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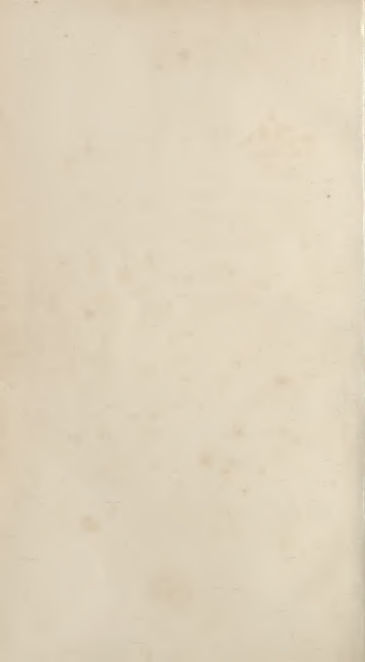
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~~J. W. Campbell.~~

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# BRITAIN'S <sup>1.</sup>

## REMEMBRANCER:

OR,

The DANGER not over.

BEING

Some thoughts on the proper improvement of the present juncture.

The character of this age and nation.

A brief view, from history, of the effects of the vices which now prevail in *Britain*, upon the greatest empires and states of former times.

Remarkable deliverances

this nation has had in the most imminent dangers; with suitable reflexions.

Some hints, shewing what is in the power of the several ranks of people, and of every individual in *Britain*, to do toward securing the state from all its enemies.

THE FIFTH EDITION:

With a PREFACE by Mr THOMAS BOSTON at *Oxnam*, and RECOMMENDATIONS by the late Mr WILLISON at *Dundee*, &c.

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MR BOSTON'S  
P R E F A C E.

**T**HIS most excellent performance, *The British Remembrancer*, made its first appearance in public, about the time of the last rebellion in *Scotland*. Since that time, it has undergone several impressions, which were very quickly sold off; for the fourth edition of it appeared in the year 1747, scarcely two years after the first. But as it is too evident that the vices exposed in this pamphlet, and many others, still prevail to an uncommon degree, in the island of *Great Britain*, the public is favoured with this new impression of it. GOD grant, for his Son's sake, the nations may at length *remember their faults*, repent, and reform, that iniquity may not prove their ruin.

The luxury and irreligion of the age are here painted out, exposed and lash'd in the most severe, and, at the same time, in the most polite and elegant manner. The author, far beyond any that ever I saw, has the happy talent of speaking in a style that is quite easy and intelligible

gible to the meanest peasant, while it can give no offence, but must be highly pleasing to the admirer of fine language. In him, the excellent scholar, the fine gentleman, and the most devout Christian, seem to be very cordially united.

As for irreligion, which is one of the two things the author chiefly insists upon, — I apprehend, that we, in this nation, are near about equal with our neighbours in *England*, and so may take the charge home to ourselves, as well as they. We have been, for some time past, and still continue to be, plagued and pestered with books, razing the foundations of natural, as well as revealed religion. And tho' the authors of them have seen their blasphemies, their sophistry, and nonsense, exposed again and again, by men of the most exquisite sense and knowledge; yet they still persist in retailing their silly stuff, and, like madmen, constantly rhyme over the same thing, without attending to what's spoken by the sober and wise.

And, wherein we fall short of our neighbours in the luxury and extravagance of life, this, one may suppose, is owing to our poverty. We have not such adminicles and supports to this fashionable vice as they have, and therefore can't carry it to that perfection they have done. *Sequimur, quamvis non passibus æquis.*

What

What gives a most melancholy prospect of the state of religion and morals in this nation, is the way in which the generality of the youth of rank and station among us are trained up. They are inured not only to the neglect, but to the contempt and scorn of religion, virtue, and sobriety. Going abroad to other countries with these bad dispositions, they swallow down, without thought, but with great greediness, the most Atheistical opinions, and go in with the most lewd and abominable practices. Returning home to their native country with the small portion of sense they carried away, impaired rather than improved, but accomplished in every vice which human nature is capable of, they become the pests and plagues of the places where they live, or have any influence. It is this sort of gentlemen who break dull jokes upon the bible, blaspheme the mysteries of our holy religion, and cry aloud in the spirit of wine, *priestcraft, imposture, hypocrisy*. But if a sober, sensible man was to enter upon the argument with one of these brainless fops, they'd either altogether decline the engagement, or they would, in the very beginning of it, discover their gross ignorance of the whole matter.

What a strange perversion of things is it, to imagine, that religion, and the fear of GOD, and acts of worship, are below

a gentleman;---and that prayer, reading the scriptures, hearing sermons, and leading a life of devotedness to the supreme Being, are low, dull, and mean exercises, designed only for peasants, mechanics, and such as can't have their bread but by the sweat of their brows! The truth is, greatness without goodness, power without piety, are the most mischievous monsters.---Estates, titles of honour, equipage, and the several implements of worldly grandeur, bestowed on such worthless wretches, are like fine furniture and rich embroideries upon the back of an ass, which serve only to make the poor brute more ugly and ridiculous.

The people of this nation were some time famous for the strict observation of the holy sabbath; but the general disregard of that day, both in towns, and thro' the country, is too well known, and deserves to be lamented with tears of blood, as that which opens the sluice for all manner of wickedness among us. Some spend this day in visiting, some in gaming, some in drunkenness and debauchery, and others sleep it away at home. Of the few who attend public ordinances with any tolerable regularity, how many discover by their behaviour, that the sabbath is so far from being their delight, that it is really a weariness to them, and that, like *Doeg*, they're detained before the Lord against their will?

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The profanation of the sabbath, however slightly we may think of it, because it is turned common and customary, yet it is deeply resented by the Lord of it, and brings down heavy judgments upon churches and nations. Hence *Nehemiah*, that great reformer, *contended even with the nobles of Judah*, about this matter, and warned them, saying, *Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath*, Neh. xiii. 18.

Not only fornication, but adultery, tho' a breach of the very letter of the law, is so very common in the nation, that people are not ashamed of it, but seem rather to glory in it. Marriage, that honourable and antient institution, is ridiculed by a set of wretched Libertines, who rush into every scene of lust and lewdness, like a horse into the battle,--and waste their strength and substance among harlots without blushing, and without reflexion, *till they mourn at the last, when their flesh and their body are consumed*. Multitudes of these antient young gentlemen are to be seen dragging a vile rotten carcase to the grave, at an age when their sober and virtuous ancestors were purchasing, by their industry, estates and titles to be a snare, a reproach, a curse, and damnation to their degenerate offspring. Nor are the sins of uncleanness peculiar to the people of higher rank in the nation;

tion; far from it.---They abound every where among the commonality, as appears from the records of most kirk-sessions and presbyteries in *Scotland*, which contain few things besides processes about these abominable works of darkness.

Drunkeness, which is an inlet to the former, and many other vices, prevails among us to an uncommon degree, notwithstanding the many dismal accidents which often attend it, and by which GOD proclaims his dreadful indignation against it. Many strong healthy constitutions we see broken with this kind of intemperance, and many families rooted out of the places where once they flourished, and reduced to the greatest misery. Nay, how many private houses are turned into common inns, where all the year long they're killing the time, (as their phrase is) and themselves too, both soul and body, and entailing diseases, poverty and shame, on their wretched offspring? 'This sin, beyond all others, drowns thought and reflexion, and destroys any serious impressions that at times are made upon a person by the preaching of the word, or by the dispensations of Providence: so that of all men, the habitual drunkard has the least chance of getting any good by the gospel.

Where are truth and uprightnes, candour and honesty, these amiable and en-

gaging

gaging virtues? Alas! they seem to have left our land, which is filled with lying, dissimulation, injustice, and cruel oppression. Looking upon the nation, we may take up a lamentation with the antient prophets of GOD, and say, *The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all ly in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net. Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slander. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Surely the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood,* Mic.

vii. 2. Jer. ix. 2, 3, 4. Hof. iv. 1, 2. *The perilous times* of which *Paul* warns his son *Timothy* are certainly come; for *men are lovers of themselves*. The generality are sunk to such a degree in fordid selfishness, that they make themselves the center, and every thing else the circumference. *All seek their own things*; but no regard is had either to the honour of **GOD** in the world, or to the welfare of our neighbour. 'Tis now as it was before the flood, *violence and oppression fill the earth*, and, like the fishes in the sea, the greater swallow up the lesser. Men don't consider what's lawful and laudable for them to do, but what's profitable and advantageous to their outward estate, and if it is within the compass of their power to effectuate it, by means foul or fair, right or wrong. Hence, in many parts of the nation, we hear the groans of the oppressed, occasioned by the unsatiable avarice of those, who, in defiance of the woes which heaven has denounced, will be *joining house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth*, Isa. v. 8. Many honest and industrious families are turned out of their habitations to make room for these harpies, who can't be satisfied with a sober subsistence, but must have supports to their pride, luxury, and extravagance.



And now, leaving the infidel and profane part of the nation, let us look into the church;—let us view the character, conduct, and manners of those who make a profession of Christianity, and partake of its external privileges.—And here, alas! my dear friends and countrymen, a very dismal and affecting scene will open before us. Contentions, divisions, and animosities about religion, were never, perhaps, to a greater height than now. People heartily hate one another, under the covert of a religion which breathes nothing but brotherly love, kindness, and charity;—a religion, the most benevolent and friendly that ever appeared among men, since men were upon the face of the earth! Holy harmony and concord seem to have fled from below, and, like the poets *Astræa*, are gone up to heaven, there to breathe in their native air, and to shew their triumphant power. In the primitive times, the Heathens used to say of the Christians, *Behold how they love one another!* But alas! there's just ground now to reverse the observation; and it may be said, and no doubt it often is said, *Behold how they hate one another!* Is it any wonder, that men modelled after the temper of the meek and lowly Jesus, are at times ready to turn sick of such a world, and desire to  
leave

leave this field of contention and strife, and retire to the regions of peace, and love, and joy?

Have we not just reason to complain of, and lament over, that carnal worldly temper which prevails among the professing part of the nation? They think it no crime to set heart and soul upon the world; to sit up late and rise early; to give it their last thoughts at night, and their first in the morning.---It is their *Zaar*, the retreat which they have chosen; and there is no bringing them out of it. In very deed, this world is one of the most dangerous and deadly enemies to the religion of Jesus Christ.---While others slay their thousands, it slays its ten thousands, and lays professing Christians heaps upon heaps as in the day of battle. Should a stranger to the human species, and to the rules by which they ought to be governed, drop in among us, I imagine he would conclude, from our temper and conduct, that we were to live here always, and that we were bound, under the highest pains and penalties, to tug and toil, and strive and fight, to amass all the riches and wealth we can possibly lay our hands on. But oh! how would our supposed stranger be confounded, if he had a bible put into his hand; and should learn from it, that these very persons who love, and lay schemes for this  
 world,

world, as if they were never to die, have not security for a moment, and, at most, cannot reach beyond three or four score years! And would he not be still more confounded, when he turned up such passages as these,---*Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, &c. Take no thought for to-morrow,---Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.---Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!*

Where is contentment with our outward state and condition? where is the right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his? Fretting, murmuring, and pining envy fill almost every breast.---The conversation of the most part of professors is just an interchange of calumny, slander, and defamation.---Ye shall hardly pass an afternoon or evening among them, but you will be obliged to witness a barbarous murder committed on some body's good name;---characters torn, and sores of others ript up, and made to bleed, which a charitable hand would have tenderly

derly bound up. Such persons do not remember that part of the citizen of Zion's character, which we have, *Pfal. xv. 3.* *Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.* He not only will not make up a reproach, but if one brings it to him, he will not take it up, and set it about, to the ruin of his neighbour's character. The *Hebrew* doctors tell us, that the backbiter hurteth three with his tongue: himself, by his sin; his neighbour, whom he backbiteth; and the receiver of his tale, whom he corrupteth.

How rare is it to find one whom you may thoroughly trust and confide in?---- a man of candour, integrity, and uprightness, who keeps strictly to the truth, is faithful to his trust,--who will not impose on his neighbour's ignorance or necessity,--who abhors gripping, squeezing, undermining, or supplanting his brother and neighbour in any thing whatsoever? Now this is it which hardens the wicked in their prejudices against all religion, and opens their mouths to triumph and blaspheme. However, religion ought not to suffer for the base behaviour of its pretended votaries. Would Christians live up to the spirit and dictates of Christianity, I dare say, a more harmless, nay, a more useful and amiable set of people would be no where

where in the world. Therefore, when the enemies of our holy religion throw up to us the irregular lives of its votaries, we protest against those lives, and appeal from them to the new testament, where Christianity shines in its native beauty. Besides, the conclusion which these *uncircumcised Philistines* would make against all religion, is absurd and ridiculous to the last degree:—it is just as if one should conclude, from the multitude of quacks, that there is no such thing as an able physician. Degenerate as the age is, there are (blessed be GOD) some who retain their integrity, *who shine as lights in the world, and adorn the doctrine of GOD their Saviour in all things.*

If any think we have insisted too much upon the professing part of the nation, I beg leave to observe, that the provocations of sons and of daughters are peculiarly heinous, and reflect the greatest dishonour upon our heavenly Father. Some have thought, that GOD's bearing with a worshipping assembly, and not consuming them, is one of the strongest evidences of his patience and long suffering. And indeed, whoso considers the shining purity and holiness of GOD, the zeal he hath for his worship, together with the formality, carnality, earthly-mindedness, and hypocrisy

pocriſy cleaving to the worſhippers, muſt needs wonder, that the fire of his holineſs does not every now and then break forth from the altar, and burn the worſhippers to aſhes. Had that great and good man, biſhop *Leighton*, lived in this day, he would have had ſtill greater reaſon than in his own, to complain as he does in one of his letters: “ Oh what a wearineſs is it, “ to live among men, and to find ſo few “ men! and among Chriſtians, and find “ ſo few Chriſtians! ſo much talk, and ſo “ little action! Religion turned almoſt into “ a tune and air of words; and, amidſt “ all our pretty diſcourſes, puſillanimous “ and baſe, and eaſily dragged into the “ mire:—ſelf and fleſh, pride and paſſion “ on domineering, while we ſpeak of be- “ ing in Chriſt, and clothed with him, “ and believe it becauſe we ſpeak it ſo “ often, and ſo confidently.”

Now, if the ſtate of matters in the church and nation be ſuch as we have repreſented it, what can we expect from angry heaven, but tribulation and anguiſh, deſtruction and deſolation? Is not GOD ſaying, *Shall I not viſit for thoſe things? ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this? Therefore thus will I do, and becauſe I will do thus, prepare to meet thy GOD, O ſinful Britain and Ireland!*  
There

There is no need of a prophetic spirit to know that judgments are approaching; nor must the apprehensions which some have of their being near, come under the censure of melancholy fancies: for as one may be sure that natural causes will produce their effects, unless there be an immediate interposition to hinder it; so moral causes will produce their effects, *i. e.* a deluge of wickedness will bring on a deluge of wrath, if God keeps to the ordinary method of Providence in managing the world.

The dispensations of Providence in many places are very awful and alarming. The Lord seems to be arisen out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. There have been terrible earthquakes in divers places, which, in scripture, are represented as evidences of the Lord's anger, and the beginnings of sorrow. *Then the earth shook and trembled, the foundations also of the hills moved, and were shaken, because he was wroth,* Psal. xviii. 7. We have likewise heard from the public papers, this last summer, several dismal accounts of the effects of fire from the heavens. Though there are natural causes for these things, and they may be accounted for in a philosophical way; yet when they tryft with the enormous crimes

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of

of a degenerate age, we have reason to consider them as tokens of wrath. At the same time, we are engaged in an expensive war against a proud, ambitious, and most treacherous nation, who are naturally enemies to our religion and liberties, and have long wished to make us a province of their imaginary empire. Often since the late glorious revolution, has the dagger of tyranny been held to the breast and bowels of our liberty; and as often has our GOD mercifully interposed for our safety. But alas! what wretched returns have we made to the Most High for all his signal mercies? are not the filthy, filthy still? and the unholy, unholy still?

Oh my dear friends and countrymen, *let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord!* let us be sensible, that we are indeed a very guilty nation; that our sins are of a deep dye, and of a crimson colour, and attended with many aggravating circumstances, not to be found about the sins of other nations.—Many plans have been laid down for national reformation; but we may be sure it will never turn out to any good account without personal reformation. As the best way to cleanse a city, is for every one to make clean about their own doors; so the best way to reform a sinful nation, is, that the several individuals there-  
of



of return to GOD, through Christ, in the way of faith, repentance, and new obedience. Thus GOD will be upon our side; and, if GOD be for us, who shall be against us? Let us be convinced that our enormous crimes and crying iniquities still persisted in, furnish men, money, and arms to our enemies; and that the huge load of guilt lying upon us, will, if it is not removed, defeat our wisest counsels, break our greatest strength, and make us flee before the face of them that hate us. Awake then, and rouse up yourselves, ye slumbering saints, and sleepy sinners;--- *The Lord's voice crieth to the city, to the country, to every village, to every family, to every individual.*---The heavens above us, and the earth beneath us, are threatening to avenge the quarrel of the Creator upon us. *The Lord is distributing sorrows in his anger, and giving many the wine of astonishment to drink.* Take the alarm; turn to the hand that smiteth; get into the true ark provided for you, and ye shall be safe, blow the storm from what airth it will.

Another thing I would earnestly recommend in our present circumstances of distress, and that is, frequent and fervent application to the throne of the Redeemer's grace. If the people of this nation  
that

that are devoutly disposed, and have moy-  
en with heaven, would meet together at  
this throne, at set times, and wrestle in  
prayer with GOD; who knows but he  
might be intreated of us, and his fierce  
anger might yet be turned away from us?  
If the prayer of one righteous person a-  
vails much, how much more might we ex-  
pect from the joint prayers and supplications  
of the righteous ones through the nation?

But I shall no longer detain the reader  
from the entertainment which this excellent  
performance will afford him: and I pray  
that GOD the Father may, for his Son's  
sake, make it effectual to the conviction and  
edification of many, by his holy Spirit.

*Oxnam-manse,*  
*Oct. 27. 1756.*

THOMAS BOSTON.

T H E

THE  
PUBLISHER  
TO THE  
READER.

Containing the Recommendations of  
Mr BARKER and Mr WILLISON of  
*Dundee.*

THE great demand for this pamphlet sufficiently shews how acceptable it is to the public; the number printed in *England* being above 4000, besides a former impression in *Scotland*, and the sale still increasing. That a piece which tends to recommend serious religion should be so well received, will, doubtless, give pleasure to every good man, and lover of his country. I beg leave to add the reverend Mr BARKER's opinion of it, in his sermon occasioned by the victory obtained over the rebels at *Culloden*, in the note, page 22d, where he says, " See a pamphlet called BRITAIN'S REMEMBRANCER, which takes notice of this, and so many things more relating to this rebellion, and proper for the right improvement of the present state of our affairs, that I cannot but wish it in every family; and that it might be very attentively read and considered. I know not the author, but I take this opportunity publicly and heartily to thank him for his excellent performance."

The late Mr WILLISON of *Dundee*, that great and good man, thus expresses his sentiments concerning this pamphlet, in his preface to *Popery another gospel*, page 12th; " I acknowledge that the present awful dispensations of God to the land are very humbling,  
" and

" and have a loud voice to men of all degrees and  
 " stations among us, calling us to consider our ways,  
 " repent of our sins, abandon the prevailing vices of  
 " the age, and set about a thorough reformation. But  
 " seeing this subject is so excellently well managed in  
 " a late pamphlet intituled, BRITAIN'S REMEMBRAN-  
 " CER, or *The danger not over*, I shall add no more  
 " upon it, save earnestly to recommend the said  
 " pamphlet to every-body's serious perusal and confi-  
 " deration: the author hath indeed remarkably ser-  
 " ved his generation by it."

That reverend author remarks there, which is wor-  
 thy of attention, that the *British* constitution, and its  
 established laws and liberties, are things most valu-  
 able, which our ancestors have all along contended for,  
 and sometimes at the expence of much blood and trea-  
 sure. Every body abroad, who knows our constituti-  
 on, admires it, and envies our distinguished happiness,  
 because of our civil liberties in *Britain*, where the in-  
 habitants have security to possess, in ease and quiet,  
 the fruits of their own industry, or the inheritances of  
 their fathers or relations, without being subject to the  
 pillage or oppression of arbitrary lords or superiors, or  
 to the exorbitant demands of lawless princes; and  
 where no tax or burden can be laid upon them, but by  
 the advice and consent of such representatives as are  
 nominated and elected by themselves. No wonder then  
 tho' every true *Briton* be anxiously concerned in time  
 of danger, for preserving these liberties to themselves,  
 and for handing them safe down to posterity.

But as the soul is preferable to the body, so our  
 pure bible-religion, our gospel-worship and ordinances,  
 with freedom of conscience, are of far greater value  
 to us, than any secular blessing whatsoever; and con-  
 sequently worthy of all the blood and treasure we have  
 to expend for their preservation. Now, when both our  
 civil and sacred interests, even all that is dear to us as  
 men and Christians, is threatned and attacked at once  
 by our perfidious enemies, how can any *British* Prote-  
 stant be easy, or look on the danger with an eye of  
 indifference

indifference, while, at the same time, the prevalence of vice and impiety amongst ourselves renders our hazard doubly great? The public good in church and state is little attended to, and a selfish worldly spirit seems to be too much abounding amongst all ranks. And such as have exerted themselves for the public good, and for Zion in distress, how have they been oppressed, despised and reproached by the world? But as they know that the servant is not greater than his Lord, any bad treatment they may receive from that quarter will not discourage Christians from their duty. For we may as reasonably expect that a house should stand upon a rotten foundation, or that a man should live after his blood is totally corrupted; as that a church and kingdom should continue in prosperity, where pride and oppression, luxury and corruption, so universally prevail. And therefore how much ought all these in power to be concerned to reform themselves, and to propagate sound religion and morality; since the stability of the throne, and the honour and happiness of the nation, intirely depend upon it?

It would make the bowels of a compassionate Christian (says an eminent divine) to yearn within him, to behold multitudes of souls, of invaluable worth, running greedily on to their eternal ruin; wilfully stopping their ears to the voice of reason and conscience, and to the voice of God in his word; not once making a pause, till they fall into the gulph of eternal and intolerable misery. And how dangerous and destructive such persons are to the community to which they belong, cannot be expressed: for how suddenly will whole swarms of sabbath-breakers, blasphemers, drunkards and adulterers, effeminate and luxurious persons, who fill every place, pull down the judgments of God upon those states and kingdoms wherein they dwell? Kingdoms and commonwealths are not so much endangered by the power and policy of their enemies without them, as by the vice and impiety, and profligate lives of those within them. But reformation quickly recovers the antient glory of kingdoms, and makes them the terror of their enemies.

We are informed from scripture, (*Pfal.* ci. 6, 7, 8.) that the pious and victorious king of *Israel* would not allow wicked persons about his house, but had his eyes upon the faithful of the land, that they might dwell with him. He knew such were most fit to be put in places of trust, whom the Lord would bless and prosper in all their undertakings, *Pfal.* i. 3. And tho' there are none of us but have good ground to confess, that we have contributed to bring judgments upon the land; yet 'tis thought, by many of the well-affected part of the nation, (and not without some reason) that the present dismal condition of our public affairs is very much owing to men being put in the management, who appear to have had neither the glory of God, nor the interest of the church and nation, at heart. Alas! 'tis to be lamented, (says a worthy divine) that those who are employed to be the defence and guardians of the nation, by their lewd and wicked lives; are enough to bring wrath and judgment on a kingdom. For how can such stand before their enemies, or protect a nation, who trust not in God, but blaspheme his name, contemn his favour, and forsake their own mercies? So that, till we repent and reform the evil of our doings, we cannot with confidence look to God to be our shield, helper, and defence; for he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and will not suffer sin to go unpunished.

Let us, then, go to God, and beg of him the spirit of repentance; and look only to him for deliverance from these national judgments with which we are now threatened. Let his promises be our refuge, his wisdom our satisfaction, and his Almighty power our encouragement and support; let his mercy be our only treasure, and the secret of his presence our pavilion: let us cheerfully refer all things to his disposal, and steadfastly depend upon him in every difficulty: let us practically acknowledge him in every dispensation of his Providence; and calmly submit to his will; for he can do nothing but what is best for us, because he himself is infinitely wise, and infinitely good.

# BRITAIN'S

## REMEMBRANCE, &c.

DEAR COUNTRYMEN,

**T**HIS ADDRESS comes to your hands at a time † when it is to be hoped you are a little come to yourselves, and may be spoke to, if you will bear being spoke to at all. When public calamities have been striking terror into a people, and the dread of a general ruin hastening upon them has forced them on thinking, then seems to be a proper season for suggesting to them thoughts of a kind too serious and important to be listened to in times of peace and tranquillity, or in the giddy hours of mirth and wantonness. To lay before you what I think the proper and necessary considerations upon such a juncture as this, and endeavour, as well as I can, to direct you to that improvement of it which may be worthy of a wise and great, as well as a pious and Christian nation, is the  
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† The first edition having been published the end of *January 1745-6*, when the rebel army was flying before the duke of *Cumberland*, by whom they were soon after totally routed at *Culloden* in the north of *Scotland*.

only intention of this application to you. And if there has been any juncture within the period of these last thirty years, that might give any hopes of gaining your attention to wholesom advice, methinks this is it; and therefore I am not without hopes, that what I shall say on this occasion will have some effect upon you, and tend, less or more, to your advantage. But, however it may succeed with regard to you, I am sure it will turn out no way to my own disadvantage another day, which is encouragement enough to me to proceed in it.

If in any part of this little tract, the natural warmth of my imagination, my zeal for the cause I engage in, or an excess of concern for my country, should give occasion to my using any expressions that may appear to one sort of readers too much exaggerated or heightned; I hope the unquestionable sincerity of my intention will plead my excuse.

First, I think I may safely lay it down for a truth capable of demonstration, That if there is a God in heaven, who by his providence overrules the revolutions, and disposes the fates of nations; according to his pleasure raising one to grandeur, and humbling another to the dust; then it is plain, from two of the necessary attributes of his Nature, Wisdom and Goodness, that whatever distresses he brings upon the kingdoms of the earth, he brings them for no other end than the punishment of guilt, and the moral improvement of mankind. It is plainly impossible that any evil can arise in the world against the will of a being of infinite wisdom and power; for by means of his wisdom he must of necessity know whatever arises in the world, and by



by his power must be able to prevent it, if he pleased; therefore there is no satisfactory account to be given, how wars, famine, pestilence, and other afflictions come upon mankind, but by concluding, that they are permitted or sent by the Almighty for the punishment of his disobedient creatures, or for warnings to call them to repentance and reformation.

There is indeed another purpose for which one particular kind of calamity has been permitted, I mean persecution, and that is, for the trial of the faith and constancy of pious men. But when war, famine or pestilence are sent upon a people, who have forgot God, and given themselves up to folly and wickedness; then it is plain they are intended as seasonable and rousing alarms to call the thoughtless to repentance, and as scourges to punish the daringly impious. Since the conclusion of the prophetic and apostolic ages, the Almighty governor of the world has used no other method for working out his important ends of reforming or punishing wicked nations, than by threatening or actually inflicting upon them such judgments as will severely distress them; the natural effect of which is to put them upon flying to something divine, for that relief which they find nothing human will yield.

When the Almighty, of his great mercy and forbearance to a sinful people, instead of bringing upon them the punishment due to their wickedness, does but threaten the blow, without inflicting it; when he brings a nation to the very gates of destruction, and, by means wholly out of human power, delivers them in a signal and remarkable manner; then does it highly concern that nation wisely to regard the hand that has thus conspicuously exerted itself for their

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deliverance,

deliverance, and to consider what important lesson is intended to be taught by such a remarkable interposition ; lest, if they slight these warnings too often, the patience and forbearance of the best of Beings be at last provoked against them, so that he determine again to bring them into danger and fear as formerly, but not as formerly to deliver them.

You have, my dear countrymen, in one season been threatned with two heavy national calamities, *viz.* a dearth of corn, and a bloody intestine war. As to the first, every one remembers that the fall of rains last summer was so severe, and of so long continuance, that the whole harvest of the year was generally given over for lost ; and it is certain that a very few weeks more rain had intirely cut it off. But that mercy, which we have never deserved, interposed in the time of our distress. The Almighty shewed us how intirely we were in his power ; what we might expect if we did not take timely warning ; and, at the same time, how loth he is to treat mankind as they deserve. We let this threatning go as it came, without shewing any regard to it : and yet he forgave us and spared us. He scattered his clouds by the breath of his winds ; he commanded his sun to shine, and his heavens again to smile upon us ; the earth yielded her fruits, the poor rejoiced in the prospect of plenty, and he crowned the year with his goodness.

You have likewise very lately seen the sword let loose amongst you, and have been put in fear of its coming home to each of your own bosoms. You have seen the daring emissary of a Popish pretender presume to invade this peaceful island, unused to scenes of violence and blood, and with  
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a crew of lawless rebels threaten ruin and destruction to your civil and religious liberties, and slavery, persecution, and death with tortures, to all who should refuse to make shipwreck of a good conscience. You saw this rebel-rout overrun and conquer a very considerable part of your country, a great and populous city, and a body of your regular forces. All this you saw with terror and amazement. Confusion filled every heart, and paleness covered every face. You looked when this bloody crew, with hasty marches, should arrive at your metropolis, and lay the glory of the greatest city in the world in dust. You dreaded every day the arrival of a *French* army on your coasts, well knowing that it was under the umbrage of that restless and ambitious nation, the rival of your greatness, and the old disturber of your peace, that the cursed scheme was framed. You saw yourselves wholly destitute of forces to defend you against the enemy already in your country, and much more against the united force of the rebellious crew, and an army from *France* to second them. Then did *French* tyranny, Popery, and persecution, present themselves to your eyes. Then did you view your country as already filled with blood, with fire, and desolation, a general massacre begun, and the *British* empire destined for a province to *France*. And had they not been infatuated by heaven to consume so long a time in the North, instead of hurrying on towards *London*, immediately after the defeat of the army, what numbers from every county in *England* would have flocked in to them, flush'd as they were with their first success, who can pretend to say? and had we not all the reason in the world to fear, that their friends in *London* would have immediately fired the city?

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what could then have been the event of this infernal machination, but our country's being plunged in a sea of blood, if not wholly overflowed and lost in it? These were the terrors of that gloomy day, and these your fears were but too well grounded. It was in that melancholy crisis, when all looked black and threatening around you, and when no help seemed to be near, that He, whose timely interposition has so often saved this unthankful nation in her last extremity, cast an eye of pity on your distress, and resolved to deliver you once more from your enemies, to prove you, whether you would leave off your follies, cast your sins behind your backs, and turn to him with your whole hearts; or if you would forget your Almighty and merciful deliverer, and return to the pursuit of your follies and vices as before. He commanded his winds to waft over your forces from abroad. He commanded an east wind to blow for a whole month together, at a season of the year in which they are very rarely known. Our army landed, after one of the quickest passages ever heard of, just in time to support and revive our spirits after our sudden consternation, and to restore to us that courage which was absolutely necessary to enable us to take any farther measures for our own safety.

Let any person of judgment in the nation say, what must have been the consequence, if a westerly wind had set in for a very few weeks, about the time when our forces were so much wanted from abroad, which would have been only agreeable to the usual course of the season; or what would have been the consequence, if a body of ten or twelve thousand men from *France* had arrived among us, at the time when

an army of cut-throats were already broke loose in our country; or what would have been the consequence, had the rebellious crew, immediately after the defeat of our army, hastened into the midst of *England*, and, hurrying on to *London* itself, taken us under every disadvantage; which was the part they ought, according to prudence, to have acted, and were expected to act, according to their own declared intention. The thoughtless, who do not take the trouble of observing the ways of heaven, and the impious, who have forgot the God who made and governs the world, may overlook these remarkable concurrences of circumstances, or consider them as no other than common accidents falling out according to the natural course of things: but the wise and considerate, I am persuaded, will own, that it is not our own arm that hath saved us; and that this deliverance, so far as we are yet delivered, is from God.

And now, my dear countrymen, must I ask you, Whether you think such signal interpositions in your favour, require any particular regard on your part; or whether you can persuade yourselves, that they have no meaning at all, and are no way intended to put you upon thinking, or altering your conduct? Methinks the very supposition that a wise and a Christian nation should be capable of overlooking such remarkable Providences, and of neglecting to make the due improvement of them, ought to appear an affront to your character. But, alas! the days of thought, attention, and religious regard to the awful steps of Providence, are gone; and giddy pleasure, and Atheistical ignorance have taken their place. If there are, however, any left among us, who have not resolved to harden

harden their hearts against all thought and reflexion, to them I willingly write, and do not grudge the trouble of laying before them the following brief view of the characteristic vices of the age, which we are so loudly called upon, by these awful threatenings of heaven, to reform without delay. And if any, from a sincere desire of their own amendment, and that of others, of appeasing the wrath of heaven, and preventing a much more fatal visitation, would know what are the peculiar vices which distinguish this unhappy age from all the past, and against which the late vengeance of heaven was particularly threatned ; I wish the answer were not so ready as it is, and that it were not so obvious to every eye, that LUXURY and IRRELIGION, which are inseparable companions, are the characteristic vices of the age, and that our degenerate times and corrupt nation have the unhappiness of being singular in this respect ; that, whereas in all the other kingdoms of the world, and all the ages of it, it has ever been only the rich and great who have either had taste enough to pretend to consume their lives and incomes in luxury and pleasure, or insolence enough to presume to treat all things serious and sacred with contempt : on the contrary, with us no rank or station is too low for either of these polite vices ; for at this day hardly any man thinks himself so mean as not to be above religion, frugality and sobriety. But when I say these two are the distinguishing vices of the age, I am far enough from meaning that they are the only ones. No ; tho' they alone are more than sufficient to sink a nation, yet we want not for a numerous train of others that always follow at their heels. For when luxury and irreligion enter

enter a nation, with them enter venality, perjury, faction, opposition to legal authority, idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, lewdness, excessive gaming, robberies, clandestine marriages, breach of matrimonial vows, self-murders, and innumerable others. Here is a legion of furies sufficient to rend any state or empire that ever was in the world to pieces; and accordingly we find, from universal history, that no degree of wealth, of trade, of naval or military force, have ever been sufficient to support any nation, where luxury and vice have prevailed; but, on the contrary, the greatest empires in all ages have sunk before them.

I hope it will not be to your disadvantage to observe, from the few following instances, the truth of this assertion, which may shew you what you are to expect, and what will be the issue of your conduct, if you do not alter it in time.

The first great empire in the world, *viz.* the *Assyrian*, the capital of which was *Nineveh*, owed its destruction intirely to the luxury of its prince *Sardanapalus*, of whom *Diodorus*, *Justin*, &c. give the following account; That he surpassed all his predecessors in effeminacy, luxury, and cowardice; that he never went out of his palace, but spent all his time among a company of women, dressed and painted like them, and employed like them at the distaff; that he placed all his glory in the possession of immense treasures, in feasting, rioting, and indulging himself in all the most infamous and criminal pleasures. Which luxury, some of his own generals growing impatient of, and despising to be governed by him, took arms against him, intirely overturned the empire, and broke it into three kingdoms. Such was the effect of luxury and

vice in one person. What may they not then produce, when they become so universal as to debauch a whole nation?

The *Babylonian* empire, so called from the city *Babylon* its capital, arose after the fall of that properly called the *Assyrian*. It grew to great splendour and riches, and those riches produced great luxury, which proved the ruin of the state. For the city and empire were taken by *Darius* the *Median*, in the night, by surprise, while the king *Belsazzar*, his wives and his concubines, with a thousand of the nobles of the land, were engaged in a debauch †. So little did this luxurious monarch and his court profit by the example of the ruin which luxury and vice had before brought upon the *Assyrian* empire.

The *Persian* empire, which arose on the ruins of the *Babylonian*, acquiring immense riches by that conquest, fell also into great luxury, and in time exceeded the *Babylonian* in that very vice which they saw bring on its destruction. For in *Xerxes's* time, when he invaded *Greece* with an army of above two millions and an half, the number of the servants and attendants exceeded that of the soldiers: but that of the concubines, eunuchs, and other implements of luxury which accompanied his army, according to *Herodotus*, was beyond reckoning. And the event was answerable, for almost this whole multitude was destroyed. The luxury of this army was so great, that in *Mardonius's* camp, (who was left by *Xerxes* to finish the war, which he himself thought proper to desert with great precipitation) there were found such prodigious sums in gold and silver, besides cups, vessels, beds, tables, necklaces, and bracelets of gold and silver,

† See *Dan.* V.



ver, not to be valued, that *Justin* gives it as his judgment, That these very spoils proved fatal to all *Greece*, by becoming the instruments of introducing luxury among her inhabitants. And when afterwards the empire was attacked by *Alexander*, its whole power fell before him at the head of a handful (for such they were, compared to the army of *Darius*) of troops not enervated by luxury, in which *Darius* indulged himself to such a degree, as could not fail to ruin his expedition; the very army being incumbered with such a numerous train of princesses, concubines, eunuchs, and domestics of both sexes, that their procession in chariots with all manner of magnificence, made his expedition appear more like a triumph or a pageant, than the march of an army to battle. It is observed by *Seneca*, that the *Persians* carried their luxury and extravagance in the army, with respect to their tents, chariots, and good cheer, to a greater excess, if possible, than they did in their cities. The finest meats, the rarest birds, and the most exquisite dainties, must be found for the prince, in what part soever of the world he was encamped. They had their vessels of gold and silver without number; "Instruments of luxury," says *Q. Curtius*, "not of victory, and more proper to allure and enrich an enemy, than to repel or defeat them."

One would have thought that *Alexander*, who himself overpowered the vast army of *Persia* by the mere advantage of his troops being hardened to war, whereas those of *Darius* were effeminated by luxury to such a degree, that thirty thousand *Macedonians* proved victorious over six hundred thousand *Persians*; one would have thought, I say, that *Alexander* himself

would have been in no danger, with such an example before his eyes, of splitting upon the same rock that had proved so fatal to *Darius*. But we are told by *Justin*, " That he degenerated into the luxury and vices of the *Persians*, whom, by means of that very luxury, he had overcome ; that he suffered his army to debauch themselves in the same manner ; that afterwards he gave himself up to the most unkingly cruelty against his own friends, one of whom he murdered for expressing himself a little freely concerning his faults ; that he then proceeded to demand divine honours to be paid to him, which some of his ministers bravely refusing, he basely caused them to be murdered." At length, degenerating into immoderate intemperance and drunkenness, he died suddenly in the midst of a debauch. Whether he was poisoned by some of his nobles, whom he had provoked by his cruelties, as some writers affirm ; or whether his death was the effect of drunkenness, as others assert, comes to the same purpose, *viz.* that he fell a sacrifice to his own luxury and vices. With him fell the empire he had raised, being immediately divided into several kingdoms, which his favourites shared amongst them.

Thus have we seen the three first universal monarchies, *viz.* the *Assyrian* or *Babylonian*, the *Persian*, and the *Grecian*, suffer several terrible shocks, and at last sink under luxury and vice : let us now see what effects they had upon the fourth, *viz.* the *Roman*.

It is remarkable, that after *Lucullus* debauched the *Romans* with the luxury of *Asia*, they did not preserve their liberties for half a century ;  
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the perpetual dictatorship being within that time usurped by *Julius Cæsar*, which provoked *Brutus*, and those who stood with him for freedom, to cut him off. The commonwealth was immediately upon this involved in a bloody civil war, in which some of the greatest men of *Rome* fell. From these times, the antient simple *Roman* virtue gradually sunk more and more, till the empire at last was torn to pieces by the irruption of the northern nations.

We are told by *Sallust*, That the principal tools which *Cataline* (after the expedition of *Lucullus*) made use of for carrying his conspiracy into execution, were such of the men of birth in *Rome*, as had, by their luxury and extravagance, consumed their estates, (and who, consequently, were willing to engage in any design from which they had a chance of repairing them by plunder) and those of the army, whom *Sylla* in his wars in *Asia* had debauched with luxury and pleasure, in order to engage them the more strongly to his party. From this conspiracy the greatest empire in the world was in the most imminent danger of a total subversion, and must have fallen before it, but for the unequalled sagacity and vigilance of *Cicero*, who was then consul, and who, for his successful care of the state, received the honourable title of *The father of his country*.

To add no other particular instances, which would be endless; how the *Roman* empire sunk from one degree to another of luxury, venality, and effeminacy, till at length it was divided into ten kingdoms, by the *Goths* and *Vandals*; is very well known to all that are in the least acquainted with the *Roman* history, and that its  
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ruin was owing to its vices, and to its vices only, which enervated its antient strength, and gave it a prey to its enemies.

Your patience would fail me before I could give an account of one half of the fatal effects of luxury and vice upon the other states, empires, and cities of the world. Yet I cannot avoid mentioning the destruction of the luxurious city of *Tarentum*, the manners of that people having very much resembled our own at this day. We are told by *Strabo*, *Plutarch*, &c. that there were more festivals, solemn games, and public feasts in this city, than days in the year: that, upon an outrageous insult offered by them to the *Romans*, being drawn into a war with them, their pride and wantonness were so great, that they neither knew how to conduct it, nor to avoid it by a prudent peace: that having called in king *Pyrrhus* to manage it for them, the whole people soon began to exclaim against him, (much in the same licentious manner as many people in *England* are wont to shew their wit and their ignorance, by railing against their governors) because he found it necessary, in order to qualify them for war, to establish an exact military discipline among them. Some even quitted the city, thinking it a condition of insupportable slavery, not to be permitted to live the same idle and voluptuous life, while they were engaged in war with a powerful enemy, as they used to indulge themselves in, in times of peace and prosperity. The war ended accordingly in the total overthrow of that powerful city, once so famous for its wealth, trade, and magnificence.

The character of the *Sybarites*, and the ruin  
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of their city and state, are likewise so peculiarly proper to my purpose, that I cannot help abridging their story. This city became so very powerful, as to be able to raise an army of three hundred thousand men. Their wealth soon introduced luxury, and such a dissolution of manners as is almost incredible, if it were not attested by *Strabo*, and other authentic writers. The citizens employed themselves in nothing but banquets, games, shows, parties of pleasure, and carousals. Public rewards were bestowed on those who gave the most magnificent entertainments; and even on such ingenious cooks as were best skilled in the important art of making improvements in the dressing of nice dishes, and inventing new refinements to tickle the palate. They carried their delicacy to the monstrous length of sending out of the city all manner of noisy artificers, as blacksmiths, carpenters, &c. and destroying all the cocks, that their downy slumbers might not be disturbed by any noise.

This unbounded luxury naturally produced dissensions, which proved their ruin; one of the contending parties having interest enough to engage the *Crotonians* to come against the city with an army, which, tho' only equal to a third part of that which the *Sybarites* brought into the field, yet not being enervated by luxury, as that of the *Sybarites* was, proved victorious over them, and totally overthrew their city and state.

Why should I weary you with a long account of the antient state and destruction of the great city of *Corinth*? a city once so eminent for its fine harbours, its extensive trade, and its wealth, as to draw upon it the envy of *Rome* herself.

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This wealth puffed them up so with insolence, that they cast the most provoking indignities they could think of upon the *Roman* ambassadors. In revenge for which the *Romans* sent *L. Mummius* against them, who burnt their city, and razed it to the ground.

Why should I enlarge on the fall of the great city of *Constantinople*? which at its destruction was got to a prodigious height of splendour and riches, which the inhabitants refused to part with for their own security. The *Turks* were so enriched with its plunder, that it became a proverb, if any man acquired great wealth on a sudden, "that he had been at the sack of *Constantinople* \*."

Or why should I mention the conquest of *Syria* by the *Mahometan Saracens*? the inhabitants of which were grown so wicked from the great riches and ease they enjoyed, that they themselves imputed their miseries to the just judgments of God for their prodigious luxury †.

These are some of the ravages which the infernal monster *Luxury*, and its attendant vices, have been making upon the nations of the earth for almost these three thousand years backwards. The mightiest empires, the richest kingdoms, and the best fortified cities, have fallen before them; and what can *Britain* then expect but to share their fate, if she do not take warning by their fall?

And now, for the *Luxury* of our own times, should any one desire to have it proved to him, that we are in the present age arrived to an excess

\* *Echard's Rom. hist.* vol. V. p. 456.

† *Oakley's hist. of the Saracens*, p. 27. and 222.

cess in that vice beyond all the past, from which the greatest danger may be feared to the state; both on account of the natural consequences of that vice itself, and the others, which are its constant attendants; and likewise of its judicial consequences, or the vengeance it is likely to bring upon us from the hand of heaven: I say, should any one desire to have a demonstration of the excessive luxury of our times, it might seem sufficient only to desire him to take a superficial survey of the manner of life of almost every rank in the nation, but especially the very lowest, and he will hardly see any thing else but luxury, pleasure and extravagance, staring him in the face, wherever he turns his eyes in town and country.

As to the conduct of the highest ranks in the nation in this respect, to say the truth, it is less to be blamed than that of their inferiors. It were to be wished indeed, that they would live mostly upon their own estates, and within their incomes; and that they would make the best of their estates, by keeping their accounts, and transacting their business themselves, without the intervention of a pack of rascally stewards and rent-gatherers, whose practice it is too commonly to plunder the landlord with one hand, and the tenant with the other.

Again, if any one desires to enquire into the character of the trading part of the nation as to luxury, let him take a view of the manner of life in all the considerable cities in *Britain*, but especially in this once great and flourishing metropolis. Whoever does so, will see little else than scenes of wantonness, pleasure, and extravagance. In these streets, which in the last ages

were filled with decent citizens dressed in a garb, plain, uniform, and fit for business, he will now see a motly race of *English* traders burlesqued into *French* dancing-masters; their clothes bepatched with lace, their hands unfitted for business by being muffled up in cambrick to the fingers ends, and their feet crippled by wooden-heeled shoes of some inches high. That these *French* sopperies should thus fill the heads and disguise the persons of our citizens, seems no hopeful omen for the trade of *England*. If he goes into the houses of the citizens, (and not of the richest neither) the luxury, the expence, the number of servants, and the intertainment of a palace will meet his eyes. If he visits a tradesman of the meanest rank, he will see nothing less than gilt China-ware, silver-plate, and choice of foreign wines adorn his board \*.

Where are now the sober and regular manners of our fathers, when it was the constant custom of the citizens to rise betimes, according to the order of nature, and employ the morning in examining their accompts, adjusting their warehouses and shops, and preparing themselves for the busy hours of the day? when the exchange was shut at twelve, and dinner over every where by one; when they spent their evenings at home in instructing their children, apprentices, and  
servants

\* The modern extravagance in dress has also given rise to the enormous expence of coaches, which are now found absolutely necessary for saving our fine clothes, but might be wholly spared, would people content themselves with apparel fit for use. Wonderful! that only in queen *Elisabeth's* time there was not a coach in *England*, and that in a course of about 150 years the number of them should be beyond reckoning.



servants, in the principles of virtue and religion, and concluded every day with the laudable exercise of family-devotion? In place of these decent and regular methods of living, our citizens now find it hard to rise by ten; to get dressed for the change by two; to get dinner, and the bottle after it, over by four; and in an hour after, the joking club, the wanton play-house in winter, and the luxurious music-garden in summer, call them from the peaceful enjoyment of their families at home, from the instruction of their children and domestics, and from the worship of Him in whose power alone it is to send a blessing upon their secular employments. Nor do they think the mid-night hour too late to conclude their pleasures, or to seek that rest which nature, wearied with a round of follies, requires. Thus does luxury invert the beautiful ordination of heaven, which appointed the day for labour, and the night for rest.

And is it then any wonder that the rising generation have no more sense or understanding of Christianity, than if they had never heard of it, and that the *London* apprentices are, generally speaking, a set of mere town-rakes? is it any wonder that the affairs of families are neglected, when the masters of them are gone abroad in pursuit of pleasure one way, and their wives another? or is it to be expected, that an extravagant apprentice or journeyman, who has not had one principle of honesty or religion infused into his mind by education, will not lay hold on such opportunities for plundering his master, for the gratification of his own lusts and appetites? if people will not take care of their own houses themselves, how can they expect

others should do it for them? Indeed I cannot conceive how they can relish any mirth or pleasure abroad, while their houses at home are liable to be stript or fired by the carelessness or dishonesty of servants. And if the scenes of pleasure and gaiety, which they pass through abroad, are at all relished by them, the effect they must have on their minds must be, only to make their business a drudgery, and their own homes dull and tiresome.

The modern luxury and extravagance of the citizens appears from nothing more convincingly than its visible effects, I mean the frequent bankruptcies of late, which have brought things at length to that pass, that now it is hardly thought prejudicial to the credit of a trader that he make a stop of payments, if he escapes being fairly declared a bankrupt. And indeed how can bankruptcy miss to be the consequence, when our young traders now-a-days usually begin where formerly the old ones ended, I mean, with furnishing a town-house and a country-house, setting up coaches, or keeping horses; making as great a shew as possible of wealth and trade, and taking as much credit as they can have by any means, without making any allowances for the innumerable chances of trade, and dangers of being disappointed of returns, to enable them to make due payments?

How many instances have we of the terrible consequences of extravagance among traders? some of whom have been forced, by their necessities, upon the fatal and wretched shift of endeavouring to patch up their credit by gaming; which only sinks them so much the deeper. Others we have seen betake themselves to the highway,

way, and, in endeavouring to recover their ruined fortunes, make shipwreck of life, fortune, and soul at once.

But what above all gives the most dismal prospect of the state of the nation, is the monstrous, and hitherto unequalled luxury which prevails among the very lowest ranks of the people. It is very well known, that now even the poor mechanic, by whose labour the trade of our country ought to be supported, has learned to spend every *Sunday*, and at least the two following days of the week, in drunkenness and idleness, and to lay out generally the whole earnings of the foregoing week, in procuring to himself a taste of those heightened pleasures, which even in the luxurious age of king *Charles II.* were thought only fit for people of fortune to run mad after; I mean, getting drunk, haunting of bawdy-houses, seeing plays, hearing music, &c. So that in our days every journeyman has as high a relish of pleasure, and as fine a taste, as they affect to call it, of plays and music, as most of the gentry of the above-mentioned infamous age. And is it then any wonder, that we cannot carry our manufactures to foreign markets on equal terms with the rivals of our trade; with the additional charge of foreign wines, musicians and players, to be added to their price?

To give a full view of the luxury of the age, my dear countrymen, would carry me a great way beyond the intended length of this pamphlet and of your patience. To have just notions of the state of this epidemic vice, let any man open his eyes, and every object will present it to his view. For in every street of this great metropolis

tropolis he will see one tavern or house of entertainment within call of another \* ; whereas it is known, that only in the days of the fathers of people now alive, strong liquors were sold no where but at the shops of apothecaries. In the dress of the inhabitants he will see journeymen and chambermaids got beyond the pitch of the quality of last age. In every village round the city, he will see every sixth house possessed by a retailer of strong liquors, and prepared for the reception of the rambling inhabitants, of which he will see such numbers carousing in each of them every *Sunday*, when the weather is fair, as would make a stranger conclude there was a general carnival in the nation, and that all the inhabitants were broke loose. In every delightful spot round the city, he will see a retreat set apart for music, wine, and wantonness ; and there he will see such magnificence, taste, and expence, as is beyond the power of most princes in *Europe* to support ; and all for the intertainment of the inhabitants of a city which was once the seat of frugality, trade, industry, sobriety, religion, and every virtue that could make a nation great and happy. If he looks into the public news-papers, he will see them filled with advertisements of races, cock-matches, plays, music-gardens, balls, assemblies, operas, concerts, masquerades, breakfasting-houses, riddos, and fire-works. And to shew how our pleasures

\* I am credibly informed, that by an account taken of the public houses of different kinds in only one parish in *London*, they were found to be no less than fifteen hundred. What must then be the whole number within the bills of mortality ?

pleasures have ingrossed us, and into what a lethargy they have sunk us, in the very papers which lately gave accounts from time to time of the progress of the rebels; whose arrival at our metropolis we dreaded every day, and from which a general massacre was reasonably to be expected; in the very same paper, I say, one paragraph contained the history of their motions, and the very next invited us to a play or a horse-race. And, if he steps into the theatre, it will be hard for him to say, whether luxury or wickedness prevails there most; but (to postpone the wickedness of the theatre till afterwards) surely the magnificence of the decorations, the dresses of the players, the finery of the audience, and the indolence of their appearance, as they sit dissolved in pleasure and gaiety, would incline a being who did not know the state of human nature, and who had been transported thither from another world, to conclude, that mankind were an order of creatures placed here on earth, merely to enjoy themselves for a course of years, without being obliged to any manner of duty, or that their whole duty were to invent the most exquisite gratifications for their senses, and indulge themselves in the most exquisite pleasures that could be found out.

We may think of this matter as we please; but it will be found hereafter, that no son or daughter of *Adam* has any indulgence from heaven to live a life of absolute indolence and pleasure, without filling up a certain station, and doing the duties of a certain sphere. Were we even an order of beings absolutely innocent and blameless, it is not to be conceived, that the Almighty Governor of the world would see us  
with

with satisfaction consume our time in a manner altogether useleſs to ourſelves or our fellow-creatures, though the enjoyments we amuſed ourſelves with were otherwiſe harmleſs: but for an offending, guilty order of creatures, who are continually provoking the diſpleaſure of our Maker, and in continual danger of bringing down his vengeance upon our heads, to paſs away the time of trial for an everlaſting ſtate in pleaſure, and in criminal pleaſure too, while we ought to be endeavouring, by penitence for our faults, to avert the puniſhment due to us, and, by a conſtant watch over our conduct, to qualify ourſelves for being fit objects of heavenly mærcy; I ſay, for ſuch an order of creatures as we are to live the life we do, what is it but for a ſet of criminals to rével in priſon with wine and muſic, and to inſult their judge to his face?

From this curſed fountain, among many other poiſonous ſtreams, flows that fatal one of the unhappy diviſions of our country. While ſo many among the great, by their extravagance, run out their fortunes, it is no wonder that ſo many want to fiſh in troubled waters, and can find in their hearts to divide a nation for the ſake of gaining their own private purpoſes. And when men of inferior ranks find their affairs going into diſorder, they readily become proper dupes to the heads of factions, and are then fit to join in the clamour againſt their governors. Were people at eaſe in their own private fortunes, they could not ſo ſoon be put in a paſſion at the proceedings of the government. What gives me the moſt diſguſt in this matter is, that thoſe ſimple people, who are ſo good-natured as to let out their paſſions for nothing to the heads of parties,

parties, are commonly the most ignorant both of the history of other countries, and the present state and true interest of their own; are commonly the farthest from the springs of government, and consequently know least what difficulties a government have to struggle with, and in what peculiar circumstances they are involved. Thus they that are least qualified for finding fault, are, generally speaking, loudest in their complaints. That ever men should pretend to settle the affairs of nations, while their own exorbitant desires and appetites are in an uproar within them, or to find fault with those who have the government of kingdoms in their hands, while themselves cannot govern their own passions!

Nor is it to be imputed to any other cause than unbounded luxury, that the people of *Great Britain*, formerly a nation of heroes, are now so enervated and effeminate, that if they happen to be destitute of an army trained to war and hardship, they are before an enemy as a flock of sheep before wolves; as appears from what we have seen but the other day, *viz.* a banditti of hardy ruffians penetrating into the heart of our country without interruption or opposition from the people, and likely to reach our metropolis itself, had they not been prevented by the army\*.

Thus have I laid before you, my dear countrymen, a very brief view of a very copious subject, *viz.* the modern LUXURY of our unhappy country. The other epidemic disease I

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mentioned

\* The rebel army having come as far as *Derby*, within less than a hundred miles of *London*.

mentioned, from whence the most fatal effects are to be feared, and which is inseparable from the former, is IRRELIGION. And here I am got, if possible, into a larger field than before, and into a subject which yields a more gloomily prospect than the former. If the unbounded luxury of the age has the false plea of great wealth and trade to support it, (though it is certain no degree of wealth or trade are sufficient for it); if it should pretend, though falsely, that its natural consequences are more to be feared than its judicial; if luxury, I say, should pretend to these wretched and sophistical defences, irreligion cannot: for it is more inexcusable in this age, (an age of the greatest light and knowledge that has been for above these twelve hundred years backwards) than in all the past, and it is likewise a more certain means of bringing destruction upon a nation than even luxury itself. For, if there be a God in heaven, it is not to be imagined he will long suffer a nation to flourish which shews the utmost contempt for the best and most sublime dispensation of religion that can be laid before the sons of men. That many people in *England* are at this day guilty of this atrocious and provoking crime, needs no other proof than what will appear to any one who will but cast the most careless eye upon the ways of all ranks in the nation, the clergy themselves not excepted, to our inexpressible confusion, and their indelible disgrace be it spoken.

The irreligion of the present age is above sneaking out of sight or concealing itself. It appears without blushing in our news-papers, walks in state at our declarations of war, presides at  
our



our elections, and reigns without controul at our public diversions.

The following and such like bravadoes meet our eyes almost in every news-paper. "The fleets are in high spirits, and only long for a hearty brush with the Dons. We only desire the arm of flesh may be left to decide the quarrel. We doubt not but the brave admiral such-a-one, with his glorious fleet, will soon give a good account of the enemy. Let *England* but take care of her fleet, and what has she to fear?"

In all which there is so far from any appearance of a sense of dependence upon heaven, that we seem rather desirous to stand by our own strength, than be beholden to the assistance of the God of battles. I shall only at present add on this particular, that had such expressions as the above, and many others of the same kind, that have passed unpunished in the public newspapers since the commencement of the *Spanish* war, been published at *Athens* or *Rome*, the publishers had been treated as contemners of the gods of their country\*.

\* To quote all the passages from Heathen writers, in which they speak of the reverence due by states and empires to the superior powers, and of the absolute dependence on them which they ought to express in all their public undertakings, would fill a volume. I shall therefore only refer the reader to the writings of the loose and wanton *Horace* himself, for some expressions which discover a sense of reverence and submission to the gods, that may put the Christians of our degenerate age and nation out of countenance. See *Book I. Ode 2.* where (*verse 35*) he intreats several of the inferior Deities to intercede with *Jupiter*, that he

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And, now I mention the *Spanish* war, I appeal to the thousands who saw it declared, whether there appeared in the behaviour and conversation of the people of *London* on that occasion, the least sense of humanity for their fellow-creatures who were likely to suffer in it, or the least dependence on heaven for the success of it; or whether the spirit which reigned at that time in *England* was not a spirit of insolence and defiance both of God and man? It is plain from the *Roman* history, that that humane people (though strangers to our religion, which teaches us that the whole success of war depends upon the over-ruling providence of God) always engaged in it with a deeper sense of dependence upon their gods, who yet were idols and no gods, than we shew on Him, *who does in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,* whatever

he would not destroy the *Roman* empire for the murder of *Julius Caesar*. Ode 12. ver. 14. he says, *Jupiter* has the supreme disposal of the affairs of gods and men; see also verse 49. Ode 34. is an acknowledgment of the absolute power of *Jupiter* to over-rule all human affairs. Book III. Ode. 1. verse 6. he calls *Jupiter* supreme king over all earthly monarchs, and says all things depend upon his nod. He speaks to the same purpose, ode 4. verse 45; see also verse 66. Ode 6. of the same book is written expressly to charge the *Romans* with the contempt of religion and depravation of manners, and to assure them, that from thence proceeded the miseries of all *Italy*. He there particularly affirms (verse 5.) that the *Roman* empire was raised to its greatness by the gods for the devotion of the people.

whatever pleases him, and whose hand none can stay †.

Further, it is wholly owing to the luxury and sensuality of the age, that a religion, which has upon it all the characters a revelation from God can be imagined to have, is rejected and despised in this unhappy nation.

What avails it that the important truths of Christianity have of late been so deeply enquired into, that they have been opposed by the most subtle writers of the Deistical party, and defended by the greatest masters of human reason, and that the result of this enquiry is, that these sacred truths have, by that means, been better established, to the satisfaction of every fair examiner, than if they had never been controverted; what avails, I say, all this strict and severe scrutiny, and the convincing proof of the truth of the Christian religion which it has produced, if there be at this day a more numerous party of Deists, who are such merely from ignorance and sensuality, than of Christians, who are such in belief and practice, from a fair and thorough examination?

What avails it, that any man who will fairly enquire into the Christian religion, will find, that the

† I cannot help taking notice of the insolence and defiance of heaven which appears in the names that are given to the ships of the *British* navy; and the genius of the people appears as plain in this as in things of greater consequence. The *Victory*, the *Dreadnought*, the *Superb*, the *Terror*, the *Thunder*, and the *Lightning*, seem to me very improper names for frail vessels, liable every moment to be swallowed up by the devouring waves, whenever it shall please him who has the power of them, to give them such a commission.

the scheme, as it stands in the scriptures, taken literally, is so far from being unreasonable, that the main of it was thought of and earnestly wished for, by the wisest heathens \*; that its doctrines, if they were not true, are of that sublime and heavenly nature as to make every wise and good man admire them, and wish they were true; that its proofs are the most irresistible that ever were laid before mankind upon any occasion, *viz.* the completion of almost innumerable antient prophecies in our Saviour's own person, some written several thousand years before his appearance, besides those given by himself, the completion of many of which is unquestionable; the performance of almost innumerable miracles by him and his apostles; the attestation of his resurrection by multitudes, some of whom performed many miracles, and at last gave their lives in attestation of the truth of it, in which it was impossible they themselves should be deceived; and as plain from the miserable lives and deaths they exposed themselves to by their adherence to this religion, that they could have no design of imposing upon others? What avails it, that the firm belief and strict observance of Christianity would raise the human nature almost to the pitch of the angelic? It is the single objection of its fixing beyond dispute the bounds of right and wrong, and pointing its canon directly against our favourite lusts and passions, that disgusts us at it, and puts us upon so many wretched shifts to prove that false which we dare not allow to be true.

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\* See *Dr Clarke's evidence of natural and revealed religion*, p. 308. & *seq.*

Is there a fop in any of the inns of court, whose reading goes no farther than the pamphlets he subscribes for at the coffee house, or an *Oxonian* in his second year, whose knowledge serves only to enable him to call a *horse*, a *house*, or a *table*, by a different word in *Latin*, *Greek*, and *French*, that does not take upon him to cast reflexions on the awful and solemn doctrines of the Christian religion; and this in the very age in which a *Newton*, a *Clarke* and a *Locke*, (a triumvirate which no age since the appearance of Christianity can exceed) have declared their belief, and exerted the utmost force of their genius in demonstrating the truth of it; and without even pretending to have found out one new difficulty in it, one fallacy in the arguments formerly applied in defence of it, or so much as knowing the best objections against it, much less the satisfying answers which have been made to these objections?

Nor does the irreligion of the age appear more shocking in any single instance than in the modern education of youth: for from thence there is no manner of prospect of any cure of the evil; but on the contrary, every appearance of religion is sinking more and more in the nation with every succeeding generation. It is notorious, that the immorality of the youth of one of our universities is grown to such a height, that it deserves at this day more properly to be stiled, the seat of the vices, than of the muses. Nor is it to be doubted, but that it is in the power of the learned gentlemen, who have the charge of the youth at that university, to remedy, or at least in a great measure to restrain, this evil. I should be glad to hear of any number of schoolmasters, public or  
private

private, who make a conscience of teaching the children committed to their charge to form rational conceptions of the Christian religion, or of the duties of common morality; for having made some enquiry myself into the general practice of instructors of youth, I must own I have, to my great concern, found that they have generally thought they had discharged their duty to them, if they made them scholars, though they did not use the least endeavour to make them Christians, or honest men. At this rate, how many ages, upon a reasonable computation, may any sense of religion be expected to remain in this unhappy country, (if Heaven should suffer us still to hold our place among the nations) since every rising generation falls behind their fathers in the knowledge and practice of it?

To what a deplorable state of irreligion must that nation be reduced, in which many of the men, who should be the last to give up the spirit and power of Christianity, are got into the same epidemic unbelief and immorality that has overrun the rest of the nation? That in *England* at this day, too many of that order of men whose business it is to support, by their doctrine and example, the belief and practice of Christianity, have betrayed their important trust; that they have made themselves too obnoxious to the reflexions of the enemies of religion, by engaging themselves in secular schemes for preferment, and some by notoriously immoral lives, is a truth not less certain than melancholy. I am aware, that in this tract I shall not have occasion to touch upon any subject more tender and delicate than this, and that it is very difficult to attack a set of clergy without wounding religion through  
their

their sides. And if the objections against those of the present age could be ascribed to human frailty, I should with pleasure do my best to palliate and excuse them, instead of exposing them to public view; being, in all cases, and in this especially, of opinion, that private offences ought to be reprov'd in private, and that deeds of darkness ought to remain in darkness. But what avails it that I, or any other writer, carefully conceal the faults of the clergy, if too many of their own body expose their shame, by embroiling themselves in politics and party causes, to the neglect and disgrace of their sacred function, by indulging themselves in all the luxury of theatres music-gardens, wine and feasting, and some in other kinds of a more infamous nature? The practices of a set of clergy of a character preferable to those of this age, drew upon them the severe rebukes of two of their own order, who thought it necessary to reprove them from the press; whose proceedings will sufficiently justify mine, especially as their names are no less than those of archbishop *Tillotson* and bishop *Burnet* \*.

To proceed, how can a people pretend to have any sense or love of religion in their hearts, who never have it in their mouths? We know that mankind love the riches, pleasures and honours of this world, by this certain token, that they are ever talking of them, and nothing but them. But as to religion, I appeal to every judicious person in the nation, whether such a thing is now to be heard of any where in town and country, as a conversation in which religious sub-

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jects

\* *Tillotson's* serm. vol. I. p. 461. *Burnet's* pastoral care.

jects are the prevailing ones, kept up with any relish or satisfaction in any mixed company; and whether, on the contrary, they don't find, that the few who love such subjects of conversation are obliged carefully to avoid them, in all but select companies, as generally disagreeable. It is a wise and just saying of our Saviour, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Were there as much love of religion in our hearts, as there is of worldly honour, profit or pleasure, our conversation would favour as much of it as now it does of them.

Another fearful instance and effect of the irreligion of the age is the horrid contempt of judicial oaths, exacted at entering upon almost every office, from the highest down to that of a scavenger, with those of the custom-house and excise, and those yet more shocking, if possible, which are required at elections for members of parliament.

What makes this particular the more deplorable, is that these oaths answer no purpose, but to lay a load of guilt upon the nation: for it is not to be supposed that any person who has not virtue enough to resist the temptation of a bribe, or of defrauding the revenue, or of betraying his trust, will have virtue enough to refuse an oath he does not intend to keep, to answer a present purpose; especially considering how little solemnity or significancy there is in the form of the oath, and in the manner of administering it; which accordingly ignorant and thoughtless people swallow with the greatest indifference, regarding the kissing of the book no more than as a mere insignificant ceremony.

For proving the frequency of the shocking crime of perjury, there needs no curious enquiry,



ry, nor dirty raking into dark scenes of corruption. Whoever knows any thing of elections, and custom-house practices, knows that there it walks in open day-light; that a great many thousand electors must be perjured at every election, of which the many strict laws against bribery shew the sense of the legislature itself; that custom-house oaths are become a standing term of ridicule; and that the oaths taken upon entering on most places and offices, are taken without so much as being intended to be kept, many of them being so strict as to render it almost impracticable to keep them.

Good God! what a scene of perjury is here! And how great must be the mercy of the insulted Being who suffers such a wicked people to live upon his earth, without commanding her to open her mouth and swallow us up!

If there is not a more daring crime committed among men than calling the God of truth to witness a falshood; if no crime ever was more frequent in any nation than perjury is in *England* at this day; and if the abovementioned oaths, to which all this perjury is owing, are of no manner of advantage for preventing bribery, infidelity in offices, or frauds to the prejudice of the revenue; if all these things are so, and if it be not yet time to consider of a speedy redress of this grievance, I know not when it will.

If there were any love of religion or piety left among us, it would appear from the fulness of the places of public worship, and from our constant keeping up among us the practice of worshipping God in private families. But we shew by our indifference to every thing that has the least relish of religion in it, that we have forgot

the God that made us. Indeed we are now grown so very polite, that we are above asking a blessing of him who only can bestow it upon the common comforts of life, or thanking him whose creatures we have been consuming, for his bounty in feeding and supporting us.

Should I pretend to give a view of the wickedness of the theatre, I should not know where to begin, or to what length the subject would carry me. For whether I insisted on the lewdness or impiety of most of the plays themselves, on the infamous characters of the actors and actresses, on the scandalous farces they commonly tag the gravest plays with, or above all, on the inhumanly impudent dances and songs with which they lard them between the acts; I say, which soever of these particulars I insisted on, each of them would furnish matter for a great many pages; and much more, if I should enter upon a full view of them all. Indeed the theatre is at present on such a footing in *England*, that it is impossible to enter it, and not come out the worse for having been in it; for now-a-days a good play is no other than a trap to draw in the modest and innocent to a love of theatrical entertainments: and the minds of the spectators are not the safer from being polluted and debauched, though the play itself be in the main decent and modest; since the ingenious contrivance of the managers entirely prevents the good effect of any worthy sentiment expressed in the play, by introducing a painted strumpet at the end of every act, to cut 'capers on the stage in such an impudent and unwomanly manner, as must make the most shocking impressions on every mind; and lest the audience should chance,

in spite of all this, to carry away somewhat that might make their hearts the better, a ludicrous and shameless farce concludes the whole, and with one stroke erases all the little traces of virtuous sentiments that were formed by the play itself.

I only beg leave to ask you, my dear countymen, for what purpose you support a sacred order of men, to teach you the pure and holy laws of the Christian religion, and at the same time encourage by your countenance and your riches a set of the very dregs of human nature, who make it their business to debauch your minds by their lewd compositions and wanton gesticulations, to fill them with impure and vile ideas, and to disappoint the most diligent endeavours of a Christian ministry? Surely it can never be consistent with common sense to support in the same country one order of men for the propagation of virtue and religion, and another for the destruction of them; to maintain one set of people for promoting a reformation of manners, and another for promoting an universal corruption.

It is the saying of a great man of the last age, That upon some accounts it were better that wicked men would fairly renounce Christianity than continue to profess it, and at the same time disgrace it by their scandalous lives. And indeed it could be no such matter of grief to good men to see a nation of barbarians overrun with vice and debauchery, as to see this kingdom, once illustrious for its purity in doctrine and practice, celebrated for its martyrs, and which pretends to be the grand bulwark of the protestant religion; to see this kingdom, I say, thus sunk to a pitch of wickedness and lewdness in its public entertainments

tainments, which at *Athens*, where they worshipped the unknown God, would have thrown the celebrated diversions of the stage into utter disgrace.

And are these the favourite pleasures that so wholly ingross and bewitch a Christian nation, that we cannot live without them, even while an enemy is laying waste our country, and expected every hour at our very gates? For my part, I cannot say I am sure, whether, if it had been our miserable fate to have had our metropolis burnt to the ground, and the inhabitants put to the sword by the rebels, they would not have found us upon their arrival engaged in hearing music, and seeing plays; and whether numbers had not been sent by them directly from the play-house into another world\*.

And

\* That I may not appear singular in my sentiments upon theatrical entertainments, I will add the judgments of a few (out of innumerable that might be inserted) of the wisest men of antient and modern times, which will strengthen what I have said.

We are told by *Plutarch*, that the great and wise legislator *Solon*, “ upon seeing some of *Thespis’s* pieces acted, struck his staff against the ground, to shew his dislike; as apprehending, that these idle stories, from theatrical representations, would soon become matters of importance, and have too great a share in life.”

The author of the *dialogue on the orators* makes this just remark on the character of the *Roman* people; “ There are certain vices peculiar to this city, [*Rome*] which seem almost conceived with them in their mothers wombs; such as the taste of theatrical shews, gladiators and horse-races. Are not these almost the  
“ only

And now, my dear countrymen, what remains, or what more is in the power of any private person, than, after having thus laid before you

“ only subjects of conversation among the young people,  
 “ and indeed in all companies? Is it probable that a  
 “ mind intent upon, and in a manner besieged by these tri-  
 “ fling amusements, should be very capable of applying  
 “ to serious studies?” *Rollin's ancient history*, volume  
 II. page 251.

“ Of what advantage (says *Plutarch*) have trage-  
 “ dies been to *Athens*? We find that the prudence  
 “ of *Themistocles* inclosed the city with strong walls;  
 “ that the fortitude of *Miltiades* preserved its liber-  
 “ ties; and that the conduct of *Cimon* gained it the  
 “ empire of all *Greece*. If the poetry of *Æschylus*,  
 “ *Sophocles* or *Euripides*, have obtained equal advan-  
 “ tages for the city of *Athens*, by delivering it from  
 “ impending calamities;—I consent that dramatic  
 “ pieces be ranked with trophies of victory, the  
 “ poetic scenes with the fields of battle, and the com-  
 “ positions of the poets with the exploits of the gene-  
 “ ral.” He concludes, that it was the greatest impru-  
 dence for the *Athenians* to prefer pleasure to duty, the  
 passion for the theatre to the love of their country, tri-  
 vial representations to the application to public business,  
 and to consume in useless expence and tragic entertain-  
 ments the funds intended for the support of fleets and  
 armies. Accordingly king *Philip* of *Macedon*, instruc-  
 ted by the *Greeks* themselves, knew to take the oppor-  
 tunity of their effeminacy, and to wreath a yoke round  
 the necks of all *Greece* and *Asia*. See *Justin*, book  
 VII. chap. 6.

The wisdom of the *Roman* legislature, foreseeing the  
 fatal effects of theatric entertainments upon the genius  
 of the people, ordained by a standing law, that no the-  
 atre should last above one month, viz. during the time  
 of the public shews, though erected at ever so great an  
 expence;

you a brief view of the national guilt that has brought the late troubles into our land, to conclude this little tract, by earnestly calling upon each

expenditure; so that even that of *M. Scaurus*, which must have cost above a million of our money, underwent the same fate. *Pompey* however had power enough to break through this wise regulation, and was the first that ever erected a perpetual theatre, with seats, which had never before been permitted, lest the people should have desired to indulge themselves too much in those diversions. It is very well known that from this period the *Roman* virtue declined apace, and never recovered itself.

Hear what the great bishop *Burnet* (than whom no man better knew human nature) says of the stage.

“ The stage is the great corrupter of the town, and  
 “ the bad people of the town have been the chief cor-  
 “ rupters of the stage, who run most after those plays  
 “ that most defile the stage.—The poets pretend  
 “ their design is to discourage vice; but they really do  
 “ recommend it in the most effectual manner. It is a  
 “ shame for our nation and religion to see the stage so  
 “ reformed in *France*, and so polluted still in *England*.  
 “ —Till another scene appears, certainly our plays  
 “ are the greatest debauchers of the nation.” Conclu-  
 sion of *Burnet's history*.

I shall add to bishop *Burnet's*, the thoughts of one of the kindest, most judicious and best men that this world ever produced, who never said a hard thing but when the good of mankind required it, I mean archbishop *Tillotson*, who in his discourse against corrupt communication, speaking of plays, says, “ They are intole-  
 “ rable, and not fit to be permitted in a *civilized*,  
 “ much less in a *Christian* nation. They do most no-  
 “ toriously minister both to infidelity and vice. By  
 “ their profaneness they are apt to instill bad principles  
 “ into the minds of men, and to lessen that awe and  
 “ reverence

each particular rank in the nation to exert themselves in their public and private stations for bringing about that general reformation which is necessary for averting a final and extirpating judgment.

I only beg leave first to recount some remarkable deliverances this kingdom has had from the immediate hand of God; to shew you what you owe him on the score of mere gratitude alone, if there were no other engagement upon you.

To take no notice of the many wonderful preservations of the life of queen *Elisabeth*, of immortal memory, from almost innumerable plots of the Papists against her life, (which were in effect the preservation of this nation from Popery and slavery) since the year 1588, a period of little more than one hundred and fifty years, it is easy to shew that this nation has been ten or twelve different times in imminent danger of the total destruction of its liberties civil and religious, and as often been delivered by immediate and indisputable interpositions of divine Providence.

In the year 1588, king *Philip* of Spain sent against us a fleet of such force, that he did not scruple impiously to call it, *The invincible Armada*; nor indeed had the world till that time ever seen such a powerful naval armament. The seas were overspread with their sails, and the ocean groaned with their weight. Scarce had they displayed their pride to the inviting gales, when He who holds the winds in his treasures,

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“ reverence which all men ought to have for God and  
 “ religion: and by their lewdness they teach vice, and  
 “ are apt to infect the minds of men, and dispose  
 “ them to lewd and dissolute practices.”

let them loose upon the face of the great deep. He commanded them to lift up the stormy waves of the sea. They mounted up to the heavens, they went down to the deeps; their souls melted within them because of their trouble: the Almighty triumphed over them gloriously: their fleets and their warriors he cast into the sea; they sunk to the bottom as a stone. His right-hand became glorious in power; his right-hand dashed in pieces the enemy.

The pious queen who then swayed the *English* sceptre, scrupled not to ascribe the glory of this victory to the immediate interposition of heaven, ordering a medal to be struck with this inscription, "He blew with his wind, and they were scattered\*."

In the year 1596 another attempt was made by the same power to make a descent upon *England* with a very formidable naval armament. "But a violent storm arising in the midst of the voyage, several of the ships were lost, and the rest so dispersed, that the fleet was rendered unserviceable for this year. Thus *Elisabeth* had the pleasure of hearing that it was disabled from hurting her, before she knew of its sailing †." The winds in their courses fought for *England*. He that is mighty hath done glorious things for us: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he hath taken our enemies in the very snare themselves had laid for us.

In the year 1605, when that infernal power who has long been drunk with the blood of saints  
and

\* AFFLAVIT DEUS ET DISSIPANTUR.

† The words of *Rapin*, vol. II. p. 146.



and martyrs, found her cursed machinations against us disappointed; ever thirsting, ever insatiable of Protestant blood, she resolved to strike a stroke which might at once cut off the hopes of all who opposed her interest in this land, by hurrying our king, and some hundreds of the principal men and chief rulers of the nation, out of the world, by one explosion of a mine of gun-powder †. Deeply was the plot laid, and dark and secret was the hellish contrivance: but that eye from which the darkness hides no more than the light, before which hell is naked and destruction uncovered, saw all their horrid combinations, confounded their devices, and brought them in ruin and vengeance upon their own heads ‡.

From the year 1685 to 1688 we saw our royal seat filled by a Popish prince || and his court, and many principal places of power and trust by persons devoted to the same interest. We saw the laws of *England*, the barriers of our freedom, broken; a standing army established to force a devilish religion and an arbitrary government down our throats; our church put under the inspection of Popish bishops, and her true Protestant fathers and overseers discarded and imprisoned \*;

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soned \*;

† Thence called the gun-powder plot, being a Popish scheme for blowing up the parliament-house.

‡ It was discovered by the miscarriage of a letter to a particular nobleman, whom they were willing to save from the general destruction: "For (says *Rapin*) God abhorring so detestable a plot, inspired one of them with a desire to save *William Lord Monteagle, &c.*" By a letter sent to him the whole was found out and defeated. *Rapin*, vol. II. p. 170.

|| King *James II.*

soned \* ; we saw a bloody inquisition setting up in our country, though under a softer name †, and begun to feel the iron teeth of that merciless religion ‡.

These were scenes of gloominess and darkness : these were days of horrou and despair. How didst thou then, fair liberty, and thou, star-crown'd religion ||, lift your streaming eyes to heaven ; and how didst thou, O my country, faint with thy deadly wounds, how didst thou ly, all pale and ghastly, wallowing in thy blood ! Come, glorious deliverer, come, immortal *William* : for thee is reserved the honour of saving a miserable nation from spiritual and temporal slavery. He came, he saw, he delivered. The inconstant winds seemed proud to serve him, and the swelling floods smoothed their rage to waft him over. They varied and calmed in the minute when he needed them, and his fleet was carried prosperously through the seas, while that of the enemy was shut up in port. The winds breathed a gentle and favourable gale, till his fleet was secured, and then broke in a violent storm upon that which came against him. They were scattered and forced into ports, and their hopes and the fears of the Protestants at the same time extinguished §.

In

\* Seven bishops put in the tower for presenting a petition to the king in favour of religion and liberty.

† Commission for ecclesiastical affairs.

‡ Several hundreds arbitrarily executed by judge *Jeffereys* and general *Kirk*.

|| *Rev. xii. 1.*

§ See bishop *Burnet's* account, who was himself in the fleet. *Burnet's hist. vol. I. p. 787.*

In the year 1690, when in the bloody field of *Boyne* our heroic deliverer \* was bravely shewing his love of this country, and his contempt of death in its most dreadful form; while thousands fell at his right hand and his left, the sure messenger of death † passed so near him as to violate his sacred person, but at the same time passed guiltless of his important life. A sure proof that the eye of Providence watched over him, and that the hand of God was around him to ward off every fatal blow. For had he fallen at that critical time, the glorious labours of those worthy patriots and of that excellent prince who wrought our deliverance, had been lost; the hopes of the Protestants dashed; the revolution again unhinged, and Popery again let loose upon us.

In the year 1692 a formidable armament was brought to the opposite coast ‡, and embarked to invade us, when we were in no condition to resist it ||. The fleet was even got into our seas before ours was ready to receive them: but its course was soon stopped, and that for some time, by winds contrary to them, but so favourable to us, that our whole force was brought together before they could advance. Upon this followed the most glorious naval victory *England* ever gained, with the destruction of the best part of the

\* King *William*.

† A cannon-ball, which grazed his shoulder. *Burnet's hist.* vol. II. p. 50.

‡ *Cherbourg* and *La Hogue*.

|| “ If the winds had favoured the *French*, they themselves would have brought us the first news of their design.”——The words of bishop *Burnet*, in his history, vol. II. p. 93.

the enemy's fleet, on their coast, and in their very sight. In this whole affair there was such a conjunction of extraordinary interpositions of Providence, that he who had the greatest share in the action \* thought it no diminution of his honour to reckon up a whole train of them, and to acknowledge that the success of that happy day was owing to the immediate hand of God.

This fatal defeat of our enemies seemed sufficient to free us from all apprehensions for some time: but they again resolved in the year 1696 to make another attempt, and that upon a surer footing, with the additional improvement of an assassination † to make way for it. This black contrivance, worthy only of *France* or *Rome*, was discovered but two days before it was to have been executed by some who were practised on to engage them in it. And as the design was thus disappointed at home; so by a kind providence our fleet, which was designed to be sent to a very great distance, was kept in our ports by cross winds, contrary to what is ordinary at that season of the year. And then the same person who formerly had the command, when the same enemy was defeated, took it upon him again, and went with our fleet toward their coast, till

\* Admiral *Ruffel*.

† Of king *William*. There was also a design on foot of the same sort in the year 1692: but I pass it over; the immediate interposition of Providence for defeating it being less clear, and more liable to be disputed, than in the present case. See *Burnet's* history, vol. II. p. 95. And p. 148, of another assassination-plot.

till they saw the design impracticable, and dispersed themselves †.

Another remarkable crisis was in the year 1714 ||. It is very well known to numbers now alive, that the restless and indefatigable enemies of the Protestant religion, and our present happy establishment, had for a considerable time been undermining them, and secretly working their ruin; that their schemes were in the abovementioned year in great forwardness; too many well-wishers to that interest from which we have every thing to fear, having wormed themselves into the court of queen *Ann*, and into places of great power and influence; that several violent steps were actually taken, the sure presages of what we had to expect; that all things were going forward in the fairest manner they could desire for reducing us again under the power of the same family we had been before obliged to exclude from the *British* succession, a family educated in principles of cruelty and blood, and besides exasperated by their late disgrace. Heaven at this dangerous juncture again look'd down upon us. Death was sent in the critical moment to cut short the royal life, before the fatal schemes were ripe for bringing in a Popish pretender to fill the throne\*. The consequence of which remarkable providence was, that the affairs of *England* immediately went into another channel.

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† *Ibid.* p. 164, &c.

|| See *Rae's* history of the rebellion.

\* The *Jacobite* party openly declared, that had the queen lived six weeks longer, and things continued as they then were, their schemes had been ready for execution.

The schemes of the disaffected party were unhinged, and the illustrious father of the august prince who now happily sways the sceptre over us came in time to prevent them, and once more baffle their pretensions; and this without so much as a single blow struck, or one drop of blood shed, to make way for his accession.

The famous year 1715 † is yet fresh in the memory of many among us. We have not yet forgot how the insulting enemy plumed themselves with as sanguine hopes of gaining their point, as tho' they had never been once disappointed. We have not forgot that they raised in our country an army of rebels, which almost shook the pillars of the *British* throne. It is also very well known, that they placed their chief dependence on that ambitious power \*, which has all along been the patron of their baffled cause: and what the consequence must have been, if Providence had suffered *France* to land a powerful body of forces to second them, while the whole regular force in the nation did not amount to ten thousand men, is very obvious. But he, who at his pleasure cuts short the distant prospects of ambitious men, who has in his hand the breath of the mightiest monarchs, by one timely stroke put an end to the life of a king † who had been for threescore years the plague and scourge of *Europe*, reduced his kingdom to the precarious state of a minority, and disabled it from lending that assistance to our enemies which they expected. The upshot was, that

‡ *Ibid.*

\* *France.*

† *Lewis XIV. of France.*

that an easy conquest gave them into our hands: a few the government punished; but a much greater number their unequalled lenity spared; which lenity they have requited by their late ungrateful and brutal attempt to overturn the very government to which some of them owe their lives.

It is also fresh in our memories, how the same implacable power, that has so long been the fire-brand of Christendom, only in *February 1743* got together against us an embarkation consisting of sixteen thousand men, with arms for the friends of the *Jacobite* interest in our own country, to the number of many thousand stands besides: that they were suffered but just to peep out of their harbours, and were presently by a storm wrecked, sunk, and dashed on the shore; that the bodies of many hundreds were taken up on the *French* coast, and that the fleet was totally disabled from hurting us, before we set sail to attack it †. As if that kind Providence, which so tenderly watches over us, had been unwilling to let us take the trouble of conquering our enemies, or run the hazard of suffering any loss from them, and chose rather to bid us "stand still and see the salvation of God."

The last remarkable interposition of Providence in our favours, that I shall mention, is what has given birth to this address. An interposition neither less kind nor less conspicuous than any of the above-mentioned, and which I hope neither we nor our children shall ever suffer to slip out of our memories, nor its good

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† See the gazettes of *February* and *March 1743*.

effects on our lives and conduct to cease; but that the year 1745 shall be remembered, among the other memorable years, with due gratitude, to latest posterity, for a deliverance from a dearth of corn and a bloody civil war, or rather a general massacre, of each of which we have been this year within the distance of only one fortnight, or perhaps less, and from both which the hand of God alone hath saved us; unless any one will pretend, that the winds and rains of heaven are at our disposal.

Can we look back upon the hideous precipice we have so narrowly escaped, without hearts full of gratitude and stedfast resolutions of future obedience to our Almighty Deliverer? and are not these a set of deliverances which, for their uncommon nature and circumstances, may be applied as arguments for a Providence sufficient to silence Infidelity itself?

And now, what so reasonable an account can be given why this peculiar and constant care has been exercised over us, but that Providence has thought fit to set this nation up as a fence against that worldly ecclesiastic power, whose business has ever been to subvert all true religion and moral virtue, and which has for these twelve hundred years been scattering delusion, impiety, corruption, fire, sword, and desolation over the kingdoms of the earth. I know it is not in the eye of heaven of such consequence, what particular sect or subdivision of religion a nation or person is of, where due reverence is had to those laws he hath established by his sacred Messenger, who came to be the light of the world. But the difference between the Popish and Protestant religions is the same that is between darkness



ness and light; between incredible absurdities and certain truths; between diabolical cruelty and heavenly benevolence; between Satan and Jesus Christ. It is therefore no wonder, though the Almighty has determined to prevent, by the most singular interpositions, the general establishment of this infernal religion; which would prove the general establishment of irreligion and vice, and the rooting out of Christianity and morality. And shall we, for the sake of a little guilty pleasure, and fleeting amusement, drop or give up this pure and sublime religion, which God himself has, by so many visible interpositions, taken care to preserve among us? I mention giving up the Protestant religion for pleasure; because nothing in the world is so likely to open a door to Popery, as unbounded luxury and voluptuousness; it being a religion calculated for the indulgence and gratification of the lusts and appetites of men.

Let us not flatter ourselves, that our work is over, now we hope the late danger is over. It was sent for a trial; and if it do not work its effect upon us, it will only make way for a more terrible judgment. We have been, as I said before, threatened in this one year with a dearth of corn and a civil war, supported by an invasion from abroad. The third national judgment, when famine and the sword prove ineffectual for the reformation of a people, is commonly the pestilence: and for God's sake let us think in time before that terrible scourge be sent amongst us, how we shall get free of it, as we hope we are of the others. National guilt can only be punished in this present life, the punishments in the next being for personal guilt. We are not

therefore to dream, that the Governor of the world will pass from his usual method of dealing with nations, out of any partiality for us. On the contrary, we may assure ourselves he will not be always insulted; but will send such judgments as shall produce either a reformation, or a final extirpation.

The present juncture seems to be the crisis that is to determine the fate of this once illustrious island, and you the persons in whose power it is, by your good or bad conduct, either to gain your country that favour and protection of heaven, which alone can support you against all your enemies, or to draw down upon it that almighty vengeance, which can shake the pillars of the best established empire in the world, and lay its honour and its pride in ruins. And for the sake of all that is dear to you, if you have any regard for your children, any love for your country, any reverence for your religion, or any gratitude to your Almighty Deliverer, let the time past be sufficient to have lost in indolence and pleasure, and at last, before it be too late, resolve to consider what is to be done for saving a sinking nation. It will be ungrateful, impious and brutish, to a degree I hope you are not capable of, to despise so many signal warnings, and to make no other use of your late remarkable deliverance, but to return with so much the more gust to your follies, which have been a little, and but a little, interrupted by your danger.

There is the more necessity to guard you against the danger of giving yourselves up to impious mirth and wantonness upon the return of your tranquillity, because it is so well known,  
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what a flood of wickedness over-ran the nation after the restoration of king *Charles II.* and the deliverance it brought from troubles of the same kind as we have lately been alarmed with. Nor ought it to be forgotten, what a succession of judgments the divine Providence at that time brought upon this guilty land, to shew that heaven was displeas'd with so monstrous an abuse of such a remarkable deliverance. We engaged in a war with our next neighbours \* and best allies, which proved as unsuccessful as it was unjust. A very considerable part of our naval strength was destroyed by the fire of the enemy in our very ports †. A devouring pestilence was let loose among us, which heaped our streets with dead ‡. A fearful conflagration was suffered to overpower our capital, and to humble the proudest city upon earth to the dust §. And need I then advise you to take care how you again provoke such wrath, and draw down such vengeance upon your heads? A people may trifle with governors of their own setting up, and baffle both their laws and the sanctions annexed to them, which seems to be the *English* notion of liberty; but wo to that people who presume to trifle with the Almighty Governor of the world.

Upon you my lords and gentlemen, who hold the first ranks in the nation, whether sharers in  
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\* The *Dutch*.

† The *English* fleet burnt by the *Dutch* at *Chatham*. See *Burnet's hist.* vol. I. p. 242.

‡ The plague in *London*, which cut off an hundred thousand people. *Ibid.* p. 218.

§ The fire of *London*. *Ibid.* p. 229.

the legislative power, or not; upon you it lyes to begin the general reformation, by your superior example and influence, which, you know, cannot fail to lead the nation. Let but the quality and gentry enter into an association, to live mostly in the country upon their estates, and within their incomes; to countenance the public worship of God, and to support a due decorum in their own families; and observe how long extravagance and impiety will continue in *Britain*. In whatever light this matter may appear to people of birth and quality, it is certain they are blameable, not only for their own personal faults, but also in a great measure, for those of their inferiors, since their bad example leads a whole people astray.

Of you, right reverend fathers of the church, it is expected, that you will neglect no means in your power for influencing the inferior clergy, who have the immediate charge of souls committed to them, to make conscience of instructing their people in their duty, and of warning them against the danger of Popery, of which you know they have of late grown excessively negligent; and that you will use all proper means for coming at the true characters of the several clergy of your respective dioceses; and shew particular marks of your favour to such as live exemplary lives, and are diligent in the execution of their duty, and do your utmost to discountenance those whose lives are not at least sober and decent, and who do not shew that they have the spiritual advantage and reformation of the manners of their people at heart.

I the more chearfully, and with the better hopes, address you upon this occasion, right reverend

verend fathers, because I have, with great satisfaction, seen some of you exert yourselves gloriously in the cause of religion and your country, since the beginning of the late troubles. I should think no better opportunity than the present could offer for your laying aside whatever may have the least appearance of luxury or superfluity in your expence, and can any way be spared for charitable uses. I hope, I need not recommend to a body of Christian prelates, the Christian virtue of charity, from considerations taken from scripture : but I will appeal to yourselves, whether, by a hundred pounds a year bestowed in charities, you are not likely to gain more of the love and esteem of mankind, than by a thousand laid out in the pomp and grandeur of life. I mention this, because the usual pretence for the bishops keeping what they call a rank, and making a figure, is to give them weight and authority among the people ; which end, I am sure, would be much more effectually gained, by laying out all above the conveniencies of life in judicious and well chosen charities. Let me add, that this virtue is peculiarly graceful in your sacred order, and that you may contribute as much this way to averting the vengeance of heaven from your country, as any way ; according to the judgment of that honour of the Christian priesthood, archbishop *Tillotson*, who was himself a glorious pattern of this virtue.

“ I have often thought (says he) that the extraordinary charity of this nation—next to the  
 “ infinite mercy and goodness of Almighty  
 “ God, has had a very particular influence upon our preservation and deliverance from those  
 “ terrible

“ terrible calamities that were just ready to rush  
“ in upon us.”

And upon you, reverend pastors of the church, it is not to be expressed, how much depends with regard to the state of virtue and religion in the nation. It is certain, no rank in it has more influence in forming the manners of the people, unless perhaps the great may be excepted. And it is likewise certain, that no order of men in the nation has the morals of the people committed to their charge so immediately as you have. Of your hands therefore, if our destruction be decreed, you may expect a great part of the blood of your expiring country will be required \*.

If there is any foundation for hoping that the divine Providence will not give us up to our enemies, nor extirpate us by an immediate judgment from his own hand, it is, that, as I said before, we are the only feeble bulwark of the Protestant religion; and it is to be hoped, it is not the scheme of Providence, that the Protestant religion be suffered wholly to sink. But, if by our vicious lives we disgrace our religion, or if by our mad pursuit of pleasure we drop all sense of religion, or if through the carelessness of our watchmen we degenerate into Popery, why should we hope the Protestant religion will stand as a fence betwixt us and the vengeance of Heaven?

Nor is less to be expected of you at this important juncture, right worshipful gentlemen of the magistracy in town and country, in whose hands the executive power is lodged. It lies wholly in your breasts, whether that body of laws which regards the morals of the people,

shall

\* See *Ezek.* iii. 20.

shall be a terror and restraint upon evil-doers, or a gigantic but harmless bug-bear. It has long been the complaint of the most judicious, that no country is better furnished with laws, and yet no country is more lawless than *England*. It is in your power, gentlemen, to wipe off this reproach whenever you please; for the public business may always be done, where magistrates know how to command, and will see themselves obey'd.

It is wholly in the power of your numerous and wealthy body, worthy citizens of *London*, to regulate the conduct of all the trading part of the nation. If you will set before them a pattern of industry, sobriety, and oeconomy, you will see how powerful your example is, and how closely it is copied by the other trading cities in the kingdom. You have lately made a glorious stand for the support of public credit: why should you not make as noble a one for the support of public virtue? You have unanimously entered into associations for the defence of your lives, and your liberties, civil and religious, against a *Papist* pretender and his adherents: why should you not enter into associations for the restoration of the frugal, the industrious, the virtuous and religious manners of your fathers, against a flood of *Deism*, of *French* foppery, and of bewitching pleasure, which over-runs the land?

O *London, London*, how hast thou degenerated! Where are now those happy days, when thy greatness and superiority to the other cities of *England*, consisted more in thy superior virtue and piety, than in thy enormous wealth, trade, and magnificence. Thou art the chief of

the cities of the earth ; thy merchants are princes ; thy commerce is extended from sea to sea, and from the rising to the setting of the sun. Thy riches have exalted thee to heaven ; beware lest thy pride humble thee to the dust. For, when thy sins have once brought upon thee the hour of thy destruction, it will not be in the power of thy riches, thy commerce, or thy mighty fleets, to protect thee ; much less will the infamous tools and panders to thy luxury and pleasure serve to come between thee and the vengeance which hangs over thee.

It is in your power, learned gentlemen, to whom the instruction of youth is committed, by infusing into their minds a set of rational principles of religion, to do a great deal towards providing a rising generation to serve God, to support the cause of virtue, and to hand down the Protestant religion to posterity, after you are gone to receive the reward of your pious labours. And I doubt, whether any thing could give this country more reasonable hopes of the protection of Heaven, than the prospect of a succeeding generation likely to walk in the ways of virtue and religion, for the sake of whose piety (though only seen in futurity) God might think fit to spare the nation.

You, gentlemen, have the opportunity of forming the mind, at almost the only time when it is capable of being impressed ; I mean, in youth : for it is to be lamented that in this age of wealth, prosperity, and luxury, the minds of many people who are come to years are too stubborn to be bettered by any kind of advice, whether given from the pulpit, the press, or in private. I know it is said on this subject, though  
unreasonably,



unreasonably, that those who have had the most pious educations are often seen to go shamefully astray from the good ways they have been brought up in; and on that account it is pretended, that a religious education is of the less consequence. The assertion is true, and a melancholy truth it is. But the reasoning upon it is false. For it is not to be conceived, that a person who has not had his mind tinged in his youth with religious principles, should in any future part of his life give himself up to a religious practice. And therefore a religious education is absolutely necessary, if we would give our youth any chance of ever becoming pious or virtuous men. Further, the advantage of a religious education, upon a rational foundation, appears even in the course which men of loose lives take. Of which those who have not had that advantage, when they once get into the ways of open vice and impiety, having no principle within them to stop them in their career, are ever seen to ramble from one folly to another, till Providence puts an end to the course of their lives and impieties at once. But those who have had their minds tinged with principles of virtue and religion, though they sometimes miserably wander from the peaceful ways of sobriety, overpowered by heat of youth and strong temptation; whenever that youthful heat abates, and the temptation loses its force, or some severe affliction, the result of their follies, interveens, are often found to return to the temper of mind their education gave them, and tread those paths again which they were formerly accustomed to.

If therefore you will make a conscience of giving the youth intrusted to your care a rational

view of the Christian religion, as it is in the New Testament, and of that admirable system of morality communicated to mankind by it; especially, if you will inculcate upon their minds the beauties and the indispensable obligation of those sublime and heavenly precepts contained in that best discourse that ever was made to the sons of men, or ever will, till he who made it appears again, I mean our Saviour's discourse on the mount, *Matth.* v. vi. vii. the law by which we all are to be judged at the last day; if you will do these things carefully and conscientiously, regarding them as the most important parts of your duty to the youth whose education is intrusted to you, you will then contribute your proper part toward bringing about the national reformation so much wanted at this day.

Nor ought I to let slip this opportunity of addressing myself to you, my fair countrywomen, nor of laying before you a view of your proper duty, and the part you ought to act on this occasion. The beauties and graces of your persons and your minds make you the proper objects of the most tender love and affection of our sex; and the ordination of Heaven itself has put you under our immediate protection. Your characters as to virtue and vice greatly depend on your fathers and husbands; your tender minds being naturally so pliant, as to be susceptible of whatever impressions are made on them by our sex, It is therefore the more melancholy a consideration, that by our neglect of you, from too much false indulgence and fondness, your minds have been suffered to grow wild, and your passions and desires to shoot out into such extravagancies

as are altogether unsuitable and ungraceful in the female character,

It is with reluctance and grief I accuse you, and the more because my accusation is but too just : for it is certain, that no small part of the national guilt is to be charged to your account. It is by no means to be denied, that in this gay and voluptuous age, many of you have given yourselves up a great deal too much to the heightened pleasures of theatrical and musical intertainments, to the neglect not only of all that is spiritual and sacred, but also of those domestic cares which are your proper province. The unavoidable effect of a constant pursuit of the most innocent of these public diversions must be, intirely to pervert your minds from what is the only natural sphere of womankind, and what you were originally intended for by the ordination of heaven : for I will not stick to tell the proudest beauty that shines in the front-box, or in *Ranelagh's* gay alcove, bedecked in all the gaudy plumage that female vanity can contrive to put together, that she was originally formed for the plain and homely, but necessary and endearing characters of a wife and a mother ; and that all the various ornaments of pride which fill her fantastick brain, and disfigure the native beauties of her person, and all the giddy hours she passes in a round of guilty follies, falsely called pleasures and diversions, tend only to make her more and more unfit for what nature designed her for. Believe me, my dear countrywomen, whenever you aim at any thing else than to be dutiful daughters, loving wives, tender mothers, prudent mistresses of families, faithful friends, and pious Christians, you aim at somewhat that

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is quite out of nature, and beside the intention of heaven in making you rational creatures. Will *Vauxhall* improve you in œconomy and frugality? or *Ranelagh* in the domestic arts that make families happy? will the bombastic rant of the play-house furnish you with maxims of prudence? or its obscene ribaldry store your minds with the graces of modesty and virtue? how long must you die away to soft strains of music, or study to enter deeply into the various theatric excellencies of stage-heroes and heroins, before you will be the fitter companions for men of sense? how long must you practise curling your hair, fluttering your fans, and overloading your persons with false ornaments, before your conversation will be ever new and ever entertaining to a husband of knowledge and worth?

I beg leave only to ask you, Whether there is more of happiness or uneasiness in the life you generally live, even in your own experience? can you say you ever come away from the tumultuous scenes of pleasure which ingross the bulk of your time, without having your minds disturbed and thrown into a ferment of irregular and exorbitant desires, which, if you lived a life of sobriety, peace, and retirement, would never have stirred in your breasts? can you pretend that the sight of gorgeous dresses, of gaudy paintings, and all the various magnificence which exquisite art, supported by unbounded extravagance, can put together; that the hearing of the most melting strains of music, and of the most rapturous and passionate flights of poetry; can you pretend, I say, that these have any other effect upon you than to fill your fancies with a thousand romantic wishes and desires, altogether in-

consistent

consistent with your station, and above your rank in life, and to make your own homes dull and tiresome to you ? is the pleasure of being bowed to by a brainless fop in a side-box, equal to the satisfaction of mind which arises from the judicious regard of a tender parent or a loving husband ? what is the happiness of being rumbled in a crowd, compared to that of the peaceful enjoyment of the society of affectionate relations and friends, and the endearments of a race of promising children ?

If it be certain, that your fortune chiefly depends upon your being well settled in marriage ; if it be certain that a lady's having a fine taste in pleasures, and delighting to pass her life in the most expensive diversions, serves rather (according to the judgment of the male sex) to qualify her for a mistress than a wife ; and if it be likewise certain, that at this very time what chiefly deters the youth from entering into the marriage-state, is the excessive love of idleness, dress, and public diversions, they observe in the ladies, to which very few incomes are equal ; if these things be certain and indisputable, methinks your interest alone, and the desire of being agreeable to the other sex, if there were no other motive, ought to influence you greatly, and put you upon correcting your conduct. I assure you, however our sex may flatter you in your present taste for pleasure, there are few of them such fools as not to know, that a fine lady, who delights in gadding abroad in pursuit of pleasure, and when she stays at home in having her house crowded with idle visitors, and who is too polite to lend a hand to promote her husband's business, or to mind her own domestic cares, is not in the least  
fit

fit for being a wife, but, instead of being a help meet for a man, is rather like to be a clog or incumbrance upon his affairs.

But, tho' I have said, that the unavoidable effect of your haunting the luxurious intertainments of plays and music-gardens, is, to pervert your taste, and to turn the bent of your inclinations aside from your proper sphere; I have not yet mentioned by far the most fatal effect of a life spent in this manner. I appeal to the common sense of mankind, whether it is conceivable, that a lady can frequent the luscious theatre, be a witness of all the scenes of impurity, and give ear to all the shameless lewdness of that haunt of vice and obscenity, without having her mind debauched and polluted, which is the surest prelude to the debauching of her person. Nor indeed would I advise any friend of mine to make his addresses to one of these gay ladies, who spend much of their time at plays, as I should not think his honour the safer for being in the power of a woman who had drawn her principles of modesty and virtue from *Drury-Lane* or *Covent-Garden*. But to add no more on this head; a word being enough to the wise:

From what I have said of the faults of your conduct, my dear countrywomen, you may plainly see what is in your power to do toward the general reformation I have been recommending so earnestly, to wit, to correct those faults. It is in your power to lighten your country of all that part of the national guilt which your bad conduct has brought upon it. It is even in your power to do a great deal toward reforming the other sex. Virtue, according to the well known saying of the poet, is doubly amiable in  
a beautiful

a beautiful person, and you can hardly fail of gaining her some votaries among your lovers and husbands. Upon the whole, if you will resolve to retrench your extravagancies, to employ your time at home in the works of domestic œconomy, charity, virtue, and piety, and in filling up the place you hold with regard to your friends, your relations, and your God; you will contribute what is properly in your power toward the reformation, and consequently the saving of your unhappy country.

Lastly, my dear countrymen and countrywomen in general, it is in the power of every one of you (from the highest to the lowest rank in the nation) to do somewhat toward the general reformation; it is in the power of every man and every woman in *England* to reform one, to add one to the number of the truly virtuous and religious, for the sake of whom incensed Omnipotence may be moved to spare a guilty nation, and lay the avenging thunder-bolt aside.

If by what I have written I shall in any measure disoblige or disgust, and by that means fail of attaining my design, it will give me infinite concern: for I appeal to him who knows the secrets of all hearts, that my intention is to reform, and not to irritate.

These are not times for saying soft things; and, if it were not that finding fault is the most disagreeable work a man of common humanity ever engages in, it is easy to see, only from the list of epidemical vices of the age, mentioned Page 33. most of which I have only named, that I could have spun out a volume upon that ungrateful subject: but it is my opinion, that no man ought ever to write or say a harsh thing against

gainst his fellow-creatures, but when he has some prospect of gaining a superior advantage by it.

I conclude with my hearty prayers, that God would be pleased to touch your hearts, and put you upon amending your conduct by whatever means he may see proper, whether I am to have the happiness of being any way instrumental to it or not; and that he would graciously accept this poor offering to his honour, the interest of the true religion, and the good of my country.

T H E E N D.





