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THE
THOUGHTS

OF AN

Impartial MAN

UPON THE

Present Temper of the Nation;

Offer'd to the

CONSIDERATION

OF THE

Freeholders of *Great-Britain*.



L O N D O N :

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THE
 THOUGHTS
 OF AN
 Impartial Man, &c.



SOCIETY cannot subsist without Government, nor Government where the People are not of a governable Temper; But to be governable, requires some Degree of Fear and Knowledge. There is no governing Men void of Fear; and the more Sense and Courage they have, the more insolent they will be. Again, Fear without Knowledge,

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Iedge, puts Men only upon avoiding the Danger dreaded, without considering what will become of themselves afterwards: Men therefore who will live under Government, must both fear and understand. But it is not enough that they barely submit, they must likewise be governable. There is a great Difference between being submissive and being governable; for he who barely submits to another, may only acquiesce in what he dislikes, to shun what he dislikes more; and we may be very submissive, yet of no Use to the Person we submit to: But to be governable, implies an Endeavour to please, and a Willingness to exert ourselves in behalf of the Person that governs, without which the Governor cannot have that Support that is necessary for the general Protection and Defence. Bare Submission is a precarious Obedience; for when a new Governor shall

Shall offer himself more agreeable in Imagination than the present, the submissive Subject will encline to withdraw his Subjection from the present; especially if that Fear which should tye him to his Duty be remov'd; and most of all, when to that want of Fear is added want of Knowledge also, which last is the Case of the far greater Part of the Govern'd. It is therefore very wicked in some Members of Society, to remove Fear and Understanding out of the Minds of their Fellow-Subjects.

To bring this Reasoning home; We know it was the Fear of Popery and of Arbitrary Power, that brought about the Revolution; and the same Fear of seeing those Evils return under the Pretender, join'd with a due understanding of the Blessings of Liberty and of the Protestant Religion, establish'd the *Hanover* Succession. In like man-

ner, the Fear of losing these Blessings, and the Knowledge of our Happiness, are what preserve the present Government under this Royal Branch; but if there are any who labour by their Discourses or Writings to remove our Fears of the Pretender's Return, or to make us think we can enjoy our Civil and Religious Rights under a Popish Prince; or who spread Disaffection in the Minds of the People, thereby to make us misapprehend our Happiness, and think we are neglected or ill used by our Prince; who is there but must own, they are not only bad Subjects, but have it in their Design to overthrow the Government, and either to change it into a Commonwealth, or put it under some other Person? And tho' some may flatter themselves that they do not design to go so far, yet they must be very weak and adventurous Men. Thinking Men must know,
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that in poisoning the Minds of the Nation against the Administration, in order to force an Alteration of Measures, they raise a Spirit they are not sure of laying at their Pleasure, and may themselves be carry'd away by the Torrent, which by breaking down the Banks, they have made Passage for.

I ALLOW of Self-defence in publick as well as private Cases: No doubt there is a Remedy where there is a Right, and Subjects under a mixt Monarchy have Rights, the Invasion of which they may repel by the best Means in their Power. But is this the present Case? Has our Sovereign hitherto violated our Liberties? No: It is confess'd by the most disaffected among us, he has not: What is it then they pretend? They say, that under the Form of our Constitution, Designs are carrying on to enslave us. Barbarous Suggestion!

tion ! and as unlikely to be true as barbarous. It is a barbarous Treatment to suspect our Prince of ill Designs against his People, who in the whole Course of his Reign has born Respect to the Laws, and in no Instance infring'd them ; if this be fair dealing, how shall we distinguish between good Princes and bad ? What other Demonstration can Sovereigns give that they content themselves with their just Prerogative, than by governing according to Law, and leaving the Constitution entire ? Suspicion discourages Virtue, is often unfair, groundless, and dangerous, because it has no Bounds ; it is founded in Ignorance, because what is known is no longer suspected : But there are Criterions by which Truth is to be judged, and none so plain as in high Points of Government, where Liberty is concerned, particularly with respect to the Government of *England*.
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With us, the Prince's Power is circumscrib'd by Laws, and the Limits of it known; the Infringement of those Laws, is the Criterion by which to judge, whether our Princes are contented with the Prerogative allow'd them, and by this Criterion the Nation judg'd that King *James* determin'd to erect himself into a Tyrant, when he suspended the Penal Laws and Test by his single Authority. There must be some Overt-Act committed by our Princes, some open Invasion of our Liberties, before we can be justified in charging them with ill Designs; and it is unpardonable not to treat them at least with that Justice the Laws allow the worst of Subjects, who must commit some Overt-Act of Treason, before he is condemn'd.

AGAIN; It is unlikely that while the Form of our Constitution remains entire, our Liberties should
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be lost, for no Form of Government secures the Subjects Liberty so much as ours. While Parliaments subsist, the Crown can do nothing arbitrarily; the Army is the Parliament's, as it is the People who pay it, not the Crown, and that only from Year to Year. The Parliament raises Supplies, directs the Application, and annually enquires into the Disbursement: All the Officers of the Publick Revenue have their distinct Branches of Duty, have Checks upon them, and are accountable to others; till at last the Parliament takes Account of all. The King has Power to protect his People, but not to hurt them, for he can neither make new Laws, nor suspend or cancel the old, and whoever should advise him to it, is liable to be question'd for it in Parliament. In all Matters of high Concern, Matters wherein the People's Liberties are substantially

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tially concern'd, he is as much circumscribed by the Laws as his Subjects are, and the Parliament is Judge of the Infringement of them. The Judges, tho' appointed by the Crown, hold their Places for Life, and are likewise accountable to Parliament, if they deviate from their Duty ; nor can the meanest Subject suffer in his Property or Life, but by the Verdict of his Fellow-Subject. This is the Form of our Constitution, and while this Form remains, we may defy all secret Attempts to alter it ; for the Foundation of it is Liberty, and all its Parts are calculated to maintain our Freedom : It consists of a Variety of wise Provisions made by our Ancestors against Arbitrary Power, to fill up those Chasms and Defects at which Tyrants aim'd to enter and lead us Captive ; and all these Provisions depend on each other like so many Links of a Chain, of which the

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King holds one End, the Parliament the other, so that the People have their Security in their own Hands. Unlikely is it therefore, that this Constitution should be hurt by any Covert Designs of Prince or Ministry, or that they should entertain a Thought of attempting to hurt it, till they forget the Examples of former Princes, the Parliamentary Right by which this Royal Family reigns, and, in a Word, are void of common Sense; which, if it were the Case, I see no Danger of their Success in a Nation so vigilant and jealous of their Privileges.

BUT suppose, for Argument-sake, there were those Grounds for Jealousy, which in my Conscience I think have not been given, what Way is there to mend ourselves, unless by altering the Constitution itself, which, tho' we have Reason to believe is the Desire and Intention

tion of some, is yet deny'd by them. But would that mend our Condition? if it would, let the Disaffected tell us how: Their weekly Libels, indeed, throw out dark Hints, but they tend only to pull down, not to erect. Perhaps they are not yet agreed upon their Form of Government, which is not strange, considering the different Views and Principles of these *Evil-speakers of Dignities*. In the mean time, till they inform me better, it seems to me that it can only be done by introducing a Commonwealth, or setting up Absolute Authority, for these are all the Forms of Government that differ from mixt Monarchy, our present happy Constitution. But a Commonwealth is no fit Government for *Englishmen*, as has been experienc'd, and I trust none of us would bear with Absolute Monarchy; and if so, we should find ourselves, after all our unnatural

Struggles, and, perhaps, much Bloodshed, fall back into the Constitution our angry Gentlemen pretend to find such Fault with, as in the Year 1660. Then let them count their Gains, what have they purchas'd? nothing they are not actually in Possession of; but dear was the Price they paid for it: Breach of Oaths, Faction and Rebellion, Stagnation of Trade, Loss of Rents, Disunion of Families, the exposing the Nation to foreign Invaders, our Liberties to some hungry Arbitrary Stranger, and our Religion to the Courtesy of a Papist. Our Constitution may have Defects, but what Government has them not? Shall I throw away my Coat, or rend it from Top to Bottom, because I cannot take out a Spot, or mend a Fray in it? They will say, that is all we aim at, we would only mend, not tear to Pieces: Be it so; but leave it then to the Fine-drawer, who only
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has the Skill to do it, and whose only proper Business it is, and call not in all the Artisans of the Street to assist, whose Trade is of another Sort. The Constitution is the People's Covering, and it belongs only to the Parliament to suit it to their Backs, change its Fashion, or mend what is amiss.

THE Obligations the Crown is under to the Subject, are so well made known by the Coronation Oath, the Bill of Rights, the Act of Settlement, and others of later Date, that Men of common Observation may judge whether the Crown has acted against the least of those Obligations: But the Factious are so far from asserting this, that they make it Matter of Sorrow no Violation has been made; for then, say they, the whole Nation would open their Eyes: whereas the Crown has found the Art to undermine the Constitution by
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dark and hidden Measures, to poison the Root without lopping the Branches, and to rot the Sap and Timber, while the Rind looks fair for a Time to the Eye. But this is more easily said than proved; and those who see the Tree shoot forth its Leaves as formerly, and the Branches bear kindly Fruit, will desire to know of these Weeders of the Publick, how they prove it. We will prove it, say they, by Amputation: let us cut off a big Branch, or scoop a Hole in the Body, and you shall see the Corruption within. That may be dangerous, reply others; it may cost the Life of the Tree. No Matter, say these Pruners, 'tis but cutting it down to the Ground, and it will spring afresh; or at the worst we will plant you another Tree. I wish this may not be the Drift, as I am sure it is the Tendency of the Speeches and Actions of many among us: What else do they mean
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by objecting to several Laws in being, the Septennial Act, the Riot Act, the King's negative Voice, and the Seat of Bishops in Parliament? Are not these Parts of the Constitution, some necessary to preserving Peace, the others essential to Government itself? As the Temper of Mens Minds is disposed, what Feuds and Animosities would be kept up, if Annual or Triennial Parliaments were reviv'd; and what Distractions might not the Nation fall into, if the Riot Act were repeal'd, when we see that with it, the People are so practis'd upon, they scarce are kept in Order? Should the Crown be depriv'd of its negative Voice, there were an End of Monarchy; the supream Head, to whom we all have sworn, would be no longer the King, but the Slave of his People, and, considering the Riches and Strength of the Commons, become inferior to the Doges of *Venice*.

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And if the Bishops Seat in Parliament were taken away, there would be an End of one Branch of our Legislature: for 'tis a Mistake to say the Three Estates consist of King, Lords, and Commons; they consist of Lay Lords, the Bishops, and the Commons, as the Lawyers will tell you. Experience shews, that the Upper House is hardly a Balance for the Lower; and if one Branch thereof should be laid by, it is to be fear'd the Commons would over-balance the other, and, possibly, not rest till they had remov'd the Temporal Lords also. Thus do the Schemes of some among us, tend to Democracy, and these Refiners of the Constitution, become Destroyers of the Constitution itself. Are the Commons to expect that every Bill they send up to the Lords shall pass of Course? If so, what becomes of that Check which our prudent Ancestors thought so essential to Govern-

Government, and is so necessary for forming wise Resolutions? And if the King's Negative be taken away, we take from him that Power which we allow the meanest Freeholder, the being bound by his own Consent, and the preserving his own Property; and what can better secure to us our Religion, Liberty, and Property, or what is better fitted for producing wise Deliberation and effectual Execution, than the joint Concurrence of all Parts of the Legislature?

THESE Considerations are so obvious, that they cannot escape us, and therefore I much distrust the Sincerity of those, who at the same Time they pretend a Regard for our Constitution, are doing all in their Power to weaken it, by sowing Disaffection all over the Nation. This is a Time when Men should not content themselves with being Legal Subjects, they should
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be Loyal too, and exert themselves: If they will not be active in Defence of a Prince who protects them, and has committed no Overt-Act against their Liberties, when shall we hope for Peace at Home, or Reputation Abroad! If a few ambitious Men, disappointed of their Hopes, or actuated by Revenge and personal Resentment, shall be able to animate the Multitude against the Administration, to think evil of the Constitution, to fill them with unreasonable and dangerous Jealousies, and persuade them that the long-avow'd Enemies of our Prince and Liberties have on a sudden deserted their Principles, and are become honest Men; it is Time for all who are really honest, to join heartily and openly in the Support of a Prince who has sworn to protect them, and whom they have sworn to obey: At least, let them not help forward the Schemes of some, to mob the Ministry out
of

of their Stations, only to make Room for others, whose Abilities have never been tried, or when tried, we must remember, abused them to their Country's Hurt. If the Ministry are the Men they represent them, let them attack them the legal Way: The Constitution admits it, and there are Examples enough in History to follow; but if the Parliament has constantly approv'd their Measures, and not so much as an Attempt been made to attack them there, it is unjust to misrepresent them in every Corner of the Kingdom, where they cannot be heard in their Justification. I know it will be reply'd, they have too many Friends there, to hope for Success in impeaching them: But whence have they so many? I hope from the Experience of their Abilities, and a general Belief of their Integrity. I see many Nobles and Commoners approve their Measures, who, from

their large Fortunes and Manner of Life, ought not to be suspected of Corruption; and suppose some few may deserve the Charge, I cannot conceive that a Majority of the Legislature would refuse the Nation the Justice of punishing bad Ministers, if their Crimes were so great as to deserve Impeachment. For aught we know, they are as innocent of this Charge as their Forefathers; and the Guilty in this Respect, if any, should be named, otherwise Presumption is on the Side of Innocence. If the Charge be true, the Country should have taken better Care in the Choice of their Representatives; and if they did take Care, the Fault lies not in the Constitution, but in the general Depravity of our Nation; and if that be the Case, there is little Prospect of mending our Condition by changing Hands; for if a general Corruption reigns, we are safe in none. If the Charge be
false,

false, as every Man is bound to think, unless he knows the contrary, let Suspicion die ; but if Suspicion still must live, I may as well presume to suspect, that those who rail the most against the Ministry, are under equal Influence of Corruption, and that they who join loudest in the Cry, have been promis'd Money and Preferment, to stoop their Backs for others to mount into the Saddle.

THE ill Use made of the late Attempt to excise two Duties, is a very melancholy Topick to think of ; the Nation has been persuaded to believe that a *general Excise* was intended, than which nothing is more false ; but Evil-minded Men reported it so, to inflame the Subject, against not only the Person who propos'd it, but against all who were for considering the Expediency of that Proposal. These, in a Lump, are pronounc'd Enemies

mies to the Liberties of their Country ; and those whose Principles in Government ought never to have entitl'd them to a Place in the Legislature, are, it seems, in many Places, judg'd the best Guardians of our Liberties. Heavens ! what Infatuation is this ? to take the first Occasion of renouncing, without Distinction, a Body of Men who are the *known* Supporters of our King, in favour of others who have no Experience in Legislative Affairs, or who value themselves on being disaffected. The Bill above-mention'd, never came so far as to be *committed* ; so that no Man can say how good it might turn out ; for in a *Committee*, Bills undergo many Alterations and Amendments ; and it cannot be deny'd, but that *Excises* might be put under such proper Methods and Restrictions, as to make them very consistent with the Subjects Liberties ; And had
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this Bill been suffer'd to have gone so far, I doubt not, for my Part, but it would have been render'd pleasing to the Nation, or if otherwise, laid aside. I am sure the Ends of it were desirable, The *Ease* of the *Land*, and *Correction* of *Fraud*. Neither is it to be doubted, but that if it had been expedient to have put the Question, the Bill must have been *committed*; for what reasonable Man could refuse to follow the true Method of Parliament in considering the Matters brought before them? But when it was observ'd, that the Nation had been work'd up to apprehend Inconveniencies from *any Excise* at all, and that the best Modifications were like not to be Satisfactory in the present Ferment, the Parliament agreed to let the Bill drop. And now, where is the Injury done our Country, and why is this Ferment kept up? Why must those Gentlemen who were disposed

disposed to *examine* that Project, be accounted Betrayers of their Country's Liberties? Was there ever any Bill propos'd of Consequence, that had not its Approvers as well as its Opposers? Is thinking alike the Rule of judging Mens Integrity? One thought the Frauds committed in the Duties on *Tobacco* and *Wine* could not be remedied but by putting those Duties under an *Excise*, and that it might be done with *Safety*: Another thought it better the Frauds should *remain*, than to cure them by an *Excise*; but surely this Difference of Opinion makes neither of them necessarily Enemies to their Country. They *both* might mean it well; but he that from thence concludes, that *either* of them meant it ill, is an Enemy to Human-kind; for if he would have me blindly follow the Interest of *his Party*, and will allow me no Opinion of *my own*, he is himself
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the Destroyer of all Liberty. Shall the constant laudable Tenour of a Man's Actions be forgotten by me, because he *once* voted differently from what I *wish* he had? And shall his Mistake in a *single* Instance, supposing it one, discriminate him an Enemy to his Country? Was the Excise of *two* Commodities a Matter of such Importance, had it pass'd into a Law, with *proper Restrictions*, that from thence-forward our Constitution had been destroyed? For shame, let no Man say it: If not, how were our Liberties endanger'd, and by whom? Would the Legislature concur in *their own* Destruction? No: Could the Ministry do it *without* them? Neither. Were the Law found inconvenient, would not the Legislature *repeal* it? Without Doubt: We see this *frequently* done; ours are not the Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians* never to be revoked; nor

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are our Members of Parliament *perpetual*. Every *seven Years* the Country may send up as many *new Faces* as they please, and *they* have the same Power as their *Predecessors* : If they liked not the *Excise*, they would undoubtedly repeal it.

AND now, provided my Countrymen elect Men faithful to the present Establishment, I shall be little solicitous for their *Persons* ; but I would not have the Excise Scheme the *Criterion* of their Merits : I would not have *one* old Member excluded because he happen'd in his Judgment to be *for* it, nor *another* prefer'd merely because *he* was in his Judgment *against* it ; but I would have their Merits and Fitness to serve their Country in that Important Trust, be judged of by their *known* Affection to the Royal Family, their Concern for the Publick Tranquillity, and, where it can be discern'd, their Regard to Religion. I

I HAVE here given you the Thoughts of as *impartial* a Man as any, perhaps, in the Kingdom: I am personally an Enemy to none, and embark'd in no Party. I seek not *Favours* from the Court, but am desirous to enjoy, in Peace, the Little I have. I am no *Ministerial Writer*, for no body knows the Author of this, not even the Printer. I own myself a *Friend* to the Government, because it *protects* me; I love the *Constitution*, because it is the *best* under Heaven; and I shall love my *Country* while it understands its Happiness, and will be content to enjoy it: But if Faction is to get the better of Loyalty, Corruption of Honesty, and Ambition of due Subserviency: If all Ties and Obligation between Subject and Prince are to be dissolved; and the Respect due to Parliaments withdrawn; if the Governed are to give Law to their Governors, *suspect* every Thing they do, and

esteem their *Enemies* as their only *Friends* : If the Nation can be persuaded to despise the Blessings that flow from a *mixt Monarchy* under a *Protestant Prince*, and bear that *Faction* should *strengthen* itself by joining Hands with *Jacobites* : If my Countrymen are so blind as not to see where all This must end, either in *Anarchy* and *Civil War*, in a *Commonwealth* or *Absolute Power*, and that, perhaps, under a *Popish Prince*, which GOD avert ! what remains, but that every Man who has the *Protestant Religion* at Heart, who knows the Value of *just Liberty*, and delights in the *sure* and *peaceable* Enjoyment of it ; who has any Concern for his *Property*, his *Family*, his *Friends*, his *Country*, and his *Oaths* : What remains, I say, but that all *such* should faithfully adhere to their KING and to the CONSTITUTION, and defend them every manner of Way to the utmost of their Power. What *Englishmen* are in Possession

session of, is too valuable to be lost by a careless *Indifference*, and the Mischiefs to be apprehended, too great to be thought of without Horror.

The Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water; therefore leave off Contention, before it be meddled with. Prov. xvii. 14.

F I N I S.



1871

Received of the Treasurer of the
Board of Education the sum of
\$100.00 for the year ending
the 31st of March 1871

Witness my hand and seal
this 1st day of April 1871
at New York City

John A. Dix



John A. Dix

