

THOUGHTS
ON A
FRENCH INVASION,
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
PROBABILITY OF ITS SUCCESS,
AND THE
PROPER MEANS OF RESISTING IT.

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WITH EXTRACTS

FROM THE

BISHOP OF LANDAFF'S
CELEBRATED ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

CONTAINING

Observations on the principal objections of some Modern Declaimers against

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT.

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T H O U G H T S

O N A

FRENCH INVASION.

THE menace of a French Invasion, which formerly afforded a subject for ridicule, cannot now be treated in so light a manner. For some time, indeed, the French have rested their hopes in the accumulation of our national debt, and loudly declared we should ultimately fall under the weight of our finances; they have affected to call us a nation of brokers, and compared the people of Britain to the inhabitants of Holland, who have sacrificed their very existence as a nation to the most sordid and the most mistaken notions of self-preservation.

In these hopes they trust no longer; they groan under the weight of our naval and colonial successes: they see the vast increase of the commerce of this nation, and they cannot but attribute it in a great degree to the very means they make use of for their aggrandizement: they themselves are obliged to purchase here the luxuries and many of the necessaries of life; the wealth they have obtained by rapine, flows to this country by the channels of trade, and France contributes by the drains of its specie to the prevention of the catastrophe held out by its rulers as inevitable.

Convinced, at length, that Britain can never want money whilst carrying on the commerce of the world, France now resolves to make a grand attempt. The Directory, the Legislators, and the Generals, of the

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country, make no secret of their intentions*. Whenever they have meditated the ruin of a country and the destruction of its government, they have previously declared it. They announced their march to Holland, to Spain, to Italy, to Germany. Their policy is to terrify governments with threats, and to prepare beforehand the disaffected of every country for a change. They have already experienced the effect which may be produced by this exaggerated representation of their power; and they have seen more than one example of the dismay, which menaces apparently extravagant have struck into their opponents, while in the same proportion the exertions of their soldiers have been increased by the opinion which has been inculcated into them, that nothing can resist their armies.

The General who conquered Italy is named to command the Army of England, and has accepted the trust †. Preparations of an uncommon kind are
on

* *Decree of the Executive Directory on the 26th of October, 1797.*

“ *The Executive Directory decrees what follows:*

“ *Art. 1. There shall be assembled without delay on the coasts of the ocean, an army which shall be called the Army of England.*

“ *2. Citizen General Buonaparte is named Commander in Chief of that Army.*

“ *Reveiller Lepaux, Pres.*

“ *Ligarde, Sec. Gen.*”

† “ *Go, Citizen General, to crown so glorious a life by a conquest which the Great Nation owes to its insulted dignity; go and punish, in London, outrages which have been too long unpunished.*”

Speech of President Barras to General Buonaparte, 21st Nov. 1797.

“ *It seems decreed that the French Republic shall only make peace with their enemies at their own capital.— send to England those columns which have made victory the companion of their banners.*”

Address of the Merchants to the Executive Directory.

on foot, new inventions are framing, and the whole power, ingenuity, and wealth of France and its dependents, are set on the chance of an Invasion.

To these machinations the government of this country is no stranger; the extent of the danger they can ascertain, the naval and military defence is in the best hands, and the honest mechanic, farmer, and tradesman may pursue his habits of industry, without any reasonable ground for apprehending either that his labours should be interrupted, or his property taken from him.

But since the danger, either real or apparent, may suddenly burst upon an unprotected part of this island, as its happy inhabitants know not how to ascertain the risk they run under an invasion; they may derive instruction from being made acquainted with the progress of the enemy in other countries, and apprized by what human means the fall of so many independent and powerful states was effected. They will be cheered at the view of some striking differences between those states and us, and it will prevent alarm, misrepresentation, and dismay, to show every individual in this country what ought to be his immediate object during the confusion inseparable from an attack.

The writer begs to be understood as not addressing himself to those who have made the profession of arms their study, or to those who are associated and embodied under established officers: his wish is to give practical hints to the plain man, who has never seen any military service.

It may not be known to the generality of Englishmen, that when the French invaded the different countries of Europe, they calculated on suffering no impediment from their inhabitants, who were as quietly ploughing their land, opening and shutting their shops, and carrying on their traffic during the time of invasion, as if no enemy had been at their gates. The French therefore only inquired what number of regular troops were opposed to them; while these, although obliged to refrain from any coercive measure, or any kind of requisition, for fear of offending their own commanding

commanding officers, ever considered the inhabitants they were defending more as their enemies than their friends. Thus the more populous the country, the greater resource (instead of the greater opposition) the enemy found in it; and his first measure was to put in requisition † every article he wanted. By means of this system of requisition, those persons, who had sheltered themselves under the mask of neutrality, while the Combined Armies protected them, aided and assisted the French on their arrival, in the warm hope of purchasing by treachery an exemption from the general pillage.

As the enemy advanced they recruited their army with the disaffected, and raised contributions upon the rich, increasing their numbers, both from the love of plunder and the motive of fear; but not one generous, one patriotic struggle against them has been made on the Continent by any one people or state; not one government has ventured to levy its subjects in a mass, or even to organize a system of defence in which the people had a share.

France poured forth her hundreds of thousands on a disunited coalition. While these were pressing in the front, the discontented, the dissolute, the demagogues, the atheists, the illuminati, were in the bosom of the country, magnifying their numbers, extolling their successes,

† *As an Englishman may not be acquainted with the full meaning of the word requisition, it may not be superfluous to acquaint him, that a French commissary, on his arrival at a town, or in a district, gets possession of the magistrates and principal persons in it, whom he obliges, in pain of being instantly hanged, to discover every kind of property belonging to them or others, every resource the country can afford, and the speediest mode of being put in possession of it. These are declared to be in a state of requisition for the use of the Republic; and, as a security that nothing may escape, the commissioners have always a list of rascally informers in reserve, on whose evidence, or charge of prevarication, the magistrates, or principal persons, are liable to be sacrificed.*

successies, and foretelling their near approach. But with all this, in how many instances did these boasted conquerors succeed, except by numbers? Not only assisted by partizans in every country they invaded, they always had regular armies, twice or thrice the number of those they fought with. Possessing unity of action, they had to contend with allies who pursued separate interests, who were more jealous of each other than careful to oppose the enemy, and each of whom, as the French truly asserted at that time, considered the misfortune of the other as advantages to himself. Under such circumstances it cannot be matter of surprise that the operations of the Continental Powers should have been weak and ill concerted, and the event of them disastrous. They have met the ample punishment of their short sighted selfishness. But amidst the gloom which these reflections spread, a cheering light is derived from recollecting the brilliant manner in which the British troops have never failed to distinguish themselves whenever an opportunity offered of manifesting the superiority of their valour. Let those who extol the gallantry of our fleets, not with a view to display the glory they have so justly acquired, but for the sake of blasting the laurels gained by their countrymen by land; let these men, whether in the pay of France, or only acting from their own vile imaginations, say, where was the boasted courage of the enemy at Lincelles, when eleven hundred British Guards stormed a formidable work defended by six times their number, completely routed the enemy, and made themselves masters of the whole of his artillery? Where, in the action near Cateau, when eighteen hundred British cavalry defeated their army of five and twenty thousand men, pursued them to the gates of Cambrai, took their general prisoner, and upwards of fifty pieces of cannon? Where, at the battle of Tournay, when a small British brigade, under the command of General Fox, drove back General Pichegru's left wing, and decided the victory, till that moment doubtful? Where, at the sortie from Nimeguen, when six British battalions marched out in the middle of the day, threw themselves

selves, without firing a shot, into the enemy's trenches, dispersed the troops that guarded them, and after being in possession of them two hours, and completely destroying the works, returned in perfect order to the town, without the enemy daring to harrass them? Where, at the capture of Martinique, and before the little army of Sir Charles Grey? Where, in the East Indies, when the enemy was stripped of every foot of land they held there? Strange and fatal delusion! that in Britain men should be found to magnify the courage of our enemies, and depreciate our own at the expence of truth.

Having touched upon the advantages the French derived in their progress on the Continent from the people of the country, and leaving the full consideration of the subject to abler pens, it is material to recollect, that the French art of war is calculated upon the reception which their troops have hitherto met with: aware of this, their rulers have given out that the British are a venal people *, incapable of great exertions, dissatisfied with their government †, and divided among themselves ‡.

It is in fact (however incredible to an English ear,) that they are taught to believe, that a division of twenty thousand men, once landed, is quite adequate to the conquest of this country; for they calculate that, having once a footing in the island, such an army might advance where it pleased, and could easily be reinforced. That

* See the Message of the 4th Jan. prohibiting English manufactures:

“An enemy, who always fly when closely pressed; who are a handful of pirates.”

† Address of the French merchants to the Directory.

“Thus let the Army of England go and dictate terms of peace in London. And there, Republicans, you will also have auxiliaries. ‡ There you will also find those thousands of generous men, who have struggled for a long time past with a view of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform.”

Proclamation of the Directory, 21st Nov. 1797.

That twenty thousand men are not easily transported in the face of a superior navy, is admitted; but without having recourse to balloons, to diving bells, or even to monstrous rafts, such a number may perhaps be risked in boats or small vessels, if, as we most incontrovertibly know to be the case, their lives weigh but as a feather in the estimation of their rulers.

Supposing, then, a column or division should escape our ships on passage, and not be destroyed by the naval power on the coast; before they could land, it is incumbent on every man in Britain to consider beforehand what would be the consequence of their landing.

Wherever the landing may be effected, officers will no doubt be found who will give the best directions to the military force; but if individuals remain inactive at the spot, or if, in their haste to escape, they impede the military operations, they will in both cases assist the views of the enemy.

Before our armies are assembled, the first object with every man must be the driving away the cattle, the securing the horses, the carrying off the provisions of every kind for man and beast. If this be done, it is impossible the enemy can advance; nothing will be left him but to return to the sea from whence he came.

The women, the old men, the sick, and the helpless children, are to be taken care of; and every individual will no doubt assist in procuring them an asylum; but as to property of any kind, except provisions, it would impede every plan of attack or defence to pay attention to it.

Let any one reflect on the astonishment of the enemy, if, on entering a town or village, he found no living thing, nor any food in it.—He would stand appalled, and feel conquered from that moment!

So far from setting fire to the place, or plundering the valuables left there, he would dread being called to account for the mischief; and in so new and unprecedented a situation, would strive to purchase his pardon by forbearance.

It may not be obvious to every one, that an army cannot advance to any distance without horses. For

twenty thousand men (with any degree of artillery, ammunition, cavalry and waggons) six thousand horses, at least, are requisite; and it is well known that the strength of the French army consists in its artillery, which cannot be moved without horses. The cannon, the horses, and the waggons, are not so easily wasted over the sea as the men; if, therefore the people of the country will drive away their horses and waggons, the total deprivation of the enemy's means will be superadded to the horrors of their solitude.

Much more care and attention may be required in order to drive away the cattle and carry off the provisions, without injury to the old men, infirm women and children, than at first sight may be supposed. The roads leading to the enemy must be kept as clear as possible, so as to enable the armed force to advance upon them; and as every care will be taken to indemnify all those who may suffer in their property through their exertions for the common cause, some intelligent person should accompany every drove of cattle, every convoy of provisions, every detachment of helpless persons; such a man might depend on being noticed and rewarded in proportion to the care and judgement he may display; as officers will be specially charged with taking account of, and reporting upon the provisions and property thus prevented from affording sustenance to our invaders.

If, instead of retiring before the enemy, the inhabitants of towns and villages should remain, they must be aware that all their property, their dear property, for which they had sacrificed their honour, their conscience, and their religion, would be put in requisition *, their women would be compelled to receive the embraces of the invaders, and themselves would be

* See, in a preceding note, what French requisition was on the Continent, and judge what it would be here, when a loan is borrowed, and called the "English Loan" the premiums for which are "secured on the success of the grand operation."

Message of the Directory to the Council of Five Hundred.

be forced to act as guides and waggoners, if not to enlist as soldiers, and to meet death from the bayonets of their brethren, or from the hands of an executioner.

Such has been the fate of all the countries over run by the modern French. But alas! their inhabitants had not the alternative which, God be praised! we possess. They had no friends in the rear to afford them a shelter: they had no country to indemnify them for their sacrifices for the common good; no rallying point; no hope, no confidence in their own government; each family thought separately for itself, and had no choice but to throw itself on the conqueror.

Let no man flatter himself that he can purchase security for himself or his property by submission. We, of all other people, can hope for no mercy, if we are conquered. The governors of France stop at no false representations, and unworthy means of inflaming the minds of their subjects. This, they tell them, is the mine that will enrich them all; this the country, which alone prevents their obtaining universal dominion; this, they say, like Carthage, must be destroyed; and, as if these motives were not sufficient, they tax us with cruelty to our prisoners *, and excite their soldiers with the war-hoop of revenge.

After distressing the enemy, the next point, for every individual to consider, is, how best to assist the armed force, and join in the common defence. Whenever troops are on their march towards the enemy, every hand will surely be active in procuring bread for them. There our generous country-women will be found to share in the laurels which their husbands, their brothers, and their friends, are seeking to gather; they will

* “ Does not England refuse sustenance to 20,000 Frenchmen, whom the chance of war has delivered into its hands? O pinnacle of horror! No the English Ministers are not human; we can only compare them to ferocious wolves accustomed to feed on human gore, whose stomachs reject any other nourishment.”

Letters of the Administrators, &c. to the Council of Five Hundred, 3^d. Jan. 1798.

will be ready to provide for their refreshment, and every necessary support on the march, and at every halt; the farmers will assist with their teams and wag-gons in transporting artillery and forage; and every one will be careful to keep the roads as clear of encum-brances as possible; for that is a point of the utmost importance, which they who have never seen great movements are not sufficiently aware of.

And let not individuals suppose, that while they are thus assisting in their country's cause, they are injuring their own fortunes. As in ordinary life, "honesty is the best policy," (and, God be praised, this country has not abandoned one ally, or broke its faith to any people) so in case of actual invasion, they who distress the enemy and assist their brethren, will in fact be taking the most effectual measures for their own preservation. But they will also meet due remuneration from Government. Proper modes are adopted, and will be made known, for ascertaining the proportion of damage every individual may have sustained from military measures. Where property has been abandoned for the sake of carrying off provisions, or helpless persons, in preference to other articles, the owner will have an opportunity of stating the case at the time, to officers appointed for the purpose, and where he shall have assisted the troops, those same officers will be bound to procure him the payment in due time. On the other hand, they will know and hold forth to public execration, those cold blooded or traitorous men, who at such a moment may withhold their services, or counteract the general enthusiasm: and unquestionably no live or dead stock will be paid for if it falls into the enemy's hands, unless every possible exertion, to save or destroy it, is proved to have been made by the owner.

What then has the enemy to hope for?—he expects to shake our credit to its foundation. He does not then see, that by the wisest stroke of policy that ever was attempted, it is no longer in his power. The specie of the country centres in the Bank, and its paper is now become more than ever the general medium
of

of circulation. No avaricious farmer will hoard this; nor even will stockholders venture to sell out of the funds, because all descriptions of men know that the Bank paper is merely a link in the chain of general credit, of which the funds are the support. He trusts, indeed, that he shall be joined by the partizans of a Hamilton Rowan, or a Thomas Muir. What their power is, the late events at the Nore plainly showed. Then was the time for bloody faction to rear its head; but she fell astounded before the Genius of Britain;—or rather, that kind Providence, which has showered blessings on this country, unknown to any other nation, ancient or modern, interposed its protecting shield, and showed the atheistical world that Britain is not to be enslaved, even when a prey to civil commotions*.

But

* *It would very greatly indeed diminish the Writer's confidence in the resources of this country, if he thought the sentiments of a certain class of writers were in any degree those of the bulk of this nation. As an instance among the rest:*

“There are three capital scarecrows just set up to protect religion, and social order.—Church and King, French Principles, and Radical Reform.”

Morn. Chron. 8th Jan. 1798.

We may be told indeed, that it is not religion, but the form of our ecclesiastical government, that is here ridiculed; it should, however, be remembered, that the pretended philosophers in France set out from that point, and for the lengths they have gone, refer, among others, to the following fact, which has lately appeared in the public papers:—

“General Dancan (a republican general) tells us, that a felon, who had assumed the name of Brutus, chief of a revolutionary tribunal at Rennes, said to his colleagues on Good Friday:—‘Brothers, we must put to death this day, at the same hour the counter revolutionist Christ died, that young devotee who was lately arrested.’ And this young lady was guillotined accordingly, and her corpse treated with every possible species of indecent insult, to the infinite amusement of a vast multitude of spectators.”

But though the Jacobin traitors will not dare to rise manfully as a body, it well behoves every man to watch, lest they should convey intelligence, or give assistance of any kind to an invading enemy. Be it remembered, that such men are parricides, and deserve no more mercy than the unnatural son who lifts his hand against his father.

That the French army, if ever it should land, will come with erroneous opinions of the great body of the people, and that it will meet with confusion and dismay at landing, in consequence of that error, is evident from the declaration of their rulers; their boastings must to every firm mind appear ridiculous, and but for the wickedness of degenerate men in our own country, would be perfectly despicable.*

If the writer has in any way succeeded in guarding honest men against misrepresentation, and in shewing them, from experience, how best they can distress the enemy, and assist in the common defence, before our
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* Present effective force in Great Britain:

2 Regiments Life Guards,	}	
1 ditto Horse Guards,		
3 ditto Dragoon Guards,		
15 ditto Light Dragoons,		16,160
26 Regiments Fencible Cavalry,	- -	13,104
32 ditto Infantry Regulars,		13,540
12 Skeleton ditto officers included,	- -	2,124
18 Regiments Fencible Infantry,	- -	11,042
69 ditto Militia,	- -	45,000
252 Troops Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry,		15,120
856 Companies Volunteers,	- -	51,360
Supplementary Militia,	- -	60,000
<hr/>		
Making in the whole, effective men,	- -	227,450

Besides 117 Companies Artillery, 10 invalid ditto, 59 Independent Companies of Invalids, and the Marines in garrison.

In Ireland is a force of nearly 120,000 effective men.
And a TRIUMPHANT NAVY!

14 *The Bishop of Landaff's Address*
own troops and armies can be supposed decisively to act, he has succeeded in his design: he is too proud of his country, to doubt the readiness of every class of men to die for their wives, their families, their religion, their laws, and their king; and he knows, that without making boast of courage inherent with their birth, or of an energy displayed in every page of their history, they will strike home in the bosoms of their lawless invaders, assured, as they may hope to be, that the God of Battles is on their side.

E X T R A C T S

FROM THE

BISHOP OF LANDAFF'S ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN..

WHATEVER doubts I formerly entertained, or (notwithstanding all I have read or heard on the subject) may still entertain, either on the justice or the necessity of commencing this war in which we are engaged, I entertain none on the present necessity and justice of continuing it. Under whatever circumstances the war was begun, it is now become just; since the enemy has refused to treat, on equitable terms, for the restoration of peace. Under whatever circumstances of expediency or in expediency the war was commenced; its continuance is now become necessary; for what necessity can be greater than that which arises from the enemy having threatened us with destruction as a nation?

With respect to the valour of the French troops, I have nothing to object. I know it is a favourite opinion

tion with many, that the French are now what their ancestors were in the time of Cæsar: "that in the first onset they are more than men, but in the second less than women." But it appears to me, I must confess, that in this war the French have sustained with courage many onsets:—praise is due to the gallantry even of an enemy. But if I were asked, whether an equal number of British would beat these conquerors of Italy, I would answer, as an English ambassador answered a King of Prussia, when, at a review of his forces, he asked the ambassador, "Whether he thought that an equal number of Englishmen could beat his Prussians?"—"I cannot tell (replied the ambassador) whether an equal number would beat them; but I am certain half the number would try."—I have the firmest confidence that fifty thousand British, fighting for their wives and children, for their liberty and property, as individuals, for the independence and constitution of their country, would, without hesitation, attack an hundred thousand Frenchmen.

If Ireland be the object of invasion, France may flatter herself, perhaps, with the expectation of being more favourably received there than in Great Britain: but I trust she will be equally disappointed in both countries, I mean not to enter into the politics of Ireland; but considering her as a sister kingdom, I cannot wholly omit adverting to her situation.

I look upon Britain and Ireland as two bodies which are grown together, with different members and organs of sense, but nourished by the circulation of the same blood: whilst they continue united they will live and prosper; but if they suffer themselves to be separated by the force or cunning of an enemy; if they quarrel and tear themselves asunder, both will instantly perish. Would to God, that there were equity and moderation enough among the nations of the earth, to suffer small states to enjoy their independence; but the history of the world is little else than the history of great states sacrificing small ones to their avarice or ambition; and the present designs of France, throughout Europe,

confirm

confirm the observation. If Ireland so far listens to her resentment (however it has originated) against this kingdom: if she so far indulges her chagrin against her own legislature, as to seek for redress by throwing herself into the arms of France she will be undone, her freedom will be lost, she will be sunk in the scale of nations; instead of flourishing under the protection of a sister that loves her, she will be fettered as a slave to the feet of the greatest despot that ever afflicted human kind—to the feet of the French democracy.

Let the malcontents of every nation of Europe look at Holland, and at Belgium. Holland was an hive of bees; her sons flew on the wings of the wind to every corner of the globe, and returned laden with the sweets of every climate. Belgium was a garden of herbs, the oxen were strong to labour, the fields were thickly covered with the abundance of the harvest—unhappy Dutchmen! You will still toil, but not for your own comfort; you will still collect honey, but not for yourselves; France will seize the hive as often as your industry shall have filled it. Ill judging Belgians! you will no longer eat in security the fruits of your own grounds, France will find occasion, or will make occasion, to participate largely in your riches; it will be more truly said of yourselves than of your oxen, “you plough the fields, but not for your own profit!”

France threatens us with the payment of what she calls a debt of indemnification; and the longer we resist her efforts to subdue us, the larger she says this debt will become; and she tells us, that all Europe knows that this debt must be paid one time or other. And does she think that this flourish will frighten us? It ought to move our contempt, it ought to fire us with indignation, and, above all, it ought to instruct every man amongst us what we may expect, if thro' supineness, cowardice, or division, we suffer her mad attempt to prove successful. She may not murder or carry into slavery the inhabitants of the land; but under the pretence of indemnification, she will demand millions upon tens of millions; she will beggar every
man.

man of property; and reduce the lower orders to the condition of her own peasantry and artificers—black bread, onions and water.

It is now somewhat more than seventy years, since certain men who esteemed themselves philosophers, and who, unquestionably, were men of talents, began in different parts of the continent, but especially in France and Germany, to attack the Christian religion. The design has been carried on by them and others, under various denominations, from that time to the present hour. In order to accomplish their end, they have published an infinity of books, some of them distinguished by wit and ridicule, unbecoming the vast importance of the subject, and all of them stuffed with false quotations and ignorant or designed misrepresentations of scripture, or filled with objections against human corruptions of faith, and for which Christianity cannot be accountable.

A similar attempt, I have reason to believe, has for some years been carrying on amongst ourselves, and by the same means. Irreligious pamphlets have been circulated with great industry, sold at a small price, or given away to the lowest of the people, in every great town in the kingdom. The prophane style of these pamphlets is suited to the taste of the wicked, and the confident assertions which they contain are well calculated to impose on the understanding of the unlearned; and it's among the wicked and the ignorant that the enemies of religion and government are endeavouring to propagate their tenets.

It is here supposed that the enemies of religion are also the enemies of government; but this must be understood with some restriction. There are, it may be said, many deists in this country, who are sensible of the advantages of a regular government, and who would be as unwilling as the most orthodox believers in the kingdom that our own should be overturned—this may be true—but it is true also that they who wish to overthrow the government are not only, generally speaking, unbelievers themselves, but that they found their hopes of success in the infidelity of the common

common people. They are sensible that no government can long subsist, if the bulk of the people have no reverence for a supreme Being; no fear of perjury; no apprehension of futurity, no check from conscience; and foreseeing the rapine, devastation, and bloodshed, which usually attend the last convulsions of a state struggling for its political existence, they wish to prepare proper actors for this dreadful catastrophe, by brutalizing mankind; for it is by religion more than any other principle of human nature that men are distinguished from brutes.

The mass of the people has, in all ages and countries, been the mean of effectuating great revolutions, both good and bad. The physical strength of the bulk of a nation is irresistible, but it is incapable of self-direction. It is the instrument which wise, brave, and virtuous men use for the extinction of tyranny, under whatever form of government it may exist; and it is the instrument also which men of bad morals, desperate fortunes; and licentious principles, use for the subversion of every government, however just in its origin, however equitable in its administration, however conducive to the ends for which society has been established among mankind. It is against the machinations of these men, secret or open, solitary or associated, that I wish to warn you; they will first attempt to persuade you that there is nothing after death, no heaven for the good, no hell for the wicked, that there is no God, or none who regards your actions; and when you shall be convinced of this, they will think you properly prepared to perpetrate every crime which may be necessary for the furtherance of their own designs, for the gratification of their ambition, their avarice, or their revenge.

No civil, no ecclesiastical constitution can be so formed by human wisdom as to admit of no improvement upon an increase of wisdom; as to require no alteration when an alteration in the knowledge, manners, opinions, and circumstances of a people has taken place. But men ought to have the modesty to know for what they are fitted, and the discretion to confine their exertions to subjects of which they have a competent knowledge.

There is perhaps little difference in the strength of memory, in the acuteness of discernment, in the solidity of judgement, in any of the intellectual powers on which knowledge depends, between a statesman and a manufacturer, between the most learned divine and a mechanic: the chief difference consists in their talents being applied to different subjects. All promote both the public good and their own, when they act within their proper spheres; and all do harm to themselves and others, when they go out of them. You would view with contempt a statesman who should undertake to regulate a great manufactory without having been brought up to business; or a divine who should become a mechanic without having learnt his trade; but is not a mechanic or manufacturer still more mischievous and ridiculous who affects to become a statesman, or to solve the difficulties which occur in divinity? Now, this is precisely what the men I am cautioning you against wish you to do—they harangue you on the disorder of our constitution, and propose remedies; they propound to you subtillies in metaphysics and divinity, and desire you to explain them; and because you are not prepared to do this, or to answer all their objections to our government, they call upon you to reject religion, natural and revealed, as impostures, and to break up the constitution of the country, as an enormous mass of incurable corruption.

No one, I trust, will suspect the writer of contending that great abuses in church or state ought to be perpetuated, or of wishing that any one dogma of our holy religion should not be discussed with decent freedom (for the more religion is tried, the more it will be refined;) but he does contend that the faith of unlearned Christians ought not to be shaken by lies and blasphemies; he does contend that it is better to tolerate abuses, till they can be reformed by the counsels of the best and wisest men in the kingdom, than to submit the removal of them to the frothy frequenters of ale-houses, to the discontented declaimers against our establishment, to the miserable dregs of the nation who seek for distinction in public confusion. An ancient

cient fabric, may, by mere force, be defaced and thrown down: but it requires the knowledge and caution of an architect to beautify and repair it. You are sensible that the most ingenious piece of mechanism may be spoiled by the play of a child, or broken to pieces by the blow of an idiot or a madman: and can you think that the machine of government, the most ingenious and complicated of all others, may not at once be despoiled of all its elegance, and deprived of all its functions, by the rude and bungling attempts of the unskilful to amend its motion?

I have not time to lay before you the rise and progress of that infidelity with respect to revealed religion—of that scepticism with respect to natural religion—of that insanity with respect to government, which have, by their combined influence overwhelmed with calamity one of the mightiest states in Europe, and which menace with destruction every other. I have not time to shew you by detailed quotations from the writings of the French and German philosophers—that the superstition of the church of Rome made them infidels—that a misapprehension of the extent of human knowledge made them sceptics—and that the tyranny of the continental governments made them enemies of all governments, except of that silly system of democratic liberty and equality, which never has had, nor never can have a permanent establishment amongst mankind.

Though I cannot, in this short and general address, enter fully or deeply into these matters, I may be allowed to say to those philosophers—how has it happened that men of your penetration, in shunning one vice, have fallen, like fools, into its opposite? Does it follow that Jesus Christ wrought no miracles, because the church of Rome has pretended to work many? Does it follow that the apostles are not honest men because there have been priests, bishops, and popes, who were hypocrites? Is the Christian religion to be ridiculed as more absurd than Paganism, to be vilified as less credible than Mahometanism, to be represented as impious and abominable, because men, in opposition to every practice of
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the apostles, have worshipped images, prayed to dead men, believed in transubstantiation, granted indulgencies, erected inquisitions, and roasted honest men alive for not complying with their superstition?

With respect to natural religion, I would say to them—you complain that you cannot comprehend the creation of the universe, nor the providence of God; and is this your want of ability to become as wise as your Maker, a reason for doubting whether there ever was a creation, and whether there is a providence? What should you think of a nest of reptiles, which being immured in a dark corner of one of the lowest apartments of a magnificent house, should affect to argue against the house having ever been built, or its being then taken care of. You are those reptiles with respect to your knowledge of the time when God created, and the manner in which he still takes care of the world,—You cannot, you tell us, reconcile the omniscience of God with the freedom of man—is this a reason for your doubting of the freedom which you feel you possess, or of the power of God to understand the nature of what he has made?—You cannot comprehend how it is possible for an immaterial being to be acted upon by material organs of sense—will you therefore deny the existence of your soul as a substance distinct from your body? do you not perceive that it must equally surpass your understanding how matter, acting upon matter, can produce any thing but motion; can give rise to perception, thought, will, memory, to all those intellectual powers, by which arts and sciences are invented and indefinitely improved?

With respect to government, I would say to them, admitting that there is a natural equality amongst mankind, does it follow that there may not be, or that there ought not to be, an instituted inequality? Admitting that men, before they enter into society, are free from all the miserable arts by which men are wont to defend the dominion of each other, does it follow that they may not voluntarily relinquish the liberty of a state of nature, in order that they may enjoy the comfort and obtain the security of a state of society?

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Can there be no just government, because there is, and has been much oppression in the world, no political freedom in Great Britain, because there was, during the monarchy, little in France; where there is, probably, still less than there was? Does it follow that there ought to be no distinction in society, with respect to rank or riches, because there are none in a state of nature; though nature herself has made a great difference amongst the individuals of our species as to health, strength, judgement, genius, as to all those powers which, either in a state of nature or society, necessarily become the causes and occasions of the superiority of one man over another? Does it follow that rich men ought to be plundered, and men of rank degraded, because a few may be found in every state who have abused their pre-eminence, or misapplied their wealth? In a word, does it follow that there ought to be no religion, no government, no subordination amongst men, because religion may degenerate into superstition, government into tyranny, and subordination into slavery? As reasonably might it be argued, that there ought to be no wine, because some men may become drunkards; no meat, because some men may become gluttons; no air, no fire, no water, because these natural sources of general felicity may accidentally become instruments of partial calamity?

He who peruses with attention the works of those foreigners, who for the last seventy or eighty years have written against revealed and natural religion, and compares them with the writings of our English deists towards the end of the last and beginning or middle of the present century, will perceive that the former have borrowed all their arguments and objections from the latter; he will perceive also that they are far inferior to them in learning and acuteness, but that they surpass them in ridicule, in blasphemy, in misrepresentation, in a bad cause: they surpass them too in their mischievous endeavours to disseminate their principles amongst those who, from their education, are least qualified to refute their sophistry.

Justly may we call their reasoning sophistry, since it

was not able to convince even themselves. One of the most eminent of them (Voltaire) who had been a theist, a materialist, a disbeliever of a future state all his days, asked with evident anxiety a few years before his death, Is there a God such as men speak of? Is there a soul such as people imagine? Is there any thing to hope for after death? He seems to have been consistent in nothing, but in his hatred of that gospel which would have enlightened the obscurity in which he was involved, and at once dissipated all his doubts. As to his notions of government, he appears to have been as unsettled in them as in his religious sentiments; for though he had been one of the most zealous apostles of liberty and equality, though he had attacked monarchical governments in all his writings with great bitterness, yet he at last confessed to one of the greatest princes then in Europe, that he did not love the government of the lowest orders—that he did not wish the re-establishment of Athenian democracy.

Such are the inconsistencies of men who, by their profane disputation against religion, have disturbed the consciences of individuals; who, by their senseless railing against government, have endangered the tranquility of every nation in Europe! And it is against such men I warn you.

Are any of you oppressed with poverty, disease, and wretchedness? Let none of these men beguile you of your belief that "God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,"—the protector of "them that trust in him."—Are any of you afflicted in mind, despairing of mercy through the multitude of your sins? Let none of these men stagger your persuasion that the gospel is true; for therein you will read that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,"—repent, and the gospel will give you consolation. Are any of you prosperous in your circumstances, and easy in your consciences? Let none of these men, by declaiming against defects in our constitution, or abuses in government, betray you into an opinion that, were the present order of things overturned, a better might, by their counsels, be established;

ed; for, by their counsels, you would either be plundered of your property, or compelled to become their accomplices in impiety and iniquity. See what has happened in France to all orders, to the common people as well as to the nobility. "The little finger of their republic has become thicker, more oppressive to the whole nation, than the loins of their monarchy; they were chastised with whips, they are now chastised with scorpions."

I am not altogether insensible of the danger I may have incurred, (should matters come to extremity), by thus publicly addressing my countrymen. I might have concealed my sentiments, and waited in retirement till the struggle had been over and the issue known, but I disdain safety accompanied with dishonour. When Hannibal is at the gates, who but a poltroon would listen to the timid counsels of neutrality, or attempt to screen himself from the calamity coming on his country by skulking as a vagabond amid the mountains of Wales or of Westmoreland? I am ready, and I am persuaded that I entertain a just confidence in saying, that hundreds of thousands of loyal and honest men are as ready as I am, to hazard every thing in defence of the country.

I pray God to influence the hearts of both sides to good will, consideration, and peace; to grant to our enemy grace to return to a due sense of piety and a belief in uncorrupted Christianity; and to impress our own minds with a serious sense of the necessity of so repenting of our sins and so reforming our lives, as may enable us to hope for his protection against all enemies foreign and domestic.

F I N I S.



GLASGOW,

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