two opposite Extremes of good and bad. Compare the *French* Government under *Henry III.* and under *Henry IV.* Cruelty, Oppression, Levity, Artifice on the Part of the Rulers; Faction,

Sedition, Treachery, Rebellion, Disloyalty on the Part of the Subjects: These compose the Character of the former miserable *Æra*. But when the Patriot and heroic Prince, who succeeded, was once firmly seated on the Throne, the Government, the People, every Thing seem'd to be totally chang'd, and all from the Change of the Temper and Sentiments of one single Man. An equal Difference of a contrary Kind, may be found in comparing the Reigns of Elisabeth and James, at least with Regard to foreign Affairs; and Instances of this Kind may be multiply'd, almost without Number, from antient as well as modern History.

BUT here I wou'd beg Leave to make a Distinction. All absolute Governments (and such the *English* Government was, in a great Measure, till the Middle of the last Century) must very much depend on the Administration; and this is one of the great Inconveniencies of that Form of Government. But a Republican and free Government wou'd be a most glaring Absurdity, if the particular Checks and Controuls, provided by the Constitution, had really no Influence, and made it not the Interest, even of bad Men, to operate for the public Good. Such is the Intention of these Forms of Government; and such is the real Effect, where they are wisely constituted: As on the other Hand, they are the Sources of all Disorder, and of the blackest Crimes, where either Skill or Honesty has been wanting in their original Frame and Institution. So great is the Force of Laws, and of particular Forms of Government, and so little Dependence have they on the Humours and Temper of Men, that Consequences as general and as certain may be deduced from them, on most Occasions, as any which the Mathematical Sciences can afford us.

THE *Roman* Government gave the whole Legislative Power to the Commons, without allowing a Negative, either to the Nobility, or Consuls. This unbounded Power the Commons possessed in a collective Body, not in a Representative. The Consequences were, When the People, by Success and Conquest had become very numerous, and had spread themselves to a great Distance from the Capital, the City-Tribes, tho' the most contemptible, carried almost every Vote: They were, therefore, most cajol'd by every one who

affected Popularity: They were supported in Idleness by the general Distribution of Corn, and by particular Bribes, which they received from almost every Candidate: By this Means they became every Day more licentious, and the *Campus Martius* was a perpetual Scene of Tumult and Sedition: Armed Slaves were introduced among these rascally Citizens; so that the whole Government fell into Anarchy, and the greatest Happiness the *Romans* could look for, was the despotic Power of the *Cæsars*. Such are the Effects of Democracy without a Representative.

A NOBILITY may possess the whole or any Part of the legislative Power of a State after two different Ways. Either every Nobleman shares the Power as part of the whole Body, or the whole Body enjoys the Power as composed of Parts; which have each a distinct Power and Authority. The *Venetian* Nobility are an Instance of the first kind of Government: The *Polish* of the second. In the *Venetian* Government the whole Body of Nobility possesses the whole Power, and no Nobleman has any Authority, which he receives not from the Whole. In the *Polish* Government every Nobleman, by Means of his Fiefs, has a peculiar hereditary Authority over his Vassals, and the whole Body has no Authority but what it receives from the Concurrence of its Parts. The distinct Operations and Tendencies of these two Species of Government might be made most apparent even *a priori*. A *Venetian* Nobility is infinitely preferable to a *Polish*, let the Humours and Education of Men be ever so much vary'd. A Nobility, who possess their Power in common, will preserve Peace and Order, both among themselves, and their Subjects; and no Member can have Authority enough to controul the Laws for a Moment. They will preserve their Authority over the People, but without any grievous Tyranny, or any Breach of private Property; because such a tyranninical Government is not the Interest of the whole Body, however it may be the Interest of some Individuals. There will be a Distinction of Rank betwixt the Nobility and People, but this will be the only Distinction in the State. The whole Nobility will form one Body, and the whole People another, without any of those private Feuds and Animosities, which spread Ruin and

Desolation everywhere. 'Tis easy to see the Disadvantages of a *Polish* Nobility in every one of these Particulars.

'Tis possible so to constitute a free Government, as that a single Person, call him Duke, Prince or King, shall possess a very large Share of the Power, and shall form a proper Ballance or Counterpoise to the other Parts of the Legislature. This chief Magistrate may be either *elective* or *hereditary*; and tho' the former Institution may, to a superficial View, appear most advantageous; yet a more accurate Inspection will discover in it greater Inconveniencies than in the latter, and such as are founded on Causes and Principles eternal and immutable. The filling of the Throne, in such a Government, is a Point of too great and too general Interest not to divide the whole People into Factions: From whence a Civil War, the greatest of Ills, may be apprehended, almost with Certainty, upon every Vacancy. The Prince elected must be either a *Foreigner* or a *Native*: The former will be ignorant of the People whom he is to govern; suspicious of his new Subjects, and suspected by them; giving his Confidence entirely to Strangers, who will have no other Thoughts but of enriching themselves in the quickest Manner, while their Master's Favour and Authority is able to support them. A Native will carry into the Throne all his private Animosities and Friendships, and will never be regarded, in his Elevation, without exciting the Sentiments of Envy in those who formerly consider'd him as their Equal. Not to mention, that a Crown is too high a Reward ever to be given to Merit alone, and will always induce the Candidates to employ Force, or Money, or Intrigue, to procure the Votes of the Electors: So that such a Choice will give no better Chance for a superior Merit in the Prince, than if the State had trusted to Birth alone to determine their Sovereign.

It may therefore be pronounced as an universal Axiom in Politics, *That an hereditary Prince, a Nobility without Vassals, and a People voting by their Representatives, form the best* MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY *and* DEMOCRACY. But in order to prove more fully, that Politics admit of general Truths, which are invariable by the Humour or Education either of Subject or Sovereign, it may not be amiss to observe some

other Principles of this Science, which may seem to deserve that Character.

It may easily be observ'd, that though free Governments have been commonly the most happy for those who partake of their Freedom; yet are they the most ruinous and oppressive for their Provinces: And this Observation may, I believe, be fix'd as a Maxim of the kind we are here speaking of. When a Monarch extends his Dominions by Conquest, he soon learns to consider his old and his new Subjects as on the same Footing; because in reality all his Subjects are to him the same, except the few Friends and Favourites, with whom he is personally acquainted. He does not, therefore, make any Distinction betwixt them in his *general* Laws; and at the same Time is no less careful to prevent all *particular* Acts of Oppression in the one as in the other. But a free State necessarily makes a great Distinction, and must always do so, 'till Men learn to love their Neighbours as well as themselves. The Conquerors, in such a Government, are all Legislators, and will be sure so to contrive Matters, by Restrictions of Trade and by Taxes, as to draw some private, as well as public, Advantage from their Conquests. Provincial Governors have also a better Chance in a Republick, to escape with their Plunder, by means of Bribery or Interest; and their Fellow-Citizens, who find their own State to be enriched by the Spoils of their Subject-Provinces, will be the more inclined to tolerate such Abuses. Not to mention, that 'tis a necessary Precaution in a free State to change the Governors frequently; which obliges these temporary Tyrants to be more expeditious and rapacious, that they may accumulate sufficient Wealth before they give place to their Successors. What cruel Tyrants were the *Romans* over the World during the Time of their Common-wealth! 'Tis true, they had Laws to prevent Oppression in their Provincial Magistrates; but [*Cicero*](#) informs us, that the *Romans* could not better consult the Interest of the Provinces than by repealing these very Laws. For, says he, in that Case our Magistrates, having entire Impunity, would plunder no more than would satisfy their own Rapaciousness: Whereas, at present, they must also satisfy that of their Judges, and of all the

great Men of *Rome*, whose Protection they stand in need of. Who can read of the Cruelties and Oppressions of *Verres* without Horror and Astonishment? And, who is not touched with Indignation to hear, that after *Cicero* had exhausted on that abandoned Criminal all the Thunders of the most divine Eloquence, and had prevailed so far as to get him condemned to the utmost Extent of the Laws; yet that cruel Tyrant lived peaceably to old Age, in Opulence and Ease, and, thirty Years afterward, was put into the Proscription by *Mark Anthony*, upon account of his exorbitant Wealth, where he fell, along with *Cicero* himself, and all the most virtuous Men of *Rome*? After the Dissolution of the Common-wealth, the *Roman* Yoke became easier upon the Provinces, as [Tacitus](#) informs us; and it may be observed, that many of the worst Emperors, *Domitian*, for instance, were very careful to prevent all Oppression of the Provinces. In *Vespasian's* Time, *Gaul* was esteemed richer than *Italy* itself: Nor do I find, during the whole Time of the *Roman* Monarchy, that the Empire became less rich or populous in any of its Provinces; though indeed its Valour and military Discipline were always upon the Decline. If we pass from antient to modern Times, we shall find the same Observation to hold true. The Provinces of absolute Monarchies are always better treated than those of free States. Compare the *Païs conquis* of *France* with *Ireland*, and you'll be convinced of this Truth; though this latter Kingdom, being almost entirely peopled from *England*, possesses so many Rights and Privileges as should naturally make it challenge better Treatment than that of a conquered Province. *Corsica* is also an obvious Instance to the same Purpose.

THERE is an Observation of [Machiavel](#), with regard to the Conquests of *Alexander* the *Great*, which, I think, may be regarded as one of those eternal political Truths, which no Time or Accidents can vary. It may seem strange, says that Politician, that such sudden Conquests as those of *Alexander*, shou'd be possess so peaceably by his Successors, and that the *Persians*, during all the Confusions and civil Wars of the *Greeks*, never made the smallest Effort towards the Recovery of their former independent Government. To satisfy us

concerning the Cause of this remarkable Event, we may consider, that a Monarch may govern his Subjects after two different Ways. He may either follow the Maxims of the Eastern Princes, and stretch his Power so far as to leave no Distinction of Ranks among his Subjects, but what proceeds immediately from himself; no Advantages of Birth; no hereditary Honours and Possessions: And, in a Word, no Credit among the People, except from his Commission alone. Or a Monarch may exert his Power in a milder Manner, like our *European* Princes; and leave other Sources of Honour, beside his Smile and Favour: Birth, Titles, Possessions, Valour, Integrity, Knowledge, or brave and fortunate Atchievements. In the former Species of Government, after a Conquest, 'tis impossible ever to shake off the Yoke; since no one possesses among the People so much personal Credit and Authority as to begin such an Enterprize: Whereas in the latter Species of Government, the least Misfortune or Discord of the Victors, will encourage the Vanquish'd to take Arms, who have Leaders ready to prompt and conduct them in every Undertaking.

SUCH is the Reasoning of *Machiavel*, which seems to me very solid and conclusive; tho' I wish he had not mixt Falshood with Truth, in asserting that Monarchies govern'd according to the Eastern Policy, tho' more easily kept when once they are subdued, yet are the most difficult to be subdued; since they cannot contain any powerful Subject, whose Discontent and Faction may facilitate the Enterprizes of an Enemy. For besides, that such a tyrannical Government enervates the Courage of Men, and renders them indifferent concerning the Fortunes of their Sovereign; besides this, I say, we find by Experience, that even the temporary and delegated Authority of the Generals and Magistrates, being always, in such Governments, as absolute within its Sphere as that of the Prince himself, is able, with Barbarians, accusom'd to a blind Submission, to produce the most dangerous and fatal Revolutions. So that, in every Respect, a gentle Government is preferable, and gives the greatest Security to the Sovereign as well as to the Subject.

LEGISLATORS, therefore, shou'd not trust the future Government of a State entirely to Chance, but ought to provide a System of Laws to

regulate the Administration of public Affairs to the latest Posterity. Effects will always correspond to Causes; and wise Regulations in any Common-wealth are the most valuable Legacy, which can be left to future Ages. In the smallest Court or Office, the stated Forms and Methods, by which Business must be conducted, are found to be a considerable Check on the natural Depravity of Mankind. Why shou'd not the Case be the same in public Affairs? Can we ascribe the Stability and Wisdom of the Venetian Government, thro' so many Ages, to any Thing but their Form of Government? And is it not easy to point out those Defects in the original Constitution, which produc'd the tumultuous Governments of Athens and Rome, and ended at last in the Ruin of these two famous Republics? And so little Dependence has this Affair on the Humours and Education of particular Men, that one Part of the same Republic may be wisely conducted, and another weakly, by the very same Men, merely by Reason of the Difference of the Forms and Institutions, by which these Parts are regulated. Historians inform us, that this was actually the Case with Genoa. For while the State was always full of Sedition, and Tumult, and Disorder, the Bank of St. George, which had become a considerable Part of the People, was conducted for several Ages with the utmost Integrity and Wisdom^[2].

HERE then is a sufficient Inducement to maintain, with the utmost ZEAL, in every free State, those Forms and Institutions, by which Liberty is secured, the Publick Good consulted, and the Avarice or Ambition of private Men restrained and punished. Nothing does more Honour to human Nature, than to see it susceptible of so noble a Passion; as nothing can be a greater Indication of Meanness of Heart in any Man, than to see him devoid of it. A Man who loves only himself, without Regard to Friendship or Merit, is a detestable Monster; and a Man, who is only susceptible of Friendship, without publick Spirit, or a Regard to the Community, is deficient in the most material Part of Virtue.

BUT this is a Subject that need not be longer insisted on at present. There are enough of Zealots on both Sides to kindle up the Passions of their Partizans, and under the Pretence of publick Good,

pursue the Interests and Ends of their particular Faction. For my Part, I shall always be more fond of promoting Moderation than Zeal; though perhaps the surest Way of producing Moderation in every Party is to encrease our Zeal for the Public. Let us, therefore, try, if it be possible, from the foregoing Doctrine, to draw a Lesson of Moderation, with regard to the Parties, in which our Country is at present divided; at the same Time that we allow not this Moderation to abate the Industry and Passion with which every Individual is bound to pursue the Good of his Country.

THOSE who either attack or defend a Minister in such a Government as ours, where the utmost Liberty is allowed, always carry Matters to Extremes, and exaggerate his Merit or Demerit with regard to the Publick. His Enemies are sure to charge him with the greatest Enormities, both in domestic and foreign Management; and there is no Meanness or Crime, of which, in their Account, he is not capable. Unnecessary Wars, scandalous Treaties, Profusion of public Treasure, oppressive Taxes, every kind of Male-administration is ascribed to him. To aggravate the Charge, his pernicious Conduct, it is said, will extend its baneful Influence even to Posterity, by undermining the best Constitution in the World, and disordering that wise System of Laws, Institutions and Customs, by which our Ancestors, for so many Centuries, have been so happily governed. He is not only a wicked Minister in himself, but has removed every Security provided against wicked Ministers for the future.

ON the other Hand, the Partizans of the Minister make his Panegyric run as high as the Accusation against him, and celebrate his wise, steady, and moderate Conduct in every Part of his Administration. The Honour and Interest of the Nation supported abroad, public Credit maintain'd at home, Persecution restrain'd, Faction subdu'd; the Merit of all these Blessings is ascrib'd solely to the Minister. At the same Time, he crowns all his other Merits, by a religious Care of the best Constitution in the World, which he has preserv'd inviolate in all its Parts, and has transmitted entire, to be the Happiness and Security of the latest Posterity.

WHEN this Accusation and Panegyric are receiv'd by the Partizans of each Party, no Wonder they engender a most extraordinary Ferment on both Sides, and fill the whole Nation with the most violent Animosities. But I wou'd fain perswade these Party-Zealots, that there is a flat Contradiction both in the Accusation and Panegyric, and that it were impossible for either of them to run so high, were it not for this Contradiction; if our Constitution be really^[3] *that noble Fabric, the pride of Britain, the Envy of our Neighbours, rais'd by the Labour of so many Centuries, repair'd at the Expence of so many Millions, and cemented by such a Profusion of Blood;* I say, if our Constitution does in any Degree deserve these Elogiums, it wou'd never have endur'd a wicked and a weak Minister to govern triumphantly for a Course of Twenty Years, when oppos'd by the greatest Geniuses of the Nation, who exercis'd the utmost Liberty of Tongue and Pen, in Parliament, and in their frequent Appeals to the People. But if the Minister be wicked and weak, to the Degree so strenuously insisted on, the Constitution must be faulty in its original Principles, and the Minister cannot consistently be charg'd with undermining the best Constitution of the World. A Constitution is only so far good, as it provides a Remedy against Male-administration; and if the *British* Constitution, when in its greatest Vigour, and repair'd by two such remarkable Events, as the *Revolution* and *Accession*, by which our antient Royal Family was sacrificed to it; if our Constitution, I say, with so great Advantages, does not, in Fact, provide any such Remedy against Male-administration, we are rather beholden to any Minister, that undermines it, and affords us an Opportunity of erecting a better Constitution in its Place.

I wou'd make Use of the same Topics to moderate the Zeal of those who defend the Minister. If our Constitution be so excellent, a Change of Ministry can be no such dreadful Event; since 'tis essential to such a Constitution, in every Ministry, both to preserve itself from Violation, and to prevent all Enormities in the Administration. If our Constitution be bad, so extraordinary a Jealousy and Apprehension, on Account of Changes, is ill-plac'd; and a Man shou'd no more be

anxious in this Case, than a Husband, who had marry'd a Woman from the Stews, shou'd be watchful to prevent her Infidelity. Public Affairs, in such a Constitution, must necessarily go to Confusion by whatever Hands they are conducted; and the Zeal of *Patriots* is much less requisite in that Case than the Patience and Submission of *Philosophers*. The Virtue and good Intentions of *Cato* and *Brutus* are highly laudable; But to what Purpose did their Zeal serve? To nothing, but to hasten the fatal Period of the *Roman* Government, and render its Convulsions and dying Agonies more violent and painful.

I WOU'D not be understood to mean, that public Affairs deserve no Care and Attention at all. Wou'd Men be moderate and consistent, their Claims might be admitted; at least, might be examin'd. The *Country Party* might still assert, that our Constitution, tho' excellent, will admit of Male-administration to a certain Degree; and therefore, if the Minister be bad, 'tis proper to oppose him with a *suitable* Degree of Zeal. And on the other Side, the *Court-Party* may be allow'd, upon the Supposition, that the Minister were good, to defend, and with *some* Zeal too, his Administration. I wou'd only perswade Men not to contend, as if they were fighting *pro aris & focis*, and change a good Constitution into a bad one, by the Violence of their Factions.

I HAVE not here consider'd any Thing that is personal in the present Controversy. In the best Constitution of the World, where every Man is restrain'd by the most rigid Laws; 'tis easy to discover either the good or bad Intentions of a Minister, and to judge, whether his personal Character deserves Love or Hatred. But such Questions are of little Importance to the Public, and ly under a just Suspicion either of Malevolence or Flattery in those who employ their Pens upon them.

1. ↑

For Forms of Government let Fools contest: Whate'er is best administer'd is best. Essay on Man, Book 3.

2. [[↑]](#) *Essempio veramenti raro, & da Filosofi intante loro imagine & vedute Republiche mai non trovato, vedere dentro ad un medesimo cerchio, fra medesimi cittadini, la liberta, & la tirannide, la vita civile & la corrotta, la giustitia & la licenza; perche quello ordine & solo mantione quella citta piena di costumi antichi & venerabili. E s'egli auvenisse (che col tempo in ogni modo auverrà) que San Giorgio tutta quella città occupasse, sarrebbe quella una Republica pin que la Venetiana memorabile.*

Della Hist. Florentine, lib. 8.

3. [[↑]](#) Dissertation on Parties, Letter 10.
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ESSAY V

OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

NOTHING is more surprising to those, who consider human Affairs with a Philosophical Eye; than to see the Easiness with which the many are governed by the few, and to observe the implicate Submission with which Men resign their own Sentiments and Passions to those of their Rulers. When we enquire by what Means this Wonder is brought about, we shall find, that as FORCE is always on the Side of the Governed, the Governors have nothing to support them but OPINION. 'Tis therefore, on Opinion only that Government is founded; and this Maxim extends to the most despotick and most military Governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The *Soldan* of *Ægypt*, or the *Emperor* of *Rome*, might drive his harmless Subjects, like brute Beasts, against their Sentiments and Inclination: But he must, at least, have led his *Mamalukes*, or *Prætorian Bands*, like Men, by their Opinion.

OPINION is of two Kinds, *viz.* Opinion of INTEREST, and Opinion of RIGHT. By Opinion of Interest, I chiefly understand the Sense of the public Advantage which is reapt from Government; along with the Perswasion, that the particular Government, which is establish'd, is equally advantageous with any other that cou'd easily be settled. When this Opinion prevails among the Generality of a State, or

among those who have the Force in their Hands, it gives great Security to any Government.

RIGHT is of two Kinds, Right to POWER, and Right to PROPERTY. What Prevalence Opinion of the first Kind has over Mankind, may easily be understood by observing the Attachment, which all Nations have to their antient Government, and even to those Names, which have had the Sanction of Antiquity. Antiquity always begets the Opinion of Right; and whatever disadvantageous Sentiment we may entertain of Mankind, they are always found to be prodigal both of Blood and Treasure, in the Maintenance of public Right. This Passion we may denominate Enthusiasm, or may give it what Appellation we please; but a Politician, who wou'd overlook its Influence on human Affairs, wou'd prove himself to have but a very limited Understanding.

'Tis sufficiently understood, that the Opinion of Right to Property is of the greatest Moment in all Matters of Government. A noted Author has made Property the Foundation of all Government; and most of our political Writers seem inclin'd to follow him in that Particular. This is carrying the Matter too far; but still it must be own'd, that the Opinion of Right to Property has a great Influence in this Subject.

UPON these three Opinions, therefore, of Interest, of Right to Power, and of Right to Property, are all Governments founded, and all Authority of the few over the many. There are indeed other Principles, which add Force to these, and determine, limit, or alter their Operation; such as *Self-Interest*, *Fear*, and *Affection*: But still I assert, that these other Principles can have no Influence alone, but suppose the antecedent Influence of those Opinions above-mention'd. They are, therefore, to be esteem'd the secondary, not the original Principles of Government.

FOR first, as to *Self-Interest*, by which I mean the Expectation of particular Rewards, distinct from the general Protection which we receive from Government; 'tis evident, that the Magistrate's Authority must be antecedently establish'd, or at least be hop'd for, in order to produce this Expectation. The Expectation of Reward may

augment the Authority with regard to some particular Persons; but can never give Birth to it with regard to the Public. Men naturally look for the greatest Favours from their Friends and Acquaintance; and therefore, the Hopes of any considerable Number of the State, wou'd never center in any particular Set of Men, if these Men had no other Title to Magistracy, and had no Influence over the Opinions of Mankind. The same Observation may be extended to the other two Principles of *Fear* and *Affection*. No Man wou'd have any Reason to *fear* the Fury of a Tyrant, if he had no Authority over any but from Fear; since, as a single Man, his bodily Force can reach but a small Way, and whatever Power he has beyond, must be founded either on our own Opinion, or on the presum'd Opinion of others. And tho' *Affection* to Wisdom and Virtue in a *Sovereign* extends very far, and has great Influence; yet he must be antecedently suppos'd to be invested with a publick Character, otherwise the public Esteem will serve him in no Stead, nor will his Virtue have any Influence beyond his private Sphere.

A GOVERNMENT may endure for several Ages, though the Ballance of Power, and the Ballance of Property do not agree. This chiefly happens, where any Member of the State has acquired a large Share of the Property; but from the original Constitution of the Government has no Share of the Power. Under what Pretext would any Individual of that Order pretend to intermeddle in public Affairs? As Men are commonly much attacht to their antient Government, it is not to be expected, that the Public would ever favour such Usurpations. But where the original Constitution allows any Share of the Power, though small, to an Order of Men, that possesses a large Share of Property, 'tis easy for them gradually to stretch their Authority, and bring the Ballance of Power to coincide with that of Property. This has been the Case with the House of Commons in *England*.

MOST Writers, that have treated of the *British* Government, have supposed, that as the House of Commons represents all the Commons of *Great-Britain*; so its Weight in the Scale is proportioned to the Property and Power of all whom they represent. But this

Principle must not be received as absolutely true. For though the People are apt to attach themselves more to the House of Commons than to any other Member of the Constitution, that House being chosen by them as their Representatives, and as the public Guardians of their Liberty; yet are there Instances where the House, even when in Opposition to the Crown, has not been follow'd by the People; as we may particularly observe in the *Tory* House of Commons in the Reign of King *William*. Were the Members of the House obliged to receive Instructions from their Constituents, like the *Dutch* Deputies, this would entirely alter the Case; and if such immense Power and Riches, as those of the whole Commons of *Britain*, were brought into the Scale, 'tis not easy to conceive, that the Crown could either influence that Multitude of People, or withstand that Over-balance of Property. 'Tis true, the Crown has great Influence over the collective Body of *Britain* in the Elections of Members; but were this Influence, which at present is only exerted once in seven Years, to be employ'd in bringing over the People to every Vote, it would soon be wasted; and no Skill, Popularity or Revenue could support it. I must, therefore, be of Opinion, that an Alteration in this particular would introduce a total Alteration in our Government, and would soon reduce it to a pure Republic; and perhaps, to a Republic of no inconvenient Form. For though the People collected in a Body, like the *Roman* Tribes, be quite unfit for Government, yet when dispersed in small Bodies, they are more susceptible both of Reason and Order; the Force of popular Currents and Tides is, in some Measure, broke; and the public Interest may be pursued with Method and Constancy. But 'tis needless to reason any farther concerning a Form of Government, which is never likely to have place in *Britain*, and which seems not to be the Aim of any Party amongst us. Let us cherish and improve our antient Government as much as possible, without encouraging a Passion for such dangerous Novelties.

I SHALL conclude this Subject with observing, that the present political Controversy, with regard to *Instructions*, is a very frivolous one, and can never be brought to any Decision, as it is managed by

both Parties. The Country-Party do not pretend, that a Member is absolutely bound to follow such Instructions, as an Ambassador or General is confined by his Orders, and that his Vote is not to be received in the House but so far as it is conformable to them. The Court-Party, again, do not pretend, that the Sentiments of the People ought to have no Weight with every Member; much less that he ought to despise the Sentiments of those whom he represents, and with whom he is more particularly connected. And if their Sentiments be of Weight, why ought they not to express these Sentiments? The Question, then, is only concerning the Degrees of Weight, which ought to be plac'd on Instructions. But such is the Nature of Language, that 'tis impossible for it to express distinctly these different Degrees; and if Men will carry on a Controversy on this Head, it may well happen, that they may differ in their Language, and yet agree in their Sentiments; and differ in their Sentiments, and yet agree in their Language. Besides, how is it possible to fix these Degrees, considering the Variety of Affairs that come before the House, and the Variety of Places, which Members represent? Ought the Instructions of *Totness* to have the same Weight as those of *London*? Or Instructions, with regard to the *Convention*, which respected foreign Politics, to have the same Weight as those with regard to the *Excise*, which respected only our domestic Affairs?

ESSAY VI

OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

I Know not whence it proceeds, that Women are so apt to take amiss every Thing that is said in Disparagement of the married State; and always consider a Satyr upon Matrimony as a Satyr upon themselves. Do they mean by this, that they are the Parties principally concerned, and that if a Backwardness to enter into that State should prevail in the World, they would be the greatest Sufferers? Or, are they sensible, that the Misfortunes and Miscarriages of the married State are owing more to their Sex than to ours? I hope they do not intend to confess either of these two Particulars, or to give such an Advantage to their Adversaries, the Men, as even to allow them to suspect it.

I HAVE often had Thoughts of complying with this Humour of the Fair Sex, and of writing a Panegyric upon Marriage: But, in looking around for Materials, they seem'd to be of so mix'd a Nature, that at the Conclusion of my Reflections, I found I was as much dispos'd to write a Satyr, which might be plac'd on the opposite Pages of my Panegyrick: And I am afraid, that as Satyr is, on most Occasions, thought to have more Truth in it than Panegyric, I shou'd have done their Cause more Harm than Good by this Expedient. To

misrepresent Facts is what, I know, they will not require of me. I must be more a Friend to Truth, than even to them, where their Interests are opposite.

I SHALL tell the Women what it is our Sex complains of most in the married State; and if they be disposed to satisfy us in this Particular, all the other Differences will be easily accomodated. If I be not mistaken, 'tis their Love of Dominion which is the Ground of the Quarrel; though 'tis very likely, that they will think it an unreasonable Love of it in us, which makes us insist so much upon that Point. However this may be, no Passion seems to have more Influence on female Minds than this for Power; and there is a remarkable Instance in History of its prevailing above another Passion, which is the only one that can be supposed a proper Counter-poise for it. We are told, that all the Women in *Scythia* once conspired against the Men, and kept the Secret so well, that they executed their Design before they were suspected. They surprised the Men in Drink, or asleep, bound them all fast in Chains, and having called a solemn Council of the whole Sex, it was debated what Expedient should be used to improve the present Advantage, and prevent their falling again into Slavery. To kill all the Men did not seem to the Relish of any Part of the Assembly, notwithstanding the Injuries formerly receiv'd; and they were afterwards pleased to make a great Merit of this Lenity of theirs. It was, therefore, agreed to put out the Eyes of the whole male Sex, and thereby resign for ever after all the Vanity they could draw from their Beauty, in order to secure their Authority. We must no longer pretend to dress and Show, say they; but then we shall be free from Slavery. We shall hear no more tender Sighs; but in return we shall hear no more imperious Commands. Love must for ever leave us; but he will carry Subjection along with him.

'TIS regarded by some as an unlucky Circumstance, since the Women were resolved to main the Men, and deprive them of some of their Senses, in order to render them humble and dependent, that the Sense of hearing could not serve their Purpose, since 'tis probable the Females would rather have attack'd that than the Sight: And I think it is agreed among the Learned, that, in a married State,

'tis not near so great an Inconvenience to lose the former Sense as the latter. However this may be, we are told by modern Anecdotes, that some of the *Scythian* Women did secretly spare their Husbands Eyes; presuming, I suppose, that they could govern them as well by means of that Sense as without it. But so incorrigible and intractable were these Men, that their Wives were all obliged in a few Years, as their Youth and Beauty decay'd, to imitate the Example of their Sisters; which it was no difficult Matter to do in a State where the female Sex had once got the Superiority.

I KNOW not if our *Scotish* Ladies derive any Thing of this Humour from their *Scythian* Ancestors; but I must confess, that I have often been surpriz'd to see a Woman very well pleas'd to take a Fool for her Mate, that she might govern with the less Controul; and cou'd not but think her Sentiments, in this Respect, still more barbarous than those of the *Scythian* Women above-mention'd, as much, as the Eyes of the Understanding are more valuable than those of the Body.

BUT to be just, and to lay the Blame more equally, I am afraid it is the Fault of our Sex, if the Women be so fond of Rule, and that if we did not abuse our Authority, they wou'd never think it worth while to dispute it. Tyrants, we know, produce Rebels; and all History informs us, that Rebels, when they prevail, are apt to become Tyrants in their Turn. For this Reason, I cou'd wish there were no Pretensions to Authority on either Side; but that every Thing was carry'd on with perfect Equality, as betwixt two equal Members of the same Body. And to induce both Parties to embrace those amicable Sentiments, I shall deliver to them [*Plato's*](#) Account of the Origin of Love and Marriage.

MANKIND, according to that fanciful Philosopher, were not, in their Original, divided into Male and Female, as at present; but each individual Person was a Compound of both Sexes, and was in himself both Husband and Wife, melted down into one living Creature. This Union, no Doubt, was very entire, and the Parts very well adjusted together, since there resulted a perfect Harmony betwixt the Male

and Female, altho' they were oblig'd to be inseparable Companions. And so great was the Harmony and Happiness flowing from it, that the ANDROGYNES (for so *Plato* calls them) or MEN-WOMEN, became insolent upon their Prosperity, and rebell'd against the Gods. To punish them for this Temerity, *Jupiter* cou'd contrive no better Expedient, than to divorce the Male-Part from the Female, and make two imperfect Beings of the Compound, which was before so perfect. Hence the Origin of Men and Women, as distinct Creatures. But notwithstanding this Division, so lively is our Remembrance of the Happiness we enjoy'd in our primæval State, that we are never at Rest in this Situation; but each of these Halves is continually searching thro' the whole Species to find the other Half, which was broken from it: And when they meet, they join again with the greatest Fondness and Sympathy. But it often happens, that they are mistaken in this Particular; that they take for their Half what no Way corresponds to them; and that the Parts do not meet nor join in with each other, as is usual in Fractures. In this Case the Union is soon dissolv'd, and each Part is set loose again to hunt for its lost Half, joining itself to every one it meets by Way of Trial, and enjoying no Rest, till its perfect Sympathy with its Partner shews that it has at last been successful in its Endeavours.

WERE I dispos'd to carry on this Fiction of *Plato*, which accounts for the mutual Love betwixt the Sexes in so agreeable a Manner, I wou'd do it by the following Allegory.

WHEN *Jupiter* had separated the Male from the Female, and had quell'd their Pride and Ambition by so severe an Operation, he cou'd not but repent him of the Cruelty of his Vengeance, and take Compassion on poor Mortals, who were now become incapable of any Repose or Tranquility. Such Cravings, such Anxieties, such Necessities arose, as made them curse their Creation, and think Existence itself a Punishment. In vain had they Recourse to every other Occupation and Amusement. In vain did they seek after every Pleasure of Sense, and every Refinement of Reason. Nothing cou'd fill that Void, which they felt in their Hearts, or supply the Loss of their Partner, who was so fatally separated from them. To remedy

this Disorder, and to bestow some Comfort, at least, on human Race in their forelorn Situation, *Jupiter* sent down LOVE and HYMEN to collect the broken Halves of human Kind, and piece them together, in the best Manner possible. These two Deities found such a prompt Disposition in Mankind to unite again in their primitive State, that they proceeded on their Work with wonderful Success for some Time; till at last, from many unlucky Accidents, Dissension arose betwixt them. The chief Counsellor and Favourite of Hymen was CARE, who was continually filling his Patron's Head with Prospects of Futurity; a Settlement, Family, Children, Servants; so that little else was regarded in all the Matches *they* made. On the other Hand, *Love* had chosen PLEASURE for his Favourite, who was as pernicious a Counsellor as the other, and wou'd never allow *Love* to look beyond the present momentary Gratification, or the satisfying of the prevailing Inclination. These two Favourites became, in a little Time, irreconcilable Enemies, and made it their chief Business to undermine each other in all their Undertakings. No sooner had *Love* fixt upon two Halves, which he was cementing together, and forming to a close Union, but *Care* insinuates himself, and bringing *Hymen* along with him, dissolves the Union produc'd by *Love*, and joins each Half to some other Half, which he had provided for it. To be reveng'd of this, *Pleasure* creeps in upon a Pair already join'd by *Hymen*; and calling *Love* to his Assistance, they Under-hand contrive to join each Half, by secret Links, to Halves, which *Hymen* was wholly unacquainted with. It was not long before this Quarrel was felt in its pernicious Consequences; and such Complaints arose before the Throne of *Jupiter*, that he was oblig'd to summon the offending Parties to appear before him, in order to give an Account of their Proceedings. After hearing the Pleadings on both Sides, he order'd an immediate Reconcilement betwixt *Love* and *Hymen*, as the only Expedient for giving Happiness to Mankind: And that he might be sure this Reconcilement shou'd be durable, he laid his strict Injunctions on them never to join any Halves without consulting their Favourites, *Care* and *Pleasure*, and obtaining the Consent of both to the Conjunction. Where this Order is strictly observ'd, the *Androgyne* is perfectly restor'd, and human Race enjoy the same

Happiness as in their primæval State. The Seam is scarce perceiv'd,
that joins the two Beings together; but both of them combine to
form one perfect and happy Creature.

ESSAY VII

OF THE STUDY OF HISTORY

There is nothing I would recommend more earnestly to my female Readers than the Study of History, as an Occupation, of all others, the best suited both to their Sex and Education; much more instructive than their ordinary Books of Amusement, and more entertaining than those serious Compositions, which are usually to be found in their Closets. Among other important Truths, which they may learn from History, they may be informed of two Particulars, the Knowledge of which may contribute very much to their Quiet and Repose; *That* our Sex, as well as theirs, are far from being such perfect Creatures as they are apt to imagine, and, *That* Love is not the only Passion, that governs the Male-World, but is often overcome by Avarice, Ambition, Vanity, and a thousand other Passions. Whether they be the false Representations of Mankind in those two Particulars, that endear Romances and Novels so much to the fair Sex, I know not; but must confess I am sorry to see them have such an Aversion to Matter of Fact, and such an Appetite for Falshood. I remember I was once desired by a young Beauty, for whom I had some Passion, to send her some Novels and Romances for her Amusement in the Country; but was not so ungenerous as to take the Advantage, which such a Course of Reading might have given

me, being resolved not to make Use of poisoned Arms against her. I therefore sent her [*Plutarch's Lives*](#), assuring her at the same Time, that there was not a Word of Truth in them from Beginning to End. She perused them very attentively, 'till she came to the Lives of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*, whose Names she had heard of by Accident: and then returned me the Book, with many Reproaches for deceiving her.

I MAY indeed be told, that the fair Sex have no such Aversion to History, as I have represented, provided it be *secret* History, and contain some memorable Transaction proper to excite their Curiosity. But as I do not find that Truth, which is the Basis of History, is at all regarded in those Anecdotes, I cannot admit of this as a Proof of their Passion for that Study. However this may be, I see not why the same Curiosity might not receive a more proper Direction, and lead them to desire Accounts of those who lived in past Ages as well as of their Contemporaries. What is it to *Cleora*, whether *Fulvia* entertains a secret Commerce of Love with *Philander* or not? Has she not equal Reason to be pleased, when she is informed, (what is whispered about among Historians) that *Cato's* Sister had an Intrigue with *Cæsar*, and palmed her Son, *Marcus Brutus*, upon her Husband for his own, though in Reality he was her Gallant's? And are not the Loves of *Messalina* or *Julia* as proper Subjects of Discourse as any Intrigue, that this City has produced of late Years.

BUT I know not whence it comes, that I have been thus seduced into a kind of Raillery against the Ladies: Unless, perhaps, it proceed from the same Cause, that makes the Person, who is the Favourite of the Company, be often the Object of their good-natur'd Jests and Pleasantries. We are pleased to address our selves after any manner to a Person that is agreeable to us; and at the same Time presume, that nothing will be taken amiss by one who is secure of the good Opinion and Affections of every one present. I shall now proceed to handle my Subject more seriously, and shall point out the many Advantages, that flow from the Study of History, and show how well suited it is to every one, but particularly to those who are debarred the severer Studies by the Tenderness of their Complexion and the

Weakness of their Education. The Advantages found in History seem to be of three kinds, as it amuses the Fancy, as it improves the Understanding, and as it strengthens Virtue.

IN reality, what more agreeable Entertainment to the Mind, than to be transported into the remotest Ages of the World, and to observe human Society in its Infancy, making the first faint Essays towards the Arts and Sciences: To see the Policy of Government, and the Civility of Conversation refining by Degrees, and every thing that is ornamental to human Life advancing towards its Perfection. To remark the Rise, Progress, Declension and final Extinction of the most flourishing Empires: The Virtues, which contributed to their Greatness; and the Vices, which drew on their Ruin. In short, to see all human Race, from the Beginning of Time, pass, as it were, in Review before us, appearing in their true Colours, without any of those Disguises, which, during their Life-time, so much perplexed the Judgments of the Beholders. What Spectacle can be imagined so magnificent, so various, so interesting? What Amusement, either of the Senses or Imagination, can be compared with it? Shall those trifling Pastimes, which engross so much of our Time, be prefer'd as more satisfactory, and more fit to engage our Attention? How perverse must that Taste be, which is capable of so wrong a Choice of Pleasures?

BUT History is a most improving Part of Knowledge, as well as an agreeable Amusement; and indeed, a great Part of what we commonly call *Erudition*, and value so highly, is nothing but an Acquaintance with historical Facts. An extensive Knowledge of this kind belongs to Men of Letters; but I must think it an unpardonable Ignorance in Persons of whatever Sex or Condition, not to be acquainted with the History of their own Country, along with the Histories of antient *Greece* and *Rome*. A Woman may behave herself with good Manners, and have even some Vivacity in her Turn of Wit; but where her Mind is so unfurnish'd, 'tis impossible her Conversation can afford any Entertainment to Men of Sense and Reflection.

I MUST add, that History is not only a valuable Part of Knowledge, but opens the Door to many other Parts of Knowledge, and affords Materials to most of the Sciences. And indeed, if we consider the Shortness of human Life, and our limited Knowledge even of what passes in our own Time, we must be sensible, that we should be for ever Children in Understanding, were it not for this Invention, which extends our Experience to all past Ages, and to the most distant Nations; making them contribute as much to our Improvement in Wisdom, as if they had actually lain under our Observation. A Man acquainted with History may, in some respect, be said to have lived from the Beginning of the World, and to have been making continual Additions to his Stock of Knowledge in every Century.

THERE is also an Advantage in that Knowledge, which is acquired by History, above what is learned by the Practice of the World, that it brings us acquainted with human Affairs, without diminishing in the least from the most delicate Sentiments of Virtue. And to tell the Truth, I know not any Study or Occupation so unexceptionable as History in this particular. Poets can paint Virtue in the most charming Colours; but as they address themselves entirely to the Passions, they often become Advocates for Vice. Even Philosophers are apt to bewilder themselves in the Subtilty of their Speculations; and we have seen some go so far as to deny the Reality of all moral Distinctions. But I think it a Remark worthy the Attention of the speculative Reader, that the Historians have been, almost without Exception, the true Friends of Virtue, and have always represented it in its proper Colours, however they may have erred in their Judgments of particular Persons. [*Machiavel*](#) himself discovers a true Sentiment of Virtue in his History of Florence. When he talks as a *Politician*, he considers Poisoning, Assassination and Perjury as lawful Arts of Power; but when he speaks as an *Historian*, he shows so keen an indignation against Vice, and so warm an Approbation of Virtue in many Passages, that I could not forbear applying to him that Remark of [*Horace*](#), That if you chace away Nature, though with never so great Indignity, she will always return upon you. Nor is this Combination of Historians in favour of Virtue at all difficult to be

accounted for. When a Man of Business enters into Life and Action, he is more apt to consider the Characters of Men, as they have Relation to his Interest, than as they stand in themselves; and has his Judgment warped on every Occasion by the Violence of his Passion. When a Philosopher contemplates Characters and Manners in his Closet, the general abstract View of the Objects leaves the Mind so cold and unmoved, that the Sentiments of Nature have no Room to play, and he scarce feels the Difference betwixt Vice and Virtue. History keeps in a just Medium betwixt these Extremes, and places the Objects in their true Point of View. The Writers of History, as well as the Readers, are sufficiently interested in the Characters and Events, to have a lively Sentiment of Blame or Praise; and at the same Time have no particular Interest or Concern to pervert their Judgment.

Veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imoEliciuntur.

ESSAY VIII

OF THE INDEPENDENCY OF PARLIAMENT

I HAVE frequently observ'd, in comparing the Conduct of the *Court* and *Country* Party, that the former are commonly less assuming and dogmatical in Conversation, more apt to make Concessions, and tho' not, perhaps, more susceptible of Conviction; yet more able to bear Contradiction than the latter; who are apt to fly out upon any Opposition, and to regard one as a mercenary designing Fellow, if he argues with any Coolness and Impartiality, or makes any Concessions to their Adversaries. This is a Fact, which, I believe, every one may have observ'd, who has been much in Companies, where political Questions have been discuss'd; tho', were one to ask the Reason of this Difference, every Party wou'd be apt to assign a different Reason. Gentlemen in the *Opposition* will ascribe it to the very Nature of their Party, which, being founded on public Spirit, and a Zeal for the Constitution, cannot easily endure such Doctrines, as are of pernicious Consequence to Liberty. The Courtiers, on the other Hand, will be apt to put us in Mind of the Clown mention'd by Lord *Shaftsbury*. "A Clown, says that [\[1\]](#) excellent Author, once took a Fancy to hear the *Latin* Disputes of Doctors at an University. He was askt what Pleasure he cou'd take in viewing such Combatants, when he cou'd never know so much, as which of the Parties had the

better." *For that Matter*, reply'd the Clown, "*I a'n't such a Fool neither, but I can see who's the first that puts to'other into a Passion*. Nature herself dictated this Lesson to the Clown, that he who had the better of the Argument wou'd be easy and well-humour'd: But he who was unable to support his Cause by Reason, wou'd naturally lose his Temper, and grow violent."

To which of these Reasons shall we adhere? To neither of them, in my Opinion: Unless we have a-mind to inlist ourselves, and become Zealots in either Party. I believe I can assign the Reason of this different Conduct of the two Parties, without offending either. The Country-Party are plainly most popular at present, and perhaps have been so in most Administrations: So that, being accustom'd to prevail in Company, they cannot endure to hear their Opinions controverted, but are as confident on the publick Favour, as if they were supported in all their Sentiments by the most infallible Demonstration. The Courtiers, on the other Hand, are commonly so run down by your popular Talkers, that if you speak to them with any Moderation, or make them the smallest Concessions, they think themselves extremely oblig'd to you, and are apt to return the Favour by a like Moderation and Facility on their Part. To be furious and passionate, they know, wou'd only gain them the Character of *shameless Mercenaries*; not that of *zealous Patriots*, which is the Character that such a warm Behaviour is apt to acquire to the other Party.

IN all Controversies, we find, without regarding the Truth or Falshood on either Side, that those who defend the establishd and popular Opinions are always most dogmatical and imperious in their Stile: While their Adversaries affect a most extraordinary Gentleness and Moderation, in order to soften, as much as possible, any Prejudices, that may ly against them. Consider the Behaviour of our *Free-thinkers* of all Denominations, whether they be such as decry all Revelation, or only oppose the exorbitant Power of the Clergy; [*Collins*](#), [*Tindal*](#), [*Foster*](#), [*Hoadley*](#). Compare their Moderation and Good-manners with the furious Zeal and Scurrility of their Adversaries, and you will be convinc'd of the Truth of my Observation. A like

Difference may be observ'd in the Conduct of those *French* Writers, who maintain'd the Controversy with regard to antient and modern Learning. [Boileau](#), [Monsieur](#) & [Madame Dacier](#), [l'Abbe de Bos](#), who defended the Party of the Antients, mixt their Reasonings with Satyre and Invective: While [Fontenelle](#), [la Motte](#), [Charpentier](#), and even [Perrault](#) never transgress'd the Bounds of Moderation and Good-breeding; tho' provok'd by the most injurious Treatment of their Adversaries.

I MUST, however, observe, that this Remark, with regard to the seeming Moderation of the *Court* Party, is entirely confin'd to Conversation, and to Gentlemen, who have been engag'd by Interest or Inclination in that Party. For as to the Court-Writers, being commonly hir'd Scriblers, they are altogether as scurrilous as the Mercenaries of the other Party, nor has the *Gazeteer* any Advantage, in this Respect, above *Common Sense*. A Man of Education will, in any Party, discover himself to be such, by his Good-breeding and Decency; as a Scoundrel will always betray the opposite Qualities. The *false Accusers accus'd*, &c. is very scurrillous; tho' that Side of the Question, being least popular, shou'd be defended with most Moderation. When L—d B——e, L—d M——t, Mr. L——n take the Pen in Hand, tho' they write with Warmth, they presume not upon their Popularity so far as to transgress the Bounds of Decency.

I AM led into this Train of Reflection, by considering some Papers wrote upon that grand Topic of *Court-Influence, and Parliamentary Dependence*, where, in my humble Opinion, the Country-Party show too rigid an Inflexibility, and too great a Jealousy of making Concessions to their Adversaries. Their Reasonings lose their Force, by being carry'd too far; and the Popularity of their Opinions has seduc'd them to neglect, in some Measure, their Justness and Solidity. The following Reasoning will, I hope, serve to justify me in this Opinion.

POLITICAL Writers have establish'd it as a Maxim, That in contriving any System of Government, and fixing the several Checks and Controuls of the Constitution, every Man ought to be suppos'd a

Knave, and to have no other End, in all his Actions, but private Interest. By this Interest we must govern him, and by Means of it, make him co-operate to public Good, notwithstanding his insatiable Avarice and Ambition. Without this, say they, we shall in vain boast of the Advantages of any Constitution, and shall find, in the End, that we have no Security for our Liberties or Possessions, except the Good-will of our Rulers; that is, we shall have no Security at all.

'Tis therefore a just *political* Maxim, *That every Man must be supposed a Knave*: Tho' at the same Time, I must own it appears somewhat strange, that a Maxim should be true in *Politics*, which is false in *Fact*. But to satisfy us on this Head, we may consider, that Men are generally more honest in their private than in their public Character, and will go greater Lengths to serve a Party than where their own private Interest is alone concerned. Honour is a great Check upon Mankind: But where a considerable Body of Men act together, this Check is, in a great measure, removed; since a Man is sure to be approved of by his own Party for what promotes the common Interest, and soon learns to despise the Clamours of his Adversaries. To which we may add, that every Court or Senate is determined by the Majority; so that if Self-Interest influences only the Majority (as it will always do in the present depraved State of Mankind) the whole Senate follows the Allurements of this separate Interest, and acts as if it contained not one Member, who had any Regard to public Interest and Liberty.

WHEN, therefore, there offers to my Censure and Examination any Plan of Government, real or imaginary, where the Power is distributed among several Courts, and several Orders of Men, I always consider the private Interest of each Court, and each Order; and if I find, that, by the artful Division of the Power, the private Interest must necessarily, in its Operation, concur with the public, I pronounce that Government to be wise and happy. If, on the contrary, the private Interest of each Order be not check'd, and be not directed to publick Interest, I shall look for nothing but Faction, Disorder, and Tyranny from such a Government. In this Opinion I am

justified by Experience, as well as by the Authority of all Philosophers and Politicians, both antient and modern.

How much, therefore, would it have surprised such a Genius, as [Cicero](#), or [Tacitus](#), to have been told, that in a future Age there should arise a very regular System of *mixt* Government, where the Power was so distributed, that one Rank, whenever it pleased, might swallow up all the rest, and engross the whole Power of the Constitution. Such a Government, they would have been apt to say, will not be a mixt Government. For so great is the natural Ambition of Men, that they are never satisfied with Power; and if one Order of Men, by pursuing the Interest of their Order, can usurp upon every other Order, it will certainly do so, and render itself, as far as possible, absolute and uncontrollable.

BUT in this Opinion, Experience shows they would have been mistaken. For this is actually the Case with the *British* Constitution. The Share of Power allotted by our Constitution to the House of Commons is so great, that it absolutely commands all the other Parts of our Government. The King's legislative Power is plainly no proper Check to it. For though the King has a Negative in the passing of all Laws; yet this, in Fact, is esteemed of so little Moment, that whatever passes the two Houses is always sure to be pass'd into a Law, and the Royal Assent is little better than a mere Form. The principal Weight of the Crown lies in the executive Power: But besides that the executive Power, in every Government, is altogether subordinate to the legislative; besides this, I say, the Exercise of this Power requires an immense Expence, and the Commons have assumed to themselves the sole Power of disposing of public Money: How easy, therefore, would it be for that House to wrest from the Crown all these Powers, one after another, by making every Grant of Money conditional, and choosing their Time so well, that their Refusal of Subsidies should only distress the Government, without giving foreign Powers any Advantage over us? Did the House of Commons depend in the same manner on the King, and had none of the Members any Property but from his Gift, would not he command all their Resolutions, and be from that Moment absolute? As to the

House of Lords, they are a very powerful Support to the Crown as long as they are, in their Turn, supported by it; but both Experience and Reason show us, that they have no Force nor Authority sufficient to maintain themselves alone, without any such Support.

How, therefore, shall we solve this Paradox? And by what Means is this Member of our Constitution confin'd within its proper Limits; since, from our very Constitution, it must necessarily have as much Power as it demands, and can only be confin'd by itself? How is this consistent with our constant Experience of human Nature? I answer, that the Interest of the Body is here restrain'd by the Interest of the Individuals, and that the House of Commons stretches not its Power, because such an Usurpation would be contrary to the Interest of the Majority of its Members. The Crown has so many Offices at its Disposal, that when assisted by the honest and disinterested Part of the House, it will always command the Resolutions of the whole; so far at least, as to preserve the antient Constitution from Danger. We may, therefore, give to this Influence what Name we please; we may call it by the invidious Appellations of *Corruption* and *Dependence*; but some Degree and some Kind of it are inseparable from the very Nature of the Constitution, and necessary to the Preservation of our mixt Government.

INSTEAD then of asserting [\[2\]](#) absolutely, that the Dependence of Parliament, in every Degree, is an Infringement of *British* Liberty, the Country-Party would have done better to have made some Concessions to their Adversaries, and have only examined what was the proper Degree of this Dependence, beyond which it became dangerous to Liberty. But such a Moderation is not to be expected of Partymen of any kind. After a Concession of this Nature, all Declamation must be abandoned; and a serious calm Enquiry into the proper Degrees of Court-Influence, and Parliamentary Dependence would have been expected by the Readers. And tho' the Advantage, in such a Controversy, might possibly remain to the *Country-Party*, yet the Victory would not have been so compleat as they wish for, nor would a true Patriot have given an entire Loose to his Zeal, for fear of running Matters into a contrary Extreme, by

diminishing too ^[3] far the Influence of the Crown. 'Twas, therefore, thought best to deny, that this Extreme could ever be dangerous to the Constitution, or that the Crown could ever have too little Influence over Members of Parliament.

ALL Questions concerning the proper Medium betwixt any two Extremes are very difficult to be decided; both because it is difficult to find *Words* proper to fix this Medium, and because the Good and Ill, in such Cases, run so gradually into each other, as even to render our *Sentiments* doubtful and uncertain. But there is a peculiar Difficulty in the present Case, which would embarrass the most knowing and most impartial Examiner. The Power of the Crown is always lodged in a single Person, either King or Minister; and as this Person may have either a greater or less Degree of Ambition, Capacity, Courage, Popularity or Fortune, the Power, which is too great in one Hand, may become too little in another. In pure Republics, where the Power is distributed among several Assemblies or Senates, the Checks and Controuls are more regular in their Operation; because the Members of such numerous Assemblies may be presumed to be always nearly equal in Capacity and Virtue; and 'tis only their Number, Riches, or Authority, that enter into Consideration. But a limited Monarchy admits not of any such Stability; nor is it possible to assign to the Crown such a determinate Degree of Power, as will, in every Hand, form a proper Counter-balance to the other Parts of the Constitution. This is an unavoidable Disadvantage, among the many Advantages attending that Species of Government.

1. ↑. Miscellaneous Reflections, p. 107.
2. ↑. See *Dissertation on Parties*, throughout.
3. ↑. By that *Influence of the Crown*, which I would justify, I mean only, that arising from the Offices and Honours that are at the Disposal of the Crown. As to private *Bribery*, it may be considered in the same Light as the Practice of employing Spies, which is scarcely justifiable in a good Minister, and is infamous in a bad one: But to be a Spy, or to be corrupted, is always

infamous under all Ministries, and is to be regarded as a
shameless Prostitution.

ESSAY IX

WHETHER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INCLINES MORE TO ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, OR TO A REPUBLIC

It affords a violent Prejudice against almost every Art and Science, that no prudent Man, however sure of his Principles, dare prophesy concerning any Event, or foretell the remote Consequences of Things. No Physician will venture to pronounce concerning the Condition of his Patient a Fortnight or Month after: And still less dare a Politician foretell the Situation of public Affairs a few Years hence. *Harrington* thought himself so sure of his general Principle, *That the Ballance of Power depends on that of Property*, that he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish Monarchy in *England*: But his Book was scarce published when the King was restored; and we see that Monarchy has ever since subsisted upon the same Footing as before. Notwithstanding of this unlucky Example, I will venture to examine a very important Question, *viz. Whether the British Government inclines more to Absolute Monarchy, or to a Republic? and in which of these two Species of Government it will most probably terminate?* As there seems not to be any great Danger of a sudden Revolution either Way, I shall at least escape the Shame attending my Temerity, if I should be found to have been mistaken.

THOSE who assert, that the Ballance of our Government inclines towards Absolute Monarchy may support their Opinion by the following Reasons. That Property has a great Influence on Power cannot possibly be denied; but yet the general Maxim, *That the Ballance of the one depends upon the Ballance of the other*, must be received with several Limitations. 'Tis evident, that much less Property in a single Hand will be able to counter-balance a greater Property in several Hands; not only because it is difficult to make many Persons combine in the same Views and Measures; but also because Property, when united, causes much greater Dependence, than the same Property, when dispersed. An hundred Persons of 1000 a Year apiece, can consume all their Income, and no Body shall ever be the better for them, except their Servants and Tradesmen, who justly regard their Profits as the Product of their own Labour. But a Man possest of 100,000 a Year, if he has either any Generosity, or any Cunning, may create a great Dependence by Obligations, and still a greater by Expectations. Hence we find, that in all free Governments any Subject exorbitantly rich has always created Jealousy, even tho' his Riches bore no manner of Proportion to the Riches of the State. *Crassus's* Fortune, if I remember well, amounted only to ^[1]Three Thousand Talents a Year; and yet we find, that though his Genius was nothing extraordinary, he was able, by Means of his Riches alone, to counter-balance, during his Lifetime, the Power of *Cæsar*, who afterwards became Master of the World. The Wealth of the *Medicis* made them Masters of *Florence*; tho', 'tis probable, it was very inconsiderable, compared to the united Property of that opulent Republic.

THESE Considerations are apt to make one entertain a very magnificent Idea of the *British* Spirit and Love of Liberty; since we cou'd maintain our free Government, during so many Centuries, against our Sovereigns, who, besides the Power and Dignity and Majesty of the Crown, have always been possest of much more Property, than any Subject has ever enjoy'd in any Common-wealth. But it may be said, that this Spirit, however great, will never be able to support itself against that immense Property, which is now lodg'd

in the King, and which is still increasing. Upon a moderate Computation, there are near three Millions at the Disposal of the Crown. The civil List amounts to near a Million. The Collection of all Taxes to another Million. And the Employments in the Army and Navy, along with Ecclesiastical Preferments above a third Million; a monstrous Sum, and what may fairly be computed to be more than a thirtieth Part of the whole Income and Labour of the Kingdom. When we add to this immense Property, the increasing Luxury of the Nation, our Proneness to Corruption, along with the great Power and Prerogatives of the Crown, and the Command of such numerous military Forces, there is no one but must despair, without extraordinary Efforts, of being able to support our free Government much longer under all these Disadvantages.

ON the other Hand, those who maintain, that the Byass of the *British* Government leans towards a Republic, may support their Opinion by very specious Arguments. It may be said, that though this immense Property in the Crown, be join'd to the Dignity of first Magistrate, and to many other legal Powers and Prerogatives, which should naturally give it a greater Influence; yet it really becomes less dangerous to Liberty upon that very Account. Were *Britain* a Republic, and were any private Man possess'd of a Revenue, a third, or even a tenth Part as large as that of the Crown, he would very justly excite Jealousy; because he would infallibly have great Authority in the Government: And such an irregular Authority, not avowed by the Laws, is always more dangerous than a much greater Authority, which is derived from them. A [\[2\]](#)Man possess'd of usurp'd Authority can set no Bounds to his Pretensions: His Partizans have Liberty to hope for every thing in his Favours: His Enemies provoke his Ambition, along with his Fears, by the Violence of their Opposition: And the Government being thrown into a Ferment, every corrupted Humour in the State naturally gathers to him. On the contrary, a legal Authority, though very great, has always some Bounds, which terminate both the Hopes and Pretensions of the Persons possess'd of it: The Laws must have provided a Remedy against its Excesses: Such an eminent Magistrate has much to fear,

and little to hope from his Usurpations: And as his legal Authority is quietly submitted to, he has little Temptation and little Opportunity of extending it farther. Besides, it happens, with regard to ambitious Aims and Projects, what may be observed with regard to Sects of Philosophy and Religion. A new Sect excites such a Ferment, and is both opposed and defended with such Vehemence, that it spreads always faster, and multiplies its Partizans with greater Rapidity, than any old established Opinion, recommended by the Sanction of the Laws and of Antiquity. Such is the Nature of Novelty, that where any thing pleases, it becomes doubly agreeable, if new, but, if it displeases, it is doubly displeasing, upon that very Account. And, in most Cases, the Violence of Enemies is favourable to ambitious Projects, as well as the Zeal of Partizans.

It may farther be said, That tho' Men be very much govern'd by Interest; yet even Interest itself, and all human Affairs are merely govern'd by *Opinion*. Now, there has been a very sudden and a very sensible Change in the Opinions of Men within these last Fifty Years, by the Progress of Learning and of Liberty. Most People, in this Island, have divested themselves of all superstitious Reverence to Names and Authority: The Clergy have entirely lost their Credit: Their Pretensions and Doctrines have been ridicul'd; and even Religion can scarce support itself in the World. The mere Name of *King* commands little Respect; and to talk of him as GOD's Vicegerent upon Earth, or to give him any of those magnificent Titles, which formerly dazl'd Mankind, wou'd but excite Laughter in every one. Tho' the Crown, by Means of its large Revenue, may maintain its Authority in Times of Tranquility, upon private Interest and Influence; yet, as the least Shock or Convulsion must break all these Interests to Pieces, the kingly Power, being no longer supported by the settled Principles and Opinions of Men, will immediately dissolve. Had Men been in the same Disposition at the *Revolution*, as they are at present, Monarchy wou'd have run a great Risque of being entirely lost in this Island.

DURST I venture to deliver my own Sentiments amidst these opposite Arguments, I wou'd assert, that unless there happen some

extraordinary Convulsion, the Power of the Crown, by Means of its large Revenue, is rather upon the Increase; tho', at the same Time, I own, that its Progress seems to me very slow and almost insensible. The Tide has run long, and with some Rapidity, to the Side of popular Government, and is just beginning to turn towards Monarchy.

'Tis well known, that every Government must come to a Period, and that Death is unavoidable to the political as well as to the animal Body. But, as one Kind of Death may be preferable to another, it may be enquir'd, Whether it be more disirable for the *British* Constitution to terminate in a popular Government, or in absolute Monarchy? Here I wou'd declare frankly, that tho' Liberty be infinitely preferable to Slavery, in almost every Case; yet I wou'd much rather wish to see an absolute Monarch than a Republic in this Island: For, let us consider, what Kind of Republic we have Reason to expect. The Question is not concerning any fine imaginary Republic, which a Man may form a Plan of in his Closet. There is no Doubt, but a popular Government may be imagin'd more perfect than absolute Monarchy, or even than our present Constitution: But what Reason have we to expect that any such Government will ever be establish'd in *Britain*, upon the Dissolution of our Monarchy? If any single Person acquire Power enough to take our Constitution to Pieces, and put it up anew, he is really an absolute Monarch; and we have had already an Instance of this Kind, sufficient to convince us, that such a Person will never resign his Power, or establish any free Government. Matters, therefore, must be trusted to their natural Progress and Operation; and the House of Commons, according to its present Constitution, must-be the only Legislature in such a popular Government. The Inconveniencies, attending such a Situation of Affairs, present themselves by Thousands. If the House of Commons, in such a Case, ever dissolves itself, which is not to be expected, we may look for a Civil War every Election. If it continues itself, we shall suffer all the Tyranny of a Faction, sub-divided into new Factions: And as such a violent Government cannot long subsist, we shall, at last, after infinite Convulsions and Civil Wars,

find Repose in absolute Monarchy, which it wou'd have been happier for us to have establish'd peaceably from the Beginning. Absolute Monarchy, therefore, is the easiest Death, the true *Euthanasia* of the *British* Constitution.

THUS, if we have Reason to be more jealous of Monarchy, because the Danger is more imminent from that Quarter; we have also Reason to be more jealous of popular Government, because that Danger is more terrible. This may teach us a Lesson of Moderation in all our political Controversies.

1. ↑. About 400,000l. Sterling.
 2. ↑. *On ne monte jamais si haut que quand on ne sçait pas ou on va*, said *Cromwell* to the President *de Bellievre*
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ESSAY X

OF PARTIES IN GENERAL

Of all Men, that distinguish themselves by memorable Atchievements, the first Place of Honour, in my Opinion, is due to LEGISLATORS, and Founders of States, who transmit a System of Laws and Institutions to secure the Peace, Happiness and Liberty of future Generations. The Influence of useful Inventions in the Arts and Sciences may, perhaps, extend farther than those of wise Laws, whose Effects are limited both in Time and Place; but the Benefit arising from the former is not so sensible as that which proceeds from the latter. Speculative Sciences, do, indeed, improve the Mind; but this Advantage reaches only to a few Persons, who have Leisure to apply themselves to them. And as to practical Arts, which encrease the Commodities and Enjoyments of Life; 'tis well known, that Men's Happiness consists not so much in an Abundance of these, as in the Peace and Security with which they possess them: And these Blessings can only be derived from good Government. Not to mention, that general Virtue and good Morals in a State, which are so requisite to Happiness, can never arise from the most refined Precepts of Philosophy, or even the severest Injunctions of Religion; but must proceed entirely from a virtuous Education, the Effect of wise Laws and Institutions. I must, therefore, be of a different

Opinion from my [Lord BACON](#) in this Particular, and must regard Antiquity as somewhat unjust in its Distribution of Honour, when it made Gods of all the Inventors of useful Arts, such as *Ceres*, *Bacchus*, *Æsculapius*; and dignified Legislators, such as *Romulus* and *Theseus*, only with the Appellation of Demi-Gods and Heroes.

As much as Legislators and Founders of States ought to be honoured and respected among Men, as much ought the Founders of Sects and Factions to be detested and hated; because the Influence of Factions is directly contrary to that of Laws. Factions subvert Government; render Laws impotent, and beget the fiercest Animosities among Men of the same Nation, who ought to give mutual Assistance and Protection to each other. And what shou'd render the Founders of Factions more odious is the Difficulty of extirpating Factions, when once they have taken rise in any State. They naturally propagate themselves for many Centuries, and seldom end but by the total Dissolution of that Government, in which they are planted. They are, besides, Seeds, which grow most plentifully in the richest Soils; and though despotic Governments be not entirely free from them, it must be confess'd, that they rise more easily, and propagate themselves faster in free Governments, where they always infect the Legislature itself, which alone cou'd be able, by the steady Application of Rewards and Punishments, to eradicate them.

FACTIONS or Parties may be divided into PERSONAL and REAL; that is, into Factions founded on personal Friendship or Animosity among those who compose the Factions, and into those founded on some real Difference of Sentiment or Interest. The Reason of this Distinction is obvious; though I must acknowledge, that Parties are seldom found pure and unmixt, either of the one kind or the other. 'Tis not often seen, that a Government divides into Factions, where there is no Difference in the Views of these Factions, either real or apparent, trivial or material: And in those Factions, which are founded on the most real and most material Difference, there is always found to be a great deal of personal Animosity or Affection. But notwithstanding of this Mixture, a Party may be denominated

either personal or real, according to that Principle which is predominant, and is observed to have the greatest Influence.

PERSONAL Factions arise most easily in small Republics. Every domestic Quarrel becomes an Affair of State. Love, Vanity, Emulation, any Passion begets public Division, as well as Ambition and Resentment. The *Neri* and *Bianchi* of *Florence*, the *Fregosi* and *Adorni* of *Genoa*, the *Colonnese* and *Orsini* of modern *Rome*, were Parties of this kind.

MEN have such a Propensity to divide into personal Factions, that the smallest Appearance of real Difference will beget them. What can be imagined more trivial than the Difference betwixt one Colour of Livery and another in Horse-Races? And yet this Difference begot two most inveterate Factions in the *Greek* Empire, the *Prasini* and *Veneti*, who never suspended their Animosities, 'till they ruined that unhappy Government.

NOTHING is more usual than to see Parties, which have begun upon a real Difference, continue even after that Difference is lost. When Men are once inlisted on different Sides, they contract an Affection to the Persons with whom they are united, and an Animosity against their Antagonists: And these Passions they often transmit to their Posterity. The real Difference betwixt *Guelf* and *Ghibbeline* was long lost in *Italy*, before these Factions were extinguished. The *Guelfs* adher'd to the Pope, the *Ghibbellines* to the Emperor; and yet the Family of *Sforza*, who were in Alliance with the Emperor, though they were *Guelfs*, being expelled *Milan* by the King^[1] of *France*, assisted by *Jacomo Trivulzio* and the *Ghibbellines*, the Pope concurred with them, and they form'd Leagues with the Pope against the Emperor.

THE Civil Wars lately arisen in *Morocco* betwixt the *Blacks* and *Whites*, merely on account of their Complexion, are founded on a very pleasant Difference. We laugh at them; but I believe, were Things rightly examin'd, we afford much more Occasion of Ridicule to the *Moors*. For pray, what are all the Wars of Religion, which have prevail'd in this polite and knowing Part of the World? They are, in my Opinion, more absurd than the *Moorish* Civil Wars. The

Difference of Complexion is a sensible and a real Difference: But the Difference about an Article of Faith, which is utterly absurd and unintelligible, is not a real Difference of Sentiments, but only a Difference of a few Phrases and Expressions, which one Party accepts of, without understanding them; and the other refuses, in the same Manner. Besides, I do not find, that the *Whites* in *Morocco* ever impos'd on the *Blacks* any Necessity of altering their Complexion, or threaten'd them with Inquisitions and penal Laws in case of Obstinacy: Nor have the *Blacks* been more unreasonable in this Particular. But is a Man's Opinion, where he is able to form a real Opinion, more at his Disposal than his Complexion? And can one be induc'd by Force or Fear to do more than paint and Disguise in the one Case as well as in the other?

REAL Factions may be divided into Factions from *Interest*, from *Principle*, and from *Affection*. Of all Factions, those from Interest are the most reasonable and the most excusable. Where two Orders of Men, such as the Nobles and People, have a distinct Authority in a Government, which is not very accurately ballanc'd and modell'd, they naturally follow a distinct Interest; nor can we reasonably expect a different Conduct from that Degree of Selfishness, which is implanted in human Nature. It requires very great Skill in a Legislator to prevent such Factions; and many Philosophers are of Opinion, that this Secret, like the *Grand Elixir*, or *Perpetual Motion*, may amuse Men in Theory, but can never possibly be reduc'd to Practice. In despotick Governments, indeed, Factions often do not appear; but they are never the less real; or rather, they are more real and more pernicious, upon that very Account. The distinct Orders of Men, Nobles and People, Soldiers and Merchants, have all a distinct Interest; but the more Powerful oppresses the Weaker with Impunity, and without Resistance; which begets a seeming Tranquillity in such Governments.

THERE has been an Attempt to divide the *landed* and *trading* Interest in *England*; but without Success. The Interest of these two Bodies is not really distinct, and never will be so, till our public Debts

increase to such a Degree, as to become altogether oppressive and intolerable.

PARTIES from *Principles*, especially abstract speculative Principles, are known only to modern Times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary and unaccountable *Phænomena*, that have ever yet appear'd in human Affairs. Where different Principles beget a Contrariety of Conduct, as all different political Principles do, the Matter may be more easily explain'd. A Man, who esteems the true Right of Government to ly in one Man, or one Family, cannot easily agree with his Fellow-Citizen, who thinks, that another Man or Family is possest of this Right. Each naturally wishes that Right may take Place, according to his own Notions of it. But where the Difference of Principles begets no Contrariety of Action, but each may follow his own Way, without interfering with his Neighbour, as happens in all religious Controversies; what Madness, what Fury can beget such unhappy and such fatal Divisions?

Two Men, travelling on the High-way, of whom one goes East, the other West, can easily pass each other, if the Way be broad enough: But two Men, reasoning upon opposite Principles of Religion, cannot so easily pass, without shocking; tho' one shou'd think, that the Way were also, in that Case, sufficiently broad, and that each might proceed, without Interruption, in his own Way. But such is the Nature of the human Mind, that it always takes hold of every Mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully strengthen'd and corroborated by an Unanimity of Sentiments, so it is shock'd and disturb'd by any Contrariety. Hence the Eagerness, which most People discover in a Dispute; hence their Impatience of Opposition, even in the most speculative and indifferent Opinions.

THIS Principle, however frivolous it may appear, seems to have been the Origin of all religious Wars and Divisions. But, as this Principle is universal in human Nature, its Effects wou'd not have been confin'd to one Age, and to one Sect of Religion, did it not there concur with other more accidental Causes, which raise it to such a Height, as to cause the highest Misery and Devastation. Most

Religions of the antient World arose in the unknown Ages of Government, when Men were as yet barbarous and uninstructed, and the Prince, as well as Peasant, were dispos'd to receive, with implicate Faith, every pious Tale or Fiction that was offer'd them. The Magistrate embrac'd the Religion of the People, and entering cordially into the Care of sacred Matters, naturally acquir'd an Authority in them, and united the Ecclesiastical with the Civil Power. But the *Christian* Religion arising, while Principles directly opposite to it were firmly establish'd in the polite Part of the World, who despis'd the Nation that first broach'd this Novelty; no Wonder, that Christianity, in such Circumstances, was but little countenanc'd by the Civil Magistrate, and that the Christian Priesthood were allowed to engross all the Authority in the new Sect. So bad a Use did they make of this Power, even in those early Times, that the Persecutions of Christianity may, perhaps, in Part, be ascrib'd to the Violence instill'd by them into their Followers. And the same Principles of Priestly Government continuing, after Christianity became the establish'd Religion, they have engender'd a Spirit of Persecution, which has ever since been the Poison of human Society, and the Source of the most inveterate Factions in every Government. Such Factions, therefore, on the Part of the poor People, may justly be esteem'd Factions of *Principle*; but on the Part of the Priests, who are the prime Movers, they are really Factions of *Interest*.

THERE is another Cause (beside the Authority of the Priests, and the Separation of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Powers) that has contributed to render *Christendom* the Scene of religious Wars and Divisions. Religions, that arise in Ages totally ignorant and barbarous, consist mostly of traditional Tales and Fictions, which may be very different in every Sect, without being contrary to each other; and even when they are contrary, every one adheres to the Tradition of his own Sect, without much Reasoning or Disputation. But as Philosophy was widely spread over the World, at the Time that Christianity arose, the Teachers of the new Sect were oblig'd to form a System of speculative Opinions; to divide, with some Accuracy, their Articles of Faith; and to explain, comment, confute,

and confirm with all the Subtily of Argument and Science. From hence naturally arose Keenness in Dispute, when Christianity came to be split into new Divisions and Heresies: And this Keenness assisted the Priests in their pernicious Policy, of begetting a mutual Hatred and Antipathy among their deluded Followers. Sects of Philosophy, in the antient World, were more zealous than Parties of Religion; but, in modern Times, Parties of Religion are more furious and enrag'd than the most cruel Factions, that ever arose from Interest and Ambition.

I HAVE mention'd Parties from *Affection* as a kind of *real* Parties, beside those from *Interest* and *Principle*. By Parties from Affection, I understand those which are founded on the different Affections of Men towards particular Families and Persons, whom they desire to rule over them. These Parties are often very violent, though I must own it is somewhat unaccountable, that Men shou'd attach themselves so strongly to Persons, whom they are no way acquainted with, whom perhaps they never saw, and from whom they never received nor can ever hope for any Favour. Yet this we find often to be the Case, and even with Men, who, on other Occasions, discover no great Generosity of Spirit, nor are found to be easily transported by Friendship beyond their own Interest. We are apt, I know not how, to think the Relation betwixt us and our Sovereign very close and intimate. The Splendor of Majesty and Power bestows an Importance on the Fortunes even of a single Person. And when a Man's Good-nature does not give him this imaginary Interest, his Ill-nature will do it, from Spite and Opposition to Persons, whose Sentiments are different from his own.

1. [↑](#) *Lewis XII*th.
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ESSAY XI

OF THE PARTIES OF GREAT-BRITAIN

WERE the *British* Government proposed as a Subject of Speculation to a studious Man, he wou'd immediately perceive in it a Source of Division and Party, which it wou'd be almost impossible for it, in any Administration, to avoid. The just Ballance betwixt the Republican and Monarchical Part of our Constitution is really, in itself, so extreme delicate and uncertain, that when join'd to Men's Passions and Prejudices, 'tis impossible but different Opinions must arise concerning it, even among Persons of the best Understanding. Those of mild Tempers, who love Peace and Order, and detest Sedition and Civil Wars, will always entertain more favourable Sentiments of Monarchy, than Men of bold Spirits, who are passionate Lovers of Liberty, and think no Evil comparable to Subjection and Slavery. And though all reasonable Men agree in general to preserve our mixt Government; yet when they come to Particulars, some will incline to trust larger Powers to the Crown, to bestow on it more Influence, and to guard against its Encroachments with less Caution, than others who are terrified at the most distant Approaches of Tyranny and despotic Power. Thus there are Parties of PRINCIPLE involved in the very Nature of our Constitution, which may properly enough be denominated [\[1\]](#)COURT and COUNTRY Parties. The Strength and Violence

of each of these Parties will much depend upon the particular Administration. An Administration may be so bad as to throw a great Majority into the Country Party; as a good Administration will reconcile to the Court many of the most passionate Lovers of Liberty. But, however the Nation may fluctuate betwixt these two Parties, the Parties will always subsist, as long as we are govern'd by a limited Monarchy.

BUT, besides this Difference of *Principle*, those Parties are very much fomented by a Difference of *INTEREST*, without which they cou'd scarce ever be dangerous or violent. The Crown will naturally bestow all its Trust and Power upon those, whose Principles, real or pretended, are most favourable to Monarchical Government; and this Temptation will naturally engage them to go greater Lengths than their Principles wou'd otherwise carry them. Their Antagonists, who are disappointed in their ambitious Aims, throw themselves into the Party, whose Principles incline them to be most jealous of Royal Power, and naturally carry those Principles to a greater Length than sound Politics will justify. Thus, the *Court* and *Country* Parties, which are the genuine Factions of the *British* Government, are a kind of mixt Parties, and are influenced partly by Principle, partly by Interest. The Heads of the Parties are commonly most governed by the latter Motive; the inferior Members of them, by the former. I must be understood to mean this of Persons who have any Motive for taking Party on any Side. For, to tell the Truth, the greatest Part are commonly Men who associate themselves they know not why; from Example, from Passion, from Idleness. But still it is requisite there be some Source of Division, either in Principle or Interest; otherwise such Persons wou'd not find Parties, to which they cou'd associate themselves.

As to Ecclesiastical Parties; we may observe, that, in all Ages of the World, Priests have been Enemies to Liberty; and 'tis certain, that this steady Conduct of theirs must have been founded on fixt Reasons of Interest and Ambition. Liberty of thinking, and of expressing our Thoughts, is always fatal to Priestly Power, and to those pious Frauds, on which it is commonly founded; and by an

infallible Connexion, which is found among every Species of Liberty, this Privilege can never be enjoy'd, at least, has never yet been enjoy'd, but in a free Government. Hence it must happen, in such a Government as *Britain*, that the establish'd Clergy will always be of the *Court-Party*; as, on the contrary, Dissenters of all kinds will be of the *Country-Party*; since they can never hope for that Toleration they stand in need of, but by Means of our free Government. All Princes, that have aimed at despotic Power, have known this important Interest of gaining the establish'd Clergy: As the Clergy, on their Side, have shewn a great Facility of entering into the Views of such Princes. *Gustavus Vasa* was, perhaps, the only ambitious Monarch, that ever depress'd the Church, at the same Time, that he discouraged Liberty. But the exorbitant Power of the Bishops in *Sweden*, who at that Time overtop'd the Crown, along with their Attachment to a foreign Family, was the Reason of his embracing such an unusual Piece of Politics.

THIS Observation concerning the Propensity of Clergymen to despotic Power, and to the Government of a single Person, is not true with regard to one Sect only: The *Presbyterian* and *Calvinistic* Clergy in *Holland* were always profess'd Friends to the Power of the Family of *Orange*; as the *Arminians*, who were esteem'd Heretics, were always of the *Lovestein* Faction, and zealous for Liberty. But if a Prince has the Choice of both, 'tis easy to see, that he will prefer the Episcopal to the Presbyterian Form of Government; both because of the greater Affinity betwixt Monarchy and Episcopacy, and because of the Facility which a Prince finds in such a Government, of ruling the Clergy, by Means of their Ecclesiastical Superiors.

IF we consider the first Rise of Parties in *England*, during the Civil Wars, we shall find, that they were exactly conformable to this general Theory, and that the Species of the Government gave Birth to them, by a regular and infallible Operation. The *English* Constitution, before that Time, had lain in a Kind of Confusion; yet so, as that the Subjects possess'd many noble Privileges, which, though not, perhaps, exactly bounded and secur'd by Law, were universally deem'd, from long Possession, to belong to them as their

Birth-Right. An ambitious, or rather an ignorant, Prince arose, who esteem'd all these Privileges to be Concessions of his Predecessors, revocable at Pleasure; and in Prosecution of this Principle, he openly acted in Violation of Liberty, during the Course of several Years. Necessity, at last, constrain'd him to call a Parliament: The Spirit of Liberty arose: The Prince, being without any Support, was obliged to grant every Thing requir'd of him: And his Enemies, jealous and implacable, set no Bounds to their Pretensions. Here then begun those Contests, in which it was no Wonder, that Men of that Age were divided into different Parties; since, even at this Day, the Impartial are at a Loss to decide concerning the Justice of the Quarrel. The Pretensions of the Parliament, if yielded to, broke the Ballance of our Constitution, by rendering the Government almost entirely Republican. If not yielded to, we were, perhaps, still in Danger of despotic Power, from the settled Principles and inveterate Habits of the King, which had plainly appear'd in every Concession, that he had been constrain'd to make to his People. In this Question, so delicate and uncertain, Men naturally fell to the Side, which was most conformable to their usual Principles; and those, who were the most passionate Favourers of Monarchy, declar'd for the King; as the zealous Friends of Liberty sided with the Parliament. The Hopes of Success being nearly equal on both Sides, *Interest* had little Influence in this Contest: So that ROUND-HEAD and CAVALIER were merely Parties of Principle; neither of which disown'd either Monarchy or Liberty; but the former Party inclin'd most to the Republican Part of our Government, and the latter to the Monarchial. In which respect they may be consider'd as Court and Country-Party enflam'd into a Civil War, by an unhappy Concurrence of Circumstances, and by the turbulent Spirit of the Age. The Commonwealth's-Men, and the Partizans of despotic Power, lay conceal'd in both Parties, and form'd but an inconsiderable Part of them.

THE Clergy had concurr'd, in a shameless Manner, with the King's arbitrary Designs, according to their usual Maxims in such Cases: And, in Return, were allow'd to persecute their Adversaries, whom

they call'd Heretics and Schismatics. The establish'd Clergy was Episcopal; the Non-conformists Presbyterians: So that all Things concurr'd to throw the former, without Reserve, into the King's Party; and the latter into that of the Parliament. The *Cavaliers* being the Court-Party, and the *Round-heads* the Country-Party, the Union was infallible betwixt the former and the establish'd Prelacy, and betwixt the latter and Presbyterian Non-conformists. This Union is so natural, according to the general Principles of Politics, that it requires some very extraordinary Concurrence of Circumstances to break it.

EVERY one knows the Event of this Quarrel; fatal to the King first, and to the Parliament afterwards. After many Confusions and Revolutions, the Royal Family was at last restor'd, and the Government establish'd on the same Footing as before. *Charles II.* was not made wiser by the dreadful Example of his Father; but prosecuted the same Measures, tho' with more Secrecy and Caution. New Parties arose, under the Appellations of WHIG and TORY, which have continued ever since to confound and distract our Government. What the Nature is of these Parties, is, perhaps, one of the most difficult Questions that can be met with, and is a Proof, that History may contain Problems, as uncertain as any that are to be found in the most abstract Sciences. We have seen the Conduct of these two Parties, during the Course of Seventy Years, in a vast Variety of Circumstances, possess'd of Power, and depriv'd of it, during Peace and during War: We meet with Persons, who profess themselves of one Side or t'other, every Hour, in Company, in our Pleasures, in our serious Occupations: We ourselves are constrain'd, in a Manner, to take Party; and living in a Country of the highest Liberty, every one may openly declare all his Sentiments and Opinions: And yet we are at a Loss to tell the Nature, Pretensions, and Principles of the two Parties. The Question is, perhaps, in itself, somewhat difficult; but has been render'd more so, by the Prejudices and Violence of Party.

WHEN we compare the Parties of *Whig* and *Tory*, to those of *Round-head* and *Cavalier*, the most obvious Difference, that appears betwixt them, consists in the Doctrines of *passive Obedience* and *indefeasible Right*, which were but little heard of among the

Cavaliers, but became the universal Doctrine, and was the true Characteristic, of a *Tory*. Were these Principles push'd into their most obvious Consequences, they imply a formal Renunciation of all our Liberties, and an Avowal of absolute Monarchy; since nothing can be a greater Absurdity than a limited Power, which must not be resisted, even when it exceeds its Limitations. But as the most rational Principles are often but a weak Counterpoise to Passion; 'tis no Wonder, that these absurd Principles, *sufficient*, according to a justly celebrated [\[2\]](#) Author, *to shock the common Sense of a HOTTENTOT or SAMOIEDE*, were found too weak for that Effect. The *Tories*, as Men, were Enemies to Oppression; and also, as *Englishmen*, they were Enemies to despotick Power. Their Zeal for Liberty, was, perhaps, less fervent than that of their Antagonists; but was sufficient to make them forget all their general Principles, when they saw themselves openly threaten'd with a Subversion of the antient Government. From these Sentiments arose the *Revolution*; an Event of mighty Consequence, and the firmest Foundation of *British* Liberty. The Conduct of the *Tories*, during that Event, and after it, will afford us a true Insight into the Nature of that Party.

IN the *first* Place, They appear to have had the Sentiments of true *Britons* in their Affection to Liberty, and their determin'd Resolution not to sacrifice it to any abstract Principles whatsoever, or to any imaginary Rights of Princes. This Part of their Character might justly have been doubted of before the *Revolution*, from the obvious Tendency of their avow'd Principles, and from their almost unbounded Compliances with a Court, that made little Secret of its arbitrary Designs. The *Revolution* show'd them to have been, in this Respect, nothing but a genuine *Court-Party*, such as might be expected in a *British* Government: That is, *Lovers of Liberty, but greater Lovers of Monarchy*. It must, however, be confest, that they carry'd their monarchical Principles further, even in Practice, but more so in Theory, than was, in any Degree, consistent with a limited Government.

Secondly. NEITHER their Principles nor Affections concurr'd with the Settlement made at the *Revolution*, or with that which has since

taken Place. This Part of their Character may seem contradictory to the former; since any other Settlement, in those Circumstances of the Nation, must have been dangerous, if not fatal to Liberty. But the Heart of Man is made to reconcile the most glaring Contradictions; and this Contradiction above-mention'd is not greater than that betwixt *Passive Obedience*, and the *Resistance* employ'd at the *Revolution*. A *Tory*, therefore, since the *Revolution*, may be defin'd in a few Words to be a *Lover of Monarchy, tho' without abandoning Liberty; and a Partizan of the Family of STUART*. As a *Whig* may be defin'd to be a *Lover of Liberty, tho' without renouncing Monarchy; and a Friend to the Settlement in the Protestant Line*.

THE celebrated Writer above cited, has asserted, that the REAL Distinction betwixt *Whig* and *Tory* was lost at the *Revolution*, and that ever since they have continued to be mere *personal* Parties, like the *Guelfs* and *Ghibbellines*, after the Emperors had lost all Authority in *Italy*. Such an Opinion, were it received, wou'd turn our whole History into an *Ænigma*; and is, indeed, so contrary to the strongest Evidence, that a Man must have a great Opinion of his own Eloquence to attempt the proving of it.

I SHALL first mention, as an irresistible Proof of a real Distinction betwixt these Parties, what every one may have observ'd or heard concerning the Conduct and Conversation of all his Friends and Acquaintance on both Sides. Have not the *Tories* always bore an avowed Affection to the Family of *Stuart*, and have not their Adversaries always opposed with Vigour the Succession of that Family?

THE *Tory* Principles are confessedly the most favourable to Monarchy. Yet the *Tories* have almost always opposed the Court these fifty Years; nor were they cordial Friends to King *William*, even when employ'd by him. Their Quarrel, therefore, cannot be supposed to have lain with the Throne, but with the Person, who sat on it.

THEY concurr'd heartily with the Court during the four last Years of Queen *Anne*. But is any one at a loss to find the Reason?

'TIS monstrous to see an establish'd Episcopal Clergy in declar'd Opposition to the Court, and a Nonconformist Presbyterian Clergy in Conjunction with it. What can produce such an unnatural Conduct in both? Nothing but that the former have espoused Monarchical Principles too high for the present Settlement, which is founded on Principles of Liberty: And the latter, being afraid of the Prevalence of those high Principles, adhere to that Party, from whom they have Reason to expect Liberty and Toleration.

THE different Conduct of the two Parties, with regard to foreign Politics, is also a Proof to the same Purpose. *Holland* has always been most favour'd by one, and *France* by the other. In short, the Proofs of this kind are so palpable and evident, that one is almost asham'd to collect them.

A Tory is a Lover of Monarchy, though without abandoning Liberty; and a Partizan of the Family of STUART. A Whig is a Lover of Liberty, though without renouncing Monarchy; and a Friend to the Settlement in the Protestant Line. These different Views, with regard to the Settlement of the Crown, are accidental, but natural Additions to the Principles of the *Court* and *Country* Parties, which are the genuine Parties of the *British* Government. A passionate Lover of Monarchy is apt to be displeased at any Change of this Succession; as savouring too much of a Commonwealth: A passionate Lover of Liberty is apt to think that every Part of the Government ought to be subordinate to the Interests of Liberty. 'Tis however remarkable, that though the Principles of *Whig* and *Tory* be both of them of a compound Nature; yet the Ingredients, which predominated in both, were not correspondent to each other. A *Tory* loved Monarchy, and bore an Affection to the Family of *Stuart*; but the latter Affection was the predominant Inclination of the Party. A *Whig* loved Liberty, and was a Friend to the Settlement in the *Potestant* Line; but the Love of Liberty was professedly his predominant Inclination. The *Tories* have frequently acted as Republicans, where either Policy or Revenge has engag'd them to that Conduct; and there was none of that Party, who, upon the Supposition, that they were to be disappointed in their Views with regard to the Succession, would not have desired to

impose the strictest Limitations on the Crown, and to bring our Form of Government as near Republican as possible, in order to depress the Family, that, according to their Apprehension, succeeded without any just Title. The *Whigs*, 'tis true, have also taken Steps dangerous to Liberty, under Pretext of securing the Succession and Settlement of the Crown, according to their Views: But as the Body of the Party had no Passion for that Succession, otherwise than as the Means of securing Liberty, they have been betray'd into these Steps by Ignorance or Frailty, or the Interest of their Leaders. The Succession of the Crown was, therefore, the chief Point with the *Tories*: The Security of our Liberties with the *Whigs*.

'Tis Difficult to penetrate into the Thoughts and Sentiments of any particular Man; but 'tis almost impossible to distinguish those of a whole Party, where it often happens, that no two Persons agree precisely in the same Way of thinking. Yet I will venture to affirm, that it was not so much PRINCIPLE, or an Opinion of indefeazible Right, that attach'd the *Tories* to the antient Royal Family, as AFFECTION, or a certain Love and Esteem for their Persons. The same Cause divided *England* formerly betwixt the Houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, and *Scotland*, betwixt the Families of *Bruce* and *Baliol*; in an Age, when political *Disputes* were but little in Fashion, and when political *Principles* must of Course have had but little Influence on Mankind. The Doctrine of passive Obedience is so absurd in itself, and so opposite to our Liberties, that it seems to have been chiefly left to Pulpit Declaimers, and to their deluded Followers among the Mob. Men of better Sense were guided by *Affection*; and as to the Leaders of this Party, it's probable, that *Interest* was their sole Motive, and that they acted more contrary to their private Sentiments, than the Leaders of the opposite Party.

SOME, who will not venture to assert, that the *real* Difference betwixt *Whig* and *Tory* was lost at the *Revolution*, seem inclin'd to think, that the Difference is now abolish'd, and that Affairs are so far return'd to their natural State, that there are at present no other Parties amongst us but *Court* and *Country*; that is, Men, who by Interest or Principle are attach'd either to Monarchy or to Liberty. It

must, indeed, be confest, that the *Tory* Party has, of late, decay'd much in their Numbers; still more in their Zeal; and I may venture to say, still more in their Credit and Authority. There is no Man of Knowledge or Learning, who wou'd not be asham'd to be thought of that Party; and in almost all Companies the Name of OLD WHIG is mention'd as an uncontestable Appellation of Honour and Dignity. Accordingly, the Enemies of the Ministry, as a Reproach, call the Courtiers, the true *Tories*; and as an Honour, denominate the Gentlemen in the *Opposition* the true *Whigs*. The *Tories* have been so long oblig'd to talk in the Republican Stile, that they seem to have made Converts of themselves by their Hypocrisy, and to have embrac'd the Sentiments, as well as Language of their Adversaries. There are, however, very considerable Remains of that Party in *England*, with all their old Prejudices; and a demonstrative Proof, that *Court* and *Country* are not our only Parties, is, that almost all the Dissenters side with the Court, and the lower Clergy, at least, of the Church of *England*, with the Opposition.

I SHALL conclude this Subject with observing, that we never had any *Tories* in *Scotland*, according to the proper Signification of the Word, and that the Division of Parties in this Country was really into *Whigs* and *Jacobites*. A *Jacobite* seems to be a *Tory*, who has no Regard to the Constitution, but is either a zealous Partizan of absolute Monarchy, or at least willing to sacrifice our Liberties to the obtaining the Succession in that Family, to which he is attach'd. The Reason of the Difference betwixt *England* and *Scotland* I take to be this. Our political and our religious Divisions in this Country, have been, since the *Revolution*, regularly correspondent to each other. The *Presbyterians* were all *Whigs* without Exception: The *Episcopalians*, of the opposite Party. And as the Clergy of the latter Sect were turn'd out of their Churches at the *Revolution*, they had no Motive to make any Compliances with the Government in their Oaths or Forms of Prayer, but openly avow'd the highest Principles of their Party; which is the Cause, why their Followers have been more bare-fac'd and violent than their Brethren of the *Tory* Party in *England*. As violent Things have not commonly so long a Duration as

moderate, we actually find, that the *Jacobite* Party is almost entirely vanish'd from among us, and that the Distinction of *Court* and *Country*, which is but creeping in at *London*, is the only one that is ever mention'd in this Kingdom. Beside the Violence and Openness of the *Jacobite* Party, another Reason has, perhaps, contributed to produce so sudden and so visible an Alteration in this Part of *Britain*. There are only two Ranks of Men among us; Gentlemen, who have some Fortune and Education, and the meanest slaving Poor; without any considerable Number of that middling Rank of Men, which abounds more in *England*, both in Cities and in the Country, than in any other Part of the World. The slaving Poor are incapable of any Principles: Gentlemen may be converted to true Principles, by Time and Experience: The middling Rank of Men have Curiosity and Knowledge enough to form Principles, but not enough to form true Ones, or correct any Prejudices that they may have imbib'd: And 'tis among the middling Rank of People, that *Tory* Principles do at present prevail most in *England*.

1. ↑ These Words have become of general Use, and therefore I shall employ them, without intending to express by them an universal Blame of the one Party, or Approbation of the other. The Court-Party may, no doubt, on some Occasions, consult best the Interest of the Country, and the Country-Party oppose it. In like Manner, the *Roman* Parties were denominated *Optimates* and *Populares*; and [Cicero](#), like a true Party-man, defines the *Optimates* to be such as, in all their publick Conduct, regulated themselves by the Sentiments of the best and worthiest of the *Romans*: *Pro Sextio*. The Term of *Country-Party* may afford a favourable Definition or Etymology of the same kind: But it would be Folly to draw any Argument from that Head, and I have no Regard to it in employing these Terms.
 2. ↑ Dissertation on Parties, *Letter 2d*.
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ESSAY XII

OF SUPERSTITION AND ENTHUSIASM

*That the Corruption of the best Things produces the worst, is grown into a Maxim, and is verify'd, among other Instances, by the pernicious Effects of *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*, the Corruptions of true Religion.*

THESE two Species of false Religion, tho' both pernicious, yet are of a very different, and even of a contrary Nature. The Mind of Man is subject to certain unaccountable Terrors and Apprehensions, proceeding either from the unhappy Situation of private or public Affairs, from ill Health, from a gloomy and melancholy Disposition, or from the Concurrence of all these Circumstances. In such a State of Mind, infinite unknown Evils are dreaded from unknown Agents; and where real Objects of Terror are wanting, the Soul, active to its own Prejudice, and fostering its predominant Inclination, finds imaginary Ones, to whose Power and Malevolence it sets no Limits. As these Enemies are invisible and unknown, the Methods taken to appease them are as unaccountable, and consist in Ceremonies, Observances, Mortifications, Sacrifices, Presents, or in any Practice, however absurd and frivolous, which either Folly or Knavery recommends to a blind and terrify'd Credulity. Weakness, Fear,

Melancholy, along with Ignorance, are, therefore, the true Sources of SUPERSTITION.

BUT the Mind of Man is also subject to an unaccountable Elevation and Presumption, proceeding from prosperous Success, from luxuriant Health, from strong Spirits, and from a bold and confident Disposition. In such a State of Mind, the Imagination swells with great, but confus'd Conceptions, to which no sublunary Beauties or Enjoyments can correspond. Every Thing mortal and perishable vanishes as unworthy of Attention. And a full Range is given to the Fancy in the invisible Regions or World of Spirits, where the Soul is at Liberty to indulge itself in every Imagination, that may best suit its present Taste and Disposition. Hence arise Raptures, Transports, and surprizing Flights of Fancy; and Confidence and Presumption still increasing, these Raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the Reach of our ordinary Faculties, are attributed to the immediate Inspiration of that Divine Being, who is the Object of Devotion. In a little Time, the inspir'd Person comes to regard himself as the chief Favourite of the Divinity; and when this Frenzy once takes Place, which is the Summit of Enthusiasm, every Whimsy is consecrated: Human Reason, and even Morality are rejected as fallacious Guides: And the fanatic Madman delivers himself over, blindly and without Reserve, to the suppos'd Illapses of the Spirit, and to Inspirations from above. Hope, Pride, Presumption, warm Imagination along with Ignorance, are, therefore, the true Sources of ENTHUSIASM.

THESE two Species of false Religion might afford Occasion to many Speculations; but I shall confine my self at present to a few Reflections concerning their different Influence on Government and Society.

MY first Reflection is, that Religions, which partake of Enthusiasm are, on their first Rise, much more furious and violent than these which partake of Superstition; but in a little Time become much more gentle and moderate. The violence of this Species of Religion, when excited by Novelty, and animated by Opposition, appears from

numberless Instances; of the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, the *Camisars* in *France*, the *Levellers* and other Fanatics in *England*, and the *Covenanters* in *Scotland*. As Enthusiasm is founded on strong Spirits, and a presumptuous Boldness of Character, it naturally begets the most extreme Resolutions; especially after it rises to that Height as to inspire the deluded Fanatics with the Opinion of Divine Illuminations, and with a Contempt of the common Rules of Reason, Morality and Prudence.

'Tis thus Enthusiasm produces the most cruel Desolation in human Society: But its Fury is like that of Thunder and Tempest, which exhaust themselves in a little Time, and leave the Air more calm and serene than before. The Reason of this will appear evidently by comparing Enthusiasm to Superstition, the other Species of false Religion; and tracing the natural Consequences of each. As Superstition is founded on Fear, Sorrow, and a Depression of Spirits, it represents the Person to himself in such despicable Colours, that he appears unworthy in his own Eyes of approaching the Divine Presence, and naturally has Recourse to any other Person, whose Sanctity of Life, or, perhaps, Impudence and Cunning, have made him be supposed to be more favoured by the Divinity. To him they entrust their Devotions: To his Care they recommend their Prayers, Petitions, and Sacrifices: And by his Means hope to render their Addresses acceptable to their incensed Deity. Hence the Origin of [\[1\]](#)PRIESTS, who may justly be regarded as proceeding from one of the grossest Inventions of a timorous and abject Superstition, which, ever diffident of itself, dares not offer up its own Devotions, but ignorantly thinks to recommend itself to the Divinity by the Mediation of his supposed Friends and Servants. As Superstition is a considerable Ingredient of almost all Religions, even the most fanatical; there being nothing but Philosophy able to conquer entirely these unaccountable Terrors; hence it proceeds, that in almost every Sect of Religion there are Priests to be found: But the stronger Mixture there is of Superstition, the higher is the Authority of the Priesthood. Modern Judaism and Popery, especially the latter, being the most barbarous and absurd Superstitions, that have yet

been known in the World, are the most enslav'd by their Priests. As the Church of *England* has a strong Mixture of Popish Superstition, it partakes also, in its original Constitution, of a Propensity to Priestly Power and Dominion; particularly in the Respect it exacts to the Priest. And tho', according to the Sentiments of that Church, the Prayers of the Priest must be accompanied with those of the Laity; yet is he the Mouth of the Congregation, his Person is sacred, and without his Presence few wou'd think their public Devotions, or the Sacraments and other Rites, acceptable to the Divinity.

ON the other hand, it may be observed, that all Enthusiasts have been free from the Yoke of Ecclesiastics, and have exprest a great Independence in their Devotion; with a Contempt of Forms, Traditions and Authorities. The *Quakers* are the most egregious, tho' at the same Time the most innocent, Enthusiasts that have been yet known; and are, perhaps, the only Sect, that have never admitted Priests amongst them: The *Independents*, of all the *English* Sectaries, approach nearest to the *Quakers* in Fanaticism, and in their Freedom from Priestly Bondage. The *Presbyterians* follow after, at an equal Distance in both these Particulars. In short, this Observation is founded on the most certain Experience; and will also appear to be founded on Reason, if we consider that as Enthusiasm arises from a presumptuous Pride and Confidence, it thinks itself sufficiently qualified to *approach* the Divinity, without any human Mediator. Its rapturous Devotions are so servent, that it even imagines itself *actually* to *approach* him, by the Way of Contemplation and inward Converse; which makes it neglect all those outward Ceremonies and Observances, to which the Assistance of the Priest appears so requisite in the Eyes of their superstitious Votaries. The Fanatic consecrates himself, and bestows on his own Person a sacred Character, much superior to what Forms and Ceremonious Institiions can confer on any other.

'Tis therefore an infallible Rule, that Superstition is favourable to Priestly Power, and Enthusiasm as much, or rather more, contrary to it than sound Reason and Philosophy. The Consequences are evident. When the first Fire of Enthusiasm is spent, Men naturally, in

such fanatical Sects, sink into the greatest Remissness and Coolness in Sacred Matters; there being no Body of Men amongst them, endow'd with sufficient Authority, whose Interest is concern'd to support the religious Spirit. Superstition, on the contrary, steals in gradually and insensibly; renders Men tame and submissive; is acceptable to the Magistrate, and seems inoffensive to the People: Till at last the Priest, having firmly establish'd his Authority, becomes the Tyrant and Disturber of human Society, by his endless Contentions, Persecutions, and religious Wars. How smoothly did the *Romish* Church advance in their Acquisition of Power? But into what dismal Convulsions did they throw all *Europe*, in order to maintain it? On the other Hand, our Sectaries, who were formerly such dangerous Bigots, are now become our greatest Free-thinkers; and the *Quakers* are, perhaps, the only regular Body of *Deists* in the Universe, except the *Literati* or Disciples of *Confucius* in *China*.

My second Observation, with regard to these Species of false Religion, is, That Superstition is an Enemy to Civil Liberty, and Enthusiasm a Friend to it. As Superstition groans under the Dominion of the Priests, and Enthusiasm is an Enemy to all Ecclesiastical Power, this sufficiently accounts for the present Observation. Not to mention, that Enthusiasm, being the Infirmary of bold and ambitious Tempers, is naturally accompanied with a Spirit of Liberty; as Superstition, on the contrary, renders Men tame and abject, and fits them for Slavery. We learn from the *English* History, that, during the Civil Wars, the *Independents* and *Deists*, tho' the most opposite in their religious Principles; yet were united in their political Ones, and were alike passionate for a Commonwealth. And since the Origin of *Whig* and *Tory*, the Leaders of the *Whigs* have either been *Deists* or profest *Latudinarious* in their Principles; that is, Friends to Toleration, and indifferent to any particular Sect of *Christians*: While the Sectaries, who have all a strong Tincture of Enthusiasm, have always, without Exception, concurr'd with that Party, in the Defence of Civil Liberty. The Resemblance in their Superstitions long united the High-Church *Tories* and the *Roman Catholics*, in the Support of Prerogative and Kingly Power; tho'

Experience of the tolerating Spirit of the *Whigs* seems of late to have reconcil'd the *Catholics* to that Party.

THE *Molinists* and *Jansenists* in *France* have a Thousand unintelligible Disputes, which are not worthy the Attention of a Man of Sense: But what principally distinguishes these two Sects, and alone merits our Attention, is the different Spirit of their Religion. The *Molinists*, conducted by the *Jesuites*, are great Friends to Superstition, rigid Observers of external Forms and Ceremonies, and devoted to the Authority of the Priests, and to Tradition. The *Jansenists* are Enthusiasts, and zealous Promoters of the passionate Devotion, and of the inward Life; little influenc'd by Authority; and in a Word, but Half Catholics. The Consequences are exactly conformable to the foregoing Reasoning. The *Jesuites* are the Tyrants and the Slaves of the Court: And the *Jansenists* preserve alive the small Sparks of the Love of Liberty, which are to be found in the *French* Nation.

1. ↑ By *Priests*, I understand only the Pretenders to Power and Dominion, and to a superior Sanctity of Character, distinct from Virtue and good Morals. These are very different from *Clergymen*, who are set apart to the Care of sacred Matters, and the Conducting our public Devotions with greater Decency and Order. There is no Rank of Men more to be respected than the latter.
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ESSAY XIII

OF AVARICE

'Tis easy to observe, That Comic Writers exaggerate every Character, and draw their Fop or Coward, with stronger Features than are any where to be met with in Nature. This moral kind of Painting for the Stage has been often compar'd to the Painting for Cupolas and Ceilings, where the Colours are overcharg'd, and every Part is drawn excessively large, and beyond Nature. The Figures seem monstrous and disproportion'd, when seen too nigh; but become natural and regular, when set at a Distance, and placed in that Point of View, in which they are intended to be survey'd. After the same manner, when Characters are exhibited in theatrical Representations, the Want of Reality sets the Personages at a Distance from us; and rendering them more cold and unentertaining, makes it necessary to compensate, by the Force of Colouring, what they want in Substance. Thus, we find in common Life, That when a Man once allows himself to depart from Truth in his Narrations, he never can keep within the Bounds of Probability; but adds still some new Circumstance to render his Stories more marvellous, and satisfy his Imagination. Two Men in Buckram Suits became eleven to Sir *John Falstaff* before the End of his Story.

THERE is only one Vice, which may be found in Life with as strong Features, and as high a Colouring, as need be employ'd by any Satyrist or Comic Poet; and that is AVARICE. Every Day we meet with Men of immense Fortunes, without Heirs, and on the very Brink of the Grave, who refuse themselves the most common Necessaries of Life, and go on heaping Possessions on Possessions, under all the real Pressures of the severest Poverty. An old Usurer, says the Story, lying in his last Agonies, was presented by the Priest with the Crucifix to worship. He opens his Eyes a Moment before he expires, considers the Crucifix, and cries, *These Jewels are not true; I can only lend ten Pistoles upon such a Pledge*. This was probably the Invention of some Epigrammatist; and yet every one, from his own Experience, may be able to recollect almost as strong Instances of Perseverance in Avarice. 'Tis commonly reported of a famous Miser in this City, that finding himself near Death, he sent for some of the Magistrates, and gave them a Bill of an hundred Pounds, payable after his Decease; which Sum he intended should be disposed of in charitable Uses; but scarce were they gone, when he orders them to be called back, and offers them ready Money, if they would abate five Pounds of the Sum. Another noted Miser in the North, intending to defraud his Heirs, and leave his Fortune to the Building an Hospital, protracted the drawing of his Will from Day to Day; and 'tis thought, that if those interested in it had not paid for the Drawing of it, he would have died intestate. In short, none of the most furious Excesses of Love and Ambition are in any respect to be compared to the Extremes of Avarice.

THE best Excuse that can be made for Avarice is, That it generally prevails in old Men, or in Men of cold Tempers, where all the other Affections are extinct; and the Mind being incapable of remaining without some Passion or Pursuit, at last finds out this monstrous unreasonable one, which suits the Coldness and Inactivity of its Temper. At the same Time, it seems very extraordinary, that so frosty spiritless a Passion shou'd be able to carry us farther than all the Warmth of Youth and Pleasure. But if we look more narrowly into the Matter, we shall find, that this very Circumstance renders the

Explication of the Case more easy. When the Temper is warm, and full of Vigour, it naturally shoots out more Ways than one, and produces inferior Passions to counter-balance, in some Degree, its predominant Inclination. 'Tis impossible for a Person of that Temper, however bent on any Pursuit, to be depriv'd of all Sense of Shame, or Regard to the Sentiments of Mankind. His Friends must have some Influence over him: And other Considerations are apt to have their Weight. All this serves to restrain him within some Bounds. But 'tis no Wonder the avaritious Man being, from the Coldness of his Temper, without regard to Reputation, to Friendship, or to Pleasure, shou'd be carried so far by his prevailing Inclination, and shou'd display his Passion in such surprizing Instances.

ACCORDINGLY we find no Vice so irreclaimable as Avarice: And tho' there scarcely has been a Moralist or Philosopher, from the Beginning of the World to this Day, who has not levell'd a Stroke at it, we hardly find a single Instance of any Person's being cur'd of it. For this Reason, I am more apt to approve of those, who attack it with Wit and Humour, than of those who treat it in a serious Manner. There being so little Hopes of doing Good to the People infected with this Vice, I would have the rest of Mankind, at least, diverted by our Manner of exposing it: As indeed there is no Kind of Diversion, of which they seem so willing to partake.

AMONG the Fables of [*Monsieur de la Motte*](#), there is one levell'd against Avarice, which seems to me more natural and easy, than most of the Fables of that ingenious Author. A Miser, says he, being dead, and fairly interred, came to the Banks of the *Styx*, desiring to be ferry'd over along with the other Ghosts. *Charon* demands his Fare, and is surpriz'd to see the Miser, rather than pay it, throw himself into the River, and swim over to the other Side, notwithstanding all the Clamour and Opposition that cou'd be made to him. All Hell was in an Uproar; and each of the Judges was meditating some Punishment, suitable to a Crime of such dangerous Consequence to the infernal Revenues. Shall he be chain'd to the Rock along with *Prometheus*? Or tremble below the Precipice in Company with the *Danaïdes*? Or assist *Sisyphus* in rolling his Stone?

No, says *Minos*, None of these. We must invent some severer Punishment. Let him be sent back to the Earth, to see the Use his Heirs are making of his Riches.

I HOPE it will not be interpreted as a Design of setting myself in Opposition to this famous Author, if I proceed to deliver a Fable of my own, which is intended to expose the same Vice of Avarice. The Hint of it was taken from these Lines of [Mr. Pope](#),

[*Damn'd to the Mines, an equal Fate betides*](#) *The Slave that digs it, and the Slave that hides.*

OUR old Mother EARTH once laid an Indictment against AVARICE before the Courts of Heaven, for her wicked and malicious Counsel and Advice, in tempting, inducing, perswading, and traiterously seducing the Children of the Plaintiff to commit the detestable Crime of Parricide upon her, and mangling her Body, in ransacking her very Bowels for hidden Treasure. The Indictment was very long and verbose; but we must omit a great Part of the Repetitions and Synonymous Terms. Not to tire our Reader too much with our Tale; *Avarice*, being call'd before *Jupiter*, to answer to this Charge, had not much to say in her own Defence. The Injury was clearly prov'd upon her. The Fact, indeed, was notorious, and the Injury had been frequently repeated. When therefore the Plaintiff demanded Justice, *Jupiter* very readily gave Sentence in her Favour; and his Decree was to this Purpose, That since Dame *Avarice*, the Defendant, had thus grievously injur'd Dame *Earth*, the Plaintiff, she was hereby order'd to take that Treasure, of which she had feloniously robb'd the said Plaintiff, by ransacking her Bosom, and in the same Manner, as before, opening her Bosom, restore it back to her, without Diminution or Retention. From this Sentence, it shall follow, says *Jupiter* to the By-standers, That in all future Ages, the Retainers of *Avarice* shall bury and conceal their Riches, and thereby restore to the *Earth* what they took from her.

ESSAY XIV

OF THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE

There are certain Sects, which secretly form themselves in the learned World, as well as in the political; and tho' sometimes they come not to an open Rupture, yet they give a different Turn to the Ways of thinking of those who have taken Party on either Side. The most remarkable of this Kind are the Sects, that are founded on the different Sentiments, with regard to the *Dignity of human Nature*; which is a Point, that seems to have divided Philosophers and Poets, as well as Divines, from the Beginning of the World to this Day. Some exalt our Species to the Skies, and represent Man as a Kind of human Demi-God, that derives his Origin from Heaven, and retains evident Marks of his Lineage and Descent. Others insist upon the blind Sides of human Nature, and can discover nothing, except Vanity, in which Man surpasses the other Animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an Author possesses the Talent of Rhetoric, and Declamation, he commonly takes Party with the former: If his Turn lies towards Irony and Ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other Extreme.

I AM far from thinking, that all those, who have depreciated Human Nature, have been Enemies to Virtue, and have exposed the Frailties of their Fellow-Creatures with any bad Intention. On the contrary, I

am sensible, that a very delicate Sense of Virtue, especially when attended with somewhat of the *Misanthrope*, is apt to give a Man a Disgust of the World, and to make him consider the common Course of Human Affairs with too much Spleen and Indignation. I must, however, be of Opinion, that the Sentiments of those, who are inclined to think favourably of Mankind, are much more advantageous to Virtue, than the contrary Principles, which give us a mean Opinion of our Nature. When a Man is possess'd of a high Notion of his Rank and Character in the Creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious Action, which might sink him below that Figure, which he makes in his own Imagination. Accordingly we find, That all our polite and fashionable Moralists insist upon this Topic, and endeavour to represent Vice as unworthy of Man, as well as odious in itself.

WOMEN are generally much more flatter'd in their Youth than Men; which may proceed from this Reason, among others, that their chief Point of Honour is consider'd as much more difficult than ours, and requires to be supported by all that decent Pride, which can be instill'd into them.

WE find very few Disputes, that are not founded on some Ambiguity in the Expression; and I am perswaded, that the present Dispute concerning the Dignity of Human Nature is not more exempt from it than any other. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider, what is real, and what is only verbal, in this Controversy.

THAT there is a natural Difference betwixt Merit and Demerit, Virtue and Vice, Wisdom and Folly, no reasonable Man will deny: But yet 'tis evident, that in affirming the Term, which denotes either our Approbation or Blame, we are commonly more influenced by Comparison than by any fixt unalterable Standard in the Nature of Things. In like manner, Quantity, and Extension, and Bulk, are by every one acknowledg'd to be real Things: But when we call any Animal *great* or *little*, we always form a secret Comparison betwixt that Animal and others of the same Species; and 'tis that Comparison which regulates our Judgment concerning its Greatness.

A Dog and a Horse may be of the very same Size, while the one is admir'd for the Greatness of its Bulk, and the other for the Smallness. When I am present, therefore, at any Dispute, I always consider with myself, whether or not it be a Question merely of Comparison, that is the Subject of the Dispute; and if it be, whether the Disputants compare the same Objects together, or talk of Things, that are widely different. As this is commonly the Case, I have long since learnt to neglect such Disputes as manifest Abuses of Leisure, the most valuable Present that cou'd be made to Mortals.

IN forming our Notions of Human Nature, we are very apt to make a Comparison betwixt Men and Animals, which are the only Creatures endowed with Thought that fall under our Senses. Certainly this Comparison is very favourable to Mankind. On the one hand we see a Creature, whose Thoughts are not limited by any narrow Bounds either of Place or Time; who carries his Researches into the most distant Regions of this Globe, and beyond this Globe, to the Planets and Heavenly Bodies; looks backward to consider the first Origin of Human Race; casts his Eyes forward to see the Influence of his Actions upon Posterity, and the Judgments, that will be form'd of his Character a thousand Years hence. A Creature, that traces Causes and Effects to a great Length and Intricacy; extracts general Principles from particular Appearances; improves upon his Discoveries; corrects his Mistakes; and makes his very Errors profitable. On the other hand, we are presented with a Creature the very reverse of this; limited in its Observations and Reasonings to a few sensible Objects that surround it; without Curiosity, without Foresight; blindly conducted by Instinct, and arriving in a very short Time at its utmost Perfection, beyond which it is never able to advance a single Step. What a wide Difference is there betwixt these Creatures! And how exalted a Notion must we entertain of the former, in Comparison of the latter!

THERE are two Means commonly employ'd to destroy this Conclusion: *First*, By making an unfair Representation of the Case, and insisting only upon the Weaknesses of Human Nature. And *secondly*, By forming a new and secret Comparison betwixt Man and

Beings of the most perfect Wisdom. Among the other Excellencies of Man, there is this remarkable, that he can form a Notion of Perfections much beyond what he has Experience of in himself; and is not limited in his Conception of Wisdom and Virtue. He can easily exalt his Notions, and conceive a Degree of Wisdom, which, when compar'd to his own, will make the latter appear very contemptible, and will cause the Difference betwixt that and the Sagacity of Animals, in a manner, to disappear and vanish. Now this being a Point, in which all the World is agreed, that Human Understanding falls infinitely short of perfect Wisdom, 'tis proper we should know when this Comparison takes Place, that we may not dispute where there is no real Difference in our Sentiments. Man falls much more short of perfect Wisdom, and even of his own Ideas of perfect Wisdom, than Animals do of Man; but yet the latter Difference is so considerable, that nothing but a Comparison with the former, can make it appear of little Moment.

'Tis also very usual to *compare* one Man with another; and finding very few, that we can call *wise* or *virtuous*, we are apt to entertain a contemptible Notion of our Species in general. That we may be sensible of the Fallacy of this Way of Reasoning, we may observe, that the Honourable Appellations of wise and virtuous, are not annex'd to any particular Degree of those Qualities of *Wisdom* and *Virtue*; but arise altogether from the Comparison we make betwixt one Man and another. When we find a Man, who arrives at such a Pitch of Wisdom as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise Man: So that to say, there are few wise Men in the World, is really to say nothing; since 'tis only by their Scarcity that they merit that Appellation. Were the lowest of our Species as wise as [Tully](#), or my [Lord Bacon](#), we should still have Reason to say, that there are few wise Men. For in that Case we should exalt our Notions of Wisdom, and wou'd not pay a singular Honour to any one, that was not singularly distinguish'd by his Talents. In like Manner, I have heard it observ'd by thoughtless People, that there are few Women possest of Beauty, in Comparison of those who want it; not considering, that we bestow the Epithet of *Beautiful* only on such as possess a Degree

of Beauty, that is common to them with a few. The same Degree of Beauty in a Woman is call'd Deformity, which is treated as real Beauty in one of our Sex.

As 'tis usual, in forming a Notion of our Species, to *compare* it with the other Species above or below it, or to compare the Individuals of the Species among themselves; so we often compare together the different Motives or actuating Principles of Human Nature, in order to regulate our Judgment concerning it. And indeed, this is the only Kind of Comparison, that is worth our Attention, or decides any Thing in the present Question. Were the selfish and vicious Principles of Human Nature so much predominant above the Social and Virtuous, as is asserted by some Philosophers, we ought undoubtedly to entertain a contemptible Notion of Human Nature. I may, perhaps, treat more fully of this Subject in some future Speculation. In the mean Time, I shall observe, what has been prov'd beyond Question by several great Moralists of the present Age, that the social Passions are by far the most powerful of any, and that even all the other Passions receive their Force and Influence from them. Whoever desires to see this Question treated at large, with the greatest Force of Argument and Eloquence, may consult my Lord *Shaftsbury's* Enquiry concerning Virtue.

IN my Opinion, there are two Things, which have led astray those Philosophers, that have insisted so much on the Selfishness of Man. In the *First* Place, they found, that every Act of Virtue or Friendship was attended with a secret Pleasure: From whence they concluded, that Friendship and Virtue could not be disinterested. But the Fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous Sentiment or Passion produces the Pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a Pleasure in doing good to my Friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that Pleasure.

IN the *second* Place, it has always been found, that virtuous Men are far from being indifferent to Praise; and therefore they have been represented as a Set of vain-glorious Men, that had nothing in View but the Applauses of others. But this also is a Fallacy. 'Tis very

unjust in the World, when they find any Tincture of Vanity in a laudable Action, to depreciate it upon that Account, or ascribe it entirely to that Motive. The Case is not the same with Vanity, as with other Passions. Where Avarice or Revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous Action, 'tis difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and 'tis natural to suppose it the sole actuating Principle. But Vanity is so nearly ally'd to Virtue, and to love the Fame of virtuous Actions approaches so near the Love of virtuous Actions for their own sake, that these Passions are more capable of Mixture, than any other kinds of Passion; and 'tis almost impossible to have the latter without some Degree of the former. Accordingly we find, that this Passion for Glory is always warp'd and varied according to the particular Taste or Sentiment of the Mind on which it falls. *Nero* had the same Vanity in driving a Chariot, that *Trajan* had in governing the Empire with Justice and Ability. To love the Glory of virtuous Actions is a sure Proof of the Love of virtuous Actions.

ESSAY XV

OF LIBERTY AND DESPOTISM

Those who employ their Pens on political Subjects, free from Party-Rage, and Party-Prejudices, cultivate a Science, which, of all others, contributes most both to public Utility, and to the private Satisfaction of those who addict themselves to the Study of it. I am apt, however, to entertain a Suspicion, that the World is still too young to fix any general stable Truths in Politics, which will remain true to the latest Posterity. We have not as yet had Experience of above three thousand Years; so that not only the Art of Reasoning is still defective in this Science, as well as in all others, but we even want sufficient Materials, upon which we can reason. 'Tis not sufficiently known, what Degrees of Refinement, either in Virtue or Vice, human Nature is susceptible of; nor what may be expected of Mankind from any great Revolution in their Education, Customs, or Principles. [Machiavel](#) was certainly a great Genius; but having confin'd his Study to the furious Tyranny of *antient* Sovereigns, or the little disorderly Principalities of *Italy*, his Reasonings, especially upon Monarchical Government, have been found extremely defective; and there scarce is any Maxim in his [Prince](#), which subsequent Experience has not entirely refuted. *A weak Sovereign, says he, is incapable of receiving good Counsel; for if he consult with*

several, he will not be able to choose among their different Counsels. If he abandon himself to one, that Minister may, perhaps, have Capacity; but he will not be long a Minister: He will be sure to dispossess his Master, and place himself and his own Family upon the Throne. I mention this, among innumerable Instances, of the Errors of that Politician, proceeding from his having liv'd in too early an Age of the World, to be a good Judge of political Truth. Almost all the Princes of *Europe* are at present governed by their Ministers, and have been so for near two Centuries; and yet no such Event has ever happen'd, or can possibly happen. *Sejanus* might project the dethroning the *Cæsars*; but *Fleury*, though ever so vicious, could not, while in his Senses, entertain the least Hopes of dispossessing the *Bourbons*.

TRADE was never esteem'd an Affair of State, 'till within this last Century; nor is there any antient Writer on Politics, who has made mention of it. Even the *Italians* have kept a profound Silence with regard to it; though it has now excited the chief Attention, as well of Ministers of State, as of speculative Reasoners. The great Opulence, Grandeur, and military Archievements of the two Maritime Powers, seem first to have instructed Mankind in the vast Importance of an extensive Commerce.

HAVING, therefore, intended in this Essay to have made a full Comparison of Liberty and Despotism, and have shown the Advantages and Disadvantages of each, I began to entertain a Suspicion, that no Man in this Age was sufficiently qualified for such an Undertaking, and that whatever he should advance on that Head would, in all Probability, be refuted by further Experience, and be rejected by Posterity. Such mighty Revolutions have happened in human Affairs, and so many Events have arisen contrary to the Expectation of the antients, as are sufficient to beget the Suspicion of still farther Changes.

IT had been observ'd by the Antients, that all the Arts and Sciences arose among free Nations, and that the *Persians* and *Egyptians*, notwithstanding all their Ease, Opulence and Luxury,

made but faint Efforts towards a Relish in those finer Pleasures, which were carried to such Perfection by the *Greeks*, amidst continual Wars, attended with Poverty, and the greatest Simplicity of Life and Manners. It had also been observ'd, that as soon as the *Greeks* lost their Liberty, tho' they encreased mightily in Riches, by Means of the Conquests of *Alexander*, yet the Arts, from that Moment, declin'd among them, and have never since been able to raise their Head in that Climate. Learning was transplanted to *Rome*, the only free Nation at that Time in the Universe; and having met with so favourable a Soil, it made prodigious Shoots for above a Century; till the Decay of Liberty produced also the Decay of Letters, and spread a total Barbarity over the World. From these two Experiments, of which each was double in its Kind, and show'd the Fall of Learning in Despotic Governments, as well as its Rise in popular Ones, [Longinus](#) thought himself sufficiently justified, in asserting, That the Arts and Sciences could never flourish, but in a free Government: And in this Opinion, he has been followed by several eminent Writers^[1] in our own Country, who either confin'd their View merely to antient Facts, or entertain'd too great a Partiality in Favour of that Form of Government, which is establish'd amongst us.

BUT what would these Writers have said, to the Instance of modern *Rome* and *Florence*; of which the former carried to Perfection all the finer Arts of Sculpture, Painting and Music, as well as Poetry, tho' they groah'd under Slavery, and under the Slavery of Priests: While the latter never made any Efforts towards the Arts and Sciences, till they began to lose their Liberty by the Usurpations of the Family of the *Medicis*? [Ariosto](#), [Tasso](#), [Galilæo](#), no more than *Raphael*, or *Michael Angelo*, were not born in Republics. And tho' the *Lombard* School was famous as well as the *Roman*, yet the *Venetians* have had the smallest Share in its Honours, and seem rather inferior to the other *Italians*, in their Genius for the Sciences. *Rubens* establish'd his School at *Antwerp*, not at *Amsterdam*. *Dresden*, not *Hamburg*, is the Centre of Politeness in *Germany*.

BUT the most eminent Instance of the flourishing of Learning in despotic Governments, is that of FRANCE, which never enjoy'd any Shadow of Liberty, and yet has carried the Arts and Sciences nearer Perfection than any other Nation of the Universe. The *English* are, perhaps, better Philosophers; the *Italians* better Painters and Musicians; the *Romans* were better Orators: But the *French* are the only People, except the *Greeks*, who have been at once Philosophers, Poets, Orators, Historians, Painters, Architects, Sculptors and Musicians. With regard to the Stage, they have far excell'd the *Greeks*: And in common Life, have, in a great Measure, perfected that Art, the most useful and agreeable of any, *l'Art de Vivre*, the Art of Society and Conversation.

IF we consider the State of the Sciences and polite Arts in our own Country, [Horace's](#) Observation, with regard to the *Romans*, may, in a great Measure, be applied to the *British*.

——*Sed in longum tamen ævum Manserunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.*

THE Elegance and Propriety of Stile have been very much neglected among us. We have no Dictionary of our Language, and scarce a tolerable Grammar. The first polite Prose we have, was wrote by a Man^[2] who is still alive. As to [Sprat](#), [Temple](#) and [Locke](#), they knew too little of the Rules of Art to be esteem'd elegant Writers. The Prose of [Bacon](#), [Harrington](#) and [Milton](#), is altogether stiff and pedantic; tho' their Sense be excellent. Men, in this Country, have been so much occupied in the Grand Disputes of *Religion*, *Politics* and *Philosophy*, that they had no Relish for the minute Observations of Grammar and Criticism. And tho' this Turn of Thinking must have considerably improv'd our Sense and Talent of Reasoning beyond that of other Nations; yet it must be confest, that even in these Sciences, we have not any Standard-Book, which we can transmit to Posterity: And the utmost we have to boast of, are a few faint Efforts towards a more just Philosophy; which, indeed, promise very much, but have not, as yet, reach'd any Degree of Perfection.

IT has become an establish'd Opinion, That Commerce can never flourish but in a free Government; and this Opinion seems to have been founded on a longer and larger Experience than the foregoing, with Regard to the Arts and Sciences. If we trace Commerce in its Progress thro' *Tyre, Athens, Syracuse, Carthage, Venice, Florence, Genoa, Antwerp, Holland, England, &c.* we shall always find it to have fixt its Seat in free Governments. The three greatest trading Towns now in the World, are *London, Amsterdam, and Hamburgh*; all free Cities, and Protestant Cities; that is, enjoying a double Liberty. It must, however, be observ'd, that the great Jealousy entertain'd of late, with regard to the Commerce of *France*, seems to prove, that this Maxim is no more certain and infallible, than the foregoing, and that the Subjects of absolute Princes may become our Rivals in Commerce, as well as in Learning.

DURST I deliver my Opinion in an Affair of so much Uncertainty, I would assert, That, notwithstanding the Efforts of the *French*, there is something pernicious to Commerce inherent in the very Nature of absolute Government, and inseparable from it: Tho' the Reason I would assign for this Opinion, is somewhat different from that which is commonly insisted on. Private Property seems to me fully as secure in a civiliz'd *Europæan* Monarchy, as in a Republic; nor is any Danger ever apprehended, in such a Government, from the Violence of the Sovereign; no more than we commonly apprehend Danger from Thunder, or Earthquakes, or any Accident the most unusual and extraordinary. Avarice, the Spur of Industry, is so obstinate a Passion, and works its Way thro' so many real Dangers and Difficulties, that 'tis not likely it will be scarr'd by an imaginary Danger, which is so small, that it scarce admits of Calculation. Commerce, therefore, in my Opinion, is apt to decay in absolute Governments, not because it is there less *secure*, but because it is less *honourable*. A Subordination of Ranks is absolutely necessary to the Support of Monarchy. Birth, Titles, and Place, must be honour'd above Industry and Riches. And while these Notions prevail, all the considerable Traders will be tempted to throw up their Commerce, in

order to purchase some of these Employments, to which Privileges and Honours are annex'd.

SINCE I am upon this Head of the Alterations that Time has produc'd, or may produce in Politics, I must observe, That all Kinds of Government, free and despotic, seem to have undergone, in modern Times, a great Change to the better, with regard both to foreign and domestic Management. The *Balance of Power* is a Secret in Politics known only to the present Age; and I must add, That the internal POLICE of the State has also receiv'd great Improvements within this last Century. We are inform'd by [Sallust](#), That *Cataline's* Army was much augmented by the Accession of the Highway-men about *Rome*; tho' I believe, that all of that Profession, who are at present dispers'd over *Europe*, would not amount to a Regiment. In [Cicero's](#) Pleadings for *Milo*, I find this Argument, among others, made Use of to prove, that his Client had not assassinated *Clodius*. Had *Milo*, says he, intended to have kill'd *Clodius*, he had not attack'd him in the Day-time, and at such a Distance from the City: He had Way-laid him at Night, near the Suburbs, where it might have been pretended, that he was kill'd by Robbers; and the Frequency of the Accident would have favour'd the Deceit. This is a surprizing Proof of the loose Police of *Rome*, and of the Number and Force of these Robbers; since *Clodius*, as we learn from the same Oration, was at that Time attended with Sixty Slaves, who were compleatly arm'd, and, by the *Roman* Laws, answerable, upon their own Lives, for the Life of their Master.

BUT tho' all Kinds of Government be much improv'd in modern Times, yet Monarchical Government seems to have receiv'd the most considerable Improvements. It may now be affirm'd of civiliz'd Monarchies, what was formerly said in Praise of Republics alone, *that they are a Government of Laws, not of Men*. They are found susceptible of Order, Method, and Constancy, to a surprizing Degree. Property is secure; Industry encourag'd; the Arts flourish; and the Prince lives secure among his Subjects, like a Father among his Children. It must, however, be confest, that tho' Monarchical Governments have approach'd nearer to popular Ones, in Gentleness

and Stability; yet they are still much inferior. Our modern Education and Customs instil more Humanity and Moderation than the antient; but have not as yet been able to overcome entirely the Disadvantages of that Form of Government.

BUT here I must beg leave to advance a Conjecture, which seems to me very probable, but which Posterity alone can fully judge of. I am apt to think, that in Monarchical Governments there is a Source of Improvement, and in Popular Governments a Source of Degeneracy, which in Time will bring these Species of Government still nearer an Equality. The greatest Abuses, which arise in *France*, the most perfect Model of pure Monarchy, proceed not from the Number or Weight of the Taxes, beyond what are to be met with in free Countries; but from the Expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate Method of levying them, by which the Industry of the Poor, especially of the Peasants and Farmers, is, in a great Measure, discourag'd, and Agriculture render'd a beggarly and a slavish Employment. But to whose Advantage do these Abuses serve? If to that of the Nobility, they might be esteem'd inherent in that Form of Government; since the Nobility are the true Supports of Monarchy; and 'tis natural their Interest should be more consulted, in such a Constitution, than that of the People. But the Nobility are, in reality, the principal Losers by this Oppression; since it ruins their Estates, and beggars their Tenants. The only Gainers by it are the *Finançiers*, a Race of Men despised and hated by the Nobility and the whole Kingdom. If a Prince or Minister, therefore, should arise, endow'd with sufficient Discernment to know his own and the public Interest, and of sufficient Force of Mind to break thro' antient Customs, we may expect to see these Abuses remedied; in which Case, the Difference betwixt their absolute Government and our free one, would be more nominal than real.

The Source of Degeneracy, that may be remark'd in free Governments, consists in the Practice of contracting Debt, and mortgaging the public Revenues, by which Taxes may, in Time, become altogether intolerable, and all the Property of the State be brought into the Hands of the Public. This Practice is of modern

Date. The *Athenians*, though a Republic, paid Twenty *per Cent.* for Money, as we learn from [Xenophon](#). Among the Moderns, the *Dutch* first introduced the Practice of borrowing great Sums at low Interest, and have well nigh ruined themselves by it. Absolute Princes have also contracted Debt; but as an Absolute Prince may play the Bankrupt when he pleases, his People can never be oppress'd by his Debts. In popular Governments, the People, and chiefly those who have the highest Offices, being always the public Creditors, 'tis impossible the State can ever make use of this Remedy, which, however it may be sometimes necessary, is always cruel and barbarous. This, therefore, seems to be an Inconvenience, that nearly threatens all free Governments, especially our own, at the present Juncture of Affairs. And what a strong Motive is this, to encrease our Frugality of the public Money; left, for want of it we be reduced, by the Multiplicity of Taxes, to curse our free Government, and with ourselves in the same State of Servitude with all the Nations that surround us.

FINIS

1. ↑ [Mr. Addison](#), and my Lord *Shaftsbury*.
 2. ↑ [Dr. Swift](#).
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2. [Essay_s, Moral and Political](#)
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1. [Essay_s, Moral and Political](#)
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