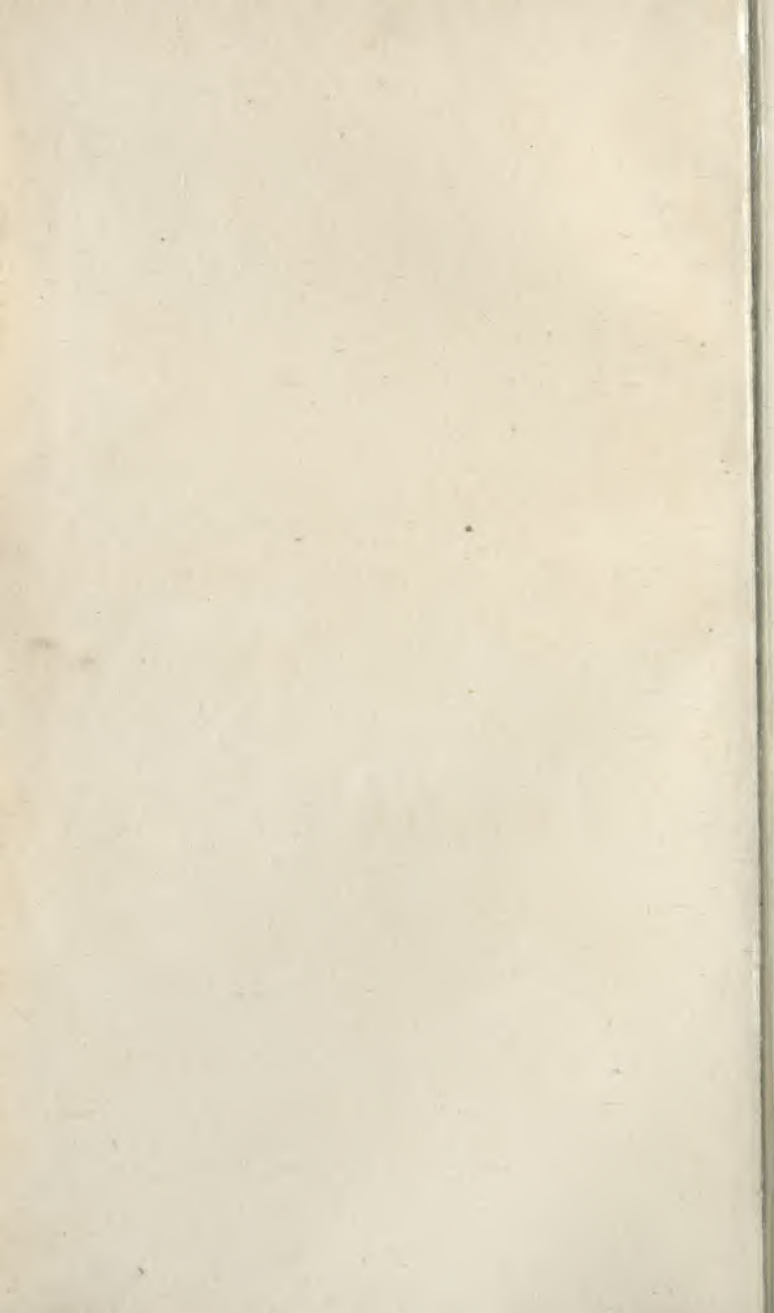




Alexander Thomson
of Banchory Esquire.





REFLECTIONS
ON
PEACE AND WAR.

LECTIONS

OF

PEACE AND WAR.

George Kerr.

REFLECTIONS

O N

PEACE AND WAR,

WITH APPLICATION TO

THE PAST EVENTS OF OUR HISTORY, AND THE
PRESENT SITUATION OF PUBLIC
AFFAIRS.

By D. Hamilton.

L O N D O N :

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POSTSCRIPT.

AN accommodation with Spain, has been announced to the public during the time that these sheets were in the press: as this is yet to be completed by negotiation, and as the general propriety of the measure will give occasion for much debate, the Reflections above offered may not yet be entirely unseasonable, especially as the argument is chiefly of a general nature, and applicable to our national measures under any circumstances.

ERRATA.

Page 39, line 11, *after* twelve millions, *add* “ and once to thirteen millions and a half; in consequence of which, twenty, and twenty-one millions have been added to the public debt, and, besides this, an unfunded debt contracted.”

Page 74, line 12, *after* one hundred and five millions, *add* “ although the sum actually received fell short of this amount by many millions.”

Page 94, line 12, *after* war, *add* “ for it has not been used, like Calais and Dunkirk formerly, as a road for invading the country of an enemy.”

Page 95, line 12, *for* half a million, *read* a million.

REFLECTIONS

O N

PEACE AND WAR.

AT the present juncture, when the British nation, as yet unrelieved from the burthens of former wars, appears to stand upon the brink of a new one, the causes and probable consequences of such an event demand the most serious attention of the pub-

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lic. The thoughts that are suggested by this situation of affairs may be arranged under the following heads : The general arguments for or against war ; the conduct of Britain in regard to former wars and their consequences ; and the propriety or expediency of a war with Spain at present.

PART I.

Arguments against war in general are drawn from its cruelty, and its absurdity ; from the calamities which it inflicts on the contending nations, and from its experienced inefficacy
for

for obtaining the purposes which it aims at.

Pathetic descriptions of the calamities of war have been often drawn; and, upon this subject, the arts of the most exquisite eloquence can never delineate an adequate picture. Thousands in the prime of life are slain in battle, and these form but a small, a very small proportion of those who perish by the hardships of war. Naval wars, so much practised in modern times, and by this nation, occasion incredible havoc. But humanity does not feel so much for those who die, as for those who survive,

and are reduced to wretchedness by its consequences.

To supply our navy force is used, to recruit our army men are enticed, in a moment of thoughtlessness or intoxication, from their families and peaceful occupations : and a very small proportion of either ever return *. Such are the evils which accompany war under its most favourable circumstances ; and which

* In the war which commenced in 1756, it is estimated that 100,000 of our seamen perished, not one in ten of whom fell in battle. It is well known that when a regiment has been some years in actual service, seldom one fourth and sometimes not a tenth of the original soldiers are found surviving.

those

those countries endure which are not themselves the theatre of warfare, and which finally prevail in the contest. The state of the country where the war is waged is wretched beyond description. Cities are destroyed, agriculture and every peaceful art interrupted, large and flourishing provinces depopulated and ruined, often with circumstances of most shocking barbarity. Pestilence and famine, the concomitants of war, complete what the sword has left undone. It is unnecessary to enter into a further detail of what every history presents, and what every per-

son who has witnessed these dreadful scenes knows so well *.

When the great question of peace or war is under deliberation, and the reasons perhaps almost equally balanced, might it not be expected that attention to the consequences would have influence with those upon whose decision the fate of nations depends? When a minister is consulting on public affairs, and perhaps impelled

* *Hæc itaque mala, tam magna, tam horrenda, tam sæva quisquis cum dolore considerat, miseriam necesse esse fateatur, quisquis autem vel patitur ea sine animi dolore vel cogitat, multo utique miserius ideo se putat beatum, quod et humanum perdidit sensum.* Augustinus apud Grot. lib. ii. cap. 24.

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by the hopes of national or personal glory, if the character of the statesman has not entirely effaced the feelings of the man, the following reflections will occur amidst his deliberations. “ If I once unsheath the
 “ sword, I know not where the slaughter
 “ will end. I cannot control it.
 “ This I know, I sacrifice the lives
 “ of thousands, I sacrifice the happiness
 “ of many more. To obtain
 “ men for the service violence and
 “ fraud must be employed ; in conducting
 “ it much cruelty will be
 “ exercised which I cannot prevent.
 “ My country may be exposed to
 “ the ravages of war, or if that be

“ averted, these ravages must pre-
 “ vail somewhere, and misery must
 “ be the portion of the peaceful in-
 “ habitants, to whom no share of
 “ the guilt can be imputed.”

Powerful as these considerations
 are in the eye of reason and huma-
 nity, the experience of every age
 affords proof of their inefficacy. In
 barbarous ages they are entirely dis-
 regarded, and in an age which boasts
 of superior civilization, they are un-
 able to restrain the ambitious and
 angry passions of men.

The arguments drawn from the
 absurdity of war are confirmed by
 the experience of successive ages,

and may be expected in time to prevail.

War is seldom effectual in gaining the objects for which it is undertaken ; the objects when obtained often prove insignificant, are attended with little or no national advantage, and are sometimes positively hurtful : the most successful war obstructs the growing prosperity of the nation, and subjects it to permanent burthens, which far overbalance any gain its victories have purchased.

War is seldom effectual in gaining the objects for which it is undertaken. When a powerful fleet or army, commanded by officers of reputation,

putation, is sent forth to action, the expectations of the public are sanguine in a high degree. Relying firmly in the imagined superiority of their countrymen's conduct, victory is considered as their certain lot, or at least a glorious peace, as the fruit of victory. But what does experience unfold in regard to the event? The war is carried on with variable success; the blood and treasures of both parties are exhausted; and, when unable to contend any longer, they generally desist in the same situation which they held at the commencement of the war, and often leave the original cause of dispute

dispute undecided. Such has been the issue of almost every European war for many centuries. The contests have been often fierce and bloody, and glorious victories have sometimes been obtained : but we search in vain for the advantages resulting to the victorious nation. Let us look back to the wars between the Guelphs and Gibbelines which distracted Europe for several centuries, the wars waged by Britain against France with a view to conquest, the frequent wars between these nations since the design of conquest was abandoned, the almost constant wars between England and
 Scotland

Scotland before the union of the crowns, the wars between the Italian republics, the invasions of Italy by France, the wars between the powers of France and Austria, the frequent wars among the northern powers, the war of thirty years in Germany, and many others. Let us trace their consequences if we can.

When the objects for which war is undertaken are obtained, they often prove useless and sometimes hurtful.

Extent of territory is an object which ambition grasps at with the most earnest desire. The nations
which

which have gained it have frequently become weaker and less prosperous in consequence. The conquered provinces are discontented with the change of government, and require to be held in subjection by military force. They are oppressed, and of course unprofitable to the ruling state. Their manners, laws and religion are different, and cannot be assimilated for a course of ages.

The maintenance of the balance of power has been a favourite topic in modern times, and has often been the ostensible cause of war. A system founded upon this principle arose some centuries ago, and attained

tained its vigour about the beginning of the present century. It is now somewhat upon the decline. Hence a complex arrangement of treaties and alliances, where the avowed object of each party is the preservation of the peace and balance of Europe, the real motive is generally their own aggrandizement*. One effect of this system is to render wars when they break out more universal, and their calamitous consequences more extensive.

* They presented "An address to the king to enter into new alliances with the states for preserving the *peace* and liberty of Europe. These words were considered, as they were indeed, an insinuation towards *war*." Burnet's History of his Own Times.

It

It cannot be denied that when a powerful and ambitious prince threatens danger to his weaker neighbours, prudence justifies and requires the union of several in an alliance for mutual defence. But it may be doubted whether that refined system which artful politicians have extended so far be really necessary. It admits of no doubt that it has often been employed as a mask to ambition ; neither can it be doubted that the means employed for the preservation of this balance have often militated against it, sometimes from an original error in the policy embraced, and sometimes from incidents which arose during the course

course of the contest, and gave a new turn to the state of public affairs. We have sometimes supported France against Austria, at other times we have supported Austria against France. In the course of a few years we have fought against Prussia in support of the Empress, and against the Empress in support of Prussia ; we have aided and we have obstructed the enterprises of Russia against the Turks ; we have joined with Russia against Sweden and with Sweden against Russia. Such are the fluctuating notions entertained of the balance of power and the means of supporting it.

If

If we carefully examine the vicissitudes of national affairs as recorded in history, we shall not attribute much to refinements in politics, but shall generally trace their causes to circumstances which human prudence could not foresee, and which are seemingly inadequate to their effect.

War is sometimes demanded to humble a nation which we consider as our *natural enemy*. A prejudice so absurd does not deserve, and hardly admits of a serious refutation.

War depresses the prosperity of

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nations.

nations. The foundations of national riches are the natural fertility of the country, the number of inhabitants, and quantity of productive labour. The first is the gift of nature, the others depend upon moral and political causes, and are much obstructed by war. The amount of the annual national income consists of the produce of the soil, improved by human labour, and fitted for the various purposes of life, the articles which we have in superfluity being exchanged with foreign nations for those we want. This is the fund that may be annually consumed by the inhabitants in the necessaries
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and enjoyments of life, or may be partly saved to increase the national capital and contribute to the wealth of succeeding years. Whatever increases this fund tends to enrich the nation ; whatever diminishes it tends to impoverish the nation.

It will readily be admitted that a nation whose inhabitants are all industrious must be richer, *cæteris paribus*, than one whose inhabitants are partly industrious and partly idle. The idle must be maintained at the expence of the industrious, and a smaller quantity of the comforts of life will fall to the share of each. And if the part of the inhabitants

who are not employed in productive labour, instead of being idle, be employed in fighting, this does not alter the case in regard to national riches. They might as well be paid for being idle, provided there was no occasion to fight. Besides, they must be furnished with the implements of war, which in modern times are very complicated and expensive. The labour of all those who are employed in preparing the necessary apparatus of war must therefore be subtracted from the public stock. But all this is only a part of the loss which the nation sustains. It is an object of war to seize and destroy

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the property of the enemy. The enemy will attempt to seize and destroy ours, and will always succeed in some degree. In every war among commercial nations captures at sea are frequent : what we lose in that manner is subtracted from the national wealth ; the practice of insuring only transfers the loss from one hand to another. Neither is this loss compensated by the prizes we take from the enemy, for against these prizes we must state the expence of equipping and supporting the ships employed in that service ; and it is doubtful whether privateer-

ing turns out, in general, a profitable adventure.

All these articles of loss are what certainly must be sustained in every war. No notice has been taken of those which probably may and often do take place.

The foregoing reasons afford a complete and satisfactory proof that war must in every case obstruct the wealth of the nation. An argument in opposition to this doctrine is drawn from the increase which some branches of trade and manufacture receive at the commencement and during the continuance of war. Our fleets and
armies

armies require large supplies of various articles, and these must be provided with all possible dispatch. Hence the professions which supply these articles must derive an advantage. But every person who understands the true sources of national wealth will perceive that the labour employed upon the articles consumed in the destructive art of war, though profitable to a few, is lost to the community.

War subjects the nation to permanent burthens. This will lead to some observations upon the system of funding; a system which commenced in this country about a century ago,

and has been embraced by most nations in Europe, and carried to an extent that almost surpasses credibility.

The amount of debt contracted each war has been much greater than the payment during the succeeding peace ; also the amount contracted each successive war has been greater, in proportion to the time of its continuance, than that contracted in the former war. It is impossible for a system, thus conducted, to go on for ever, and it is not probable that it can go on for any considerable time.

The taxes imposed to pay the interest

terest of the national debt are a heavy burthen upon the people, and fall with peculiar weight upon the industrious. Every man is conscious of a natural right to enjoy the fruits of his industry. As the protection of government enables him to carry on his business in security, it becomes his duty to contribute to the necessary expence of government. But he must also contribute for the expence of former wars, the effects of which cannot now be traced, except in the permanent burthens they have left. As the right of any age to impose burthens on posterity, for waging wars from which posterity derives

rives no benefit, is questionable ; it may happen in some succeeding age, when their weight is become still more intolerable, and when experience has farther displayed the absurdity of the system, that mankind will boldly throw off what they are no longer able to endure. Should this take place, it must occasion great national calamities. The ruin of the stockholders would involve the ruin of many others. The dissolution of our present happy government, and a period of anarchy and tumultuary distraction, would be the probable consequences. The nation might arise again, perhaps more flourishing than

than before, after the storm was over: but the first effects would be dreadful, and their duration probably considerable. It is an event which no man would wish to see; and which no prudent minister should endanger, by pushing the national burthens to the utmost.

Taxes raise the price of labour, and consequently enable foreign nations, less encumbered than us, to bring their goods cheaper to market. This must drive us out of the most valuable part of our trade, the exportation of our home manufactures. It has already done so in some branches, and if in others we be still successful,

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we should be careful not to endanger their loss by heavier burthens. There is more occasion to withdraw those under which they already labour. Our countrymen have acquired much dexterity in many branches of manufacture; by carrying them on to a great extent they have pushed the division of labour to the utmost, and the application of machinery to facilitate labour has been employed, with much ingenuity, to a very great degree. In these respects we are superior to most foreign nations, and are able to rival them in many branches of manufacture, although our price of labour be higher than theirs. But

we

we cannot expect always to retain that superiority of skill we at present possess. Few will be so partial as to believe that the genius for manufacture is confined to their countrymen. Many foreigners, employed in these professions, are active, inquisitive, ingenious. They will imitate our improvements, for it is well known that these cannot be monopolized for any country, by practising the arts of secrecy. They will invent others, and the disadvantages they sustain from carrying on their manufactures on a smaller scale will in time be surmounted. When they equal us in other respects, the cheapness of their labour

labour must preponderate the scale in their favour.

It is said that the national debt has been already carried to a greater extent than was thought practicable when the scheme of funding commenced, and it is difficult to ascertain how much farther it may still be extended; that although our burthens be great, we have still great resources; our national credit is good; and the same arguments, now used against a farther accumulation of debt, were used half a century ago; and the experience of that period has rather tended to their refutation.

In answer to these reasonings, we

may observe, that there certainly is a limit, beyond which the national credit cannot be stretched, and that each successive war has carried us by fast strides towards that limit. That however the sentiments of our fathers may have fixed it too low, it would have been well if we had never made the discovery of their mistake, as no national advantage has resulted, but much national loss been sustained from the heavy load which experience has proved us able to bear. That it is equally irrational for a nation to push its debt to the utmost, as for a private person to do so. That till either be in a state of absolute ruin,

ruin, it is still in their power to borrow more by agreeing to the terms of usury. That amidst our boasting of the strength of national credit, it would perhaps be well for us if we did not find it so easy to borrow, as it certainly would be for an extravagant heir to be prevented from ruining himself and family, by being circumscribed in the funds which he squanders with endless profusion.

The loans at the end of a war have always been obtained on terms more unfavourable for the public. In several, the capital debt contracted has been considerably more than the sum actually advanced by the creditor.

What

What can the most thoughtless prodigal do more?

There are reasons for believing that the national debt cannot be extended much farther. The most productive taxes are those upon consumption, and these may either be imposed upon the luxuries or the necessaries of life. The former are the only proper subjects of taxation, and hardly an article of that kind remains untouched. If taxes be pushed beyond a certain degree, they defeat themselves, by lessening the consumption, or increasing the temptation to smuggling. In consequence of this, the legislature has already

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found it necessary to reduce the taxes upon several articles that were very proper subjects of taxation. Taxes upon the necessaries of life are already imposed in several instances, and bear very hard upon the poor and laborious. If extended much farther, the burthen will become intolerable.

In the same degree as our national resources are exhausted, our strength is diminished, and we lose our weight in the scale of nations. By engaging in wanton and unnecessary wars, we render ourselves unable for necessary and defensive ones. It may be a matter of policy with hostile nations,
who

who perceive our extreme profusion, artfully to waste our strength in indecisive wars, till it be exhausted, and we be obliged to succumb. ↪

Some derive consolation from thinking, that however heavy our burthens may be, the situation of our enemies is no better. We may not have certain information of the fact. If it be so, a man whose liberal mind can surmount the narrow barriers by which nation is separated from nation, and view the human race as an object of benevolence, will observe with more regret that the sufferings of the contending nations are mutual. Or, if this sentiment be thought too

refined, the patriot, who understands and wishes the happiness of his country, will perceive that its prosperity has been depressed, and continues to be depressed, by the burthens of war; and his feelings for the absolute evil sustained will not be alleviated by considering what is passing in other nations. The skilful politician, who has remarked the vicissitudes of human affairs, and perceives that our strength, and perhaps the strength of our enemy, is exhausted, will dread that some other nation, rising in power, and unengaged in the present contests, may improve our mutual weakness to its own advantage,

vantage, and acquire that superiority which we are no longer able to maintain.

A person convinced of the burthen and danger of the national debt, naturally turns his thoughts to the different ways in which it may possibly terminate. If it continue to increase, as it has done during the present century, no human policy can prevent it from terminating in national bankruptcy. The debt contracted each war ought to be paid off in the subsequent peace. If this upon the whole be not done, an accumulation takes place which must at last prove fatal. The sums annually borrowed in

war should exceed the sums annually paid off in peace, only in the same proportion that the duration of peace exceeds the duration of war. From the beginning of this century to the present year 1790, there have been fifty-six years of peace, and thirty-four years of war, without bringing in to the account several threatenings of war, which occasioned considerable expence to the nation, but passed over without actual rupture. In these thirty-four years of war, the debt contracted has amounted to two hundred and thirty-six millions, or almost seven millions annually, at an average. In the fifty-six years of peace,

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the debt paid off has amounted only to twenty-seven millions, which is not so much as half a million annually, at an average. If we confine our attention to the latter part of the period, which appears to furnish a more probable ground of conjecture in regard to the future, the facts are still more unfavourable. The debt contracted in one year has sometimes amounted to twelve millions. ~~x~~ The

payments in one year never amount-
ed to two millions, and the sum now
proposed to be applied for discharg-
ing the national debt is only one mil-
lion. The interest of the national
debt exhausts one half of the annual

Ex
x and once
The *thirteen* *million*
and a half,
Consequence
which *two*
twenty one
one million
Added to
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and, based
this *on* *an*
Debt *Cont*

revenue. Hence little can be spared towards the expences of war, or towards the extinction of debt in time of peace. If we are to judge from past experience, there is little reason to expect so long a continuance of peace, that the application of one million annually, with all the advantages of compound interest, may extinguish or considerably diminish the national debt. In the trial of a few years of peace, it has been already found necessary to borrow a million upon a new scheme, that the million appropriated from the sinking fund might not be encroached on. That any relief is given by paying off an
old

old debt, while a new debt is at the same time contracted, is a conceit too shallow to impose upon any but the weakest and most credulous. Various schemes have been proposed for paying off the national debt, by complicated operations of finance. When such schemes have been proposed by private persons, they probably deceive themselves; when held forth by statesmen, there is reason to suspect they are intended to amuse the public credulity. Every scheme which does not reduce the average expence of war and peace together, allowance being made for their proportional duration, below the amount
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of our annual revenue, is founded on delusion. Some have proposed a composition of the national debt; that we might pay in part, as a bankrupt does, what we are not able to pay fully. Others have proposed to resolve the permanent debt into annuities for lives or years; and others to make such defalcations in the payment of interest to the public creditors, that the value of the funds might gradually fall, by which means the bad consequences of a sudden shock would be avoided. These are only different modes of bankruptcy: it is not probable any of them will ever be embraced. Bankruptcy, under

any form, is a measure too desperate for any administration to adopt voluntarily and deliberately. If it overtake us, it will be without consent, when it is impossible to resist it longer. Convinced of the destructive tendency of the system hitherto followed, of the futility of the schemes proposed for relieving our national burthens, and of the insufficiency of the application of one million annually for that purpose, a gleam of hope may be drawn from other resources, which may contribute to aid the exertions of public economy and moderation. The value of the precious metals has fallen, first rapidly and then gradually,

ally, since the discovery of America, and there is reason to believe that it still continues to fall. If a sensible alteration of this sort should take place in the course of another century, although our nominal debt may be then nearly the same, our real debt may be considerably diminished. The population of Britain has increased, and there is reason to hope it still continues to increase. If peace prevail, and agriculture, trade, and manufactures flourish, the increase may be still extended far. There are grounds for believing that if agriculture were improved to the utmost, at least twice the present number

number of inhabitants might be maintained, without depending upon a foreign supply of provisions. The amount of taxes upon each individual is at present near forty shillings. If the number were doubled, an equal sum would be raised by a taxation of twenty shillings. The present taxes would prove more productive. The most burthenfome might be repealed, and there would still be a surplus to augment the fund for discharging the national debt. The appropriation of a million, or of what can be spared, for payment of our debts, is a measure highly commendable, but insufficient alone to answer the purpose. If along with this the wisdom and moderation

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of our measures with foreign nations be such as to prolong the periods of peace, and prevent future accumulations ; if the alteration of the value of money operate towards our relief, and if the increasing number of our countrymen lighten the burthen upon each individual; posterity may be gradually relieved from incumbrances which cannot in our time admit of any considerable diminution.

Let the arguments urged by the advocates* for war be heard in their turn. Frequent wars, it is said, are necessary for maintaining the military

* Ferguson's Essay on the History of Civil Society, Lord Kaim's Sketches, &c.

spirit upon which national defence depends. By a long continuance of peace we become unfit for fighting, and fall an easy prey to every invader. Whatever force may be in this argument, it is not the motive that ever leads on to war. Men fight to gratify some present passion, and not to preserve their capacity of fighting. The degree of attention due to military spirit varies with circumstances. The situation of our country, the state and character of neighbouring nations, and the manner of conducting war in our age, ought to be considered. It should not be neglected, and it may be over-rated. War cherishes the
manly

manly virtues, courage, fortitude, perseverance; it gives scope to the most active and strenuous exertions of the human powers. By a course of peace and prosperity the human mind becomes enervated and debased. This argument is different from the former. It inculcates the support of the military virtues from their intrinsic excellence, as the other did from their utility. We entirely agree with those who urge it in assigning the first place to the improvement of human nature. Our object ought to be to render nations virtuous and happy rather than wealthy and populous. But we cannot agree with them

them in the high estimation in which they hold the military qualities. Human nature possesseth a sufficient stock of these qualities, and when called forth by national emergencies, they shine conspicuously, and dazzle the multitude. We read with avidity the achievements of Alexander and Cæsar; but when we try their characters by the tests of reason and virtue, we cannot hold them forth as ornaments to human nature. It is not that restless ambition which aims at its own aggrandizement, without regard to consequences, and generally by means prejudicial to society, which ought to engross our esteem.

In peaceful and in private life we meet characters, not only amiable, but highly respectable. The virtues which flourish there are less splendid, but not less excellent.

Besides the qualities directly requisite in war, it gives opportunities for the exertion of some of the noblest virtues, generosity, friendship, disinterestedness.

It is not denied that war presents occasions in which these virtues are sometimes displayed conspicuously : so does every calamitous event of human life ; notwithstanding which we shun calamities as far as we can.

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The general operations of war are fitted to excite malignant passions, *cruelty, revenge, treachery, * and to

* There is hardly any measure of treachery or cruelty which theoretical writers do not admit of as authorized by the laws of war. *Et passim occidere jus belli vocatur—non eos tantum, qui actu ipso arma gerunt, aut qui bellum moventis subditi sunt, sed omnes etiam qui intra fines sunt hostiles ;—quod infantium quoque et feminarum cædes impune habetur, et isto belli jure comprehenditur :—nec captivi quidem ab hac licentia exempti—nec qui se dedunt semper recipiuntur : nota et hæc belli jus—sed et acceptos in deditionem sine conditione ulla, interfici :—idem jus et in obsides usurpatum—supra in faminas passim legas, et permissa, & impermissa, &c. Grot. lib. iii. cap. iv.* Indeed in other parts of his elaborate work, he recommends moderation in the exercise of these rights. When a man writing at his ease permits so much, what may not those whose passions are inflamed by the scenes of war be expected to practise !

blunt the feelings of humanity and benevolence. The object of war is to deceive and to destroy.

War it is said affords an outlet to persons of high spirit and ambition, who might prove troublesome members of society, and it relieves us of the idle and profligate among the lower ranks. It has been observed that a smaller number suffer by the hand of justice in time of war than in time of peace.

Under a firm government, the ambition of private persons is not dangerous, and it may be directed to objects of public utility. It is better that a few should suffer by the executioner,

tioner, than many thousands fall victims to the perils of war. Besides, the increase of business in our criminal courts, when peace is concluded, may be rather considered as a consequence of war. The licentiousness of military life is communicated by the contagion of example, and among our private soldiers and sailors profligacy is almost universal. When multitudes of such men are disbanded, indigent and unfit for the labours of peaceful life, it is not surprising that crimes should multiply. In a moral point of view this consideration affords an argument of the greatest strength against war in general.

It is further said, that war is necessary to thin the numbers of mankind, which would soon multiply, without that scourge, so as to overstock the earth. The irruptions of barbarous nations, who would not apply to agriculture, may be attributed to the insufficiency of their territory for their support. But it is questioned if any civilized nation was ever yet driven to war, to find room for their increasing numbers. In the same proportion that a country becomes populous it becomes rich and flourishing. Europe is still far from being peopled to the utmost, and the other quarters of the world much less so.

so. It will be time enough to reduce our numbers by war, when the superfluity becomes burthensome. In this country we can urge no such plea, for in war we hire foreign soldiers, and distress our trade by impressing sailors.

Wars, it is said, have prevailed in all ages, and are still likely to prevail. It seems to be an appointment of Providence, and intended for wise purposes in our present state. It is impracticable to maintain perpetual peace: it is presumptuous to attempt it.

If war be an appointment of Providence, so are pestilence and famine.

There is reason to think that mankind will never be entirely delivered from any of these scourges, and we believe they are all rendered subservient to the wisest purposes by that great over-ruling hand which bringeth good out of evil. But experience shews that human art has been able to do much to mitigate the devastations of famine and pestilence, and render their visitations less frequent. In consequence of the improvements in agriculture and commerce, famine in Europe is now seldom felt; and the alterations in our manner of living, and precautions used to prevent foreign contagion, have been equally effectual

effectual against pestilence. It is not unreasonable to believe, that, by further exertions, these calamities may be yet more completely and universally overcome. And the attempt, so far from partaking of impiety, is an act of the highest beneficence to mankind, and as such entirely conformable to the spirit and precepts of true religion.

Why then should it be thought impracticable to deliver mankind in a considerable degree from the calamities of war? In consequence of the civilization of modern manners, war is already in some respects less destructive. Prisoners are seldom butchered,

chered, or reduced to slavery, and shocking cruelties and extensive devastations are less frequent. And so far well. But after making every deduction that truth permits, enough still remains, and must ever remain, while war is waged, to give force to our former arguments against it.

Upon a review of the whole argument, and after making allowance for what is urged on the opposite side, we cannot hesitate to pronounce that war is the absurdest and most destructive of human measures ; that it brings much evil upon the conquering as well as upon the vanquished

nation ; that its objects are often frivolous, seldom attained, and, when attained, seldom advantageous ; that heavy burthens are its constant attendant, and these not confined to the present age, but entailed upon posterity.

P A R T II.

WE are now to enquire into the motives or circumstances which induced Britain to engage in former wars, and their consequences.

We shall not enter into a detail of those bloody wars which were waged against France for some centuries, with a view to the conquest of that kingdom, or at least of some of its best provinces. It is now generally agreed, that the object would have been no less hurtful to Britain, if obtained, than the scheme appears from
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the event to have been impracticable.

In the reign of James I. application was made for assistance by his son-in-law the Elector Palatine, who was expelled from his dominions by the united power of the Emperor and several other German princes. This application was coolly received by the King, but warmly by the nation. It is hardly possible to conceive a quarrel in which England had less interest, which it would have prosecuted under greater disadvantages, or which was in every respect more impolitic. If the King had engaged in it, he would have been justly exposed
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to the charge of sacrificing the blood and interest of the nation, in a dispute which regarded his family only. Yet has that pacific monarch been branded, in his own and succeeding ages, chiefly upon account of his conduct in that affair, with every opprobrious epithet of cowardice and pusillanimity.

The troubles in the reign of Charles I. afforded no leisure for foreign wars. In the time of the Protectorate our achievements were glorious; but the wars carried on by the Commonwealth are now accounted contrary to sound policy, being directed against Spain, already too
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low, and against the Dutch states, with which we ought to cultivate a friendly intercourse. The wars in the reign of Charles II. neither brought us glory nor advantage.

The first war with France after the Revolution was undertaken to assist the Dutch, and depress the power of Lewis XIV. Our armies were generally defeated, and it was terminated by the peace of Ryswich, in 1696, rather unfavourably. A debt of upwards of twenty millions was contracted, and the system of funding introduced. The sum, compared with subsequent contractions, is inconsiderable : but those who are convinced
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of the pernicious tendency of the system will deprecate its commencement in a war with which this nation had only a secondary concern.

The next war, which commenced in 1701, was on occasion of the succession to the crown of Spain. The object was to prevent the junction of the French and Spanish monarchies, and to procure the latter for a branch of the Austrian family. A treaty for the partition of the Spanish monarchy had been transacted by King William. The first treaty for that purpose being found exceptionable, a second one was substituted in its room. The powers of Britain, Austria, and Holland,

land, were united against those of France and Spain ; but the heaviest part of the expence devolved on Britain. The success of the allied armies was glorious in a high degree. Signal victories were gained against superior armies ; strong fortresses taken, and all the efforts of the French monarch frustrated with ignominy. After a warfare of ten years, the death of the emperor's eldest son rendered the original object of the war impolitic, and there was already reason, notwithstanding all our successes, to believe it impracticable. The succession was settled on a younger descendant of the French

F monarch,

monarch, and some assurances given against the union of the monarchies, which might have been obtained at the commencement of the war. Some cessions were made in favour of our allies ; but Britain hardly gained any national advantage at the peace. We cannot reckon as such the stipulation, however humiliating to France, for demolishing the harbour of Dunkirk; an article which was renewed in successive treaties, which was never fully executed, and which was wisely abandoned on our part at the late peace. The debt contracted in this war was near forty millions.

The peace concluded at Utrecht
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in 1713 subsisted for twenty-seven years; one of the longest periods of peace we meet with in the annals of our history. During that period the national debt paid off did not amount to eight millions.

The next war broke out, first with Spain in 1740. The chief ostensible cause was, the right claimed and exercised by the Spaniards of searching our vessels suspected of carrying on a contraband trade with their American settlements. In this they seem to have done no more than every nation has a right to do for maintaining its own laws. Soon after France joined in the war against us,

and several other powers came in for a lesser share on either side. In this war we were unsuccessful. Some advantages at sea in part counterbalanced the defeats we sustained by land, and enabled us, after an eight years contest, to terminate the war by leaving matters nearly as we found them. The point which gave occasion to the war remained undecided. The debt contracted amounted to more than thirty-two millions.

One object of this war was to support the power of Maria Theresa, and the house of Austria. That object was obtained. In a few years after the whole power of that house

was

was exerted against us. The peace continued about eight years, and in that time about six millions of the national debt were paid.

The next war broke out in 1756, after having been brooding for several years. The cause was the encroachments committed upon the back settlements of our American provinces. The flames of this war were soon universally diffused. In the commencement, Russia was listed among our friends, and Prussia among our enemies. This arrangement was soon reversed. During the course of the war, Austria, France and Russia, and afterwards Spain, were united

against Britain and Prussia. We omit some less considerable allies on both sides. Few wars have been more successful than this was on our part. After a few discomfitures in the beginning, the campaigns of following years afforded a shining train of victories in every quarter of the world. The military operations of our allied army in Germany were indecisive indeed, but not inglorious. Those of the King of Prussia were uncommonly splendid. Often on the brink of destruction, his superior abilities withstood, and overcame the superior numbers of his enemies. In America, the French were completely expelled

pelled from their continental settlements, and the most valuable of their West-India islands, as well as those of Spain, were taken. In Africa, in the East, success still attended our arms. The peace, though unpopular, was honourable. It left us in possession of the whole northern continent of America, so far as the Mississippi, and many other valuable acquisitions. During this war upwards of sixty millions were added to the public debt.

The peace subsisted for twelve years, and the amount of debt paid off in that time, exclusive of some which was never funded, did not amount to nine millions. A rupture

with Spain had almost taken place in the year 1770, in consequence of an establishment we attempted upon the Falkland Islands, some barren rocks near the entry to the Straits of Magellan. Our title to these islands was liable to dispute. The inutility of the settlement, and the umbrage it must give to Spain from its vicinity to theirs, were obvious, and yet, for such a frivolous object, the spirit of the nation was disposed to plunge into war. The affair was compromised by administration upon honourable terms, but the compromise was unpopular.

After peace was re-established,

Britain

Britain attempted to levy a revenue in America, by its own authority, in order to reimburse part of the expence contracted by the war. We enter not into the argument concerning the justice or prudence of this measure ; but only observe, that the security which the cessions at the peace procured for the colonies, furnished the pretext for the demand, and emboldened the colonists in their opposition. We cannot hesitate to affirm that the successes of the former war were the cause of this one. After a state of dissatisfaction, and tumultuous opposition to government, for some years, the American

rican war broke fully out in 1775. France took part in it in 1778, Spain in 1779, and the Dutch in 1780. At the conclusion of the peace in 1783 the independence of the colonies was confirmed ; of all our possessions in North America, Nova Scotia and Quebec alone were retained ; Minorca, St. Lucia, and Senegal, &c. were ceded to the enemy. The debt contracted this war was about one hundred and five millions, *although* x

the sum
usually
received fell
short of this
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In this war we had no ally. It has been boasted, that acting alone against so many nations, although the event of the war was not successful, it was not dishonourable. A minister

nister in the House of Commons, when charged with neglect in contracting alliances, declared that the glory which the nation had acquired, the jealousy entertained of her power, and hatred of her insolence, had rendered it impossible to procure any allies.

Such was the issue of this war. The object for which it was undertaken entirely lost ; many of the acquisitions of former wars wrested from us ; our national debts nearly doubled ; our respect in the scale of nations considerably lessened.

In the year 1787 we were again upon the brink of a war. A struggle

gle between the aristocratic and democratic parties in Holland had proceeded to an open rupture. The former were supported by Prussia and Britain, the latter by France. In consequence of spirited or menacing remonstrances from Britain, France desisted from interfering, and by the assistance of Prussia the party of the Stadtholder gained the ascendant. France was at that time on the eve of an amazing revolution. Its peculiar circumstances might be known to our ministry, but they were not then known to the nation at large. Under any other circumstances, it is probable that remonstrances, such as

we made, would have met with a different reception, and involved us again in the dangers and calamities of war.

Besides the expences laid out in time of war, an additional charge has been incurred after the conclusion of peace, before matters could be brought to the footing of a peace establishment. This has been called a winding-up account. It has been always considerable, and, like the debts contracted in time of war, has increased with each succeeding war. It has also continued for a longer period. Although peace has now subsisted

sisted for seven years, the peace establishment is not yet fully adjusted.

The amount of the debt paid these seven years is about four millions, exclusive of what was never funded ; and the present amount of our debt is about two hundred and twenty-six millions.

Such have been the consequences of former wars ; such the increase of our burthens ; and such our situation, when there is every appearance of a new one. An attention to this detail of incontrovertible facts gives rise to some reflections. The national spirit inclines strongly to war.

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We rush into it upon the slightest pretexts, and with sanguine hopes ; regardless of former failures, or the certain increase of public burthens. In every age and nation, too great a propensity to war has been displayed, especially with a view to conquest ; but we have distinguished ourselves by engaging in wars with which we had no concern, and without any design of conquest.

Opposite parties who disagree in every other measure are united in favour of war. The late contest with regard to Holland and the present one with Spain afford examples of this unanimity.

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The most obvious consequences of public measures are disregarded. Nothing is more evident than that war must be supported by adequate grants of money ; that to raise this money, even upon the funding scheme, taxes are necessary, and that the taxes must be made effectual. Consistency requires us to oppose the first step, or acquiesce in all the rest. Yet we plunge into war with precipitancy ; the supplies are granted with little opposition ; the taxes occasion a considerable murmuring ; but the regulations necessary for enforcing the taxes excite the loudest clamour, and

and furnish the most copious topics for opposition.

We are always dissatisfied with the terms of peace. We look for conditions which it is improbable to obtain. An opinion prevails that our enemies excel us in the art of negotiating as much as we excel them in the art of fighting. The fury excited by the peace of Utrecht is not yet forgotten. Nothing would then have satisfied the national ardour but to march our armies into the heart of France, and conquer or dismember that monarchy. The public discontent occasioned by the peace in 1763, the most glorious

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we ever made, is still fresh in every one's memory. The late peace, although absolutely necessary, afforded topics for popular clamour.

It is not probable that we are really outwitted by the superior policy of our enemies. The truth rather is, that we overvalue our own advantages, and overlook our exhausted situation. If every circumstance at the time of any of these treaties be fairly weighed, the terms may not be found inadequate to the relative situation of the parties. If we had gained some advantages, and captured some of the detached possessions of our enemies, our victories

were

were not decisive. The body of their nation was still unbroken ; their armies were still numerous and disciplined. If their finances were exhausted, ours were in no better order.

We have always taken a particular burthen in maintaining the balance of Europe. Our insular situation renders our concern in that balance at least less direct than that of the nations on the continent. The versatility of our measures proves that we have been often wrong. We have fought to preserve the liberties of Europe. Does Europe thank us ? Do they not rather consider us as

officious intermeddlers ? In the time of our distress, which nation stepped forth to aid us ? Secure in our insular situation, and supporting a respectable fleet, we should do well to improve our trade and national prosperity, amidst the blessings of peace ; and might leave our neighbours to fight their battles, and maintain their balances for themselves.

Upon these principles, those foreign alliances ought to be reprobated, which have a probable tendency to involve us in foreign wars. Alliances of this sort have been lately contracted with Prussia, Holland and others. The contracting powers stipulate,

late, in case of either being attacked, to lend their aid in men or money to a certain extent ; and besides, if the stipulated aid be insufficient, they further bind themselves to assist their ally *with their whole strength*. When foreign wars break out, each nation pretends that it is defensive on their part, and it is often difficult to decide which is the aggressor. A demand is made for our aid, and we gratify our natural propensity to war by complying with it. If a demand be made on our part, we may not find our allies equally complying. If present interest does not support our requisition, we shall receive elusory answers.

Experience justifies this assertion. We shall search in vain for instances of succour received from abroad upon the principle of the faith of national treaties, without the bribe of subsidies, or other present interest.

Britain has discovered an extreme fondness for establishing settlements in all quarters of the world.

It is not intended to reprobate every thing of this sort. They may be useful for the extension of commerce; they may supply us with the productions of foreign climates; they may even be subservient to the purposes of humanity, by introducing civilization and useful arts among barbarous

barbarous nations. At the same time our attachment to them may be immoderate. The expences of establishing and supporting the settlements may be great ; the advantages equivocal. The cool voice of national interest may be less listened to than the glory of extending our dominions to every region. Experience has already evinced that our system of colonization in America was erroneous. Our eastern possessions have proved a source of wealth to private persons, perhaps to the public. But how far territorial property in these distant countries promotes the public welfare, or accords with our free and

happy constitution, is a point still undecided.

Of all foreign possessions, those of fortified places, held in the dominions of the independent nations of Europe, appear the least justifiable: yet to hold such possessions has been and still is a favourite passion of the British. Our conquests in France were wrested from us in the reign of Henry VI. except the city of Calais. This we held at a great expence, sometimes no less than one third of the ordinary national revenue, till the reign of Queen Mary. The loss of that place is said to have occasioned more discontent than all the cruelties

cruelties she committed ; and the grief it occasioned, to have hastened her to her grave.

Dunkirk fell into the hands of the English in the time of the commonwealth, and was fold to the French in the reign of Charles II. under the administration of the Earl of Clarendon. The expence of maintaining it amounted to 120,000*l. per ann.* or one tenth of the then ordinary revenue. The odium of that measure was the chief cause of the disgrace of that able and virtuous minister. Gibraltar has been in our possession since the year 1704. The expence of maintaining it in peace is great ;
that

that of defending it in war, enormous.

The possession of that fortress is thought to give us certain advantages in time of war.

It affords us a harbour for refitting our fleets, employed in the Mediterranean station.

The propriety of maintaining a fleet, in a sea where we have no settlements, may be questioned, when we have settlements to defend in every quarter of the globe. To send our fleets to fight the French in the Mediterranean is a similar measure to that of sending our armies to fight theirs in Germany. The propriety
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of this last has been fully canvassed by the public.

We formerly possessed Minorca as well as Gibraltar. We sent our fleets to the Mediterranean, to defend Minorca and Gibraltar. We must retain Minorca or Gibraltar to accommodate our fleets in the Mediterranean.

The enemy may have part of their fleet in the Mediterranean, and part in the Channel or Bay, and it may be of consequence to unite them. By possessing Gibraltar we prevent their junction.

This case may happen, but it is impossible to provide against every
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contingence which may occur in war, by permanent establishments. Notwithstanding our possession of Gibraltar, the enemy's Mediterranean fleet may effect its passage through the Straits ; and their doing so does not appear an object of great moment. If our fleets be superior in strength and discipline to theirs, we may hope to meet them wherever they are, and however united with advantage. If the superiority be on their side, the possession of Gibraltar will avail us little.

Without Gibraltar we should lose our trade to the Mediterranean in time of war.

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The same strength which we employ to convey succour to Gibraltar in time of war, would conduct a fleet of merchant ships through the Straits. The trade might be carried on under convoy without risks much superior to the ordinary ones in time of war. If it suffered, the object is not of sufficient consequence to be put in competition with the charge of supporting Gibraltar.

In time of war the enemy besiege Gibraltar, without success, and waste that strength in ineffectual efforts, which might be exerted against us
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in another quarter with more advantage.

The Spaniards indeed carried on a long siege last war; but they have not done so every war; nor is there reason to believe they will persevere in any measure contrary to their interest.

These are all the advantages we remember to have heard of, as resulting from Gibraltar in time of war, & It is whispered that it gives vent to some of our manufactures by affording opportunity for a prohibited trade with Spain in time of peace.

Although we do not affirm that the law

*X for it has
not been
used like
Calais and
Dunkirk
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law of nations requires us to enforce the prohibitory regulations of foreign states ; yet such clandestine intercourse deserves little encouragement from the public, and cannot be decently urged in defence of a measure of so much public consequence.

Against any advantage which the possession of Gibraltar may yield, we must state the enormous expence of maintaining and defending it, which last war exceeded ~~half~~ a million in one year. We must also state that such possessions render the countries to which they naturally belong inimical, and dispose them to take part in every war against us.

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An eminent senator is said to have declared in parliament, that if Portsmouth were in the possession of the enemy, he would rather suffer them to retain it, than agree to exchange it for Gibraltar. We do not enquire how far such a sentiment will bear the test of common sense. It appears to have been thrown out as a flower of eloquence in which judgment was not consulted. Certain it is, that whatever foreign state held Portsmouth against us, we should wage eternal war against that state till we had recovered it. Will not the same national spirit induce Spain to wage war against us, until they recover Gibraltar?

Gibraltar ? In every war since they lost it they have borne a share against us : and we may reasonably ascribe their doing so, and engaging in the family compact, to resentments naturally excited by so galling a situation.

The possession of a fortress so useless, so expensive, so insulting to the nation it naturally belongs to, is highly grateful to our national spirit. In time of war every call of honour requires us to exert ourselves in its defence. At the conclusion of peace it would be base to abandon a place we had so gallantly and successfully defended. So strongly was the voice

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of the people attached to it, that whatever might be the sentiments of the ministry at the late peace, they durst not propose to cede it. We soon enjoyed the gratification of offering an additional insult, by conferring a title of nobility from that obnoxious fortress.

Another argument against retaining Gibraltar is drawn from the probability that it may be one day wrested from us. The Spaniards must always be bent upon recovering it. They are at hand to catch an unguarded moment. It may not be always so carefully watched, and so bravely defended, as by the late gallant

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lant commander. The fortune of war, which turns upon an hundred unforeseen accidents, may cease to favour us: and thus we shall lose, ignominiously and without any recompense, a possession which we may at present exchange upon honourable and advantageous terms.

Upon the whole it appears that this nation is forward to engage in war, hard to be satisfied with terms of peace, regardless of the burthens entailed upon posterity, ambitious of establishments in every corner of the globe, and especially of holding fortresses within the territories of foreign and hostile states.

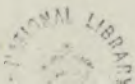
The causes to which our national conduct may be ascribed are now to be enquired into.

First, It is to be ascribed in a great measure to that high spirit, which is a striking feature in our national character. It is foreign from our present design to enquire into the causes which distinguish the characters of nations. The general fact of their diversity, and the particular example under consideration are unquestionable.

An Englishman exults in the bold and generous spirit of his country ; a spirit of liberty and enterprize, the source of whatever is great and glorious.

rious. He is quick to resent the slightest appearance of public injury or insult, and boldly advances to punish the offending foe. He considers it as our natural privilege to reign mistress of the sea, and to hold the balance of Europe. He spurns at any councils that may be offered to moderate his fervour, as the dictates of weakness and pusillanimity; or perhaps ascribes them to the insidious designs of secret enmity.

It is a wise and ancient maxim to listen to what our enemies say of us. They may exaggerate, but they generally censure the culpable part. The enemies of Britain hold us forth as unsup-



portably insolent in our public conduct ; and neutral states, not liable to any suspicion of unfavourable bias, admit that the charge is not entirely without foundation.

A British subject, who sincerely loves his country, and rejoices in her brave and active spirit, may at the same time acknowledge and desire to restrain its excesses. He may perceive that she sometimes transcends the bounds of prudence and moderation, perhaps of justice. Although a good citizen, he may not divest himself of the character of a man, nor rejoice in those national exertions, in respect of which the sentiments of
neutral

neutral states and the dictates of impartial reason declare us in the wrong.

In private life we meet with men who boast of their courage and unimpeachable honour, and who possess many excellent virtues. They are open, friendly, generous, sincere; but they are insolent, haughty and vindictive. They are regardless what offence they give, and perhaps attack their neighbour, with design, on his irritable side. They are enraged by the slightest provocation, and deem it below the dignity of a man to heal a difference by explanation or concession. They run

headlong into every quarrel, and are shunned as nuisances by the peaceable part of mankind.

Others are respected for their temperate and firm conduct. While their actions are directed by just and virtuous principles, their manners are conformed to the rules of strict decorum. They are careful of offending, and disposed to make allowances for the different tempers of mankind. They are cool and recollected in every situation. They will not submit to any considerable injury, but they are not provoked at every trifle. They have not formed a resolution of never fighting, but they

they act with so much discretion, that they may pass through life without being called to fight.

If this be Lælius, and that be Milo, who would prefer Milo to Lælius? which of these characters would we seek for in a friend? which of them must we esteem as useful to society? To which of them ought we to wish our own character to conform? In answering these questions there is hardly room for hesitation. If the principles of public conduct be ultimately the same as those which regulate private life, and if the true honour of a nation depend on the same sentiments, and be established
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upon the same grounds as those of an individual, the inference is obvious.

It belongs to those who affirm that the laws of public and private conduct are not the same, to explain the grounds of the distinction.

There are obvious reasons which render precipitation in national quarrels more inexcusable. The consequences are more extensive. An irascible man hurts himself or his antagonist. The mischief seldom extends farther. The evils of war pervade the whole community, and affect multitudes who neither know nor are concerned in the cause of it.

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The government is answerable for the calamities it inflicts on those whom it was established to defend. The present generation is answerable for the burthens entailed upon posterity. A private man who fights and survives is equally fit to fight again. This is not the case with a nation.

It is said that if we do not discover a quick resentment of injuries, our forbearance will be imputed to pusillanimity, and expose us to fresh attacks; whereas a bold and spirited conduct intimidates our enemies, and confirms our security. This argument, when confined within due limits, is well founded; but, like many others,

others, may be extended too far; and experience shews we have extended it too far. Have we discovered a tameness to bear with injuries? Has long peace been the consequence of our quick resentments? It is not the man who is always in haste to draw his sword, that passes through life with least disturbance. It is not the nation which runs most precipitately to arms that preserves best its public tranquillity.

A similar maxim, which is true to a certain degree, but false and dangerous when pushed too far, is the propriety of being always prepared for war, as the most effectual means
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of securing peace. *Bellum ostendite, pacem habebitis*, is an adage in every one's mouth. Whatever fleets and armies we maintain in time of peace, neighbouring nations will do the same; and when both sides are prepared for war, the slightest occasion will engage them in war. The language of our foldiers and failors is, *We are prepared, let us fall on*. The language of our minifters is fometimes too much the fame.

By maintaining confiderable fleets and armies in time of peace, we prevent that relief to our finances which alone can enable us to carry on war, when neceffary, with vigour. The warmeft

warmest stickler for the point of national honour may consider that frequent wars must disappoint his favourite passion. They will exhaust our national strength, and then we must be exposed to endure indignities.

There may, no doubt, be an excess of pusillanimity in public conduct; but there is little occasion to guard against that weakness, in an address offered to the British nation. Our temper leads us to the opposite extreme. Profusion is a vice equally reprehensible as avarice; but in arguing with a miser, we may save ourselves the trouble of cautioning him against the errors of profusion.

Secondly,

Secondly, Our national propensity to war may be ascribed to its promoting the interest of many individuals, and not a few of these in stations of influence, at the same time that it impoverishes the public. It produces this effect in a greater degree, the more lavishly the public treasures are squandered.

When war breaks out, the price of all commodities imported from abroad is raised by the additional charge of freight and insurance. Merchants who have a stock of these goods on hand gain by this advance of price. This motive directs the inclinations
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of a numerous class of men, universally diffused through the nation, and many of them in affluent circumstances.

Large quantities of various articles are required for equipping our fleets and armies. Manufacturers and others to whose profession it belongs to provide these articles, have the benefit of a sudden and great extension to their business.

Contractors with government in every department entertain the greatest hopes of gain, and are seldom disappointed.

The monied interest look forward
to

to profitable loans. Bargains of that kind are always concluded to the public disadvantage.

Stockjobbers expect a plentiful harvest, from the fluctuations of the public funds, in consequence of the vicissitudes of war. In that destructive field of gaming, every man trusts to the superior sagacity of his own conjectures.

Gentlemen in the army and navy are always impatient for war, which to them is the season of promotion; and gentlemen who intend to provide for their sons in the army or navy concur with them, from a like motive.

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But the greatest gainers by war are the persons entrusted with administration.

It is well known that a minister's influence in parliament is supported by patronage. This is the engine by which he succeeds at elections, and retains the elected in his interest. In these corrupt times, the most upright minister cannot entirely dispense with it. The increase of patronage in time of war is immense. It adds firmness to his establishment, and gives him ample funds for rewarding his friends; and all this he enjoys in the ordinary course of administration, without being driven to the odious measure

measure of direct corruption. Besides, as war is generally favoured by the public voice, it adds to the popularity of his administration.

Nothing is more remote from our design, than to brand the present, or any former ministry, as wicked men, who knowingly involve the nation in calamities, from selfish views. We only state the consequences which may be expected to result from the principles of human nature. Some rare characters possess a degree of candour and integrity which no selfish views can bias or prevent. But the generality of mankind in every situation are directed by their interest,

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or by what they esteem such, and they find some salvo to reconcile it to their notions of duty. In the point we are discussing, there is much to be said on that side which the interest of the ministry inclines to. The arguments for war carry along the body of the people, who are losers by it. It is not surprising they should convince the ministry, who are generally men of high spirit, and who are gainers by it.

Members of parliament come in for their share of patronage, and are therefore all in some degree under the same bias.

Thirdly, The foreign princes who
have

have been advanced to our throne for a century past, have brought along with them a predilection for foreign politics and wars. King William's ruling passion was resentment against the French monarch. Our two first sovereigns of the Hanoverian family retained a partial favour for their continental dominions, a sentiment in itself rather commendable, but improper for a British King; and tending to involve us in alliances and contests, from which we ought to have kept ourselves disengaged. Our present sovereign is exempt from the suspicion of any such bias; but the prejudice in favour of the system in-

roduced by his predecessors is not yet worn away. Opinions embraced by party are obstinately retained, and instilled by education into the tender minds of youth, and transmitted to a new generation. Our ancestors, who exerted themselves gloriously, in the cause of liberty, at the Revolution, regarded with too much favour the measures which followed that happy event. Their posterity imbibed the same sentiments. They are now weakened, but not yet obliterated.

Fourthly, Our insular situation exempts us from feeling the more dreadful calamities of war. The invasion
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of this island by a foreign force is an undertaking of much difficulty and danger. It has not been attempted in any of our late wars, nor is it much dreaded in future wars. The protection which our situation affords us might generally enable us to maintain peace: in fact it only increases the frequency of our wars, which we engage in more readily because we expect to suffer but little.

The system of funding produces a like effect. It renders the burthens of war at present light, and reserves them in a great measure for posterity.

Such are the causes of our readiness to engage in war. It suits the

high spirit of the nation. It advances the interest of many individuals, and especially it advances the interest of the minister. Our foreign sovereigns have cherished prejudices in favour of foreign politics. Our insular situation and our system of funding alleviate its calamities and burthens.

P A R T III.

IT remains to offer some remarks upon the present appearance of a rupture with Spain.

The object of the contest is itself of a trivial nature. A branch of trade has been attempted by a few private adventurers, in the remotest part of the globe. It appears from the accounts* which have been published of some of these voyages, that it can never be carried to any considerable extent. The only article it furnishes

* Dickson and Portlock's Voyage.

is furs, and those in so small quantity as only to supply a few cargoes in a season. If these be anticipated, the voyage proves entirely abortive. For a trade so confined and so precarious, a very long and dangerous voyage must be undertaken, and all the perils which attend an intercourse with savage nations sustained. A trade so circumstanced will probably be abandoned after a few trials. It certainly can never become a national object. That nation which possesses settlements in the vicinity must carry it on with superior advantages: and, extravagant as we sometimes are in regard to settlements, it may be hoped

we shall not be so absurd as to establish one for its accommodation.

It was observed in parliament, that the southern whale fishery might be objected to upon the same principle, and must be abandoned if the Spanish claim be admitted in its full extent. It was not said that any obstruction had been given, or any objection made to it. The mentioning of it leads us to estimate the value of that fishery. Our whale fisheries have been long supported by bounties, and are still so supported. The propriety of continuing these bounties is questionable. If the trade will support itself without them, they are impositions

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tions on the public, and ought to be withdrawn. If the trade, after a long trial, still requires the aid of bounties, it is a losing one to the nation, and ought to be abandoned. The proper object of bounties is to encourage new branches of commerce and manufacture, and to enable the undertakers to surmount the peculiar difficulties which attend adventures not yet fully understood. The term of their continuance may vary with circumstances, and sometimes it may be justifiable to prolong the original term; but still it ought to have its limit. If after a trial of half a century the trade will not stand without a bounty,

bounty, it ought to be left to its fate. At least when a trade is liable to such strong objections, and can be more conveniently prosecuted in its nearer branches, we may be indifferent about its more remote ones.

Since the objects of contest are trivial, the only plea for going to war is the point of national honour. Under such circumstances our conduct ought to be moderate. We should be careful of provoking war by an imperious manner; and we should be willing to accommodate differences upon easy terms.

We sometimes observe private persons going to law about a subject of

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no value, which neither will yield up the right to, and incurring expences which their fortunes are unable to bear. They are derided by their neighbours for their folly. The lawyers smile, and carry off the gain.

The Spaniards have detained some of our ships. It is generally believed they are willing to restore them, and indemnify the proprietors for their detention. If they do this, they repair the national insult in as ample a manner as is ever done between equal and independent nations. If they can verify any sufficient cause of detention, we have no right to exact so much. We should not grant so much
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under fimilar circumftances. We fhould infift that negociation fhould precede redrefs, and detain the prizes till the grounds which occafioned the capture were finally difcuffed.

It appears that the veffels feized by the Spaniards were attempting a fettlement upon a part of the coaft which they claimed as their property; that the adventurers were bargaining with the natives for *an exclusive trade*; and that they navigated occasionally under a foreign flag. It is afferted by the captor, that a foreign commiffion of a hostile nature was found among their papers.

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Without entering into an examination of the justice of the Spanish claim, we must remark the impropriety of permitting private traders to engage in such projects, and take possession of countries in the King's name at their pleasure. Persons engaged in such enterprises are generally of rash and headstrong characters, and will embroil us in unnecessary quarrels. If the law permits this, it ought to be altered. If the charter of the East India Company authorises such adventures, this power ought to be refused or modified when a new charter is granted; and in the
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mean time the controlling power of government is strong enough to prevent its improper exertion.

The claim of Spain, for an exclusive right of settling upon a certain part of the coast, is a proper subject of negotiation; and in a matter of so little value to us, the negotiation may be easy. We need be little solicitous of the precise situation of the line which bounds their claims, in a country where we never ought to settle.

The claim of property as founded upon discovery without settlement is absurd in the extreme: yet it has often been adopted in treaties among

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European nations, and by Britain in particular, as an incontrovertible principle. It might be wished that a code of public laws were established, by general consent, among the maritime powers of Europe, for deciding the several points which are apt to give rise to contests, in regard to foreign possessions; what constitutes settlement; how far the property extends from the place of actual settlement; and what shall be construed as amounting to dereliction. But these and other points of a like kind are still vague, and until they be precisely determined, which is not likely to happen soon, we shall act wisely to
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compromise the disputes which arise, according to reasons and circumstances, rather than to aim at compelling all foreign states, by a high hand, to accede to what laws we please to prescribe.

If a foreign state asserts ill-grounded or even absurd pretensions, this is no good reason for going to war, so long as these pretensions are harmless. The Pope formerly deposed kings, and disposed of their dominions; and at the æra of our great discoveries he granted the dominion of the east to Portugal, and of the western world to Spain. He has not yet, as far as we know, formally re-

nounced any of these prerogatives : yet no nation goes to war with him on that account. The King of Britain styles himself King of France, and the French monarch gives himself no concern.

In all our modern treaties, at the same time that the articles of real importance are laid down, a general one is inserted, by which the claims and rights of all parties not determined by the treaty are reserved upon their former footing. The notion of waging war in order to bring every point to an exact decision is a foolish one. The peace which terminates the war will be concluded

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as all former treatiès of peace have been, and leave many points unsettled. We may resolve, when we draw the sword, never to sheath it till we have obtained our aim. We have done so before. We did it in the war regarding the Spanish succession. We did it in the war which arose from the Spanish claim of searching our ships. The issue of these wars it is unnecessary to repeat.

We meet with instances, and recent ones, where an aspiring prince has revived claims that have lain long dormant, to obtain a pretext for attacking his weaker neighbour. Shall we say that want of precision in the treaties,

ties, which ascertained the rights of the respective states, was the cause of the war ; and that peace would have been the consequence of a more exact determination ? If any person think so, he is unfit to be reasoned with upon political subjects.

The notion of obtaining payment from Spain of the expences of our present armament is altogether vain. No such redress has been obtained in any modern war. If we search for an example of it, we shall need to recur to the glorious ages of the Roman republic. The demand is of so humiliating a nature, that no nation will listen to it till they are reduced to the last extremity of weakness.

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The most sanguine imagination cannot expect to reduce them to that state in one campaign. The millions which we spend every year must therefore be accumulated, and the amount exacted before we agree to any terms of peace. This is a demand which Spain, while it is able to fight, will never be willing, and when it can fight no longer it will not be able, to discharge.

Beside our general propensity to war, the causes of which have been already considered, there are some circumstances peculiar to the present juncture, which raise the hopes and enflame the spirits of the public.

We are animated by the success of our late negotiation with France relating to the affairs of Holland. We talked on that occasion in a high tone, such as independent states do not easily brook. Yet France yielded to our remonstrances. We believe that this is the only proper manner of negotiating, and will always be successful. The circumstances of France which occasioned the success of our negotiation were extremely peculiar. The finances deranged, the power of the sovereign almost annihilated, and the body of the nation engaged in a great design, to which war was altogether adverse. That style of conduct

conduct which we call spirited, but which the state it is addressed to consider as insolent, will not generally succeed. It would irritate us; it must irritate them, and provoke war to gratify national pride, without any national object. Spain has not the same impetuosity of temper as Britain, but she is no less haughty, though her haughtiness is of a cooler kind. To involve ourselves in war with any nation, by treating them in a manner they will not bear, is a folly of the same nature, but much superior in degree, to that of quarrelling with every person around us, by behaviour purposely

purposely offensive to their respective tempers.

Spain it is thought can at present receive no assistance from her ordinary ally, and being much inferior to Britain in naval strength, when alone, must soon be reduced to sue for peace on our own terms. Like hopes are entertained at the commencement of every war, and never more, nor seemingly upon better grounds, than at the commencement of the late war with our colonies. It was hardly thought they would have dared to oppose our fleets and armies, far less that they would frustrate all our efforts, and finally establish their inde-

independence. Every page of history, ancient and modern, affords lessons, which are not listened to, of the precarious events of military operations, and the fluctuations in the political connections of nations. The new constitution of France at present hangs upon a pin, which the slightest accident may overturn ; and it will hardly be supposed more incredible at present, that within a year that country may be in firm alliance with Spain, than it was a year ago that her public affairs should be now in their present situation. If all the successes we hope for attend us, what do we gain by it ? Our Gazettes will
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be filled with our victories, our towns illuminated, and Spain will yield us some useless claims. This is all we shall probably gain for the blood of thousands, and the expenditure of millions. Do we expect to strip them of their South American settlements, and obtain possession of the rich treasures of Potosi? Those who understand the interest of their country best, will not be dissatisfied in knowing that such projects are attended with unsurmountable difficulties. If we obtained the prize, which it is more than probable we never should, it would contribute as little to advance the prosperity of Britain, as
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the possession of these countries has done to the prosperity of the Spanish monarchy. Perhaps we might wrest from them some of their islands in the West Indies. This would be a more valuable and more practicable acquisition, and it is the utmost advantage that can rationally be expected. Let this be estimated as high as it will bear ; it will not compensate the twentieth part of the certain expence : let the difficulties and risks be estimated also, and the argument in favour of war from that expectation will amount to little.

THE foregoing reflections are offered to the public by an obscure individual, alike unconnected with those in administration, and those in opposition, and under no bias to praise or blame any party or set of men whatever. He is conscious of no motive but a sense of his duty as a citizen, and as a man. Convinced that the spirit of the nation inclines on this, as on former occasions, to engage in war precipitately, and without sufficient grounds, he wishes, though he does not hope, to moderate her ardour ; and rejoices to plead a cause, in which he believes the good of his country and the interests

rests of humanity are concerned. It is a subject which does not require shining talents, but rather plain sense, aided by a cool and candid temper : neither is an acquaintance with the secrets of state indispensably necessary. Foreign nations, unconnected with the points in dispute, judge better on such occasions than the nation concerned ; and posterity than the present generation.

It does not belong to a private person, unacquainted with all the circumstances of the transaction, to lay down the lowest terms of accommodation that ought to be accepted. It is not even proper for a minister to do so

during the dependence of a negotiation. But when the sanguine temper of the public requires terms that cannot be obtained, it is the part of a true patriot to recommend moderation.

It may be expected that Spain shall grant an adequate indemnification to the parties injured by the late seizures, unless she can shew a reasonable cause for that measure : and it is to be wished that her claims were bounded by a distinct line to prevent future contests. The exact situation of that line concerns us little ; and as to refunding the expences of our armament, it ought never to be
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thought of. It should be remembered, when these points are under discussion, that all we desire can seldom be obtained, that the expectation of obtaining the whole by war is precarious, and that it is better to pass from part of our demands now, than be obliged to do so after expending an hundred times their value.

If the detentions be the real cause of quarrel, it is so trivial, that there is little doubt of accommodating it by negociation, provided we conduct it temperately. But perhaps Spain is determined to go to war with us, and the detentions may chiefly have been made with design to provoke a rupture.

ture. This ought not to be hastily inferred, so as to precipitate us into hostile measures ; but if there be probable grounds for believing it, ministry are in the right for being prepared. If Spain be determined for war, it is unavoidable ; but we may enquire into the motives of such a resolution at a time when they engage in it under many disadvantages. So unfavourable is the juncture, it is hardly credible they can have formed such a determination. Yet we will believe they are inimical, and disposed to break with us whenever they can do it with advantage, and in every war to join our enemies. Such

will be their disposition so long as we retain Gibraltar. A British subject under this conviction may be permitted to wish that, if we engage in war, the loss of that fortress may be one of its events; or at least that its surrender may be one of the terms of peace.

The candid reader, if he be not satisfied with the whole of the reasonings above adduced, in which a variety of points have been incidentally touched on, will consider whether they be just in their principal parts. If he cannot go so far as we have done, he may perhaps admit the sentiments advanced to a certain

degree. The author knows that addresses of this kind, although drawn up with abilities far superior to his, have little influence with the public, and that the national spirit at present runs too high to listen to the voice of moderation.

Amidst the uneasiness excited by the sense of impending evils, he derives some consolation from observing the gentle progress of pacific sentiments. * The argument of the future conduct of mankind from the past, although weighty, is not fully conclusive. Many absurdities, which prevailed for ages, and occasioned infinite evils to mankind, are now ful-

* the effect of luxury and ^{ly} effeminacy

ly exploded. We no longer fight nor persecute for conscience sake. Slavery is abolished in Europe, and in the present times a spirit has arisen for extending the same humane and wise policy to America. The revolutions in human sentiments and manners which have taken place within two centuries are amazing, and highly beneficial to mankind: but we have still many prejudices which it may be hoped posterity will surmount. Propensity to war is perhaps of all others the most irrational, and the most destructive.

Some men of the greatest abilities, both natives and foreigners, have inculcated

culcated and enforced doctrines favourable to peace. Their opinions are gradually, although silently and imperceptibly, gaining ground. As yet they are chiefly confined to persons of a philosophic temper, and in retired situations. They are too weak to influence national councils, or be heard amidst the noise of angry passions which national contests excite. Yet the French assembly have formed the noble resolution of abstaining from interference with foreign politics, and from aiming at extension of territory. The progress of the human mind in an enlightened age, and the growing experience of human

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human affairs, are favourable to the dissemination of these liberal sentiments. We may be permitted to indulge the pleasant hope, that posterity may enjoy the blessings of peace in a degree we cannot look for in our own days ; and that nations, convinced of what constitutes their true interest, may apply their exertions to cultivate the arts of peace, and desist from the barbarous work of destroying one another.

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Prophecies, 150. 57.

