

The Free-Holder's ANSWER to the
Pretender's DECLARATION

WE, by the Mercy of God, Free-holders of Great-Britain, to the Popish Pretender, who styles himself King of Scotland and England, and Defender of Faith, **DÉFIANCE.**

HAVING seen a Libel which you have lately published against the King and People of these Realms under the Title of a **DECLARATION**, We, in Justice to the Sentiments of our own Hearts, have thought fit to return you the following Answer; wherein we shall endeavour to reduce to Method the several Particulars, which you have contrived to throw together with much Malice; and no less confusion.

We believe you sincere in the first Part of your Declaration, where you own it wou'd be a great Satisfaction to you to be placed upon the Throne by our Endeavours; But you discourage us from making use of them, by declaring it to be your Right both by the Laws of God and Man. As for the Laws of God, we shou'd think our selves great Transgressors of them shou'd we for your sake rebel against a Prince, who, under God, is the most powerful Defender of that Religion which we think the most pleasing to Him: And as for the Laws of Man, we conceive those to be of that Kind, which have been enacted from Time to Time for near thirty Years past against you and your pretensions, by the Legislature of this Kingdom.

You afterwards proceed to Investives against the Royal Family; which we do assure you is a very unpopular Topick, except to your few deluded Friends among the Rabble.

You call them Aliens to your Country, not considering that King **GEORGE** has lived above a year longer in England than ever you did. You say they are Distant in Blood; whereas, no Body ever doubted that King **GEORGE** is Great Grandson to King **JAMES** the First, tho' many believe that you are not Son to King **JAMES** the 2d. Besides all the World acknowledges he is the nearest to our Crown of the Protestant Blood; of which you cannot have one drop in your Veins, unless you derive it from such Parents as you don't care for owning.

Your next argument against the Royal Family is, that they are strangers to our Language; but they must be strangers to the British Court who have told you so. However you must know, that we plain Men shou'd prefer a King who was a stranger to our Language, before one who is a stranger to our Laws and Religion. For we cou'd never endure French Sentiments, tho' deliver'd in our native Dialect; and shou'd abhor an Arbitrary Prince, tho' he Tyranniz'd over us in the finest English that ever was spoken. For these Reasons, Sir, we cannot bear the thoughts of hearing a Man that has been bred up in the Politicks of **LOUIS** the XIV, talk intelligibly from the British Throne; especially when we consider, however he may boast of his speaking English, he says his Prayers in an unknown Tongue,

We come now to the Grievances for which in your Opinion we ought to take up Arms against our present Sovereign. The greatest you seem to insist upon, and which is most in the Mouths of your Party, is the Union of the two Kingdoms; for which His Majesty ought most certainly to be deposed, because it was made under the Reign of Her, whom you call your Dear Sister of Glorious Memory. Other Grievances which you hint at under His Majesty's Administration, are, the Murder of King Charles the First who was beheaded before King George was born; and the Sufferings of King Charles the Second, which perhaps his present Majesty cannot wholly clear himself of, because he came into the world a Day before His Restoration.

As on the one side you arraign His present Majesty by this most extraordinary Retrospect, on the other hand you condemn his Government by what we may call the Spirit of second Sight. You are not content to draw into his Reign those mischiefs that were done 100 Years ago, unless you anticipate those that may happen 100 Years hence. So that the keenest of your Arrows either fall short of him, or fly over his Head. We take it for a certain Sign that you are at a loss for present Grievances, when you are thus forced to have recourse to your future Prospect, and future Miseries. Now, Sir, you must know, that we Freeholders have a natural aversion to hanging, and don't know how to answer it to our Wives and Families, if we shou'd venture our Necks upon the Truth of your Prophecies. In our ordinary way of Judging, we guess at the King's future Conduct by what we have seen already; and therefore beg you will excuse us if for the present we defer entering into a Rebellion, to which you so graciously invite us. When we have as bad a Prospect of King George's Reign, as we shou'd have of yours, then will be your time to date another Declaration from your Court at Commercé: Which if we may be allow'd to Prophecy in our Turn cannot possibly happen before the hundred and fiftieth Year of your Reign.

Having consider'd the past and future Grievances mentioned in your Declaration, we come now to the present; all of which are founded upon this supposition, That whatever is done by his His Majesty or his Ministers to keep you out of the British Throne, is a grievance. These Sir, may be Grievances to you, but they are none to us. On the contrary, we look upon them as the greatest Instances of His Majesty's Care and Tenderness for His People. To take them in order, The first relates to the Ministry, who are chosen as you observe very rightly, out of the Worst, and not of the best of your Subjects. Now Sir, can you in Conscience think us to be such Fools as to Rebel against the King, for having employed those who are His most eminent Friends, and were the greatest Sufferers in his Cause before he Came to the Crown; and for having removed a General who is now actually in Arms against him, and two Secretaries of State, both of whom have listed themselves in your



your Service; or because He chose to substitute in their Places such Men who had distinguish'd themselves by their Zeal against you, in the most famous Battles, Negotiations, and Debates.

The second Grievance you mention is, That the glory of the late Queen has suffer'd, who you insinuate, had secur'd to you the Enjoyment of that Inheritance, out of which you had been so long kept. This may indeed be a reason why Her Memory should be precious with you, But you may be sure we shall think never the better of her, for her having your good Word. For the same Reason it makes us stare, when we hear it objected to his present Majesty, That he is not kind to Her faithful Servants; since, if we can believe what you yourself say, it is impossible they should be his faithful Servants. And by the way many of your private Friends here wish you would forbear blabbing at this rate; for to tell you a Secret, we are very apt to suspect that any English Man who deserves your Praise, deserves to be Hang'd.

The next grievance which you have a mighty mind to redress among us, is the Parliament of Great Britain against whom you bring a stale Accusation which has been used by every Minority in the Memory of Man; namely, that it was procur'd by unwarrantable Influences and Corruptions. We cannot indeed blame you for being angry at those, who have set such a round Price upon your Head. Your Accusation of our High Court of Parliament, puts us in mind of a Story, often told among us Free-holders, concerning a rattle-brain'd young fellow, who being indicted for two or three Pranks upon the high Way, told the Judge he would swear the Peace against him, for putting him in fear of his Life.

The next Grievance is such a one, that we are amazed how it could come into your Head. Your Words are as follow. Whilst the principal Powers engaged in the late Wars do enjoy the Blessings of Peace, and are attentive to discharge their Debts, and ease their People, Great-Britain in the midst of Peace, feels all the Load of War. New Debts are contracted, new Armies are raised at Home, Dutch Forces, are brought into these Kingdoms. What in the Name of Wonder do you mean? Are you in earnest, or do you design to banter us? whom is the Nation obliged to for all this Load of War that it feels? Had you been wise enough to have slept at Bar-le-duc in a whole Skin, we should not have contracted new Debts, raised new Armies, or brought over Dutch Forces to make an Example of you.

The most pleasant Grievance is still behind, & indeed a most proper one to close up this Article. King George has taken possession of the Dutchy of Bremen, whereby a Door is open'd to let in an Inundation of Foreigners from Abroad, and to reduce these Nations to the State of a Province to one of the most inconsiderable Provinces of the Empire. And do you then really believe the Mob-Story that King George designs to make a Bridge of Bones from Hanover to Wapping? We would have you know that some of us read Baker's Chronicle, and don't find that William the Conqueror ever thought of making England, a Province to his Native Dutchy of Normandy notwithstanding it lay so much more convenient for that Purpose; Nor that King James the First had ever any Thoughts of reducing this Nation to the State of a Province to his ancient Kingdom of Scotland, though it lies upon the same Continent. But pray how comes it to pass that the Electorate of Hanover, is become all of a sudden one of the most inconsiderable Provinces of the Empire? If you undervalue it upon the Account of its Religion, you have some Reason for what you say tho' you should not think we are such Strangers to

Maps, and live so much out of the World, as to be ignorant that it is for Power and Extent the second Protestant-State in Germany; and whether you know it or no, the Protestant-Religion in the Empire, is looked upon as a sufficient Ballance against Popery.

Besides, you should have considered that in your Declaration upon the King's coming to the Throne of Great-Britain, you endeavour'd to terrify us from receiving him, by Representing him as a powerfull foreign Prince, supported by a numerous Army of his own Subjects. Be that, as it will; we are no more afraid of being a Province to Hanover, than the Hanoverians are apprehensive of being a Province to Bremen.

We have now taken Notice of those great Evils which you are come to rescue us from: But as they are such as we neither feel nor see, we desire you will put your self to no further Trouble for our sakes.

you afterwards begin a kind of Te Deum, before the Time, in that remarkable Sentence, We adore the Wisdom of the Divine Providence, which has opened a Way to our Restoration, by the Success of those very Measures that were laid to disappoint us for ever. We are at a Loss what you mean by this devout Jargon; But by what goes before and follows, we suppose it to be this; That the coming of King George to the Crown, has made many Malecontents, and by that Means opened a Way to your Restoration; whereas you should consider that if he had not come to the Crown, the Way had been open of it self. In the same pious Paragraph, you most earnestly conjure us to pursue those Methods for your Restoration, which the Finger of God seems to point out to us. Now the only Methods which we can make use of for that End, are Civil War, Rapine, Blood-shed, Treason and Perjury; Methods which we Protestants do humbly conceive can never be pointed out to us by the Finger of God.

The rest of your Declaration contains the Encouragements you give us to Rebel. First you promise to share with us all Dangers and Difficulties which we shall meet with in this worthy Enterprize. you are very much in the Right; don't you have nothing to lose and hope to get a Crown, we don't hope for any new Free-holds and only desire to keep what we have. As therefore you are in the right to undergo dangers and Difficulties to make your self our Master, we shall think our selves as much in the right to undergo Dangers and Difficulties to hinder you from being so.

Secondly. You promise to refer your and our Interest to a Scotch Parliament, which you are resolv'd to call immediately. We suppose you mean if the Frost holds. But Sir, we are certainly inform'd there is a Parliament now sitting at Westminster, that are busy at present in taking care both of the Scotch and English Interest, and have actually done every thing which you would let be done by our Representatives in the High-Lands.

Thirdly. You promise that if we will Rebel for you against our present Sovereign, you will remit and discharge all crimes of High-Treason, Misprision of Treason, and all other crimes and Offences whatsoever; done or committed against you or your Father. But will you answer in this Case, that King George will forgive us? Otherwise we beseech you to consider, what poor Comfort it would be for a British Freeholder to be convey'd up Holbourn, with your Pardon in his Pocket. And hear we cannot but remark, that the Conditions of your General Pardon are so stinted, as to show that you are very cautious lest your good Nature should carry you too far. You exclude from the Benefit of it, all those who do not from the Time of your Landing lay hold on Mercy, and return to their Duty and Allegiance. By this means all Neuters and Lookers on are to be executed of Course, and by the studied Ambiguity in which you couch the Terms of your gracious Pardon you still leave room to gratify your self in all the Pleasures of Tyranny and Revenge.

Upon the Whole, we have so bad an Opinion of Rebellion, as well as of your Motives to it and Rewards for it that you may rest satisfy'd, there are few Free-holders on this Side the Forth who will engage in it. And we verily believe that you will suddenly take a Resolution in your Cabinet of High-Landers to scamper off with your new Crown, which we are told the Ladies of those Parts have so generously Clobb'd for. And you may assure your self, that it is the only One you are like to get by this notable Expedition. And to we bid you heartily Farewell.