

Case of a British General.

Collected from several late Celebrated Papers: And laid down in
Two Plain PROPOSITIONS.

To His GRACE the Duke of MARLBOROUGH, &c.

AS every new Discovery in the Art of War seems of Right to claim Your Grace's Regards; so the Subject of this Paper will in a more especial manner appear to deserve them, being the surprizing Product of Your own immense Labours in the Common Cause. *The Product, I say, of your own Labours*: For whilst Your Grace hath been bringing the plain Old-fashioned way of gaining Victories, and taking Towns, to Perfection, Your grateful Countrymen at Home have been led by those very Labours into a Discovery, that *France* hath reaped great Advantages from the Defeats of Her Troops, and the loss of Her Towns; and that the only true Method of overcoming the Publick Enemy, had been to have lost as many Battles; and as many Towns, as could decently have been done. I wish I could make Your Grace a better Present at your Return from unexpected, and unwish'd for Glory Abroad. But it is of the peculiar Growth of our own Country: and as such, I hope, it will not be disclaimed, especially when Your Grace remembers that at Your Expence, succeeding Generals may learn the true Method of pleasing at Home, without too much Hazard to themselves Abroad.

My Lord! When the most surprizing Successes appear plainly to be the consequence of the Wisest Counsels; one would think nothing could resist the Force of consummate Wisdom, adorn'd with the Beauty of unparallel'd Successes. But it is not so. After numerous Conquests past, there remains still a more difficult Task behind: and that is, *to Conquer your self*. A Conquest, Your Grace hath happily begun! Only go on, and bring it to Perfection. After that, nothing can remain, but undisputed Infamy to Your Private Enemies, and unshaded Glory to Your self.

PROPOSITION I.

A British General must neither lie still, though it be never so Prudent, nor Fight Battles, nor Besiege Towns; though never so Successfully.

Thus Demonstrated.

1. Doth He lie still? *How are the Bravest Troops in the World mouldering away with Inaction!* The Soldiers pine; the Army wastes and consumes; their Spirits flag; and their Strength decays for want of Motion. The General, it is plain, either wants Genius and

Dexterity, or has a Desire of protracting the War! Well then, if He must not lie still without Reproach, one would think it should be his Glory, to Fight Battles, or make Sieges, Successfully. But

2. Doth he Fight Battles, and obtain Victories? Why then the Case stands thus: The Enemy either Fight bravely; or are strongly Intrenched; or they quickly Fly.

If the Enemy either Fight bravely, or are strongly Intrenched; then, *how many brave Men are cut off, and their Bones sacrificed to a Pique between two Generals!* Then, the melancholy Considerations are all revived with the highest Aggravation. Fields covered with
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the scattered Bones of our Countrymen; and their unburied Carcases; and Rivers of Blood, are painted, in the most moving Colours: not to create a generous Compassion and Gratitude; but a base and ungrateful Indignation against a Man who hazards his own Life, and sacrifices his own Repose to the Publick Good. A Bloody Victory is represented as an intolerable thing: Shall it then be an *unbloody One*? By no means. This is a Jest with the same equal Judges. For

If the Enemy stand not an Attack at all, or very little; then, *Who can call this a Victory? A Child may gain such Trophies! No thanks to the General!* Let him be tried on harder Terms, and obtain a Victory over Difficulties worth speaking of, before He expects to receive the acknowledgements due to a consummate General.

Doth He therefore, besiege Towns, and make himself Master of strong Fortresses, which give him an Entrance into the Heart of the Enemies Country? Are Gates open'd to Him, that boasted their unconquerable Strength? Alas! Alas! This is still worse. *How many Thousand of our boldest and forwardest Troops lie buried in the Ditches of those paltry Places? And how great is the Desertion of the Army, upon the very Thoughts of a Siege?*

Thus you see the Truth of the first Proposition: And for what is here said, I appeal to multitudes of modern Authors; particularly to the late pious *Examiner*; the modest Writer of the *Post-Boy*; and the Author of *Reasons for putting an End to the War*; to whom I confess my self indebted for so plain a Demonstration of what I laid down: *viz.* that a British General must neither lie still; nor obtain Victories; nor take Towns; and that let Him chuse to do which He pleaseth, He deserves to be abused, and affronted, and treated as a Publick Enemy.

And now some one may say, What? Must He neither lie still; nor Fight; nor besiege Towns? What must He then do? What remains for Him? And which way must He turn himself? I have already laid down the *Negative Duty* of a General, or what He must not do. I will now lay down the *Positive Part* in another Proposition.

PROPOSITION II.

THE true Art and Duty of a British General is to let the Enemy have the Fatigue of beating our Armies, and taking Towns.

This is an unavoidable Consequence from the former Proposition. For if it be against the Interest of the Country He serves, and

the Army He Commands, either to lie still; or to gain Victories; or to take Towns: Then nothing remains for him but to decoy the Enemy into the fatal Mistake (which He will greedily catch at) of winning Battles, and taking Towns; making just Resistance enough to kill a Number of his Men, and after this, flying, or yielding.

This is a new-invented Master-piece of Cunning: hid indeed from our present Great General; but likely enough to be practised by succeeding ones. It is laying a Trap for the Enemy, and putting a Trick upon them: Who, whilst they think they are conquering You, are vanquishing *Themselves*; and whilst they imagine themselves victorious, what are they doing but *sacrificing the Bones of their Soldiers; and burying Thousands of their best Troops in Ditches?*

What a Satisfaction would it be to the *Dutch* (since this Art hath been discovered) had the *French* been permitted to come within a Bow-shot of their Country? And how must they now repent that their Enemies have not been undone, by being Masters of all the great Towns that lead to it? And may not one begin at last strongly to suspect that almost all that hath pass'd in this War, hath been the Effect of *French Finesse*, and *Art*? That it was a cunning Trick in Monsieur *Tallard* to decoy our Generals into the way of gaining unparallel'd, and ruinous Victories; or that the *French Generals* have all had private Orders from their Court, to take effectual care constantly to be routed? This is plain, that it must be either the great Advantage of being beaten, and losing Towns, or something else, that hath made the *French King* to rise in his Spirits, and Demands, the nearer Victory hath approached to the Gates of *Paris*.

N. B. What is here said is to be understood of a *General* who is not a *Favourite*: For notwithstanding all this, a *General* who is a *Favourite*, may e'en do what he pleaseth: He may either lie still; or fight; or besiege; or fly; or ride Post with his Soldiers about a Country; or any thing He will: and all is well.

Behold the Power of Party Rage and Malice! What a Force hath it upon the Minds of some Men! Two and Two, when it pleaseth, shall no longer make Four. No Self Contradictions are too big for it: It swallows Thousands of Absurdities. It puts out the Eyes, and extinguishes the common Sense of Mankind. Instead of the Brightness of Glory, it paints a black Cloud: and whilst the Sun is shining at Noon-day, persuades you to believe it to be Midnight Darkness.